SHE'S SELDOM SEEN WEARING HER DIRECTOR'S HAT HERE: INTERROGATING THE PAUCITY OF BLACK WOMEN STAGE DIRECTORS IN THREE STATE-SUPPORTED THEATRES IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICA (1999–2018)

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DECLARATION

I declare that all work is my own and has been duly referenced using the Harvard system of referencing.

I also declare that the work reported in this thesis has not been submitted to UKZN or any other tertiary institution for purposes of obtaining an academic qualification, whether by myself or any other party.

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SIGNATURE: 

DATE: 31 August 2020

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SIGNATURE: 

DEDICATION

To my daughter, Sebabatso Mamello Lintle Matete. May you be all He has called you to be.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACH – Arts, Culture and Heritage

ACT – Arts and Culture Trust

ACTAG – Arts and Culture Task Group

AKS – African Knowledge Systems

ANC – African National Congress

BASA – Business and Arts South Africa

BCM – Black Consciousness Movement

CAF – Community Arts Festival

CAMP – Community Arts Mentorship Programme

CAPAB – Cape Performing Arts Board

CATTHSETA – Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority

CCI – Cultural and Creative Industries

CIGS – Cultural Industries Growth Strategies

DAC – Department of Arts and Culture

DACST – Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

IPAP 2 – Industrial Policy Action Plan 2

MGE – Mzansi Golden Economy

MTEF – Medium-Term Expenditure Framework

NAC – National Arts Council

NAF – Grahamstown National Arts Festival

NAPAC – Natal Performing Arts Council

NDP – National Development Plan of 2030

NELM – National English Literary Museum

NFVF – National Film and Video Foundation

NGP – The New Growth Path Framework

NHC – National Heritage Council (NHC)

NLC – National Lotteries Commission

PAC – Performing Art Council

PACOFS – Performing Arts Council of the Orange Free State

PACT – Performing Arts Council of the Transvaal

RDP – Reconstruction and Development Programme

SAWAF – South African Women's Arts Festival

SCEG – Special Capital Expenditure Grant

SWAPAC – South West Africa Performing Arts Council

WoC – Women of Colour

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ABSTRACT

The startling dearth of black women stage directors accessing three of South Africa's six state-funded theatres – Artscape, the Market and the Playhouse – between 1999 and 2018 forms the impetus for this study. Production information across these case studies reveals that black men, white men and white women theatre directors continue to dominate mainstream stages, despite the 1996 White Paper's resolute stance that *everyone* is to *equally* participate in the arts in a post-1994 dispensation. This study examines the factors contributing to this group's under-representation through analysis of cultural policy, one-on-one in-depth interviews with the institutional heads of the three theatres, and with twelve black (inclusive of African, Coloured and Indian) women who have directed productions in at least one of the theatres during the 20 years under investigation. As historically those who are the most marginalised, the narratives of the twelve women are centered. Although these women have had directing opportunities within these theatres, their narratives reveal adverse experiences at the time that their productions were staged or later.

Cultural policy is not the panacea for persistent intersectional prejudices at state-supported theatres, as other mitigating factors are at play, including the profoundly elitist nature of the mainstream performing arts world and the notion of excellence. Nevertheless, it remains the foundational document guiding artistic activities in these spaces in a democracy. In their frameworks, the White Paper of 1996 and later drafts, neglected to effectively facilitate the overt inclusion of black women stage directors. Efforts to substantially transform these theatres are further betrayed by the pursuit of commercial viability. Additionally, lack of investment by these institutions towards training and capacity-building programmes designed to benefit specifically black women directors does not augur well for emerging directors particularly. Furthermore, aspects like level of education, training, experience or accolades do not seem to ease challenges of access, despite the various efforts made by this group of practitioners to get into these spaces.

Essentially, weak cultural policy frameworks alongside insufficiently funded theatres that must see to their own sustainability foster an arts and culture landscape that has only marginally transformed in more than twenty-five years of democracy.

INTRODUCTION

Policy, institutional processes and practice: A clear disjuncture

> The activities of these institutions [Provincial Performing Arts Councils], their continued access to State monies, and their putative transformation, *has created more controversy than any other issue facing the Ministry. But their transformation has already begun* … [my emphasis] – Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage of 1996: n.p.).

> My main view is that *we still really don't have a lot of black women directors in this country. It's a travesty.* We still don't have black women directing and the idea is we have to mentor them and we have to create a visibility of them [my emphasis] – Interview with James Ngcobo[1] (2018).

> It's just that they, for some reason, have decided that no, we will not open the spaces [state-supported theatres] to you guys, for whatever reason that may be. *And for us to still be talking about this in 2019, is a problem* [my emphasis] – Interview with Warona Seane[2] (2019).

In 1996, the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST)[3] published the White Paper of Arts, Culture and Heritage. Against the imperatives of redress, access and participation, the cultural arm of government sought to steer the arts, culture and heritage (ACH) sector towards significant transformation. The four generously state-supported PACs were identified as a principal area that needed to undergo significant change. As institutions which previously catered to the white minority, these performing arts complexes were obligated by the new government to open their doors as receiving houses, or playhouses, for all practitioners regardless of race, gender and any other factors of exclusion. In the quotes above, Ngcobo and Seane, in their respective capacities as Artistic Director of a publicly-funded cultural institution, and professional theatre practitioner, concur that there is a paucity of black women theatre directors in state-supported theatres more than 25 years into our

[1] Artistic Director at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg.
[2] Black South African woman director, actress, producer and former Artistic Director of the Soweto Theatre. She is also one of the respondents in this study.
3 Until 2002, the DACST included the Science and Technology portfolio. Thereafter, the ministry became the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC). In June 2019, the department was merged with Sports and Recreation, to form the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture.

democracy. This points to insufficient transformation, despite the DACST's assurance as outlined in the 1996 White Paper, that the major overhaul of these spaces had at that time already begun. Considered jointly, the above three quotes reveal apparent discrepancies between national cultural policy, processes governing state-supported theatres – specifically the Playhouse, the Market Theatre and Artscape in this study – as well as access to these spaces by black women stage directors within a contemporary context.

Although the emphasis is on how cultural policy has affected the scarcity of black women directors, several factors that equally hamper the meaningful participation of black women directors are recognised. These include marginal governmental support for arts and culture activities, as well as the intransigence of institutional mindsets which include white, elitist culture, normative patriarchal standards, and neoliberalism - where market priorities entrench normative patriarchal and racist (yet seemingly neutral) standards. The existence of cultural policy does not necessarily translate to equitable access for black women practitioners. However, it must be considered as a viable starting point when it comes to the transformation of longstanding institutional cultures and standards. Since the White Paper exists as the guiding principle for the activities and funding practices of DAC agencies, its framework is the benchmark by which cultural institutions are to be held accountable for practice that neglects to include all practitioners fairly. Without a policy in place, institutional processes cannot be duly examined.

While the Playhouse and Artscape are former PACs, and the Market Theatre was originally a non-racial, independent theatre, all three cultural institutions today share the status of being state-supported performing arts institutions. The significant under-representation of black women stage directors in these theatres can be largely attributed to the legacy of apartheid, where this group occupied the margins.

Black women: located at the margins of historical theatre practice

During apartheid, the participation of black male artists in the theatre of resistance happened alongside white male directors. These plays primarily comprised narratives centered on the oppression of South Africa's black majority. Plays often told stories of the subjugated black male within the tyranny of apartheid, excluding black women despite them being specifically oppressed in terms of their colour (racism as a legal system in South Africa), their class (the system that creates legal disabilities) and their gender (as inferior to white men, white women and black men) (Mahali, 2017). Nevertheless, a few "black" women playwrights did emerge

out of South Africa's historical theatre moment (see pages 49-53). These women - who have been recognised as contributors to a canon of South African theatre – include Fatima Dike, Gcina Mhlophe, Magi Noninzi Williams, Sindiwe Magona, and Muthal Naidoo, among others. But by and large, the South African professional theatre landscape has historically been dominated by white practitioners, male and female, whose productions enjoyed generous state subsidies at the former white, male-led PACs, and even now. As a result, there has historically been a dearth of scholarship that acknowledges the existence and contributions of black women theatre directors. Though theatre involves numerous "image makers" (Barranger, 2015), this study's focus is on the directing aspect of theatre practice. Some of the black women who are central in this study have taken on other roles in their respective processes towards mounting theatrical productions. However, the central point of this study will be their roles as directors; that is, as "the undisputed leaders of theatrical production" (Fliotsos & Vierow, 2013).

This central role of black women as creative leaders and shapers of productions is one that profoundly shifts this group's historical and indeed continuing marginalisation in South Africa's prominently positioned theatres. The position of black women as cultural decision-makers, seems to be quite threatening to the status quo upheld in these institutions, and is perhaps a factor that can explain the striking paucity of this group. Charlotte Canning's profound description of the director as "not a person, but a disciplinary constellation of power" (2005: 57), offers a compelling framework within which to understand the role of the black woman director today. Despite their continuing under-representation at state-supported theatres, black women directors are actively shifting hegemonic theatre practices and legacies, not only by virtue of their presence in these spaces, but also in the subject matter they tackle in their productions.

The role of a theatre director is essentially associated with authority, the power to shape and disrupt dominant performing arts (and broad aesthetic) standards, technical innovation, experimentation in stage design and overall creative autonomy. Because of their standpoint, black women directors can therefore unsettle and dislodge hegemonic standards and practices in highly disruptive ways. This potentially disruptive role (enabled by back women's standpoint) is connected to global commodity capitalism, neo-liberal corporatisation, hegemonic discourses of excellence and merit in the arts world, as well as the deeply elitist and exclusivist nature of state-funded theatre spaces. Nevertheless, the infrequency of black women in this fleeting position of authority at the Playhouse, Artscape and Market, over the 20 years examined, does not always enable and maintain this kind of imprint.

Motivation for the study

As a black woman theatre practitioner, I am interested in the positionality of black women in contemporary South African theatre practice. I find it concerning that black women theatre makers continue to navigate the challenging status of being unequally positioned in relation to their black male, white male and white female counterparts. It is exasperating to encounter 25 years into democracy, a newspaper article headline that reads: "Poet and writer Napo Masheane is set to make history when she becomes the first black female director to have her show featured on the Market Theatre's main stage, the John Kani Theatre" (Bambalele, 2015).

The urgency around this group's erasure in a contemporary context is stark when considering the political nature of theatre. Under-representation means that black women directors are excluded as the leaders and shapers of theatre productions in key spaces. In addition, this under-representation ultimately threatens the visibility and voice of this historically marginalised group. Theatre is not a neutral space, but rather a politically charged one. As Augusto Boal asserts: "All theatre is necessarily political, because all the activities of man are political and theatre is one of them" (Boal, 1979: ix). In the introduction to *Theatre and Society: Reflections in a Fractured Mirror*, Temple Hauptfleisch similarly posits that theatre in any period and in any given context reflects that context, and in the longer term may be able to change or influence that particular context (1997: 1). Historically, in South Africa, theatre was a medium through which practitioners challenged the repressive government. In the contemporary climate, theatre continues to be a platform on which new themes are explored, national identities negotiated and personal narratives articulated. Against theatre's potency, the significant exclusion of black women directors is a profoundly political act of writing out this group, which in fact perpetuates the past. This study hopes to unearth the various reasons why black women directors are grossly under-represented in state-supported theatres, despite arts and culture policy indicating inclusion of all artists and communities, particularly those who are historically disadvantaged.

This study deepens and expands on the work initiated by Karabelo Lekalake, who in her chapter titled "Black Female Directors in South African Theatre" (2013), examines the visibility of black women stage directors specifically within mainstream theatres in South Africa. By mainstream theatres, the author refers to state-funded venues and the prestigious Grahamstown National Arts Festival (NAF).

Articulating her views nearly eighteen years after the publication of the White Paper of 1996, Lekalake (2013) argues that government has seemingly failed to implement its mandate, since black women directors remain under-represented in a mainstream theatre industry dominated by their black male, white male and white female counterparts. To present a case for the worthwhile contributions of black women directors, the author profiles three notable black contemporary female theatre directors in mainstream theatre: Ntshieng Mokgoro, Warona Seane and Napo Masheane. (Mokgoro and Seane are both interview respondents in this study, while Seane and Masheane are also profiled in Loots and Coetzee's discussion). In her discussion, Lekalake (2013) includes the motivations, key productions, directorial approaches and accolades of these three professional black female practitioners. In a similar vein, this study examines the positionality of 12 black women stage directors at three selected state-supported theatres, in relation to the White Paper of 1996 and its various iterations.

Rationale

Against the backdrop of the profound lack of opportunity that characterises black women's overall historical location within theatre practice, this study aims to foreground black women directors in the current South African context, so that the rich, unique narratives of black women directors, as well as the legacy of this group of theatre practitioners are documented and not lost. Study respondent Angie Lekota4 appositely highlighted the unique storytelling of black women stage directors: "We are different not only because of our colour – the voice [and] the things that will be staged will be different" (Lekota, interview, 2019). Lekota seems to posit, and aptly so, that black women as the previously most subjugated group, offer rich narratives that are informed and shaped by this distinctive positionality. The women interviewed in this study bear testament to the fact that black women directors are indeed creating work that is not only appropriate for display in state-supported theatres in a contemporary theatre landscape, but also productions that intentionally center the black woman. Given our democratic context, the ensuing question then becomes: why is there a lack of black women directors in these theatres? This study aims to interrogate the possible reasons for the apparent discrepancies between cultural policy and the continuing lack of transformation where the participation of black women directors in mainstream theatres is concerned. If black women continue to operate at the margins of these theatres, not only is the storytelling legacy of these practitioners overlooked and undermined, but they are also

[4] This is a pseudonym which has been assigned upon request by the discussant. The respondent is referred to by this name throughout the thesis.

fundamentally excluded as both role-players in and beneficiaries of national government's imperatives for the sector, including employment creation, poverty alleviation and the dismantling of inequality.

Respondents

In an effort to address the under-representation of black women stage directors in state-supported theatres, this study examines three of South Africa's six state-subsidised theatres: the Playhouse in Durban, the Market Theatre in Johannesburg and Artscape Theatre Centre in Cape Town. To deepen understanding around the paucity of black women directors, this study includes as its respondents the three institutional leaders of the three theatres: Linda Bukhosini, CEO and Artistic Director of the Playhouse, James Ngcobo, Artistic Director of the Market Theatre and Marlene le Roux, the CEO of Artscape. While Bukhosini was engaged in an interview, this study does not quote her directly.[5] Since Artscape does not have the designated position of Artistic Director, all cultural programming is finally authorised by le Roux. These three individuals are typically responsible for the selection of productions that comprise each cultural institution's artistic calendar.

The study also includes as its discussants 12 black women stage directors[6] whose productions showcased in at least one of the three theatres during a 20-year period (1999–2018). Including the voices of these 12 practitioners is with the intent of having this group speak for themselves, which is especially important against the marginal location that black women have historically occupied in South African theatre and society in general. The 12 interviewees are: Shelley Barry, Bukelwa Cakata, Fatima Dike, Krijay Govender, Angie Lekota, Princess Zinzi Mhlongo, Gcina Mhlophe, Yolandi Michaels, Ntshieng Mokgoro, Geraldine Naidoo, Warona Seane and Chantal Snyman. Through examining the 14 interviews alongside primarily the 1996 White Paper, while also considering its various subsequent iterations, a disconnection is evident between policy and practice where processes within these state-supported theatres is concerned. Popular arts veteran and commentator, Mike van Graan, articulates this

[5] Ms. Bukhosini held expectations which were neither communicated nor foreseen at the time of the interview. Furthermore, these expectations could not reasonably be met without jeopardising the integrity of the study. As a result, Ms. Bukhosini subsequently withdrew participation from the study. It would have thus been unethical to make use of her words in this thesis. Playhouse remains a case study in this thesis on the basis that all data collection, including interviews, were concluded by the time Ms. Bukhosini withdrew. It was therefore unfeasible to select an alternative theatre. Selecting a substitute theatre as a case study at that late stage of the research would have meant interviewing a different group of respondents altogether.

[6] This study's use of small case 'director' refers to the black women subjects I am researching and upper case 'Directors' refers to the Artistic Directors of the state-supported theatres being investigated.

discrepancy: "[There is a] huge disjuncture between the practitioners of theatre on the one hand, and the structures that are supposed to be responsible for promoting theatre on the other" (van Graan, 2006). With this in mind, this study sets out to answer the following questions:

- How does cultural policy enable or hinder the meaningful participation of black women stage directors at state-supported theatres?
- How do Artscape, the Market and the Playhouse mediate the significant contribution of black women theatre directors in their respective institutional processes?
- What challenges have each director encountered, or continue to encounter, as a black South African woman, when it comes to accessing state-supported theatres in a contemporary context?
- What insights can be drawn from the collective experiences of the directors, where the under-representation of black women directors in relation to their black male, white male and white female counterparts is concerned?

Defining key terminology

State-supported Theatres

The following criteria were used to determine which of South Africa's six state-supported theatres would be the most suitable case studies:

1. The theatres must be located in South Africa's three major cities: Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town.

This is to establish the position of black women directors in the most prominent geographical spaces.

2. The Department of Arts and Culture must recognise each theatre as its performing arts institutions. Each theatre must be identifiable as 'an agency of the DAC'. In aligning with this study's aim of establishing the national position of black women directors in our current theatre landscape, it then becomes essential to examine the public entities that receive national funds. As beneficiaries of state funding, these institutions are not only assisted by the state in terms of their operational viability, but through funding, are ascribed the status of being nationally reputable.

Each of the following theatres is an agency of the DAC and receives funding from government:

- The Playhouse (Durban)

- The Market Theatre (Johannesburg)
- Windybrow Centre for the Arts (Johannesburg)7
- The South African State Theatre (Pretoria)
- Artscape (Cape Town)
- Performing Arts Centre of the Free State (Bloemfontein).

3. Each institution must function as a commissioning theatre space. A theatre can function as a production house, whereby it creates shows in-house, and sells theatrical shows and artistic performances. A theatre can also operate as a receiving house (playhouse), in that it acquires productions from external companies who may not have access to a venue. In its capacity as a receiving house, a theatre can also be a commissioning space, which entails that certain artists and performances receive funding support from the commissioning theatre in order to create productions that will subsequently feature in the space.

An institution that functions as a commissioning theatre space provides financial support to the theatre productions that it commissions. A commissioned director is one who is approached by an institution to create a work usually under a particular theme. The work is then fully produced by the commissioning theatre. In other words, the commissioning theatre commits to cover all production costs.

4. Each institution must be a performing arts complex that was operational during the apartheid dispensation.

It is important to ascertain how these institutions are embracing transformation in a democratic South Africa by including black theatre directors, particularly women, as the most historically marginalised group.

7 The Windybrow Centre for the Arts satisfies the above criteria of firstly, being located in one of South Africa's three major cities and secondly, the institution receives government funding. However, the institution neither functions as a commissioning theatre (as detailed in point 3), nor is it mandated to operate solely as a theatre and performance venue. The institution functions as a multi-disciplinary arts centre, with a specific youth and Pan African focus. In addition, the institution's history and origin include its use as a family home and nurse's home. The Windybrow is also not among the four previous performing arts councils.
Since the State Theatre and the Performing Arts Centre of the Free State (PACOFS) are not located in either of the three major cities, these theatres are not considered as possible case studies.

Global Context: Women "of colour" and "black" women

This study makes a distinction between "black" women and "women of color" or "WoC" in its discussion of literature on the global terrain. Coined by women marginalised in late 1970s white American society, the term "women of color" emerged as a rejection of the disparaging label "minority" (Edwards & McKinney, 2020). In a weblog titled *The Body is not an Apology*, Julie Feng, a self-identifying "woman of color" and intersectional feminist, asserts that the power behind the term "women of color" should undeniably be celebrated (Feng, 2018). The term signifies a moment in history when black women and women occupying other ethnic "minority" groups went through a process of self-naming in the midst of marginalisation, forging a community against similar injustices (Feng, 2018). Feng is also quick to acknowledge the vastly different experiences between "black" women and "women of color". The writer admits: "As an Asian American woman, I do not face brutalisation from institutions like the police or the military. I do not have to deal with respectability politics in the same way. I am not attacked by white supremacy in the same way" (Feng, 2018). She then proclaims: "We cannot use the term 'women of color' when we mean 'black women'. It is erasure" (Feng, 2018).

While acknowledging the political cogency surrounding the historical location of the term "women of color" in an American context, Feng's analysis considers the nuances of oppression as encountered by "WoC" on the one hand and black women on the other. Although these two terms have been theorised differently by scholars over the years, they have mostly been regarded as separate identities. In their respective writings, African-American political authors-activists, Angela Davis and bell hooks, observe these terms as different. Davis defines "black" women as the most significantly marginalised group that is a category or subset of "women of color" (1981: n.p.) and hooks refers to "black women or other women of color" (1984: 61). In her article, "Mapping the Margins", Kimberlé Crenshaw also views these two categories as distinct, in that she uses "black" and "African American" interchangeably, while she considers women from "minority" cultural groups as "women of color" (1991: 1244).

The term "women of color" is evidently complex. In our current era, the phrase is being problematised on the basis that in grouping women of different ethnic communities under this umbrella term, the subtlety and nuanced nature of experiences, identities and narratives of the women who comprise this elusive group, is erased (elusive in that we cannot really speak of "women of *no* color"). As Edwards and McKinney opine in their *Washington Post* article, "the term obscures the varied realities of Latinas and Asian, Pacific Islander and Indigenous women.

We all become an amorphous monochrome, our multidimensional heritages and ancestries neutralized" (2020). This argument appropriately illustrates the Postcolonial Feminist perspective of this study, in that women who are politically joined through a shared history of oppression, must simultaneously be visible in their diversity and multiplicity.

Given the shifting meaning and contested nature of "women of color", or "WoC", the term – whether in its full or abbreviated form – is apostrophised. The term "black" is used in discussion of the global terrain and primarily and deliberately used as a catch-all phrase in discussions of both the South African landscape and in this study specifically.

Local Context: "Black" women ("African, Coloured, Indian")

The ideological machinations of apartheid, predicated on segregation and oppression, perpetuated difference along lines of primarily race (and gender), where "white" denoted superior, while "non-white" population groups signified inferior. Through the introduction of the invidious tricameral parliamentary system in the 1980s, a shift occurred in the racial identities imposed on South African people. The three separate chambers of parliament were to predominantly represent "Whites", followed by significantly less representation of "Coloureds", and "Asians" or "Indians". The latter two "non-white" population groups each had a political voice in parliament – albeit minimal – leaving the "Black" majority entirely out of the system (Sisk, 1995: 9). According to MacDonald, "Coloureds" and "Indians" were "apartheid's blacks", while "Africans" were "Biko's blacks" (2006: 166). However, this definition is not wholly accurate since Coloured and Indian peoples were not regarded as "black". Erasmus notes that the category "Black" excluded people racially classified "Coloured" (or even Indian), "referring only to those South Africans formerly classified 'Native' and 'Bantu' by apartheid law". "Black" was a term reserved for the majority population, who were initially referred to as "Native" and then from 1951, as "Bantu" (Erasmus, 2012: 1). This classification "became official policy from 1962, only to change again in 1978 from 'Bantu' to 'Black'" (Erasmus, 2012: 1). In the construction of whiteness as the singular, powerful racial identity, apartheid structures and policies recognised to some degree "Indian" and "Coloured" groups, though they were considered subordinate sections of the country's population. It was during the mid-1960s with the emergence of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM)[8] that South Africa's "Black" majority were defined as

[8] The Black Consciousness Movement emerged in response to the jailing and banning of a majority of leaders of the struggle by the apartheid government. Led by anti-apartheid activist and leader of the South African Student

"African" and where blackness emerged as a legitimate, self-determining and dignified racial identity. While the BCM's major organising principle was primarily advocating and reimagining a "Black" racial identity – as the apartheid-contrived category defining "Native" or "Bantu" South Africans – the movement also called for solidarity amongst South Africa's oppressed groups, which it defined as African, Indian and Coloured (Desai, 2015). The philosophy undergirding the movement was that these three distinct racial classifications would be defined under the umbrella "black".

Against white hegemony, the BCM emerged as a strong opposition to the apartheid regime, since it was the first to offer alternative structures that foreground black lives, experiences and culture. The BCM's call for unity among the country's "black" population – who would comprise African, Indian and Coloured – would have proven a notably challenging endeavour, since these three population groups were organised and situated unequally across various power structures, in relation to each other. In constructing "Coloured" and "Indian" population groups as superior to the "Black" majority, the white government had embedded class factions between them. Economic class position therefore became a site through which to further segment the country's population. As the "non-white" populace recognised to some degree by the white nationalist state, Coloured and Indian population groups had more political and economic visibility and access than their African counterparts who were located at the extreme margins of society and thus completely excluded from a collective national identity.

The BCM's definition of an all-encompassing and unified "Black" identity stands as a direct resistance to the apartheid regime, with its repressive structures which both denigrated the "African" majority and sowed division between South Africa's three major oppressed population groups. Pumla Gqola observes:

> The power and success of apartheid can be attributed to, firstly, its emphasis on division and differences, and secondly, to its ability to constantly reinforce a negative self-image in those it sought to subjugate. If apartheid worked well because it divided Black people, Black Consciousness realised that the most effective tool against racism as a force was Black solidarity (2001: 132).

Organisation, Bantu Steve Biko, the Movement was aimed at the psychological emancipation of black people, such that this group did not identify with the subservience imposed upon them.

The BCM's interpretation of "black" is subsequently the reclamation of a term that characterised a state of abject marginalisation. It is also a label which continues to be negotiated by South Africans of especially Coloured and Indian descent in a contemporary context. Despite past-bred divisions which saw South Africa's majority populace demarcated along the three distinct racial categories of African, Coloured and Indian, when asked if they consider themselves as black, "Coloured" (Yolandi Michaels, Chantal Snyman and Shelley Barry) and "Indian" (Krijay Govender and Geraldine Naidoo) respondents all self-identified with this all-inclusive category, although to varying degrees.

Throughout her responses, Yolandi Michaels consistently referred to herself as a black woman. Even when asked pointedly if she positions herself as black, she unflinchingly claims this as part of her identity. On the other hand, while Chantal Snyman similarly identifies herself as a black person, she also regards herself as embodying both black and brown – or "of colour" – experiences. The array of careful responses offered by Snyman at various intervals in the interview seem to highlight the complexity, plurality and constant negotiating that occurs within "Coloured" identity in South Africa:

> I don't think I have a definitive answer. I used to without a doubt and with absolute clarity, identify myself as a black person.
>
> …
>
> I used to be a black woman theatre-maker. Now, I consider myself a black woman artist, you know.
>
> …
>
> I also realised that my experiences were also brown. And I use that consciously because I know that black and brown experiences can be similar, but also different (Snyman, interview, 2019).

Immediately staking her claim to the classification of "black", Shelley Barry also appositely and candidly articulates the nuances between historically "black" experiences and "mixed race" experiences, while she vehemently denounces the term "Coloured":

> Yes. Yes, I do use the term "people of colour" though, because I think in our particular generation and what we went through, I think it's important to make that distinction because we were still more privileged, as people of mixed race. So that is the only reason why I make that distinction. I don't like the term Coloured at all. I don't like it, because it's an apartheid label (Barry, interview, 2019).

Each of the two discussants of Indian descent equally share a sense of identity that is not monolithic. Geraldine Naidoo claims to use her "Indian" identity in the marketing aspect of her shows, since her productions have been targeted at predominantly Indian audiences. She admits: "I did angle it, or leverage it from that 'I'm Indian' [perspective]" (Naidoo, interview, 2019). At the same time, she alludes to herself as "a black person". It was inferred from Krijay Govender's responses that she similarly had no problem identifying as "black" – relating a story about her mom, Govender casually refers to her as a "black woman". While her responses were largely framed from her Indian identity, she also asserts that her South African identity precedes her "Indianness" (Govender, interview, 2019). While both women identify to some degree as "black", this is not a racial identity that is immediately claimed. Naidoo foregrounds her Indian identity and Govender identifies primarily as South African. Desai argues that from apartheid history, South Africans of Indian descent have been reluctant to comfortably claim "black" as a racial identity: "The categorization, Black, was not widely embraced by Indians and the idea of Black as an identity was hotly debated in the public domain" (2015: 41).

Within colonial and apartheid histories, the experiences of the 12 women practitioners are navigated in a contemporary context from intersectional, postcolonial and black feminist perspectives. Within western feminist discourse, women from the global South, or "Third World women" (Mohanty, Russo & Torres, 1991: 4) are largely located at the margins. Postcolonial feminist Chandra Talpade Mohanty foregrounds the feminist politics of "Third World women" by suggesting a term which this population can be politically aligned to and shifted away from the reticence and invisibility attributed to it by western feminisms: as an "imagined community" (Mohanty et al., 1991: 4). While postcolonial feminist discourse considers "Third World women" as a community that is politically allied along the lines of a shared history of colonial oppression, it also recognises within this alliance the diversity and multiplicities of "Third World women's" narratives and experiences.

Within South Africa's apartheid regime, the experiences of black women can be understood through the concept of "intersectionality", which arose out of black feminist political activism. Like Postcolonial Feminism, the concept of intersectionality fundamentally challenges western feminist and western patriarchal ideology which insists that "gender is the sole determinant of women's fate" (hooks, 1984: 14). Black feminist scholarship emphasises that the magnitude of marginalisation can only be illuminated within "*interlocking* systems of domination", which include, though are not limited to, race, sex and class (hooks, 1986: 21). Black feminist academic, Patricia Hill Collins, appositely argues that "intersectional paradigms remind us that

oppression cannot be reduced to one fundamental type, and that oppressions work together in producing injustice" (2000: 8). From apartheid history, black women's subjugation has been premised not only on race and gender oppression, but also class domination, signifying a positionality of "triple oppression" (Hassim, 1991; de la Rey, 1997). Despite the 12 women directors occupying the historically contrived racial markers of "African", "Indian" and "Coloured", this study primarily positions them as "black". As stated earlier, Mohanty recognises subtle risks inherent in the very desire for unity represented by the self-identification "Third World". In privileging sameness over difference, "material differences between cultures can be suppressed" (Lawrence, 1992: 183). This argument foregrounds that insofar as the women directors in this study are politically aligned as "Third World women" whose sense of community is based on their shared peripheral status across Artscape, the Playhouse and the Market, it is important that the cultural differences among them not be denied. While the five "Coloured" and "Indian" respondents largely self-identified as "black", some also drew attention to the "mixed race" or "Indian" identities which also shape them. The selection strategy employed in this study is therefore a deliberate attempt at reclaiming the rich histories and nuanced cultural experiences of the directors in their occupancy of "African", "Indian" and "Coloured" respectively. Furthermore, considering that some "Coloured" and "Indian" respondents denounce these race labels, these assigned categories are how these women present, not how they necessarily identify. Since this study aims to elevate the voices of the 12 women directors, it is important to frame the discussion using their chosen terminology. While the selection strategy employed makes space for the nuanced narratives of the three black identities, throughout the thesis, the discussants are otherwise classified as "black".

Against colonial and apartheid histories which mostly rendered black women silent and invisible, these women directors are a community of black theatre-makers whose subjective voices are shifted from the margins to the centre in a post-apartheid South African context.

Scope of the study

Of the six state-supported theatres in South Africa, this study focuses on just three. Although black women are actively directing productions in robust ways in both formal and informal spaces, and arguably similarly under-represented in those respective spaces, investigating the dearth of black women directors in specifically the Playhouse, the Market and Artscape is for three primary reasons:

Geographical location

Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town are the only South African cities ranked among the top ten wealthiest cities in Africa (Gaanakgomo & Shaikh, 2017). The assumption here is that cities with the largest GDP (gross domestic product) would possibly provide a bigger market for theatre attendance. It also follows that the wealthier a population, the more likely it is to support the performing arts, and to do so frequently.

Population size

Johannesburg is the largest city in South Africa, followed by Cape Town and Durban (Worldatlas, 2018). These three cities are therefore the most populous South African metropolitan areas. It is likely that the larger the population of a city, the greater the chance of people there patronising theatres, more so if these people are high-income earners.

Tourist destinations

Finally, all three cities are the major South African tourist destinations. Durban is South Africa's main domestic tourism destination, Cape Town is Africa's premier international tourism destination and Johannesburg has also since joined the urban tourism scene (Rogerson & Visser, 2007). The significance of this point in this study is that the leisurely activities of holidaymakers, who typically have disposable income, may include visits to the respective state-supported theatres. This could mean both national and international patronage and subsequent widespread recognition for not only the theatre, but also for the production and its director.

Essentially, financial means, possible cultural awareness linked to financial means, bigger population sizes, as well as their status as key tourist destinations are factors that make these three cities significant for my study. As noted by Joffe et al. (2019: 167), "three metropolitan areas (in Gauteng, Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal) dominate the South African economy and, indeed, the institutional landscape of the arts and culture sector".

Each of the state-supported theatres is financially supported by government, whose mandate is to operate within a transformative paradigm across all sectors.

Limitations of the study

Scope

In its scope to assess the representation of black women directors in three of the six state-supported theatres, this study's findings cannot conclusively be applied to the other three

theatres outside of its ambit. While examination of all six theatres would provide deeper insight into the overall access and participation of black women directors in a contemporary context across all of South Africa's state-supported theatres, this study, in its focus on three theatres, nevertheless begins to illustrate patterns which could be beneficial for conceptualising further studies which would examine the other theatres not covered within the scope of this study.

Respondents

At the time of fieldwork, the researcher was unaware that Nadia Davids is according to historically contrived race labels, "Coloured". The researcher understood Yolandi Michaels to be the only Coloured director to have directed at Market Theatre during the 20-year period under investigation. In reality, Davids directed on two occasions across two intervals: 2003 and 2009. She also directed once at Artscape in 2017. In line with the study's selection strategy, she would have been deemed the most suitable respondent. An effort has been made to indicate this oversight where appropriate throughout the thesis.

The CEO and Artistic Director of Playhouse, Linda Bukhosini, was approached for an in-depth, face-to-face interview, to which she agreed. Ms. Bukhosini subsequently withdrew her participation from the study. As a result, all quotes from the interview have been omitted. Although discussion of the Playhouse is contingent on available material in the public domain, efforts were made to engage this secondary data as rigorously as possible.

Time

Given the study's timeframes as well as the demanding schedules of respondents – especially the institutional leaders – follow-up interviews were not possible. However, the advantageous factor of just a single interview is that data could indeed be richer, given that interviewees reply in the moment and based on impulse. In the absence of follow-up engagements, respondents do not have an opportunity to withdraw statements that would have been made in earnest and in that instant.

Archives

The result of unarchived production material means that some plays which featured at the selected three theatres across the 20 years remain unidentifiable. As such, the directors attached to those productions could not be tallied. In addition, the availability of only partial information related to those productions which were identifiable, means that those whose directors are "unspecified" could also not be considered. Nevertheless, this study hopes to have highlighted

the need for organised archives and the availability of production information at the various state-supported theatres. Furthermore, these absences point to a need for the digitisation of archives on a nationally supported and widely accessible platform.

Annual Reports

In Chapter Four, this study engages the three theatres in depth. The discussion includes information derived from each institution's annual reports. In the absence of annual reports covering all the financial years that coincide with the period under investigation, some information around funding could not be obtained. Nonetheless, available annual reports reveal similar patterns in terms of funding received by each theatre.

The Playhouse, Artscape and the Market: In History and Today

The four PACs – namely the Cape Performing Arts Board (CAPAB), the Natal Performing Arts Council (NAPAC), the Performing Arts Council of the Orange Free State (PACOFS) and the Performing Arts Council of the Transvaal (PACT) – were instituted in 1963 to replace the ailing National Theatre Organisation, which was established in 1947 with the mandate to produce and perform productions in Afrikaans and English in South Africa. In 1966, the South West Africa Performing Arts Council (SWAPAC) was later added as the fifth PAC. With the arrival of independence in 1990, SWAPAC broke away from the South African PACs and changed its name to the Namibian National Theatre, leaving four PACs. NAPAC and CAPAB are two former PACs that are this study's focus. While NAPAC was replaced by the Playhouse Company in 1995, CAPAB was renamed and re-launched as Artscape in 1999.

At the emergence of democracy, the PACs had to go through changes that were in line with the democratic ideals of redress, access, participation and inclusivity. In line with this study's focus on two former PACs and a previously independent theatre, the shifts that have occurred in their composition between then and now, are discussed. As mandated by DACST, the following aspects have been developed to serve as the framework through which the state-supported Market, Playhouse and Artscape are examined: artistic policy, leadership, finances and practitioners.

Artistic and Cultural Policy

With the exception of the independent, non-racial Market Theatre, whose conversion into a state-legislated, government-funded playhouse took place in 2003 (van Heerden, 2008: 81), the artistic policy governing the PACs was the presentation of predominantly white, elitist and

Eurocentric productions, in line with apartheid ideology (van Heerden, 2008). Black theatre practitioners were mostly excluded from these theatres, whether as performers, playwrights or directors. The PACs originated during the era of the legitimised exclusion of South Africa's black majority.

In a historical document authored by the Market Theatre Foundation, the Company's artistic policy is described using the following statements:

> The Market Theatre Foundation is committed to the *development of indigenous work.* We choose to be a platform for people and ideas that do not often receive them.
>
> We invite evidence of struggle and risk rather than comfortable commercial certainty. We have learned to measure our accomplishments through a count of challenged minds rather than *empty or full seats*.
>
> We hope to maintain a theatre that has taught us, as the Market has, that home-grown phenomena […] can be as *commercially viable* as a West End farce – work that happened when creative rather than *commercial instincts* were followed [my emphasis] (Market Theatre Foundation: n.d.).

In creating perilous, openly defiant works, all while repudiating state subsidies, the independent Market Theatre demonstrated an unwillingness to succumb to political or financial pressures. The company's artistic policy illustrates a clear commitment to works of artistic integrity and political responsiveness, rather than to commercially viable, politically innocuous productions.

South Africa's first democratic artistic policy which was to govern arts and culture activities was articulated by the DACST in the form of the 1996 White Paper. This policy encapsulates the vision of the DACST for the sector and so formalised the relationship between the state and its various cultural stakeholders (practitioners, institutions and organisations). Subsequent revisions of the White Paper were drafted in 2013, 2015 and two in 2017, by what was at this point the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC). A notable shift is evident from the original policy and its different iterations: while the DACST in the 1996 policy endorses the intrinsic value of arts, culture and heritage (ACH), the DAC emphasises its economic growth potential from the revised draft of 2013 onwards. The relationship between government and ACH was established not only through the 1996 White Paper, but became further entrenched in 2003 with the Cultural Institutions Act. According to van Heerden, this Act of Parliament signified the moment when theatres became "state-controlled" (2008: 24). Their status as government-

owned is evident in that across all platforms, each state-supported theatre, including Playhouse, Market and Artscape, must indicate that it is "an agent (sic) of the Department of Arts and Culture", or in other words, "institutions giving effect to the political imperatives of the DAC" (van Graan, 2013: 14). The correct terminology used across various medium is, in fact, "agency" and not "agent", as per van Graan's erroneous expression.

While segregationist policy largely underpinned the PACs as the previous domain of whites, the artistic policy adopted by each state-supported theatre nowadays must first and foremost be in alignment with South Africa's democratic national cultural policy, that is, the White Paper of 1996. Although subsequent drafts have been published in 2013, 2015 and two iterations in 2017, the original 1996 policy exists as the "document governing cultural policy in South Africa" today (Snowball, Collins & Tarentaal, 2016: 8). For this reason, the under-representation of black women stage directors is explored in relation to the 1996 policy framework. Subsequent drafts are also examined in order to understand the DAC's strategic intent for the sector, as well as the impact that these proposed cultural policy frameworks would have on the participation of black women directors in state-supported theatres. In considering not only the 1996 policy, but also its various iterations, this study aims to present a trajectory of South African cultural policy, recognising any gaps, silences or additions articulated by the cultural arm of government as its changing vision for the sector.

Leadership

In their organisation, PACs were historically helmed by South African white males. Through these figures of authority, the white (Afrikaner) patriarchal discourse of apartheid was made manifest. These leaders essentially ensured the practical implementation of apartheid ideology through their artistic programming. Although the Market was also under the leadership of a company of white practitioners, with white males Barney Simon and Mannie Manim at the forefront, this composition was strategically facilitated towards the progression of the radical, non-racial theatre for which the Market is – even today – renowned. As a group of liberal white artists, The Company put into practice their policy which was "to raise the awareness of its mainly white audiences about the oppression of apartheid and their own social, political, and economic privileges" (Burns, 2002: 359).

The Market's departure from the white, elitist culture that marked the PACs is illustrated with the example of veteran practitioner Gcina Mhlophe, who became the only black woman to have both directed and occupied the position of resident director during the height of apartheid in

1989. In interviews conducted both with Mhlophe and fellow prolific theatre practitioner, Fatima Dike, both laud the political, non-racial work of the Market Theatre's first and long-standing Artistic Director, Barney Simon, who occupied the role until his sudden passing in 1991:

> Then Barney Simon came; I met him for the first time. He came from Johburg. He was a Jew but he was very much involved in the theatre in Joburg. He worked with a lot of black artists (Dike, interview, 2019).

> Mr. Barney Simon – what can I say? He was my mentor. I think he was my mentor. I learnt so much from him. He was so generous. I also saw how he was able as a director to make an actor feel that I'm capable, I have a voice – I've got something to say. And that is a gift, if a director can do that (Mhlophe, interview, 2019).

The Company also endured personal challenges in their mission to advance a theatre that would be accessible also to South Africa's black majority. While some sacrificed salaries, pensions and security, Manim was accused of betrayal by then PACT director and Simon sold his home so he could use the capital to sustain himself.

As much as the shifts in the race and gender demographics of leadership seem to be tangible efforts at eradicating the exclusionary historical legacies at the Playhouse and Artscape (and to a much lesser extent, the Market), the same cannot be said of practitioners accessing these spaces, particularly black women directors. At a practical level, while the transformation of the PACs into fully inclusive playhouses was initiated by the DACST in the 1996 White Paper, it has since been a process not without significant problems. Highlighting the problematic politics of transformation, the Performing Arts Network of South Africa (PANSA)[9] observes:

> In some cases, transformation – applied mainly in terms of changing the demographics of leadership and governance – has become an obstacle to substantial transformation, not because black people occupy positions of power and influence but because there has not been the requisite investment in skills, training and development of experience to ensure that those who occupy authority can deliver. Too many "transformed" cultural institutions – in the theatre sector too – have been characterised by mismanagement of funds, maladministration, corruption and poor service delivery. Some of them have become centres of conflict over control of public resources (van Heerden, 2008: 23).

[9] A national network of individuals and organisations engaged in the performing arts industry, to ensure a vital, vibrant and excellent industry.

Altering the face of these state-supported cultural institutions is not enough. A case in point is that while there have been positive shifts in the lives of black South Africans since 1994 – including a growing middle class and legalised access to services and infrastructure from which this population group was previously barred – the material conditions of a vast majority of South Africa's black populace remains profoundly affected by the three challenges of unemployment, inequality and poverty. In a similar vein, that having a woman at the top would translate to black women having greater access to state-supported theatres, would be a glib assessment, since access does not necessarily translate to opportunities for others. Bukelwa Cakata (2019) echoing this notion states that generally, "it is a rare thing to find a woman empowering another woman". On the other hand, Angie Lekota articulates her view of women's inclusion in specifically state-supported theatres today:

> Things are changing. I don't think a woman would forget a woman; to bring other women in. But then it would be a matter of what colour are coming in. Maybe that's where we are right now (Lekota, interview, 2019).

Lekota opines that transformation is happening and that a woman in a position of authority would not overlook another woman. She is also, however, quick to acknowledge the racial dynamics seemingly at play. While a woman may claim to facilitate the access for other women, the skewed race demographics of women directors that have featured across the three theatres under investigation over the 20-year period in focus, demonstrate that it is not women of all race groups that are ultimately let in.

Finances

The apartheid state invested heavily in the country's arts and culture industry, with the four PACs absorbing 46% of the national budget (DACST, 1996: n.p.). Perhaps the generous subsidies were largely because the arts were deemed a powerful platform on which to further entrench a particular political ideology. After all, if the performing arts in informal, non-professional settings, such as townships and community halls, as well as in independent spaces like the Market, had gained momentum and proven its potency as a vehicle through which to mobilise the masses against the oppressive regime, then these professional theatres could likewise be used to do the reverse.

Gradual changes in South Africa's political landscape could have reasonably affected state funding arrangements at the four PACs, especially towards apartheid's dismantlement. The beginning of these changes took place from the years after 1978, when the arts went through a

process of liberalisation, "as part of the state's new discourse of 'reform' and 'effective government'" (Peterson, 1990: 235). Two commissions on the state and development of the performing arts were tabled in 1977 and 1984 respectively – the Niemand Commission which was first appointed in 1975 and the Schutte Commission which was appointed in 1981. While the former's definition of South Africa's population included only white English and Afrikaans speakers, the latter acknowledged in its framework the promotion of the diverse population groups, as well as a concern for other indigenous languages (Peterson, 1990: 236). Though the black populace was seemingly being incorporated into the performing arts community, the Schutte Commission was still radical in its construction of a reimagined performing arts fraternity. Although artistic culture could depart from conventional Verwoerdian[10] ideals in the Schutte Commission framework, the central tenets of apartheid could not be overturned (Peterson, 1990: 235). Essentially, even if stringent practices that forbade even slight integration of the races could be relaxed, the performing arts were to nonetheless continue being shaped and developed around white culture and interests.

Another political event of significance is that shortly after replacing P.W. Botha as President, F.W. de Klerk, between October 1989 and February 1990, announced the unconditional release of numerous political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela. While this statement was probably met with jubilation by the oppressed black majority and white left-wing liberals – as it signalled a paradigm shift in the country's socio-political environment – it likely caused apprehension for "white" state-supported institutions like the PACs, who would have had to fundamentally alter their policies to be inclusive of South Africa's black populace. Soon after this period, the Transitional Executive Council (TEC) was established from December 1993 to April 1994 as an interim institutional structure that would facilitate a smooth democratic transition (Paruk, 2008: 7). The political institution of the TEC foreshadowed the imminent arrival of South Africa's democracy. South Africa's political future could not be determined with absolute certainty, since elections were only approaching. As such, the PACs (which were formerly generously subsidised by the state) were receiving less financial state support in the years leading up to democracy. This, alongside the absence of tax rebates for corporates sponsoring arts and culture, meant that the industry received dwindling assistance from both the public and private sectors.

[10] This term makes reference to Hendrik Verwoerd, who was one of the key proponents of apartheid ideology. As Prime Minister, he ensured that minority rule was entrenched through policy and legislation that served to totally disenfranchise the country's black population.

In a post-1994 context, dwindling funding was mostly the result of the need for state coffers to be distributed among a much larger population. All along, the independent Market Theatre had been struggling without state support since its inception in 1976. In an undated letter requesting funding from the Ministry of Culture, then Executive Director of the Market Theatre, John Kani, indicated the Market Theatre's categorical refusal of any state support since its establishment and that the theatre's survival had until that time been through "occasional investments and sponsorship" received through The Market Theatre Foundation (Kani, n.d.). He also stated that the Company created the original Johannesburg Flea Market in order to meet some of its needs. Part of the Company's funds was also derived from fundraising initiatives and a club system where audiences were invited as "guests" (Hutchison, 2003: 8). The Market Theatre followed the example of The People's Space (popularly referred to as The Space) in Cape Town in setting up a "club membership". Under the guise of a club, each of these theatres offered membership to people of all races, to facilitate their function as multiracial theatres respectively. The theatre's survival was also from "box office income combined with sizeable donations and funding from local and international organisations and individuals sympathetic to its anti-apartheid, pro-liberation stance" (van Heerden, 2008: 80). From the theatre's inception until the dawn of democracy, the "largely indigenous, high-risk work" that the Market Theatre had all along been known for creating, was "always unsubsidized" and so the theatre relied on creative means of sourcing finances (Kani, n.d.).

Although the Market Theatre in its political position repudiated state assistance, a newly formed democratic dispensation presented an opportunity for the arts complex to benefit from state funding for the first time since the theatre opened its doors. A decade into its establishment, the Market Theatre articulated their mission as follows: "Through trials, errors, successes, and failures of the past ten years, we have learnt that what we aspire toward is not simply achieved without at least part of the subsidy that other non-commercial companies enjoy" (Market Theatre Foundation, n.d.). The Market Theatre's position as both non-commercial and independent, posed a significant financial challenge for the theatre before 1994. In the old South Africa, other independent theatre producers existed, but unlike the specific political agenda espoused by the Market Theatre, these operators "offered purely commercial non-political entertainment and they imported commercially proven material" (van Heerden, 2008: 80). While these independent theatre operators supported their viability through commercially-driven productions, the Market Theatre, in its focus on politically cogent, indigenous and developmental workshopped and scripted work – all created without any state

subsidy – encountered financial uncertainty. At the emergence of the nation's long-expected democracy, much of the funding that the Market Theatre had received to further their work started declining and politically persuaded audiences started diminishing (van Heerden, 2008: 80-81). In 1994, the theatre was in debt of about R1 million, but because the demise of apartheid had finally been realised, the arts complex started receiving government funding. However, given the nearly two decades of functioning without any state support, as well as the anti-apartheid stance which justified its existence, the Market Theatre's financial situation was still dire and worsened by the mid-2000s, leading to the retrenchment of half of its 63 permanent employees (van Heerden, 2008: 81).

Of the Market Theatre, Charlton argues that "this financial security has come at a cost, however, attenuating to a significant degree the Market's creative output" (2015: 836). Productions that mostly feature on the Market Theatre stages are those synonymous with the apartheid era. Given the historical, classic appeal of these revivals, the Market Theatre, like all commercial theatre, is better positioned for box office successes. At the same time however, the theatre presents only a handful of illustrious new works, and even so, by the same few directors (Charlton, 2015: 836). Study respondent Shelley Barry attests to the exclusivity of state-supported theatres in general with both concern and frustration:

> A lot of still very Eurocentric plays we've seen a million times in a million different ways and less of our own work [is] reflected in our own theatres. And you have to ask yourself why. Is it about money? Is it because there is an assumption that Black people don't go to theatre or that White people have more disposable income? What is it? (Barry, interview, 2019).

Almost as if in response to Barry's questions, Yolandi Michaels articulates the conundrum in which state-supported theatres find themselves: "It's very tricky and that's why you'll find a lot of the [same] theatre directors that you usually see in those spaces because, one, they have their own following. Two, they're seasoned and so you *know* the quality of a production – it's a business you know" (Michaels, interview, 2019).

While the Market Theatre operated as a fully unsubsidised, independent, anti-apartheid theatre, and Artscape and the Playhouse received nearly half of the apartheid state's budget as former PACs, these three playhouses are today supported by the DAC as the cultural arm of government. At national level, the DAC disburses funds through its various funding sources, including the Mzansi Golden Economy (MGE) and statutory funding bodies, in particular the

National Arts Council (NAC), the National Heritage Council (NHC) and the National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF) [Joffe et al., 2019: 164]. The national lottery, through the National Lotteries Commission (NLC), remains the largest single source of funds for the sector (R357 million), although this is decreasing (Joffe et al., 2019: 165). At the national level, there also exists Business and Arts South Africa (BASA), a joint initiative of the DACST and the business sector that was founded in 1997.

There is also funding through the provincial sphere of government (Joffe et al., 2019: 164). In terms of the provinces in which the three theatres under investigation are located, these provincial governments include Gauteng's Department of Sports, Arts, Culture and Recreation, KwaZulu-Natal Department of Sport and Recreation and the Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport.

Arts and culture funding, though also available at a local level, is very limited (Joffe et al., 2019: 165). A few large metropolitan local authorities, such as the cities of Cape Town, Johannesburg and eThekweni [sic] are the exception (Joffe et al., 2019: 165). As such, Artscape, the Market and Playhouse are eligible for subsidies also at the local sphere of government. Other funding sources include the independent Arts and Culture Trust (ACT) – democratic South Africa's oldest funding and development agency.

Despite these various funding avenues, arts, culture and heritage activities remain under-funded. Joffe et al. state that "of its annual spending budget of R1,563 trillion, the [South African] government allocates a total of R7,081 billion towards arts and culture – in other words, a meagre 0.45% of the total budget is contributed towards the sector" (Joffe et al. 2019: 169). The present government's prioritisation of the sector is thus highly questionable.

Practitioners and Practice

All public performance venues, except cinemas, were officially desegregated in 1978 (Peterson, 1990: 235). English classical works typified NAPAC's legacy and were the arts council's signature genre of its mainstream theatre productions. The alternative venue, the Loft Theatre "consisted of 12 actors all under 35 years old and all trained in western-style theatre and acting styles (predominantly at South African universities)" [Riccio, 2007: 240]. Of these twelve poorly paid actors, two were Coloured, one was Indian, one was Black (Zulu), and the rest White (Riccio, 2007: 240-241). Known as "The Lofties", this group of artists were "providing a showcase for all manner of interesting works as well as catering to audiences who had previously been left out in the cold" (Woolfson, 1986: 52). Although the Loft Theatre

Company performed contemporary and indigenous plays that catered even to black audiences, the members were mostly white, educated and trained. Although establishment of the Loft Company demonstrates efforts by NAPAC to include previously marginalised and excluded practitioners and audiences, the scale was nonetheless tipped in favour of whites, the primary target audience of NAPAC's offerings. Two white male practitioners, Nicholas Ellenbogen and Ellis Pearson, were "integral to the Loft Theatre Company" (Baxter & Aitchison, 2006: 48). Janice Honeyman – a white female practitioner – is also noted among those that usually directed productions at NAPAC.

CAPAB, which managed the Nico Malan[11] Theatre Centre, was similarly a theatre complex which "became a symbol of cultural apartheid, for the apartheid ban on blacks from both stage and audience was enforced from its inception" (van Heerden, 2008: 38). Although integrated audiences were quietly allowed to attend from the mid-1970s, "most non-white theatre-goers and many whites boycotted the complex in protest against the apartheid stigma associated with it" (van Heerden, 2008: 38). CAPAB catered to white tastes with resident companies for opera, ballet, and the orchestra, Jazzart, the PE Opera House and East London's Guild Theatre. Among the directors who featured prominently at CAPAB were Marthinus Basson (CAPAB's Artistic Director), Dieter Reible, Keith Grenville, Athol Fugard, Peter Curtis, Pieter Fourie and Johan Esterhuisen – all white men.

The Market Theatre had initially presented European classics that, although could be watched by black audiences, catered to white tastes. After the Soweto Uprising of June 1976, however, the arts complex shifted its focus and began engaging the process of collective theatre-making. Workshopped plays presented at the Market were not only those created by the actors and directed by Barney Simon. Other workshop productions included numerous plays by the Junction Avenue Theatre Company, created in collaboration by company founder Malcolm Purkey, alongside the actors, including *Sophiatown* and *The Fantastical History of a Useless Man*. Some devised plays were developed collaboratively between Athol Fugard and the actors, such as the works *Sizwe Banzi is Dead* and *The Island*. There was also the all-female play *You Strike the Woman, You Strike the Rock!* which was created in collaboration between three black women – Thobeka Maqutyana, Poppie Tsira and Nomvula Qosha – and directed by Phyllis Klotz. Another seminal production created in collaboration was Gcina Mhlophe's

[11] Johannes Nicholas Malan, better known as Nico Malan, was a politician, attorney and administrator of the Cape of Good Hope during apartheid South Africa. The Nico Malan Theatre, popularly known as 'The Nico', was named after him.

autobiographical work *Have You Seen Zandile?* Commissioned for the Market Theatre, the play was written by Mhlophe alongside Thembi Mtshali and Maralin Vanrenen (Delisle, 2006: 388). The 1986 production presented by the Market Theatre starred Mhlophe and Mtshali, with Vanrenen as director. A shared feature between these examples of workshop productions is that they all articulate the experiences of black people under apartheid. Another similarity is that each was created by a group of black performers and helmed by a white director as the powerful, central "cultural broker" (Fleishman, 1991: 61), reminding us that "the director is not a person, but a disciplinary constellation of power" (Canning 2005: 57).

The figures below illustrate how black women have occupied this central and powerful role the least across the three theatres:

1. The total number of productions directed by each category of director according to race and gender, in each of the three theatres;

2. The number of directors in each category who, whether individually or in collaboration, were at the helm of these productions.

In all the categories of race and gender, across the three theatres, there are typically more productions than directors, since some practitioners have over the 20 years accessed a single theatre multiple times. Furthermore, as later explained in the methodology chapter (see pages 83-84), the number of directors in each race and gender category comprise theatre-makers who directed individually, as well as those who directed in collaboration.

The Playhouse

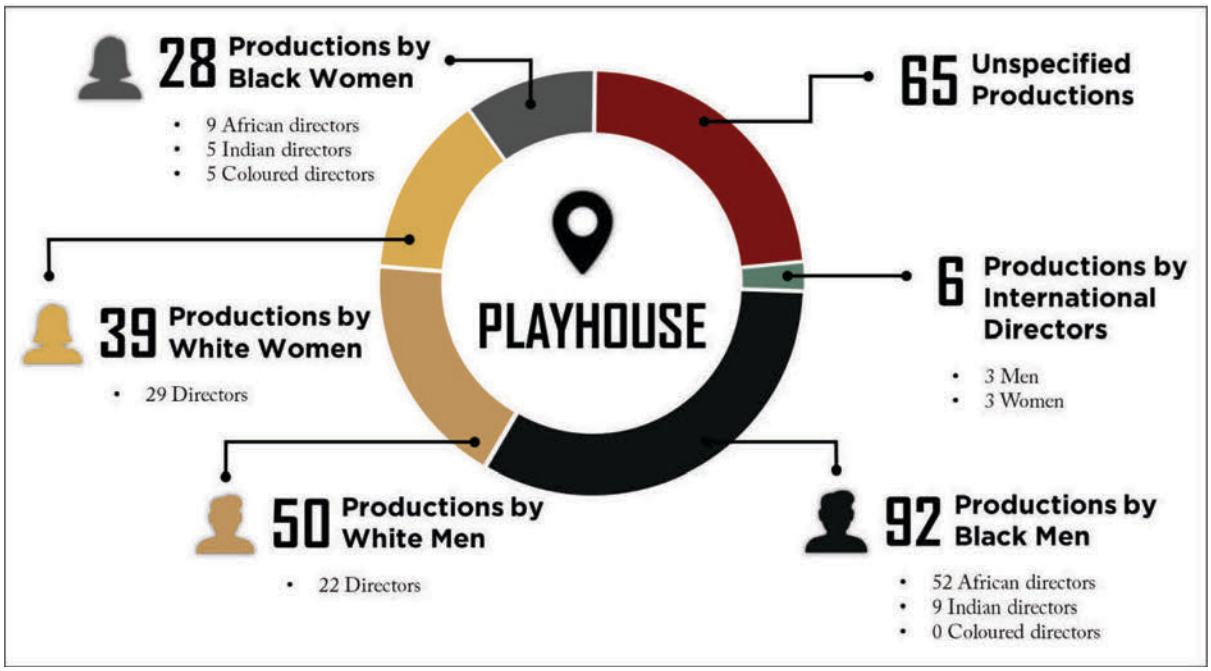

Figure 1: Number of productions and directors according to race and gender at the Playhouse, 1999–2018

Over the 20-year period, most productions at the Playhouse were helmed by black men, with specifically African directors taking the lead, followed by far fewer Indian men and no Coloured men. Evidently, African men exceeded all groups in terms of multiple showcases by individual directors. White men were next in line where the number of productions is concerned, followed by white women. However, there were more white women directors than white men. Black women featured least overall, both in terms of production output and number of featured directors. Of these directors, African women were the most numerous, though negligibly, followed by Coloured and Indian women. Fewer than 10 productions were directed by international practitioners while a significant number of works had unspecified information.

Artscape

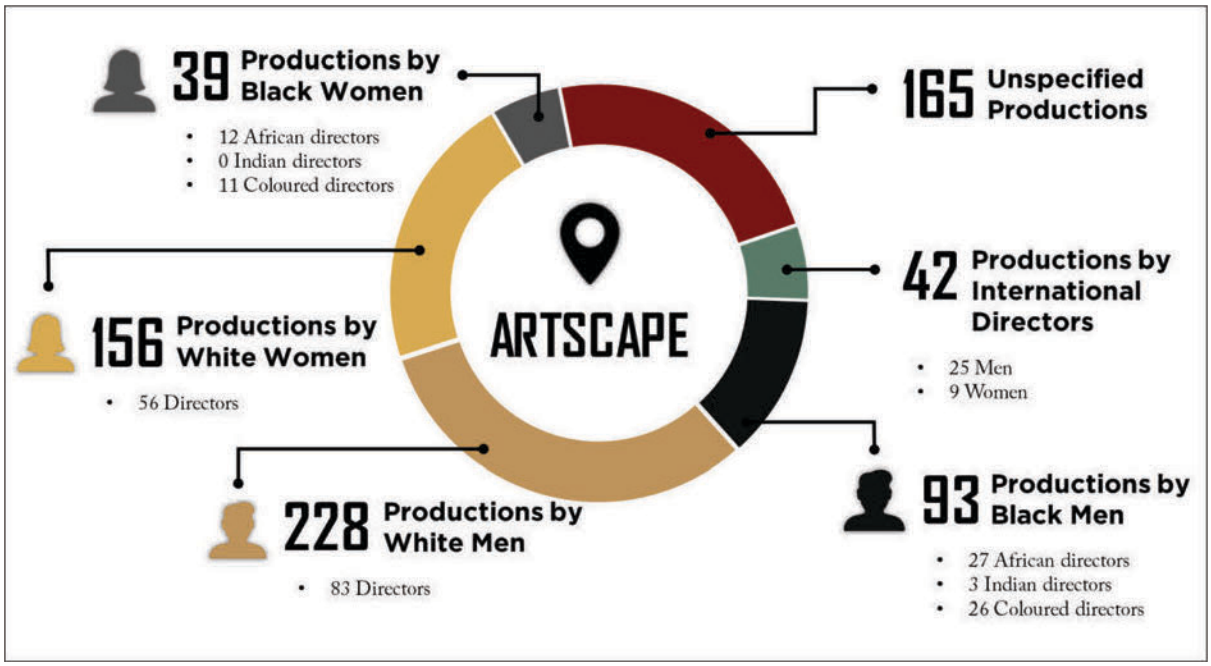

Figure 2: Number of productions and directors according to race and gender at Artscape, 1999–2018

White men markedly surpassed the number of directors across all other categories, both in the number of total productions and individual directors who were at the helm of these artistic works. While white women are the group with the next highest production output and number of individual directors, there is a significant gap between the two categories of directors. Black men followed in terms of total number of productions, with the overall number of individual directors across African, Indian and Coloured, on par with that of white women. Of the total number of directors, African and Coloured directors were almost identical, with significantly fewer Indian directors. The number of productions by international directors exceeded those by black women. Of the total works by black women, African and Coloured directors were positioned similarly, with no productions directed by Indian women. A substantial number of productions had information which could not be specified.

The Market

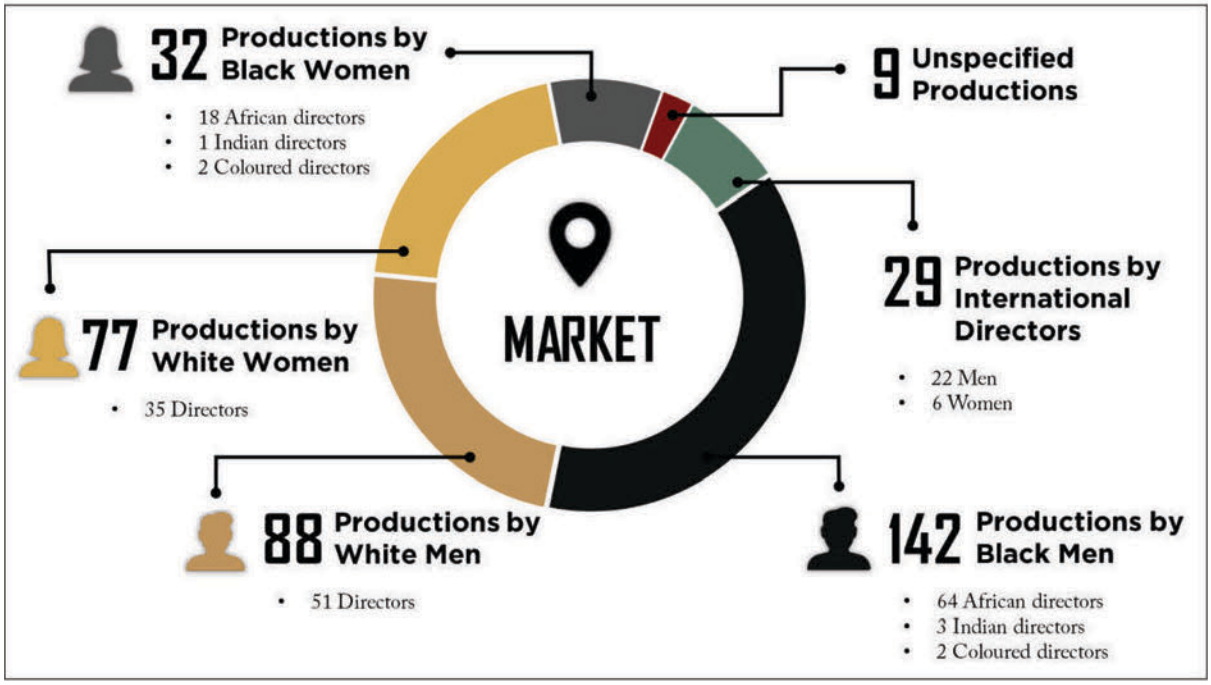

Figure 3: Number of productions and directors according to race and gender at the Market, 1999–2018

The greatest number of productions to have featured at the Market over the two decades under examination have been directed by black men. Individual directors occupying this group have also been the highest, with African men taking the lead, followed by Indian and Coloured men. White men took charge of the next highest number of productions by fewer individual directors as compared to black men. The total number of productions and directors responsible for leading those artistic works that followed the category of black men, were attributed to white women. The number of productions directed by black women, as well as individual directors in this category, came next. Of this group, African women had the most directing opportunities, followed by just two Coloured women and only one Indian woman. There was a marginal difference between the number of productions by international directors and those by the total number of black women directors. Of the three theatres, Market had the least number of productions with unspecified information.

A few notable trends are evident from the above diagrams. Firstly, black men have featured most at the Playhouse, both in terms of the number of productions helmed by this group, as well as in the overall individual directors to have accessed the space. Similarly, Artscape's stages are dominated by white men, both in number of directors to have featured in the theatre, as well as production output by this category of practitioners. Like the situation at the

Playhouse, black men exceed all other categories at the Market Theatre, both in terms of individual artists accessing the space and with regards to multiple appearances by the same directors.

In terms of individual directors to have had the most repeat appearances across the three theatres, the figures look as follows: a white male director showcased the most productions at the Playhouse (11), followed by a white female director (7); at Artscape, a white female director took the lead (35), followed by a white male director (20) and at the Market Theatre, two black male directors have featured most – (23) and (13) times respectively. The most times an individual black woman director has featured at the Playhouse and Market is (4) times respectively and on (7) occasions at Artscape.

The striking similarity between the above figures is of course the peripheral location of black women directors, which is consistent across the three theatres. Asked about his views on the representation and visibility of black women directors in state-supported theatres, James Ngcobo aptly indicated that "we need to make room because there's more white women directing in this country" (Ngcobo, interview, 2018). When probed whether this lack of representation is due to an overall absence of black women directors, Ngcobo interjects:

> They are there but they were never given opportunities for whatever reason. They are there. There's some amazing women. They are there. It's for theatres to go out of their way to give that space to black women (Ngcobo, interview, 2018).

Examining the race and gender ratios of directors that have featured at the Market Theatre over the last two decades – both in terms of individual directors and total featured productions by a particular group - it is not clear how the theatre addresses the presence of black women directors.

In a similar vein, le Roux affirms that platforms are available for black women at Artscape: "I feel that we have the spaces; it's what do we do with the spaces? That for me is important. Is it how do I bring in black women?" (le Roux, interview, 2018). She proceeded to explicate her position by emphasising the standard of a production:

> But if you're black and you don't give me a product which is of quality, and I give you an opportunity? I have no time for tokenism, just to tick the boxes. I don't have. I really don't have time" (le Roux, interview, 2018).

As far as Artscape's CEO is concerned, the quality of a production supersedes affirmative action. Her reply reveals an anti-tokenistic attitude on the representation of black women directors in state-supported theatres. While le Roux suggests that Artscape does indeed give access to black practitioners in general, she is unequivocal that support is given on the basis of quality, not race. Such a position forms a significant part of the problem where actual transformation is concerned, since destabilising historical exclusions necessitates that certain allowances be made in the present.

An apparent disjuncture indeed exists between national cultural policy, the state-supported theatres under investigation and the meaningful participation of black women directors. This disconnection is visually illustrated when considering the three infographics depicting the race and gender demographics of directors that have featured works at the Market, Playhouse and Artscape over the 20-year period under examination (see pages 37-39). Placed alongside each other, these visuals immediately highlight the stark disparities between directors; discrepancies that position black women directors as least visible. In its aim to understand the factors contributing to the under-representation of black women directors, this study will examine this group's positionality firstly in the policy framework. Their paucity will then be unpacked looking at the processes of each of the three theatres. Finally, the dearth of this group of theatre makers will be explored from the perspective of the respondents, in their own words. Scrutiny of the 1996 White Paper alongside the respective interview responses of the institutional leaders and women directors is with the aim of understanding how policy informs practice. Examining subsequent White Paper drafts is for the purpose of ascertaining the likelihood of these revised policy frameworks resolving this group's marginal representation in state-supported theatres.

Outline of chapters

In its aim to navigate the relationship between existing cultural policy, institutional processes and practice, this study is divided into five chapters.

In Chapter One the theoretical landscape of the study is first mapped out. Then Black feminist, postcolonial feminist and intersectional perspectives are explored. This group of practitioners is theorised in the Gramscian term as the "subaltern". However, it is Gayatri Spivak's postcolonial feminist interpretation of the term which frames the discussion. To Gramsci, subalternity defines peripheral social classes in pre-capitalist social structures. Spivak's subaltern is gendered, ascribed a voice and given agency. Chapter One proceeds to explore the

global and local scholarship terrain which collectively points towards the marginal location of theatre directors who are black and "of colour" across both theatre directing literature and practice. This chapter finally offers a detailed narrative of this study's methodological approach. In-depth interviews are the primary mode of data collection alongside three variants of textual analysis – namely content analysis, critical discourse analysis and narrative analysis.

A detailed analysis of policy is contained in Chapter Two. This chapter describes the positionality of black women stage directors within the 1996 policy framework. The chapter details the 1996 policy's failure to mediate the participation of black women directors as illustrated by literature on South African theatre directing (Pearce, 1998; Morris, 2006; Lekalake, 2013) as well as the race and gender ratios of directors who accessed the Playhouse, Market and Artscape between 1999 and 2018. Given this shortcoming, the chapter examines subsequent policy revisions to establish whether these frameworks would augur well for the inclusion of black women stage directors. The aim of the chapter is to highlight whether these ongoing policy iterations would address and remedy the inadequacies of the existing 1996 policy framework.

In Chapter Three, the three theatres under investigation are foregrounded. State-supported theatres are mandated to implement the Ministry's vision for the sector as indicated in the 1996 White Paper. The formulation of cultural policy is in this way a political exercise. If politics and cultural policy are this intricately connected, then the implication is that those who lead within these institutions do so as representatives of the state. The responses of James Ngcobo and Marlene le Roux are therefore interpreted and framed within governmental objectives for the sector as stipulated in the 1996 White Paper framework. Since data from the interview conducted with Linda Bukhosini is omitted, discussion of the Playhouse is framed using relevant literature.

Chapter Four elevates the voices of the 12 selected black women stage directors. These are practitioners who have had the experience of directing in at least one of the three theatres over the 20-year period under examination (1999–2018). In this chapter, the responses of the practitioners are framed within the key areas that the White Paper addresses, including access, funding, race and gender, and transformation. The aim of the chapter is to highlight that black women stage directors are indeed ascribed marginal status, despite the White Paper frameworks claiming otherwise and despite the institutional leaders (CEO/Artistic Director) mostly indicating differently. The insights of the 12 respondents collectively validate the under-

representation of this group in state-supported theatres and suggest the failure of cultural policy in facilitating their access and participation.

The final chapter of this study, Chapter Five, offers an overall discussion that considers cultural policy alongside institutional processes at the Market Theatre, the Playhouse and Artscape, as well as the viewpoints of discussants. While this study would have examined how policy informs practice in its aim to understand the contributing factors in the under-representation of black women directors, this chapter looks at how practice informs or shapes policy. The chapter posits that the recommendations made by the directors themselves must be considered by the theatres and consequently frame each institution's processes, including funding, mentorship, training and commissioning. When those changes are implemented by the state-supported theatres, this should have a direct influence on policy. The DAC would then be able to construct a policy that would lead to the actual significant inclusion of black women stage directors within its cultural institutions. Such a framework of analysis foregrounds the practice and voices of black women directors, and is therefore consistent with the black, postcolonial feminist approach of the study.

CHAPTER 1: DEFINING THE LANDSCAPE OF THEORY, LITERATURE AND METHODOLOGY

Black Feminisms and Intersectionality

This study focuses on two primary theoretical approaches: Black Feminisms and Postcolonial Feminisms. Within Black Feminist discourse, the key principle of intersectionality is discussed, while the core concept of subalternity is explored within the Postcolonial Feminist school of thought. The overarching theoretical perspective of Black Feminisms and Postcolonial Feminisms is an underlying racial consciousness. Both theoretical positions consider oppression not only within the framework of gender – as western feminism suggests – but also within the intricately connected systems of race, class, nation and other factors of exclusion.

The central tenet underpinning Black Feminisms is that black women's experiences can be understood within the structures of race, sex and class. Black Feminist thought holds that the oppression of black women can be elucidated through the intersecting nature of these systems. Influential black feminist scholar and activist, bell hooks, argues:

> As a group, black women are in an unusual position in this society, for not only are we collectively at the bottom of the occupational ladder, but our overall social status is lower than that of any other group. Occupying such a position, we bear the brunt of sexist, racist, and classist oppression (hooks, 1984: 14).

Recognising the interconnected nature of these systems of domination is vital in addressing the extent of oppression that marks the histories, realities and experiences of specifically black women. In a paper which sought to explain the oppression of African-American women, feminist scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term "intersectionality", to describe discrimination that exists along multiple axes (Crenshaw, 1989). She problematised the "single-axis" analysis intrinsic in white feminist discourse which tends to neglect "the multidimensionality of Black women's experiences" (Crenshaw, 1989: 140). Crenshaw further argues that "this single-axis framework erases Black women in the conceptualization, identification and remediation of race and sex discrimination by limiting inquiry to the experiences of otherwise-privileged members of the group" (1989: 140). Although Crenshaw was the first scholar to formalise in the late 1980s the socio-political condition of black women through this concept, its essence had formed part of black feminist thinking from as early as the mid-19th century. The relationship between oppressive systems was embodied in 1851 by Sojourner Truth, an African-American activist who was born into slavery, in her famous speech

titled *Ain't I a Woman?* This speech, which starkly pointed towards the unequal location of white women and black women in nineteenth-century American society, advocated the assertion of black women's rights within the overall feminist movement. Highlighting that white women enjoyed social privileges that black women were debarred from, Truth's speech held up a mirror to the double oppression that black women experienced simultaneously: sexism and racism. Then in 1892, African-American scholar, Anna Julia Cooper, profoundly articulated the positionality of black women: "[T]he colored woman of to-day occupies, one may say, a unique position in this country […] She is confronted by both a woman question and a race problem, and is as yet an unknown or an unacknowledged factor in both" (May, 2009: 27). While it is the interplay between race and gender that is mostly foregrounded by influential black American feminist activists, the concept of intersectionality introduces the various systems in which the compound domination of black women occurs.

In its praxis, white or Western feminist discourse overlooks the unique location of black women. In neglecting to acknowledge the intersectional nature of identities, western feminism cannot adequately address black women's oppression. While Black Feminisms respond to the gaps and silences in western feminist discourse – in which the nuances of black women's experiences are, whether consciously or unconsciously, relegated to the margins – Postcolonial Feminism is similarly a reaction to the shortcomings of Western feminism.

Postcolonial Feminism and Subalternity

The exclusion of the varied experiences and struggles from the perspectives of women in non-western cultures within the larger feminist debate, prompted the emergence of postcolonial feminist discourse and included prominent voices such as Audre Lorde and Chandra Mohanty, both of whom articulated a postcolonial feminist stance in their seminal papers titled *The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House* (Lorde, 1984) and *Under Western Eyes* (Mohanty, 1984), respectively. Underpinning Postcolonial Feminism is therefore a foregrounding of the diverse experiences and pluralistic realities of women in particularly non-western, global South, postcolonial cultures, defined by Mohanty et al. as "Third World Women" (1991: 4). These narratives, which give due attention to the issue of race where women's oppression is concerned, were previously ignored within the larger feminist movement.

Furthermore, and most pertinent to this study, "'Third World' has been appropriated by much of Western discourse to mean something quite different from the political and economic self-

determination implicit in its origins" (Lawrence, 1992: 183). Al-Sarrani and Alghamdi similarly argue that "Western scholars tended to describe 'Third World women' as victimized, poor, uneducated, and sexually constrained inferiors" (2014: 4). By articulating the positionality of the black women directors as "Third World", this study aims to use this term similarly to Mohanty, who reclaims the self-identification and agency that is inherent in its original meaning (Mohanty et al., 1991). In addition, the similar challenges encountered by black women stage directors within state-supported theatres warrants mapping these women practitioners as a collective.

Postcolonial Feminism focuses on the experiences of marginalised women, whose subjugation is twofold: as subjects within previously colonised spaces and as women. This is what Kirsten Holst Peterson and Anna Rutherfold termed "double colonization" (1986). Postcolonial Feminism seeks to articulate the condition of the "Third World woman" who suffers oppression simultaneously: as a colonised subject against colonial authority, but also as a woman within patriarchal society (Peterson & Rutherford, 1986; Dube, 1999; Tyagi, 2014). This study's focus on the exclusion of black women directors, compared to the representation of their white female, black male and white male counterparts necessitates the important consideration of patriarchy and masculinity as discriminatory systems through which this group's marginalisation is perpetuated. The study aims to engage how these systems are further implicated when considering that arts funding agencies in South Africa are predominantly governmentally aligned and should be working within political agendas of transformation, including ensuring race and gender representativity.

Rooted in Postcolonial Feminism, Subaltern Studies as a discipline emerged out of India, where it began as a series of publications titled *Subaltern Studies*, by a group of Indian scholars, the Subaltern Studies Collective. This collective sought to re-inscribe the histories and narratives of Indian peoples, as "Third World", subaltern subjects (Chakrabarty, 2000). Their writings became a reclamation of Indian history, in that they contested historical narratives often constructed by the coloniser, in which the historiography of Indian peoples comprised homogeneous and monolithic representations of this group. Chakrabarty (2000: 15) cites Ranajit Guha, the editor of *Subaltern Studies*: "We are indeed opposed to much of the prevailing academic practice in historiography […] for its failure to acknowledge the subaltern as the maker of his own destiny". Subaltern theorists therefore seek to "trace these "insurgent" imprints on colonial discourse" (Moore-Gilbert, 2003: 38). It is about "deconstructing historiography" and re-inscribing "the history of the margins" (Moore-Gilbert, 2003: 38).

Subalternity derives from the scholarly works of Italian Marxist intellectual and activist Antonio Gramsci, who coined the term "subaltern" to denote the subservient class who would then be dominated by the ruling class in a culturally diverse society. Having little to no social, political and economic mobility, the Gramscian subaltern refers therefore to the lower classes located on the periphery of a pre-capitalist society (Young, 2012: 30). In her seminal essay *Can the Subaltern Speak* (1994), influential postcolonial feminist scholar, Gayatri Spivak, deconstructs the Gramscian interpretation of "subalternity" by positing the subaltern as the singular woman figure who shifts from the position of "historically muted subject" to agent (Spivak, 1994: 91). Making reference to the Hindu tradition of *sati*[12] during British colonial rule, Spivak introduces the Indian subaltern woman as a figure who moves from being an object of perpetual silence as reflected through imperialist narratives, to one who through the cultural and religious practice of *sati* emerges as a subject with a political voice. The author articulates the subaltern as a singular woman figure who begins "to eclipse the idea of the subaltern as a class" (Young, 2012: 32). Spivak essentially interrogates the prospect of women in post-colonial geographies having a political voice. In exploring this probability, the author articulates the challenging position occupied by this group of women deemed socially and politically immobile: "If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow" (Spivak, 1994: 82-83). Her question "Can the Subaltern Speak?" is an open-ended, defiant one, because the critique embedded in the essay is that she indeed speaks as a historically subaltern subject herself. Conventionally denoting one in a subordinate position, the term "subaltern" now bears multiple meanings:

> Whilst the Studies Collective appropriated the term to denote the economically disenfranchised and politically disempowered peoples in India, Spivak draws on the nuances of the term in her essay, insisting that the subaltern subject is "irretrievably heterogeneous" (Jooste, 2015: 161).

For Spivak, the concept of "subalternity" refers not only to diverse peoples with varied histories and narratives, but moreover, "the question of subalternity, of the most oppressed groups and individuals […] must also be conceived of in terms of gender because of the historical and persistent patriarchal oppression of women through various mechanisms" (Jooste, 2015: 162). Through a postcolonial feminist lens, subalternity therefore attempts to theorise the status of

[12] Also referred as *suttee*, this ancient Hindu tradition involves the self-immolation of a widow on her husband's pyre.

abject marginalisation typically ascribed by imperialist discourse to women in postcolonial contexts. The intersectional oppression of the subaltern woman is revealed in Spivak's argument, in that this figure is simultaneously female and subordinated within a system of colonial, patriarchal authority. Through this proposition, Spivak highlights the flexible nature of the subaltern population. It is indeed the non-monolithic nature of the subaltern mass which makes way for conceptualising the colonised female subject within an intersectional lens, wherein she is oppressed through the overlap of various variables including race, gender and class.

According to the foundational interpretation of the concept of subalternity by Gramsci, the subaltern refers fundamentally to any "'low rank' person or group of people in a particular society suffering under hegemonic domination of a ruling elite class that denies them the basic rights of participation in the making of local history and culture as active individuals of the same nation" (Louai, 2012: 5). Within the framework of the subaltern as reimagined by Spivak – that is, the previously silenced woman figure who then emerges as historical subject and agent – this study aims to serve as scholarship that will document the nuanced 'histories from the margins' of black South African women directors, as those occupying the historical position of subalternity. The personal accounts analysed in this thesis collectively stand as the narratives of the historically subaltern in a contemporary South African context. These are black women directors who are actively participating in the making of history and culture. Moreover, their agency is evident in that they are articulating their voices and reinforcing their visibility in national theatre spaces where they are under-represented.

The historical position of black South African women is profoundly perceptible within the combined discourses of Postcolonial and Black Feminisms. Their multiple oppression is evident: firstly, as subjects within a previously colonised geographical area, secondly, as women and thirdly, as black persons (Hassim, 1991; Masenya, 1994; de la Rey, 1997; Gqola, 2001). Historically, class is an additional structure by which black people were oppressed. Speaking on class formations during colonial and apartheid histories, Southall states that "the class structure fashioned by settler capitalism left little room for the development of an African middle class" (2014: 3). Class oppression operating alongside racial inequality in a patriarchal society ascribes the status of abject marginalisation to black women in South African colonial and apartheid histories.

The frameworks of Postcolonial Feminisms and Black Feminisms are premised on foregrounding narratives of women who are "black" (as in the case of Black Feminism) or geographically located in the "non-western" world (as in the case of Postcolonial Feminism). Both schools of thought essentially elevate the experiences of women who, to varying degrees, are typically minoritised, whether as "women of color" ("WoC"), or as black women. Because these theoretical positions were developed in response to feminisms which focused solely on the perspectives and voices of predominantly white women in the Western world, they are appropriate in articulating the experiences of black women and "WoC" in the global context, as well as black women in the South African landscape – across both theatre directing practice and scholarship. Indeed, from South African theatre history the voices of black women theatre practitioners have emerged from the margins.

Black women's historical location in South African theatre practice

Following apartheid's institution in 1948, alternative theatre from the 1950s was in direct opposition to the country's oppressive state of affairs, with the theatre landscape dominated by the productions of Athol Fugard (Gray, 1990: 79), "South Africa's best-known playwright" (Hauptfleisch, 1997: 137). From the 1970s, the political nature of theatre became more palpable, giving rise to a theatre of resistance. During this period, women began to enter the theatre scene as directors, actresses and playwrights, signifying their participation in the anti-apartheid struggle (Ogu, 2011: 74). Published nearly two decades after the emergence of resistance theatre, Stephen Gray, in his article "Women in South African Theatre" (1990), articulates the trajectory of women in South African theatre history, with attention to the involvement of women practitioners from the 1970s. He asserts that at the time of writing his article, women's influence was in fact no longer marginal, but vital to the theatre's preservation and viability (Gray, 1990: 75). While Gray notes women's roles as performers and directors, his overview focuses on the role of South African women as playwrights.

The Space Theatre in Cape Town and later, the Market Theatre in Johannesburg, were independent, anti-racial, fringe theatres that contributed significantly to the genesis of South Africa's alternative theatre (Tomaselli, 1981; Fuchs, 1992; Meersman, 2007). Among the notable playwrights to feature during the 1970s at The Space was the white female playwright Geraldine Aron, who at that time was the most produced South African dramatist and lauded as the exemplary woman playwright, able to meticulously articulate the white population's condition of isolation (Gray, 1990: 79). As a solo playwright, Aron was an exception rather

than the rule to alternative theatre, in that from the 1970s, fringe theatre mostly comprised plays created in a collaborative process, where emphasis was on the skills that each performer could contribute to the group (Fleishman, 1990; 1991). Gray maintains that "through workshopping, black life in particular in all its facets burst through to public attention, with urgency and with dazzling appeal" (1990: 81). It was only from the 1970s through characters in Elsa Joubert's novel, *Die Swerfjare van Poppie Nongena*, that black women became a central symbol in South African entertainment (Gray, 1990: 78). Although this was a significant moment, the construction of the protagonist Poppie Nongena was critiqued, in that it is a white author speaking for a black woman (Siméus, 2014). A collaborative work constructed by a black woman and whose narrative championed black people's resistance, was Fatima Dike's counter-hegemonic bi-lingual play, *The Sacrifice of Kreli* (1976). The play aimed "to depict a coherent and viable black culture" (Flockeman & Solberg, 2015: 298). Reflecting on this notable work, published in the United States in 2001, veteran theatre practitioner Dike, who is among the discussants in this study, says:

> So the story came about … that I was the first black woman playwright to publish in South Africa. I didn't believe it. I still don't even believe it till today. I don't even boast about it, you know, that it should take so long for a black woman playwright to be published (Dike, interview, 2019).

Dike's words highlight that what was generally considered an achievement, was for her a stark representation of black women's peripheral location in theatre practice.

While Gray does not explicitly indicate the race profiles of the women he considers vital in the development of South African theatre, he does offer an overview of the theatre contributions of racially diverse South African women practitioners, including Bertha Goudvis, Pauline Smith, Nadine Gordimer, Geraldine Aron, Fatima Dike, Saira Essa, Gcina Mhlophe, Clare Stopford and Phyllis Klotz. Gray observes that in South Africa's theatre history, the preoccupation of most white women playwrights were narratives that portrayed colonial women in situations of patriarchal domination (1990: 77). These narratives, however, neglected the multi-layered oppression encountered by colonised women. As Kuumba appositely notes: "African women suffered disproportionately from the cultural genocide that resulted from European colonialism" (2006: 113). Kuumba notes the cultural exclusion of black women during imperialism – especially African women. Gray similarly observes that (postcolonial) apartheid South Africa was a period during which black, working-class women were kept off the stage (1990: 78). Alternative theatres such as The Space in Cape Town and Johannesburg's

Market Theatre became platforms accessible also to black women. The Space, which opened in 1972, became a training ground for prominent black women practitioners, including Fatima Dike, Thoko Ntshinga and Nomhle Nkonyeni, while the Market Theatre featured notable black women practitioners such as Saira Essa and Gcina Mhlophe.

The 1980s was a decade in which women's issues were potently visible. Just one year before, in 1979, Barney Simon devised *Call Me Woman*, which drew on the talents and explored the problems of its all-women, mixed-race cast (Fuchs, 2002: 99). In 1985, the Market Theatre held its first South African Women's Festival of the Arts, which featured Clare Stopford's play *The Patchers* (1985). Both her plays *The Patchers* and *Ulovane Jive* (1986) addressed issues of black and white women (Gray, 1990: 83). Also in 1985, Phyllis Klotz devised the work *Wathint' abafazi Wathint' imbokodo!* (translated *You Strike the Woman, You Strike the Rock!*), created in collaboration alongside three black women: Thobeka Maqutyana, Poppie Tsira and Nomvula Qosha. This play was inspired by the 1956 women's march to the Pretoria Union Buildings, where a crowd of approximately 20,000 women, diverse in race, age and class, demonstrated peacefully against the law that compelled black women to carry passbooks for identification. Still that same year, 1985, Durban-based Indian practitioner Saira Essa, alongside Charles Pillai, produced a daring documentary play titled *The Inquest,* based on the detention and murder of black anti-apartheid activist, Bantu Steve Biko (Gray, 1990: 84). Another important work to emanate from 1986 was Gcina Mhlophe's autobiographical play *Have You Seen Zandile?* – which was published in the United States in 1990. A narrative told in the mode of storytelling, Mhlophe's play presents the character Zandile, who is black, working class, female and a child. The character Zandile is "an eight-year-old schoolgirl who slowly realises she is a black woman in a society which denigrates her race and gender" (Walder, 1999: 56). However, instead of demonstrating the disabilities of such a social position, Zandile "later turns herself from the object of others' perceptions into an active subject, narrating her story and thereby affirming her identity" (Walder, 1999: 56). *Have You Seen Zandile?* therefore emerged as a narrative that is equally personal as it is political.

Since Gray (1990) documents the contributions of women primarily as playwrights within South African theatre history, while also observing their role as directors and performers, his discussion maps the overall theatre contributions of female practitioners. He posits that involvement in professional theatre by women of all kinds positioned this group as a marked presence in South African cultural life, and that of all the arts, the sphere of theatre is where women were most visibly burgeoning as the "cultural-carriers" that they are traditionally

understood to be (Gray, 1990: 75). Notably, of the nine women theatre practitioners discussed by Gray, six are white and three are black. The historical theatre landscape is evidently dominated by white women. In a similar vein, Loren Krüger only a few years later, cites Fatima Dike (one of the nine women practitioners discussed by Gray) as "one of only a few visible black women *playwrights*" (1995: 53). She also states that "opportunities for women *performers*, especially black women, have been limited" (Krüger, 1995: 47) and that white women "*directed* many of the amateur groups that dominated South African white theatre" [my emphases] (Krüger, 1995: 54). Scanning the historical theatre landscape, then, black women were located at the margins, whether as playwrights, performers or directors. Suffice it to say that in his claim that women were at the pinnacle of theatre development in the past, Gray (1990) neglects to acknowledge that it was white women who dominated this development.

Despite white women largely occupying the roles of performers, playwrights and directors in terms of women's overall contributions in the historical theatre landscape, a few black women – as seen in the examples of Fatima Dike, Thoko Ntshinga, Nomhle Nkonyeni, Thobeka Maqutyana, Poppie Tsira, Nomvula Qosha and Saira Essa – charted a notable course for contemporary South African women artists, such as Mwenya Kabwe, Chuma Sopotela, Faniswa Yisa and Mamela Nyamza. In their engagement with gender issues and the legacies of colonial oppression and apartheid, these women "use their bodies, skin, and clothing as sites to contextualise histories and challenge racial and patriarchal narratives" (Hutchison, 2018: 356). Through this profoundly personal, corporeal work, today's female artists are pushing back against historical narratives which sought to both relegate women to the private space and represent them in their absence – in so doing, replicating "a set of female 'types' and 'stereotypes'" (Flockemann, 1999: 43). Although black women's conceptual and artistic agencies as directors are presently actively suppressed, these practitioners continue to navigate exploitative structures to create visibility for their work. This group of theatre makers continues to push not only creative boundaries, but also through various obstacles to accessing state-supported spaces.

Black women in theatre directing practice: Past and present

In their chapter that offers a brief historical overview of women specifically as directors in South Africa, Lliane Loots and Marie-Heleen Coetzee argue that while apartheid foregrounded race as the most pernicious site of power struggle, gender is also a discriminatory system that "remains the most prevailing" (2013: 277). From an intersectional perspective that considers

both race and gender as connected systems through which oppression operates, Loots and Coetzee (2013) discuss the location of women directors in South Africa's historical and contemporary contexts. They maintain that despite a lack of comprehensive documentation of women directors in South Africa's past context, there indeed exists a long history of women directors who shaped the South African theatre directing landscape of the 21st century.

In their introduction, Loots and Coetzee (2013) note that women are visible as fighters within the politically volatile climate that characterised South Africa's apartheid history. Naidoo similarly acknowledges South African women as "positive change agents that stood in the forefront of the struggle against apartheid" (2007: 177). Turning their discussion to pre-apartheid South Africa, Loots and Coetzee (2013) highlight that the oppression of black women during apartheid mimics their outlying positionality even during early South African theatre history.

From the 1700s, South Africa's theatre was dominated by Afrikaner and British culture, and from 1910 until the latter part of the 20th century, British heritage typified South African theatre practice (Loots & Coetzee, 2013: 279). The authors note that the exclusion of black Africans in theatre became officialised through the emergence of the National Theatre Organisation in 1947, which was the first state-funded organisation formed to propel a white nationalist agenda in professional theatre premised on serving the English and Afrikaner population (Loots & Coetzee, 2013: 279). Then from the mid-1950s into the 1970s, theatre grew as a prominently political platform on which to challenge the injustices of the day (Loots & Coetzee, 2013: 279). Women's voices were however rendered marginal in favour of narratives that were primarily centred on the plight of black males victimised within the apartheid system. Loots and Coetzee (2013) argue that race and racism were in this way prioritised as primary systems of oppression, while gender was altogether overlooked. The problem of single-axis analysis of oppression is its negation of black women as those who are "multiply-burdened" (Crenshaw, 1989: 140). In foregrounding black male experiences in anti-apartheid theatre, the sufferings of women – especially black women as the most marginalised – were silenced.

In their discussion, Loots and Coetzee then offer summaries of women who directed on South Africa's professional stages during apartheid. The authors highlight two notable women during this period: Phyllis Klotz and Gcina Mhlophe. Klotz devised and directed, in collaboration with black women, the noteworthy protest play, *You Strike the Woman, You Strike the Rock!* (1985).

Mhlophe directed her seminal autobiographical play *Have You Seen Zandile?* at the Market Theatre in 1986, where she was to later become resident director in 1989 and 1990. Against the emphasis on race and racism during the era, both plays shifted this focus to include gender, with particular attention paid to the experiences of ordinary black, working-class women. Gray notes that "in a land where, under apartheid ideology, race is the cutting edge of discrimination and class its reinforcement, gender as the third means of dividing and ruling the population had not before enjoyed much prominence as a political issue" (1990: 83).

Since the apartheid era, women's movements in South Africa have firmly advocated for the inclusion of gender on the national political agenda. Numerous South African female scholars have theorised the important inclusion of gender (and class) in the nation's political consciousness, including black intellectuals Desiree Lewis, Shireen Hassim, Cheryl de la Rey, Pumla Gqola and Christine Qunta. Lewis notes that in the South Africa of the 1980s, "a robust struggle for gender equality" was "waged by women's organisations" (2008: 2). In terms of documentation of this struggle, Hassim argues that "the trajectory of women's resistance, whether against men or against the apartheid order, cannot be traced within a framework in which gender is regarded as insignificant or at best of secondary significance" (1991: 69). As Loots observes, "gender issues for black South African women, at best, became womanist issues where the common oppression of being black in South Africa was placed as the primary concern for struggle resulting in a decided lack of interrogation of sexist attitudes within 'the struggle' itself and indeed, the wider patriarchal oppression of women" (1997: 144). In overlooking the parallel struggle for gender equality, liberation politics failed to adequately recognise the effects that apartheid, as an "intricate gendered and racialised exercise of power" (Mohanty, 2013: 968) had on women – especially black women. Alongside race and gender as sites of oppression that black women had to navigate, de la Rey includes class by suggesting that black women were "simultaneously classed, raced and gendered" (1997: 7). These triple systems of subjugation are echoed by Akala: "Although women faced injustices in general during the colonial and apartheid eras, black women in particular suffered what has been termed "triple marginalisation", that of race, social class, and sex" (2018: 228-229). This compound oppression of black women is what American political activist and author Angela Davis, defines as "triple jeopardy" (Davis, 1981).

Even in liberation movements, the voices and visibility of black women were relegated to the margins. Referring to the Black Consciousness Movement, Pumla Gqola poignantly articulates the unfavourable location of this group:

> By refusing to allow "them" on the political agenda, BC rejects the politicization of Blackwomen's experiences since this would entail extending attention to the specific experiences of exploitation that Blackwomen face. Exclusion from the language and space afforded to Black men directly points to Blackwomen's secondary status within the movement. It is the ambiguous status of Blackwomen which allows them to be silenced (2001: 142).

While these notable scholars generally define the triple oppression of black women, South African writer Christine Qunta describes the marginalisation of black women in Southern Africa as four-fold, especially during the years of apartheid: colonialism and imperialism, white racism, class domination and sexual marginalisation (1987: 12). Within the purview of intersectionality politics, black women not ascribing to heteronormativity would have encountered yet another dimension of oppression, and so forth.

Against the backdrop of "South African historiographies [which] have been influenced by nationalist thinking that undermines women", black women's narratives and experiences are those which were predominantly erased (Ntwape, 2016: 4). Such a history necessitates an intersectional lens through which to examine women's location in a current South African context, in which race, gender and class (among others) are considered as collectively dominating systems of oppression in women's lives. Crenshaw makes the following assertion: "Because the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated" (1989: 140).

The imminent end to apartheid also brought strongly to the fore the contrived race classifications of "Indian" and "Coloured"; racial identities that would be a preoccupation for "Indian" and "Coloured" female directors respectively. In a post-1994 context, Singh articulates the interstitial location of South Africans of Indian and Coloured descent: "While affirmative action and Black empowerment is selectively targeting Africans, it is simultaneously marginalising previously disadvantaged groups such as Indians and Coloureds – despite them being part of the rubric of "Blacks" during the years of anti-apartheid struggle" (2005: 5). Nyar similarly defines the location of South African Indians as a space of "in-betweenity" (2016: 57). The author describes the intermediate situation of Indian South African identity: "Under colonialism and apartheid Indian South Africans were historically constructed as an intermediary layer between the ruling white minority and the oppressed black majority within the context of a racialised hierarchy of power and oppression" (Nyar, 2016: 57). Their

connection to the Indian diaspora, alongside their interstitial location between privileged Whites and subjugated Blacks, saw Indian South Africans occupying a status of uncertainty in the social order (Nyar, 2016: 85). Even within a post-apartheid dispensation, "anti-Indian racism" marks the socio-political landscape (Nyar, 2016: 11).

Navigating the theme of South African Indian identity, female Indian theatre practitioners, Muthal Naidoo and Saira Essa challenged both Indian cultural dominance and the apartheid state, and subsequently had their works censored or banned. While Naidoo wrote and directed plays that negotiated the challenging politics of the multifaceted identity of being simultaneously South African, Indian and African, Essa is known for her politically charged directing of English plays, including *The Inquest* (1986). With regard to Coloured identity, Loots and Coetzee (2013) cite *A Coloured Place* (1996), written and directed by Lueen Conning (now Malika Ndlovu). Set in Wentworth, a historically Coloured residential and industrial town to the south of Durban, this political, post-apartheid play relates the experiences of Coloured women in Durban. Through her play, Conning inserts and asserts Coloured heritage and Coloured female identities into South African history, especially as an identity historically typified by confusion, ambiguity and uncertainty (Adhikari, 2005; 2013). Adhikari notes that "coloured identity has been in flux since the early 1990s" (2013: xvii) and that even within Coloured communities in contemporary society, "there is a tentativeness about whether members should express their identity as black, as African, as South African, as coloured, as Khoisan or as descendants of slaves" (2013: xviii).

The feminist and particularly intersectional positioning of the above-mentioned practitioners' works is evident. In challenging Indian cultural dominance and the apartheid state, South African Indian female playwrights Muthal Naidoo and Saira Essa were effectively addressing the oppression of Indian women within the interconnected systems of patriarchy and racism. Through their works, these playwrights were interrogating the subjugation that Indian persons (especially women) experienced in the apartheid social order, as well as the "toxic masculinity" which continues to be pervasive in the South African Indian community, as argued by Akoob in her article (2018). Similarly, Lueen Conning's play, which focuses on Coloured female identities and is set in a high density "Coloured" working-class township in South Durban, simultaneously engages the feminist and intersectional politics of race, gender and class identities.

Through their anti-apartheid theatre practice, black women practitioners such as Gcina Mhlophe, Saira Essa, Muthal Naidoo and Lueen Conning were exercising "subaltern agency" (Prakash, 1994; Edwards, 2017). During a period of white, patriarchal hegemony, each of these practitioners emerged from the margins with a political voice. Against the regime which legitimised the total oppression of particularly black women, these practitioners' theatre works are a collective example of what a participant of the Indian-British Subaltern Studies Collective, Sumit Sarkar, described as "autonomous initiatives by subordinate groups" (2011: 207).

Unlike much of the scholarship around women stage directors emerging from the international terrain – as discussed in the following section – Loots and Coetzee (2013) offer a perspective that demonstrates cognisance of the racially diverse women stage directors who comprise South African theatre directing history. In navigating the aspects of both race and gender, the authors highlight the importance of an interpretation of women directors in South Africa that is not only feminist, but one that is intersectional, in that is takes into account the "interlocking systems of domination" (hooks, 1986:21) that more accurately define the reality of inequality. They conclude the chapter with profiles of a select few contemporary women directors – three white women and two black women – including Janice Honeyman, Phyllis Klotz, Lara Foot Newton, Warona Seane and Napo Masheane.

In her introduction to "Black Female Directors in South African Theatre", Lekalake (2013) provides a brief historical overview of black women's location in the South African theatre landscape. She notes that the privileges enjoyed by white practitioners to create and fully participate in state-subsidised plays during apartheid, led black theatre-makers to pursue the alternative platform of protest theatre to explicitly express the anger of the oppressed black majority. However, not only did these plays fundamentally exclude black female theatre practitioners by predominantly comprising black male characters, but the prevalent opinion that black women should be confined within the domestic roles of caregiver and homemaker further entrenched the marginal status of this group. Pumla Gqola explores these and similar tropes in South African literature (Gqola, 1999), as well as in the context of the Black Consciousness Movement (Gqola, 2001). Referencing the noteworthy *You Strike the Woman, You Strike the Rock!* (1986), Lekalake notes that while the production was a collection of narratives conceived by three black women, at its premier it had as director Phyllis Klotz, a white woman. Though Lekalake recognises that a white woman at the helm would have been reasonable given the political conditions of the time, she also questions the accuracy of the

interpretation that a white woman could have brought to bear on black female social and cultural experiences (2013: 124).

Lekalake (2013) then shifts attention to the major changes that occurred within the theatre landscape as a result of the new democratic dispensation. During this transition period, previously marginalised black theatre practitioners yearned to see tangible transformation in the industry (Lekalake, 2013: 113). In 1996, the DACST articulated its mandate for the arts and culture sector in the White Paper. In line with its aim of redressing past race and gender imbalances and championing transformation, the White Paper stipulated that the previous four Performing Arts Councils (PACs)[13] would be transformed into playhouses (Lekalake, 2013: 113). This was a pertinent change for black theatre practitioners, as it gave confidence that they too would be regarded as beneficiaries in an industry in which they were historically overlooked (Lekalake, 2013: 113).

Ntshieng Mokgoro notes that she "got into directing because she was angry at the South African theatre world for side-lining women and ignoring their concerns" (Lekalake, 2013: 114). Although Mokgoro was acknowledged as a professional director when she became the first black female director to be presented with the Standard Bank Young Artist Award in the drama category after directing *Thursday's Child* in 2008, she admits that she still struggles to get her work featured in state-supported theatres. She also observes that although black women are increasingly occupying executive positions in mainstream theatres, transformation is yet to be seen where the representation of black women stage directors is concerned (Lekalake, 2013: 115). Instead, black women directors experience the brunt of disparities in the mainstream theatre space, where white directors, according to Mokgoro, "are always directing shows" (Lekalake, 2013: 115).

Formally trained dramatist, Warona Seane has vast experience in the theatre field. She directed her first play, *Eclipsed* (2010) in a state-supported theatre after more than ten years of working actively in the industry. Seane recognises that, while there are indeed race and gender imbalances evident in the industry, an additional problem that exacerbates the predicament of black female theatre directors is the lack of mentorship from fellow women practitioners (Lekalake, 2013: 116). One of the more seasoned study respondents, Gcina Mhlophe, firmly

[13] The Department of Arts and Culture currently recognises the following as cultural institutions within the arts sector, with the output category of 'staging of productions' (Department of Arts and Culture, 2013: 45): Artscape, the Market Theatre Foundation, the Performing Arts Centre of Free State, the KZN Playhouse Company, the South African State Theatre and Windybrow Theatre.

believes that "you need to have the generosity to share some of your skills and experiences with others" (Mhlophe, interview, 2019). At the same time, she also highlights the complexities and challenges of the mentorship process, due to pressure and expectations on older practitioners in the guidance of aspirant artists:

> Is that person free to do so at this given time? Because we are still working at this time in our lives. We're not living in a country where a certain age group of artists get stipends from their government. We don't have that in South Africa, so I still have to make a living. So when you are not able to work with somebody for a certain amount of time, you are being rude to them, you are being selfish" (Mhlophe, interview, 2019).

Napo Masheane echoes the sentiment that there is a dire lack of black women directors in relation to black men, white men and white women directors, and that this state of affairs denies a sense of support and community to the few professional black women directors that exist (Lekalake, 2013: 118).

Unlike Lekalake's argument, which draws attention to the DAC's shortcomings towards the arts, culture and heritage sector, Patrick J. Ebewo (2017) applauds the government department's efforts. He regards the 1996 White Paper and the revised draft of 2013 as testaments of the South African government's commitment in developing legislation aligned to transformations ideals. He further asserts that the state's support of the performing arts "is not lip service" (Ebewo, 2017: 196), but is "transparently demonstrated" through various domains and the formulating of relevant policies, such as the ANC-steered National Cultural Policy, in which the performing arts are positioned as essential in the course of development (Ebewo, 2017: 196).

Ebewo states that South Africa has observed a "vibrant funding tradition" (2017: 199), from the apartheid era until presently. He proceeds to cite budget allocations towards the sector, noting the increasing figures allocated to arts, culture and heritage at irregular year intervals between the 2005/2006 and 2016/2017 financial years. In light of these funding distributions, together with government establishing Business and Arts South Africa (BASA), as well as support of the arts at provincial government level, Ebewo concludes: "The intention of the government is evidently to transform the sector" (2017: 200). He maintains that the South African government gives a prominent role to the performing arts and that state support of the industry is tangible.

In his discussion of state funding of the arts, Ebewo however overlooks some important considerations. Firstly, although professional theatre activity took place from the early 1960s in the "four generously state-subsidised Performing Arts Councils (PACs)" [van Heerden, 2008: 20], those artistic activities were created by predominantly white practitioners who enjoyed the government's substantial support. The majority of black South Africans were therefore fundamentally excluded as beneficiaries in the sector. Secondly, implicit in Ebewo's argument is that increments in budget from government to the DAC for the arts, culture and heritage sector, together with the formation of BASA, necessarily correspond with equitable distribution of funding, such that all practitioners benefit.

Ebewo rightfully acknowledges that despite all of government's efforts to promote the arts, the sector still faces numerous challenges. He firstly cites the criticism from theatre practitioners that funding is neither fairly distributed nor adequate (Ebewo, 2017: 205). Not only is it Lekalake who supports this critique, but some respondents also expressed a similar sentiment. On the one hand, Warona Seane related the general position of state-supported institutions towards black women practitioners: "No, we don't have the money for productions" (Seane, interview, 2019). She adamantly proceeds: "No, there *is*, there *is*" (Seane, interview, 2019). On the other hand, Ntshieng Mokgoro delved into the issue of the micro-management of black women Artistic Directors, which often is accompanied by a lack of support and mistrust:

> If you decide *ukuthi* [that] I have a programme, then there's an issue of *ibhajethi* [budget]. They want to give you *i-change eye-bhajethi* [small change as a budget]. They don't give you freedom and money and position to say, "Here's the space, do what you like – all you have to do is to report back" (Mokgoro, interview, 2019).

Secondly, Ebewo observes that there is still insufficient theatre infrastructure in many black townships (Ebewo, 2017: 206). Despite the 1996 White Paper outlining the "primary need for infrastructure … in rural and black urban areas", there remains a shortage of arts and recreation facilities in these locations. Thirdly, the author cites poor attendance by the black population, which could be attributed both to proximity of theatre buildings as well as relevance of plays (Ebewo, 2017: 206). In her interview, Fatima Dike identified the unavailability of public transport as the greatest impediment to the participation and enjoyment of township communities in performances. Speaking about Artscape specifically, Dike laments that even after sitting "on the board *yase*-Artscape [of] for six years trying to make them understand that you need Black audiences to come and sit in a professional theatre space", her pleas are yet to

be considered (Dike, interview, 2019). The obvious outcome of course is a negligible number of black audiences at one of South Africa's major performing arts complexes.

Fourthly, in his statement that "some feel that the performing arts sector is not adequately transformed […]", Ebewo seems to give an impression that he questions the validity of those who hold this viewpoint (2017: 206). The author then mentions that inaccessibility to finance "has been identified" as a hindrance in the promotion of black "entrepreneurs" in the sector (Ebewo, 2017: 206). In alignment with the terminology of "Creative and Cultural Industries" and the corresponding view of arts as a business, Ebewo defines black performing arts practitioners as entrepreneurs. This follows the statement, "the creative industry is now a high growth economic sector" (Ebewo, 2017: 205). Ebewo also notes the widespread issue of gender discrepancies, evident in the lack of women in the sector (2017: 206). Notwithstanding impediments facing the arts, culture and heritage sector, Ebewo states: "However, in my view, the situation today is a lot better than what it used to be" (2017: 296).

In a chapter that assesses the role of theatre in transformation, Hemke posits that South Africa's economic crisis fuels divisions in society, which in turn spills over to the country's theatre (2019: 16). He argues that even outside apartheid's laws, the activities of state-supported theatres occur along racial lines and that these spaces operate within different financial circumstances – while some enjoy funding and renown, others experience financial constraints (Hemke, 2019: 16). Hemke states that "when considering this situation, the key word remains the same: 'transformation'" (2019: 16). While acknowledging Ebewo's praises for the South African theatre industry, Hemke offers a more temperate critique:

> The South African theatre scene has a unique position on the continent. No other country has so many state-subsidised theatres, such quality and breadth of theatre education, so many large, well-frequented festivals, along with serious theatre critics who are known to the wider public. So South Africa must be in a good position? Not really. Because the theatre scene […] has found itself in a state of permanent crisis ever since the end of apartheid (2019: 15).

In his detailed overview of government's notable role in the performing arts industry in post-apartheid South Africa, Ebewo (2017) generally positions the government and DAC in a favourable light. His commendations of government's contributions towards the arts, culture and heritage sector are mostly valid. However, the lack of detail as regards government's shortcomings, as well as the cursory discussion of noteworthy impediments in the sector,

positioned near the end of the chapter, lead to an unbalanced overview that does not give satisfactory attention to the tangible gaps and silences in a contemporary South African arts context. These gaps and silences include the ongoing lack of support for black women stage directors and the ensuing compromised visibility of this historically marginalised group of practitioners in state-supported theatres. The author's discussion certainly does not point towards a South African theatre landscape that is in a state of crisis where transformation is concerned.

Black women and "WoC" as directors in a global context

In examining literature on global professional theatre directing over the last few decades, it appears that women are consistently under-represented in relation to their male counterparts. Moreover, when considering scholarly writings on this topic, the marginal location or complete absence of black women and "WoC" is discernible. Scholarship on international professional stage directing comes mainly from the global North, with limited scholarship emanating from Africa or even the Global South.

In the 1960s, a source book edited by women authors with a focus on directors of the modern theatre, referenced only two notable female directors (Cole & Chinoy, 1963). Then in 1976, a collection of essays mapping the landscape of contemporary directing practice included no women directors at all (Wills, 1976). A decade later, a book about women in the theatre was published. From that book, only one short article focused exclusively on women directors, and even so, the article was historical rather than an account of directorial process (Hennigen, 1986). Shortly afterwards, *The Director's Voice: Twenty-One Interviews* by Arthur Bartow (1988) was published. A collection of essays that provide an overview of the work of 21 foremost stage directors in the American context, of the 21 directors profiled, 16 are white men, three are white women, two are black men and there are no women who are black or of colour. A few years later, a book about ten particular directors and their rehearsal processes was published. This publication was a refreshing addition to existing scholarship on theatre directing, in that half of the directors profiled were women (Cole, 1992). Across these three decades of theatre directing literature on a global context, women have persistently occupied the periphery - black women and "WoC" more so than white women.

Foremost theatre directing scholarship primarily profiles directors either on the basis of a particular national context or in terms of prominence within directing practice overall. In *Upstaging Big Daddy: Directing Theater as if Gender and Race Matter* (1993), editors Ellen

Donkin and Susan Clement introduce race and gender as additionally significant factors in the directing process. In their introduction, they argue that the role of directing is not devoid of social responsibility. From a feminist perspective, they assert:

> No one with any degree of gender and racial consciousness can venture into directing these days without an uneasy sense of leading a double life. There is contemporary social awareness on the one hand, and on the other hand a body of literature that is now in the process of being framed and critiqued by that social awareness (Donkin & Clement, 1993: 2).

This argument is premised on the long-standing principle of second-wave feminism: "the personal is political". While it is unknown who coined this slogan, its popularisation is generally attributed to radical feminist Carol Hanisch, in her 1968 essay of the same title (Lee, 2007: 163). Donkin and Clement (1993) highlight the interconnectedness between a director's race and gender subjectivity and the work created on stage, positing that every director is faced with negotiating the complexity of their positionality alongside making directorial choices that will unavoidably be influenced by that personal position.

In her book, *Women Directors Speak: Exploring the Influence of Gender on Their Work* (1996), Rebecca Daniels similarly foregrounds race and gender as important factors within directing. A compilation of 35 interviews conducted over a three-year period with women stage directors working in the United States, this book is Daniels' attempt, as a director herself, at exploring perceptions held by other women directors on the influence of primarily gender, but also race, in directorial processes. In the preface, she observes that "the profession of directing has been heavily influenced and dominated by male artists since it first came to prominence in the nineteenth century, and most directing theory and pedagogy to date has been written by men" (Daniels, 1996: 1). In response to the marginal status that women directors have occupied over several decades in the theatre world, Daniels (1996) offers this book as a way to render these female practitioners visible. While *Women Directors Speak* (1996) both foregrounds the noteworthy contributions of women directors to the contemporary American theatre landscape and seeks to be an important addition to published scholarship dedicated to the respective directorial practices of women artists, Daniels also notes the gaps and silences amongst the voices represented. She explains that an attempt was made to include lesbians and directors "of colour" in the interviewing process. With that, she adds that while there are few women directing on the professional mainstream platform, there are even fewer women from minority groups who have either chosen directing as a career path, or who have had the opportunity to

pursue it as a profession (Daniels, 1996: 14-15). Highlighting the racial demographics of the directors profiled, she observes that of the 35 women interviewed, who include four "out" lesbians, 27 are white, three are black (African American), and five are "WoC" (three Latina and two Asian Americans).

The volume *In Other Words: Women Directors Speak* (1997) by Helen Manfull, seems to be a noticeable departure from racial diversity, in its focus on 14 British women directors who are all white, based in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Two years later, in *Taking Stage: Women Directors on Directors* (1999), Manfull profiles the directorial craft of the same 13 directors included in her previous work, with the exception of one director. As if to indirectly explain the lack of racial difference, feminist author and academic Elaine Aston reviewed the latter volume, stating, "The women in the study were selected on the basis of who responded to the author's request for an interview rather than to a particular brief" (Aston, 2001: 94). Another book also published in 1999 and similarly documenting foremost contemporary British stage directors, is *On Directing: Interviews with Directors* (1999), edited by Gabriella Giannachi and Mary Luckhurst. In the format of interviews that examine the craft of 21 British-based directors, the book comprises 14 white men, six white women, one man "of colour" and again, no women who are black or "of colour". The absence of race and gender inclusivity is particularly stark in the British context in terms of literature on theatre directors.

Two publications that offer an overview of theatre directors spanning centuries are *50 Key Theatre Directors* (2005), edited by Shomit Mitter and Maria Shevtsova and *American Women Stage Directors of the Twentieth Century* (2008), co-authored by Anne Fliotsos and Wendy Vierow. While the former work surveys prominent practitioners of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries who significantly shaped the sphere of theatre and performance in a universal context, the latter outlines significant contributions by 50 influential women directors in twentieth century America. Of the 50 directors in Mitter and Shevtsova's edition, seven are women and 43 are men. In terms of the race profile of the 50 selected directors, 48 are white, while only two are persons "of colour", with none who are black.

In their introduction, Fliotsos and Vierow note that while they understand that "many women want to be studied based not on their gender but on their artistic talent and achievement" (Fliostos & Vierow, 2008: 1), they have not been equally represented alongside their male counterparts in the sphere of professional directing, nor have their accomplishments been documented. For this reason, the aspect of gender cannot be overlooked. For instance, the

authors observe that many women were directing even during the late nineteenth, into the early twentieth centuries, when the role of the modern director was being defined and developed (2008: 8). However, the contributions of those women directors are not included in the historical archives, because these works did not feature on the commercial stage. They also argue that the subject of women directors has been significantly disregarded by scholars. The paucity of both black women theatre directors on the commercial stage and scholarship on black South African theatre directing, are key concerns which frame this study.

Like Donkin and Clement (1993) as well as Daniels (1996), Fliotsos and Vierow (2008) emphasise not only gender, but also race, as important factors in directing practice. Although their book predominantly examines women directors, the authors assert the significance of race, which they acknowledge as "a factor that must be further addressed and studied" (2008: 24). In their book, the authors seem to regard women "of colour" and "black" women as interchangeable classifications. Mapping the trajectory of "WoC" in the American directing space, they articulate that shifts in American society saw a number of African-American women making their marks as directors in the 1960s and beyond (including Vinnette Carroll, Shauneille Perry, Barbara Ann Teer, and Glenda Dickerson). Then from the 1970s, women from various minority cultural groups also entered the professional American theatre landscape. Despite this pivotal historical moment that rendered "WoC" as present in mainstream American theatre, Fliotsos and Vierow (2008) point out the challenges faced by these practitioners that undermine their visibility in the contemporary American context. Referencing the professional theatre setting, the authors make the following observation: "Any prejudices that white male producers may hold against women are compounded by prejudices they have against people from cultures that are different from their own. Thus, a director who is both a woman and a person of color faces an exceptionally hard battle" (Fliotsos & Vierow, 2008: 24). They propose that "the education of audiences and conscious acceptance of artists of color into the mainstream by those in positions of power would help to create more opportunities for women and lessen racism in the theatre" (Fliotsos & Vierow, 2008: 24).

Edited by Jason Loewith, *The Director's Voice: Twenty Interviews* (2012) follows the first volume published more than two decades earlier, yet reveals similar patterns when considering the race and gender demographics of the selected directors. In his introduction, the author emphatically notes from the outset that there are absences in the book, though these are not defined: "There are directors missing from this book. A *lot* of them. It verges on the criminal" (Loewith, 2012: xiv). The twenty directors included in this second volume are 12 white men,

five white women, two black men, one Asian American man, one theatre company comprising white men and white women and again, no "WoC" and no black women.

Following their 2008 publication, Anne Fliotsos and Wendy Vierow embraced a global perspective in *International Women Stage Directors* (2013), by offering a detailed account of the contributions of women theatre directors from 24 diverse countries. Organised by country, this book examines how the social, political, historical, economic and religious fabric of each geographical space has influenced the participation of women in professional theatre directing practice in that particular context. Contributing authors in each chapter provide narratives of their country's ground-breaking women directors and outline the contributions of prominent contemporary directors creating work today. One of the chapters includes the earlier-discussed work authored by Marie-Heleen Coetzee and Lliane Loots, which focuses on women stage directors in South Africa (see pages 53-54).

While an evaluation of directing trends in nations beyond South Africa is not a focus of this study, it is worth noting that of the 24 countries examined in *International Women Stage Directors* (2013), eight (Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Egypt, India, Kenya, Pakistan and South Africa) form part of the "global South".[14] Though women stage directors are located differently in each of the eight global South countries cited in the anthology by Fliotsos and Vierow – with some having made significant strides in their participation in theatre over the centuries – it is apparent within each context that recognition of these practitioners' directorial efforts emerged out of particular and generally challenging historical, social, economic and political circumstances, and where these directors had to negotiate the aspect of their gender. Alongside Postcolonial Feminism and its related concept of subalternity, Loots and Coetzee's discussion of the participation of women in South African stage directing is situated against this universal backdrop of women's marginalisation in postcolonial, "Third World" geographical spaces. A recent publication titled *Contemporary Women Stage Directors* (2019) by Paulette Marty presents 27 prominent women directors in the United States and United Kingdom. The collective of women, defined as "mid-term professionals", have directed noteworthy productions in professional theatres across the United Kingdom and United States. The book documents their respective approaches, including engagement with performers, script work, as

[14] This is a concept which has been applied to postcolonial discourse and which broadly refers to the regions of Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania in nations widely recognised as "less developed", "Third World" and on the "Periphery", in relation to European and North American regions, or jointly, the "global North" (Dados & Connell, 2012). The global South indicates areas outside Europe and North America, usually low-income and often politically or culturally marginalised (Dados & Connell, 2012).

well as their insights on the barriers and opportunities presented by race, gender and ethnicity. Of the directors profiled, 18 are white, six are "WoC", two are black (African American) and one is the South African-born American actress and director, Liesl Tommy, who occupies the historical racial category of "Coloured". This book is evidently the first among the international literature published over the past three decades to include a relatively fair number of black women and "WoC" stage directors.

There is a clear trend in international scholarship on theatre directing over the last thirty years: it is practitioners who are white men from the American and European contexts that are predominantly featured. White females generally follow in representation, then men of colour, with "WoC" and black women being the least represented, if not altogether absent. In collections solely dedicated to women theatre directors, it is specifically white European or American women who are mostly profiled, with "WoC" and black women marginally represented, if at all.

Black women in South African theatre directing scholarship

In his article *The Director and the South African Theatre* (1998), Brian Pearce advocates the recognition of directing practice within a South African context, which he argues is not adequately considered. He provides factors that he believes contribute to the general under-representation of the director in South African theatre practice and concludes by offering some suggestions on how the director can be practically situated as an integral aspect of the theatrical production. He argues that South African theatre has primarily been understood from the perspective of the dramatic text, with very little research produced about directing theory. Drawing on the global context, he maintains that while critical debate and research on theatre directors in Britain, Europe and America exist, there is a marked absence of scholarship on directing practice in a South African context.

Pearce maintains that directors, in their reluctance to write about their own productions, are themselves contributing to a lack of research on theatre directing practice. As a result, academics have access to very limited material on the subject of directing (Pearce, 1998: 204). Secondly, drawing attention to reviews, he argues that productions in South Africa are generally poorly documented (Pearce, 1998: 205). While the acting, costumes and setting of the production are generally appraised, the contributions of the director are often absent in the analysis. Pearce argues that failing to give due attention to the role of the director subsequently leads to the dismissal of this role by academics as being of little importance (1998: 204). In

responding to the question of "what can be done to bring the work of South African directors into critical focus?" (Pearce, 1998: 204-205), Pearce offers the following recommendations.

Pearce firstly supports the inclusion of modules on theatre directing in the drama departments of institutions of higher learning, emphasising that research in this field needs to be particularly pursued at postgraduate level (1998: 205). Theatre directing modules are indeed offered at postgraduate level across some of the country's universities, including Rhodes University, the University of Cape Town, the University of the Witwatersrand, the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and Stellenbosch University. With the exception of the University of KwaZulu-Natal,[15] these institutions share a status as historically white institutions. In line with the suggestion of including directing modules in Drama departments, Pearce maintains secondly, that these departments should actively pursue integrating specific modules on theatre criticism into their offerings. It is crucial that theatre journalists be adequately skilled around the various aspects of the discipline, including acting, directing and theatre history, to be equipped in writing quality criticisms (Pearce, 1998: 206). Two decades later, the need for training in the business of the arts emerged as a key factor for some of my respondents. Insights drawn from discussants conveyed that education in the financial sphere of the performing arts is important, since this is directly connected to the sustainability of the artist.

The third suggestion offered by Pearce is that South African productions need to be better documented and that a research institute could be developed for this purpose (Pearce, 1998: 205). Housing production material such as reviews and tape recordings would prove invaluable not only to academics within the discipline, but to the overall development of the discipline (Pearce, 1998: 206). Sixteen years later, Keuris and Krüger (2014) lament the continuing lack of archives for the performing arts and advocate an urgent intervention that will ensure the safeguarding of South Africa's theatre heritage. The Amazwi South African Museum of Literature (formerly NELM), remains an important archive preserving, archiving, and facilitating research into all South African literature in all official languages. However, the National Afrikaans Literary Museum and Research Centre (NALN) which was developed in 1973 in Bloemfontein, along with the state-legislated National Archives established in 1996 and located in Pretoria, remain ailing literary museums. Part of the deterioration of the National

[15] The University of KwaZulu-Natal was formed in 2004 through merging the historically white University of Natal and the University of Durban-Westville. In accordance with the Extension of University Education Act of 1959, the University of Durban-Westville was one of five universities that was to provide education to blacks along both racial and ethnic lines (Meyer, 1974: 12).

Archives is the Department of Arts and Culture's "cursory reference to the archives in its budget debate as pressing problems" (Keuris & Krüger, 2014: 25).

Pearce then highlights the need for South African directors to take up available opportunities to promote their work more vigorously, which he posits as his fourth suggestion (Pearce, 1998: 206). Krijay Govender stresses this point throughout her interview:

> Your biggest thing has got to be marketing and you are actually up against, not other theatre shows; you are up against the movies, the home entertainment systems […] I feel that our education at university should have a course on marketing and should have almost like a computer literacy course because that's how it's moving (Govender, interview, 2019).

Finally, Pearce reiterates that directors need to write accounts of their productions, as this is the most important form of research (1998: 206). He further argues that the researcher must be familiar with directing theory from the last century in Britain, America and Europe, before approaching the task of documenting the unique perspectives and contributions of South African directors (Pearce, 1998: 207).

In her article *Considering Directors and Directing in South Africa*, Gay Morris (2006) addresses, nearly a decade later, the issue of scant scholarship on this subject, but unlike Pearce, considers the factors of race and gender in her discussion. Morris (2006) explains that the aim of the special issue of the *South African Theatre Journal* on directors and directing in South Africa was to address a notable gap: namely, the lack of scholarship dedicated to theatre directing. She observes that newspapers and websites are the only platforms on which the subject of directing is engaged, consequently accentuating the absence of critical commentary on directing practice from scholarly sources. Furthermore, the author notes the problematic binary of reviews – typically, reviewers either offer fervent praise to the director for considered, creative directorial choices, or lambast the director for dull, uninspired work. Akin to Pearce (1998), Morris advocates the significance of documenting South African directing practice in the form of scholarly writing.

Morris firstly states that it is through the academy that the South African directing landscape can be consistently and comprehensively engaged, and subsequently benefit the theatre fraternity (2006: 12). She argues that directing scholarship can go as far as shifting the perception of local productions, since scholarly accounts of these productions would ascribe greater value to them (Morris, 2006: 12). Moreover, she asserts that a profound reflection can

be facilitated for the reader of a scholarly work about directing, as certain themes of the text resonate against familiar cultural, social or political backgrounds (Morris, 2006: 13). The reader is therefore positioned to critically interrogate the director's aesthetic choices and to closely engage South African practices as interpreted by the director.

Secondly, Morris cautions that a lack of directing scholarship could immediately define the profound impact that a particular local production has as "special" or "magical", without critically examining the skills employed by the director alongside key considerations such as social and political context (2006: 12). Furthermore, in the absence of critical analysis, the successful production becomes inaccessible to numerous scholars, as it would have existed insofar as the transient experience of performance, or in journalistic reviews that often lack the necessary rigour in their assessment of theatre work (Morris, 2006: 12-13). Moreover, Morris asserts that a paucity of directing scholarship perpetuates a generalised idea of the local theatre director as "sole heroic individual, usually male" (Canning, 2005: 49).

Drawing parallels with an international context, Morris (2006) notes that while the directorial processes of world-renowned practitioners such as Robert Wilson, Lee Strasberg and Peter Brook are efficiently documented (men, a white American and two Europeans respectively), when looking towards the South African context, there are some published records on the works of Barney Simon, Brett Bailey, and the Junction Avenue Theatre Company (founded by Malcolm Purkey), with the work of Athol Fugard having the most widespread exposure. Interestingly, all the theatre director examples cited by Morris – both local and global – are white men. Alluding to Pearce's argument, Morris concedes that indeed "there is insufficient critical commentary on a range of South African practitioners" (Morris, 2006: 13).

Like the position held by the authors of *Upstaging Big Daddy* (1993) and *Women Directors Speak* (1996), Morris (2006) emphasises the influence of context in theatre directing. She notes the responsibility of the director as one who needs to continuously reflect upon and subsequently respond to the immediate social and political context. She discusses the impact that the social and political context of apartheid South Africa had on the theatre-making of that bygone era. Against the backdrop of the black South African majority's political dissent against apartheid, theatre itself took on the form of resistance. Often devised by a group of theatre-makers, plays would include the director to facilitate the process. In the special issue, McMurtry discusses that the workshopping process involved theatre collectives in search of theatre forms that were deliberately "counter-hegemonic" (2006: 30). Productions were

defined as workshop theatre practice, under the directorship of black and white men directors such as Athol Fugard, John Kani, Winston Ntshona and Barney Simon. The cross-cultural collaborations that generally typified workshop theatre highlight that "black liberation theatre is often a fiercely male-dominated and chauvinistic affair" (Gray, 1990: 82). Noting the influences that today's socio-political context has on contemporary theatre-making, Morris (2006) cites contemporary directors, whose respective aesthetics are engaged in further detail in the articles comprising the special issue – including Marthinus Basson, Mark Fleishman, Jay Pather, Brett Bailey and Geoff Hyland. While four of these directors are white, one would be classified, according to historically contrived race categories, as "Indian". All these directors are men.

Summarising the contemporary directing landscape, Morris acknowledges the absence of black scholars and black directors, as well as women directors. She continues to maintain that "South Africa has gaping holes in theatre scholarship in that, whilst all areas are underwritten, the work of white South African directors is much better archived than that of black South African directors" (Morris, 2006: 27). Morris (2006) notes that of all the contributions submitted for the issue, only two black directors are the focus, while all contributions were made by white scholars. Considering the lack of black scholars writing on theatre practice, Morris cites language as a possible deterrent, since these scholars would have had to express their views in English, as second-language speakers.

Morris (2006) not only summarises appositely the race imbalances at play within scholarship on current South African theatre directing practice, but also articulates the evident gender disparities:

> Women directors are similarly under-represented here in spite of the fact that women have been responsible for some of the most innovative and credible theatre in this country. Janice Honeyman, Ilse van Hemert, Lara Foot-Newton and Yael Farber spring immediately to mind and that doesn't even cover the many other experienced and innovative directors such as Lara Bye, Liz Mills, Bo Peterson, Jacqui Singer, Juanita Swanepoel and Marilyn van Reenen, who are contributing crucially to our national directing practice with startling, searching and innovative work (Morris, 2006: 27).

The salient feature in Morris' argument, of course, is that all ten of the cited South African women directors are white. The implication of the complete absence of examples of black women directors is that this group is not "contributing crucially to our national directing

practice with startling, searching and innovative work" (Morris, 2006: 27). On the contrary, these practitioners have over the last 20 years directed bold productions exploring myriad themes and aesthetic modes of directorial practice across Artscape, the Playhouse and the Market. Morris inadvertently illustrates the startling dearth of academic literature, or even the acknowledgement of the theatre contributions of black South African women directors. Four years after her article "Considering Directors in South African Theatre" (2006) was published, in which she failed to cite a single black woman director, Morris conveyed cognisance of this group of practitioners: "Apartheid itself was incredibly gendered. The black women were like nowhere. That is why it is so amazing that these women did make it into the theatre" (Orton, 2018: 13).

In their book *Theatre Directing in South Africa: Skills and Inspiration* (2014), theatre practitioners Roel Twijnstra and Emma Durden bring into focus the South African directing landscape by interviewing ten contemporary South African theatre directors. Of the ten directors profiled however, only two are black women (Zinzi Princess Mhlongo and Amy Jephta). While Twijnstra and Durden's book, alongside Pearce's and Morris' respective articles are important scholarly contributions that underline the importance of documenting theatre directors in a contemporary South African context, the skewed race and gender demographics of the cited or profiled directors, seem to implicitly mirror and perpetuate the disparities prevalent even in current South African society. These few examples point to the recurring theme across writing on theatre directing, which is the continuing marginalisation of black women in both scholarship and directing practice.

In the case of Pearce's article, the author offers suggestions for addressing the general lack of theatre directing scholarship in South Africa (see pages 68-70). Morris recognises this ongoing issue and expounds on Pearce's analysis, but unlike Pearce, considers race and gender in troubling the paucity of South African theatre directing scholarship. Summarising the contributions to the special issue, Morris notes three glaring absences: "black researchers", "black directors" and "women directors" (2006: 26). While the absence of "black researchers" and "black directors" can imply a shortage of either black men, black women, or both, it can be inferred from the list of ten examples comprising solely white women directors, that "black women" directors are not included in the author's contention around the absence of "women directors". In failing to mention even one black female director, Morris disqualifies this group of practitioners and she renders them absent.

The 1996 White Paper and black women stage directors

The 1996 White Paper identifies three major areas facing the Ministry as governance, finance and access. While several scholars have broadly addressed South African cultural policy, they have done so in relation to various aspects, including education curriculum (Sirayi & Nawa, 2014), alongside the ideal of transformation (Grundy, 1996; Schneider & Nawa, 2019), or along the concept of equality (Duncan, 2001). The arguments presented by Christa Roodt (2006a; 2006b) are foregrounded in that she problematises the primary concerns of the previous Ministry against the 1996 policy framework. In her article "Cultural Policy and the Landscape of the Law in South Africa" (2006a), Roodt discusses the relationship between cultural policy and the Constitution, as well as cultural policy and the state. In her discussion of cultural policy and government, she troubles the constitutional aspect of co-operative governance within the 1996 White Paper. The South African Constitution was promulgated in December 1996, while the White Paper published in June of the same year was formally adopted by Cabinet in August. Since the White Paper is the primary focus of this study, and was published before the Constitution, it is this aspect of the author's discussion that is considered. In "A Critical Look at the Legal Framework for Arts, Culture and Heritage" (2006b), Roodt addresses another principle espoused in the 1996 White Paper, that of "arm's-length funding". Considering the three major areas of the previous Ministry, the principles of cooperative governance and arm's-length funding are closely connected to the issue of access.

Of the 1996 White Paper, Roodt states that "most lamentable is the incompleteness of its perspective on the institutional framework and on the role and competency of all spheres of government in matters cultural, for arguably, this may constitute the greatest obstacle to reform in this sector" (Roodt, 2006a: 218). In a new South African landscape, "one of the key endeavours of the 1996 White Paper was to develop a multifaceted system of governance for culture that aligned to the new three spheres of government": national, provincial and local governments (Joffe et al., 2019: 161). Although the DACST describes cooperative governance as an "emerging framework" (1996: n.p.), Roodt argues that the lack of detail around the roles of the three spheres in cultural matters is the policy's greatest hindrance to transformation.

In terms of finance, the DACST also attempts to articulate the funding parameters of the 1996 White Paper: The document "sets out government policy for establishing the optimum funding arrangements and institutional frameworks for the creation, promotion and protection of South African arts, culture, heritage and the associated practitioners" (1996: n.p.). It is evident from

this statement that the DACST's aim was to construct a cultural policy that would convey funding mechanisms and institutional structures for the institutions it supports. These funding arrangements, which would include national, provincial and local governments within a developing framework of cooperative governance, would be established for the purpose of promoting and protecting the nation's arts, culture and heritage, as well as "associated practitioners". While the connection between cultural policy and funding mechanisms is perceptible, there is a lack of clarity, however, regarding the relationship between cultural policy, funding arrangements, institutional frameworks, practice and practitioners.

Within the cooperative governance framework that was subsequently developed in later policy revisions, the 1996 White Paper suggests that "provincial and local governments *should* provide funds on an ongoing basis to ensure sustainability [of the sector]" (DACST, 1996: n.p.). The suggestive nature of this statement seems to assign peripheral responsibility to provincial and local governments for the overall sustainability of the sector. Further suggestions made relate to the PACs, including that provinces and local municipalities "*should* play a more active funding role" in supporting the PACs and their activities. The policy further "*propose(s)* that the physical infrastructure of these buildings [theatres of the PACs], offices, theatres, etc., *should* be the *joint financial responsibility* of the central government, municipality/metropolitan area and Province in which they are located" [my emphases] (DACST, 1999: n.p.). For an area that "created more controversy than any other issue facing the Ministry", not only do these excerpts demonstrate a nonchalant, indecisive stance by the DACST where the funding of the former PACs and their activities is concerned, but the lack of detail on the practical ways in which this "joint financial responsibility" is to be realised is problematic. Outside of clearly articulated roles and responsibilities, the respective funding obligations of national government, provincial government and local governments towards the former PACs are not clear from the policy framework. Imprecision around funding arrangements within the three levels of government is highlighted by Tembe, who states that the national statutory body – the National Arts Council (NAC) – and provincial governments were tasked with managing the transformation of the PACs without the requisite resources or budget (2013: 35).

The NAC, formed in line with the core Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) principles of redress, access and participation, was founded in April 1997 through an Act of Parliament (Act no. 56 of 1997) and operational from October of that year (van Heerden, 2008: 21). The state-funded entity was established along the objective of funding projects of national

impact. Mandated to distribute public funds to institutions, organisations and practitioners, the NAC was to promote and reflect the full range of South Africa's diverse cultures. Grants would be received through the DACST and "subject to the provisions of the Reporting by Public Entities Act No. 93 of 1992, and other Treasury requirements" (DACST, 1996: n.p.). The NAC budget would then be constructed against agreed criteria, which would be founded "upon considerations of economy, efficiency and effectiveness" and which had to define how reconstruction and development objectives would be fulfilled (DACST, 1996: n.p.).

Despite the DACST's admirable goals for the NAC, Johann van Heerden notes challenges that emerged with the funding body's establishment. During the first decade of transition, NAC funding was distributed across the newly-established nine provinces, where "clearly the money went where the money was to be made," with Gauteng receiving up to half of annual budget allocations (van Heerden, 2008: 48). This distribution process was often criticised as it directly contradicted the transformation ideals and the RDP's fundamental principles of access, equity and participation. Instead of equitable allotments, historically marginalised provinces in fact continued to be side-lined in respect of state subsidies (van Heerden, 2008: 48). A further funding challenge was the NAC's constantly evolving and unclear policy framework, which led to artists being without work security, since grant monies were allocated on an *ad hoc* basis (van Heerden, 2008: 208).

Since a key criterion underpinning transformation of the PACs was a redistribution of resources to communities and practitioners that were totally neglected during the previous dispensation, unsettled funding arrangements within national, provincial and local governments, as well as the uneven distribution of funding through the NAC, served to impede this process. With the phrase "black women" completely absent from the 1996 policy framework, there is no convincing evidence of this group's inclusion within funding arrangements across the three spheres of government. In all fairness, while the policy does not refer to any racial grouping, or to black men as a group who were also oppressed, black women should, within an intersectional framework, be explicitly mentioned and highlighted in its framework due to their gross historical marginalisation.

The principle of arm's-length funding was accepted by the African National Congress during a culture development conference organised by the party, in preparation for the establishment of the Ministry of Culture in a democratic administration (Roodt, 2006b: 56). This principle entails an independent, state-appointed board administering funding provided by national

government (Roodt, 2006a: 57). Roodt (2006b) argues that the principle of "arm's-length funding" can indeed be applied to a South African context, but that its efficacy will be realised where there is no ministerial control when it comes to budget allocations of arts and culture activities. As van Graan notes, this principle was long discarded by the DAC when the Cultural Institutions Amendment Act was passed in 2003 (2013: 14). Through this Act of Parliament, the Minister of Arts and Culture has the right to appoint the boards, chairperson and deputy chairperson of state-supported cultural institutions (van Graan, 2013: 14). In fact, this provision is outlined even in the original Act of 1998. As van Graan aptly puts it, this arrangement "provides for a direct conduit for political intervention as the chairpersons are accountable primarily to their political principal rather than the board members, and board members are invariably intimidated into self-censorship for fear of alienating the chairperson, who is appointed by a politician" (2013: 14). Furthermore, the Act of 1998 states that members of council, in consultation with the Minister, shall appoint a chief executive officer of a "flagship institution" (1998: 7). Given that council is itself appointed at the prerogative of the Minister, it is likely that the chief executive officer would be selected as per the Minister's directive, rather than based on the considerations of his board members. In addition, final approval of applications for state subsidies against key funding mechanisms, like the Mzansi Golden Economy, are equally at the behest of the Minister of Arts and Culture.

Given the applicability of arm's-length funding to the South African context, Roodt alludes that its ineffectiveness can be attributed to "statutory bodies or government officials … misusing, misunderstanding or mismanaging its implications and abusing their powers" (2006b: 56). Ministerial involvement through the Cultural Institutions Amendment Act highlights the political nature of "flagship" institutions and cements their status as "state-controlled" (van Heerden, 2008: 24). The Ministry's proximity in critical matters of funding and leadership does not augur well against the autonomous nature of culture and posits the activities of state-supported theatres like the Market, Playhouse and Artscape as markedly political. Against the political objectives of redress, participation and access espoused in the 1996 White Paper framework, black women are profoundly politically excluded.

In both her articles, Roodt (2006a; 2006b) problematises key aspects of the 1996 White Paper: the constitutional framework of co-operative governance and the principle of "arm's-length" funding respectively. Both aspects relate to funding, which consequently impacts on access and participation. A lack of clarity on funding arrangements across the three levels of government is ground for intergovernmental conflict and passivity in the cultural arena, which

does not bode well for the sector and its practitioners. Focusing on black women directors specifically, their under-representation can be attributed, at least in part, to a policy framework that neglects to allocate funding targeting previously marginalised communities and practitioners within the three demarcated spheres of government. This would in turn hinder their access and participation. Within the framework of the Cultural Institutions Amendment Act of 2003, the principle of arm's-length funding is legitimate interference by the Minister of Arts and Culture. The DACST asserted in the 1996 policy that this "arm's-length" relationship "is fundamental to freedom of expression" (1996: n.p.). With ongoing involvement by the Ministry in matters of arts and culture funding, the sector has taken on a profoundly political nature, where the constitutional right to freedom of expression is under threat. Furthermore, with the phrase "black women" completely absent from the 1996 White Paper, this group is excluded from government's intent as articulated in the policy's framework. It would however appear that this group is not considered among the practitioners with whom this principle of "arm's-length" funding was to be observed. Excluded from the funding arrangements which support national cultural institutions, and from the policy framework itself, black women directors are – whether deliberately or inadvertently - marginalised from participating fully in the sector. In contributing significantly to apartheid's downfall, arts and culture showed its political cogency and helped inscribe a new national identity. The exclusion of black women directors from national theatres in a contemporary democratic context is an erasure of this group from a national identity.

State-supported (national) theatres and national identity

Okagbue (2013) posits that a nation's identity is enacted through performances that take place against the backdrop of particular social and cultural contexts within the space of the theatre. In line with this argument, he notes the significant role that the national theatre, specifically, can play in the "unearthing, management, dissemination, and preservation of the cultures and the inherent identity(ies) of a nation" (Okagbue, 2013: 56). In seeking to respond to the responsibilities of a national theatre, Okagbue (2013) examines the national theatres of South Africa, Uganda, Nigeria, Ghana and Senegal. In his focus on South Africa, Okagbue (2013) mentions the four former Performing Arts Councils that were transformed into playhouses in the new dispensation, as well as the two that were later declared cultural institutions (Market Theatre and Windybrow). Of the six playhouses, Okagbue (2013) briefly discusses the Market Theatre and South African State Theatre. While he lauds the former for its significant role in staging anti-apartheid theatre that challenged the apartheid regime, the latter is recognised as a

theatre that "plays a leading role in the development of the performing arts" in South Africa (Okagbue, 2013: 60). Notably, these are the only two theatres out of the existing six that the author seems to acknowledge as national theatres in South Africa, though all are equally situated as government-declared, state-supported cultural institutions and public entities of the DAC.

From his brief assessment of the cultural institutions of the five African nations, Okagbue concludes that it is only within the South African context that the national theatres seem to be fulfilling their functions, as evident in their unambiguously stated vision and mission statements, programmes, strategies and structures that detail ways in which the promoting, preserving and managing of their arts and culture activities will be achieved (2013: 68). The author highly commends the government and the DAC particularly, for impressive arts policy frameworks; however, he does not acknowledge shortcomings in any significant detail. Firstly, the author seems to imply that the existence of comprehensive policy documents outlining a theatre's vision and mission statements is a guarantee that that particular theatre is fulfilling its specified functions. Secondly, he presents what appears to be a far-reaching assessment of the South African national theatre landscape, given that only two of the country's six state-supported theatres are discussed.

In his articulation of what a national theatre entails, Okagbue does however offer some noteworthy thoughts, primarily the important connections he draws between a country's national theatre and its national identity. During the apartheid period, South Africa's four PACs "managed the largest and best-equipped performing arts complexes in each of the four provinces" (van Heerden, 2008: 26). As beneficiaries of generous state subsidies, also understanding their primary function as staging, nurturing and advancing white, elitist theatre, these PACS managed performing arts complexes that collectively signified the image of the South African national theatre space. Each of the theatres under management of the PACs is therefore positioned in South African history as a cultural expression of a particular national identity, which during that period, was defined in terms of the white minority (Roper, 1997; Baines, 1998; Stinson, 2009). Okagbue observes the political imperative of national theatres, in that in four of the five case studies, the emergence of a national theatre in Africa often followed periods of political domination in countries under colonial rule. To re-assert and recover their identities which were forcefully assimilated into the culture of the oppressor, national theatres became spaces for the post-independence reclamation of African cultures and for the articulation of national identities (Okagbue, 2013: 66). In recognising the complexity

of the notion of a national theatre, Okagbue notes three foremost ways of understanding a national theatre.

Firstly, as a political or cultural concept, Okagbue (2013) notes that a national theatre is concerned with ideas of nationalism, nationhood and the nation's cultural identity. Within this perspective, the national theatre is responsible for promoting and preserving the "national and cultural identities of the nation and its constituent peoples" (Okagbue, 2013: 67). In the second instance, the national theatre can be thought of as a physical building which houses and showcases the nation's artistic practices (Okagbue, 2013: 67). At the third level, the national theatre can be conceived of as an institution whose function is to research, document, archive and display the nation's cultural wealth (Okagbue, 2013: 67). The author argues that of the five case studies examined, it is only the National Theatre in Ghana and the DAC in South Africa, with its associated playhouses and festivals, which appear to be trying to achieve the three above-discussed spheres of activity.

In line with Okagbue's argument, the artistic activities showcased in a national theatre should be representative of a nation's people who are diverse in race, gender, class, religion and so forth. In a South African context, this definition of the national theatre corresponds with intrinsic ideals such as transformation, inclusivity, equality, social cohesion and nation-building, that are recurrent themes in cultural policy. If Okagbue's argument necessitates a synergy in relationship between a country's national theatre and its national identity, then the under-representation of black women stage directors in national theatres in contemporary South Africa is profoundly concerning. In a contemporary theatre context, it is important that perceptible shifts in the race and gender demographics of theatre practitioners be realised, especially given that this is a position articulated in the cultural policy, however obliquely. According to the 1996 policy, redress is an operational principle that "shall ensure the correction of historical and existing imbalances through … affirmative action with regard to race [and] gender..." (DACST, 1996: n.p.). The marginalisation of black women from state-supported theatres in a contemporary context fundamentally signals their exclusion from a national South African identity.

Returning to Lekalake, though her discussion was articulated more than five years ago, it still bears relevance, given the negligible presence of black women stage directors in state-supported theatres, which in turn point towards a lack of transformation. Just as Lekalake's chapter refers to the 1996 White Paper, so too does this study, given that the 1996 policy is still

in effect. In its aim to determine whether black women directors are located visibly within the DAC's amended policy frameworks, this study, unlike Lekalake's inquiry, also engages subsequent policy iterations. While Lekalake's case studies are black women directors making work in a post-1994 context and selected on the basis of prominence (as deemed by the author), this study identifies three state-supported theatres located in the three main metropolitan South African areas. In addition, this study includes the personal accounts of black women directors whose works have featured in one of these theatres at different intervals during the last twenty years (1999–2018). This focus is with the aim of mapping the trajectory of black women directors in mainstream theatres.

Lekalake addresses both the inadequacies of the original policy document and the failure of state-supported theatre institutions in their responsibility towards black women theatre directors. She argues that not only has there been ongoing marginalisation of black women practitioners in South African theatre, but also that while resources and opportunities are available, their distribution is questionable. Within the framework of the 1996 White Paper, this study aims to similarly interrogate national policy, as well as its outworking at the level of institutional processes.

Research Methodology

Introduction

This is a qualitative study that amalgamates three variants of textual analysis, namely content analysis, critical discourse analysis and narrative analysis. The methodological approach is informed by the primary aim of the inquiry, which is to explore within the 20-year period under investigation, the relationship and apparent disjuncture between South African cultural policy, selected state-supported cultural institutions responsible for implementing cultural policy and the practical participation of black women stage directors within these institutions. While there are six state-supported theatres, this study focuses on three: Market Theatre (Johannesburg), Artscape Theatre Centre (Cape Town) and Playhouse (Durban).

The study's engagement with cultural policy entails examining primarily the existing policy framework of the 1996 White Paper, together with subsequent versions of the White Paper published in 2013, 2015 and two iterations in 2017. In addition, other documents outlining the plans and strategies of the DAC for arts, culture and heritage including the National Development Plan of 2030, National Strategy on Social Cohesion and Nation-Building and the

Mzansi Golden Economy are also engaged with. This is to facilitate a rounded understanding of the Ministry's position and vision for the sector.

Content analysis is suitable in "studies that analyse the *content* of texts or documents (such as letters, speeches, and annual reports), where "content" refers to words, meanings, pictures, themes or any message that can be communicated" (Mouton, 2005: 165). This methodology is used for scrutiny of the policy documents that underpin the investigation.

The process of analysing the relevant policy documents involved engaging with the various drafts of the White Paper individually. This entailed carefully reading each policy document, while making detailed notes on a separate document. Notes taken included summaries of the points outlined in each document, as well as immediate thoughts that were provoked by the content of the policy, in relation to the under-representation of black women directors in state-supported cultural institutions. After this process was finalised for each policy draft, the documents were then analysed collectively, to deduce similarities, discrepancies and the general position of the Department of Arts and Culture towards the sector in South Africa. The same process was used for analysing relevant documents including annual reports and government strategy papers.

The methodology of critical discourse analysis "primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (Van Dijk, 2018: 466). This methodological approach was appropriate in seeking to understand the processes employed by each of the three cultural institutions in mediating the meaningful involvement of black women directors. As such, face-to-face in-depth interviews with each of the three theatre's institutional leaders (Artistic Directors/CEOs) were conducted. A face-to-face interview is a conversation that takes place in a particular social and political context. Through analysing the rhetoric in the individual interviews with the Artistic Directors/CEOs, the study aimed to interrogate meanings that were deducible from the words spoken by each institutional leader.

Lastly, narrative analysis was a relevant method of inquiry for framing the personally narrated subjective experiences of the selected 12 black South African women stage directors. According to Clandinin, "while the starting point for narrative inquiry is an individual's experience it is also an exploration of the social, cultural and institutional narratives within which individual's experiences are constituted, shaped, expressed and enacted" (2006: 46). This methodological approach essentially creates an enabling environment for members of this

most historically marginalised group to speak for themselves in the context of particular social, cultural and institutional narratives.

Nature of the Study

This research employs a case study approach, since case studies "are usually qualitative in nature and aim to provide an in-depth description of a small number (less than 50) of cases" (Mouton, 2005: 149). This approach is relevant given that the cases under investigation are three state-supported theatres. In addition, the approach is beneficial for research where "the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context" (Baxter & Jack, 2008: 545).

Research Design

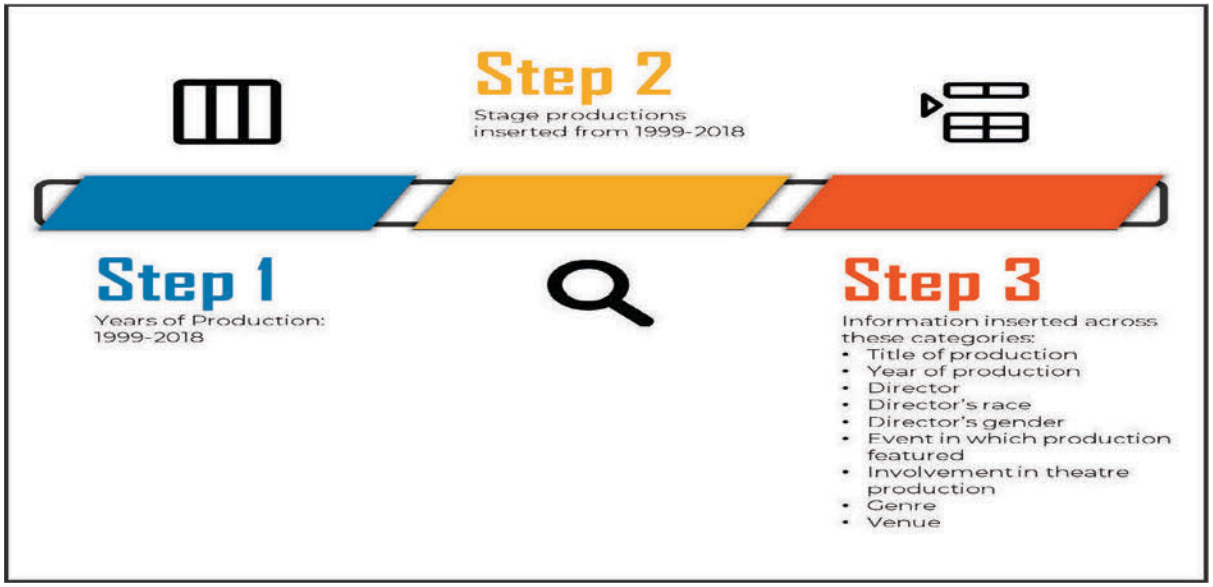

Figure 4: Steps of the study's research design

This study considers all productions staged between 1999 and 2018 at three state-supported theatres: the Market Theatre, the Playhouse and Artscape. The primary undertaking of the research involves engaging with available archival material of the three theatres. Firstly, stage productions that featured at each of the three theatres were placed onto three separate spreadsheets. Secondly, productions were inserted for all the 20 years under investigation (that is, 1999 until 2018). This resulted in three databases of production information across a 20-year period. Lastly, production information across the three spreadsheets was inserted along the following categories:

- Title of production
- Year of production
- Director

- Director's race
- Director's gender
- Event in which production featured
- Involvement of theatre in production
- Genre
- Venue

Directors were tallied on the basis of both individual productions, as well as co-directed works. The number of directors reflected in Figures 1, 2 and 3 (see pages 37-39) therefore include practitioners that directed individually as well as jointly. This aligns with the study's focus on establishing all directors who have accessed the three theatres in some capacity during the 20 years under investigation. Theatre-makers who were only part of co-directions are however not considered in the selection strategy employed in determining the 12 discussants. Since the study aims to foreground black women practitioners who have occupied the role of sole key shaper of a production, it is only those directors who have helmed productions individually that were considered as interview respondents. As such, it is directors who directed plays individually who have been listed in the tables on pages 100, 102 and 104.

Significance of selected categories in organising production data

Title of production

The title of each production was the immediate descriptor in the study. A production was identified primarily by its title. It was also the title that enabled subsequent research to be conducted about a specific production.

Year of production

Each production had to have taken place between 1999 and 2018, as this is the delineated period of investigation.

Director

Given the study's focus on the representation of black women directors across the three state-supported theatres under view, the identity of each director was integral.

Race and gender profile of director

Given the study's primary objective, the race and gender profile of each director was an essential aspect of the research. Alongside the gender identification of either "Male" or

"Female", the directors were placed in one of the following race classifications: "African", "Indian", "Coloured" or "White".

Event in which production featured

This variable was to establish the capacity in which the production featured at each theatre space. In other words, the study sought to ascertain whether each production featured as part of a special event, such as a festival or a commemoration occasion, or was given a season in the calendar of artistic productions in that specific theatre over a particular year. This information was significant in establishing the importance credited to a production.

Production involvement by state-supported theatre

Mounting a production in a theatre space requires financial contribution. Establishing the involvement of the state-supported theatre in the showcasing of a production was therefore an important consideration, as it signified a repertoire of productions deemed valuable by the respective theatre institutions. This variable was to establish whether productions attached to a director/s of a particular race and gender were typically financially supported by the cultural institution.

Genre

Given this study's focus on black women as stage directors, it was specifically theatrical productions that featured in the three theatres during the 20 years under examination, which were considered. Attention was therefore given to productions that would have a director at the helm, be it under the genre of drama, comedy, youth theatre, children's theatre or musicals.

Venue

The three theatres have distinct performance venues within them, each with differing seating capacities and technical resources. This aspect was established to note if any patterns emerge with regard to the spaces which have been commonly occupied by black women directors at Artscape, the Market and the Playhouse.

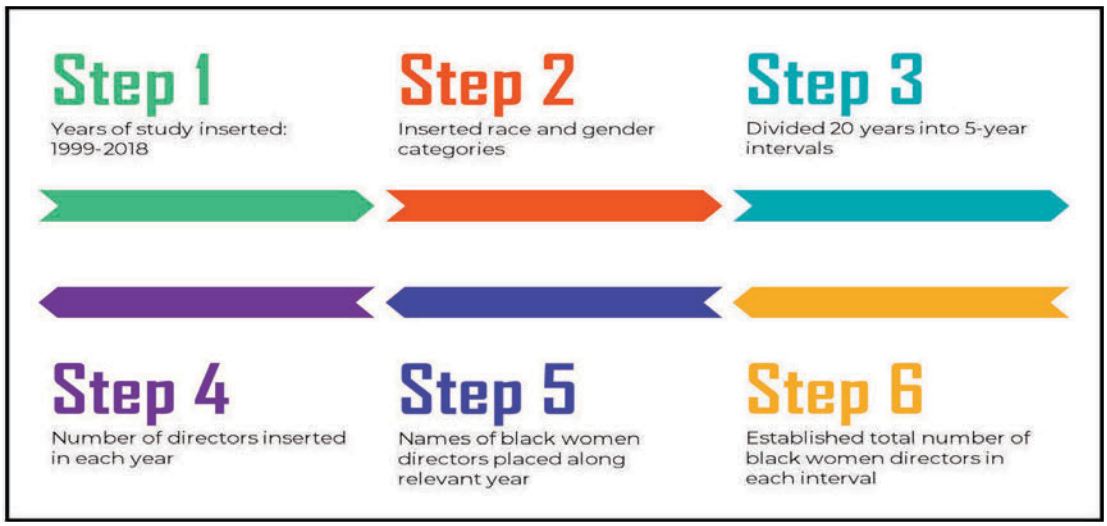

Figure 5: Steps to establish total number of black women stage directors (1999–2018)

Step 1

This study considers all the productions staged between 1999 and 2018 at three state-supported theatres. The primary undertaking of the research involves engaging available archival material of Market Theatre, Playhouse and Artscape Theatre for productions that featured during this 20-year period.

Step 2:

The following race and gender categories were inserted:

- African male
- African female
- Coloured male
- Coloured female
- Indian male
- Indian female
- White male
- White female

The additional categories were also placed to account for productions that did not fit the above groupings:

- Foreign male
- Foreign female
- Unspecified.

Step 3:

The 20-year period under examination was divided into four 5-year intervals; that is, 1999–2003, 2004–2008, 2009–2013 and 2014–2018. This was essentially to determine the following:

- The total number of directors per year, according to race and gender.
- The total number of directors in each of the four 5-year intervals, according to race and gender.
- The total number of productions in each of the relevant fields over the entire 20-year period, according to race and gender.

Step 4

The number of directors was plotted for each of the 20 years under examination.

Step 5:

The names of all black women directors were inserted into their corresponding categories, whether "African female", "Coloured female" and "Indian female". All names of black women directors were subsequently highlighted, as this was the pool from which study respondents would be selected.

Step 6

The total number of black women per interval was established. Four black women directors were sought as discussants for each of the three theatres. The criterion was that respondents occupied the race categories of "African", "Coloured" and "Indian" over the period under investigation (considering available data). In its aim to apply this selection strategy for all three theatres, the study therefore anticipated a total number of 12 interviewees.

Strategy for selecting participants

Figure 6: Selection criteria for directors

A selection was made based on one or more of these criteria:

- Directors were selected along the priority of *population group*. In other words, a black director was sought across each of the different intervals in each theatre, such that all three race categories are represented over the 20-year period in each theatre.
- In instances where more than one director of the same race existed in the same interval, the aspect of *quantity* was also considered. It was then determined which of those directors directed the most productions in that interval.
- In cases where more than one director of the same race existed in the same interval – where all had directed an equal number of productions – other intervals were also considered in order to determine *longevity*.
- In occasions where a practitioner had directed in more than one of the three *theatres* under investigation, this was also considered.

Significance of selection criteria

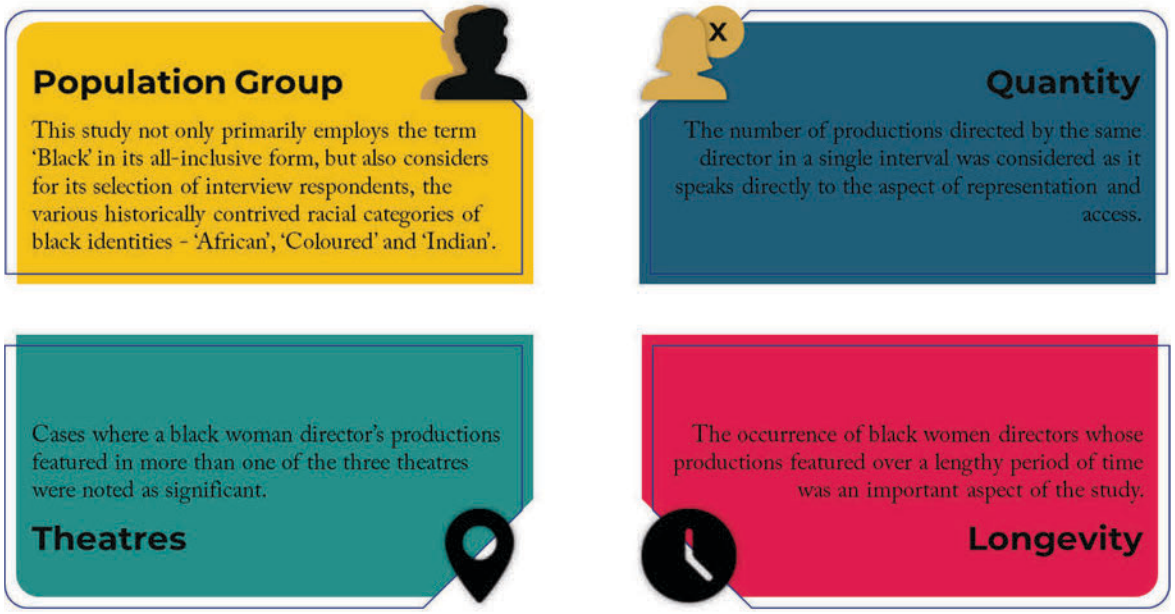

Figure 7: Significance of selection criteria

- **Population group**: This study not only primarily employs the term "Black" in its all-inclusive form, but also considers for its selection of interview respondents, the various historically contrived racial categories of black identities – "African", "Coloured" and "Indian". This is for the purpose of enabling representativity, as the nuanced and varied histories and experiences of South African women diverse in their "Blackness" are given due regard.

- **Quantity**: The number of productions directed by the same director in a single interval was considered as it speaks directly to the aspect of representation and access. The study recognised the rare occurrence of black women directors who accessed a state-supported theatre more than once in a relatively short period of time (5 years).

- **Longevity:** The occurrence of black women directors whose productions featured over a lengthy period was an important aspect of the study. Again, given the study's focus on the marginal representation of black women directors in state-supported theatres, instances where these practitioners were an enduring presence over the years were noteworthy.

- **Theatres:** Cases where a black woman director's production featured in more than one of the three theatres were noted as significant.

Since the identities of the Artistic Directors/CEOs are an established fact, criteria for selection of this group of interview respondents was unnecessary.

Method

Face-to-face interviews

According to Opdenakker (2006), face-to-face interviews have the benefit of "social cues", such as intonation, voice and body language of the interviewee. These social cues "of the interviewee can give the interviewer a lot of extra information that can be added to the verbal answer of the interviewee on a question" (Opdenakker, 2006: 394). Face-to-face interviews prove a valuable method in establishing the implicit responses of the interviewees, further enriching the quality of responses elicited. More important than being face-to-face, these interviews were in-depth. In-depth interviews involve conducting interviews with a select number of respondents to explore individual and detailed perspectives (Gill et al. 2008). They provide a greater level of individualised detail and a more complete picture of the field of interest.

According to Uwe Flick: "You should ask unstructured questions first and introduce increased structuring only later during the interview to prevent the interviewer's frame of reference being imposed on the interviewee's viewpoints" (2009: 151). Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were employed for both the CEOs/Artistic Directors and the 12 black women theatre directors, as it allowed for diversions from the interview schedule when necessary.

Data Collection: Market, Playhouse and Artscape

Market Theatre

The process of engaging with the Market Theatre archives began by inspecting the existing full records of material from 1999–2012, obtained via electronic mail from the National English Literary Museum (NELM).[16] Since the institution did not hold collections from 2013–2018, electronic copies of Market Theatre's annual reports for this period were accessed from the theatre's website. To establish theatre productions that featured during 2013 to 2018, the respective annual reports of the Market Theatre were examined.

Information in the annual reports included, but was not limited to:

[16] The National English Literary Museum (now called the Amazwi South African Museum of Literature) was gazetted as a cultural institution in 1980. Located in Grahamstown (Eastern Cape), the museum houses the most comprehensive records pertaining to southern African literature in English, with collections including authors' manuscripts, diaries, posters, correspondence, theatre programmes, play-scripts and so forth.

- Production title
- Season or dates in which the production featured
- Writer
- Director
- Cast
- Author
- Sound designer
- Lighting designer
- Venue at which the production was performed

Recording data

Relevant production information was then recorded at 5-year intervals onto a spreadsheet under the above-mentioned appropriate categories. Because each year's records existed in its own document, this enabled a methodical process. The respective records were examined a second time, a process which entailed noting any gaps in information and correcting any details that were erroneously recorded initially. This process was undertaken for all subsequent 5-year intervals, namely the periods 1999–2003, 2004–2008, 2009–2013 and 2014–2018.

After information for the entire 20-year period was recorded, a process of final cross-checking was conducted, whereby the data recorded for each year (1999–2018) was individually examined against the comprehensive Market Theatre records. Obtainable information was inserted alongside the appropriate category, while remaining gaps in data were noted as "unspecified".

Challenges and limitations

Some records did not readily have information across all the above categories – this necessitated further online searches to obtain the outstanding information. A challenge with this was that at times divergent information would be yielded by different websites for the same search. In such instances, a search on at least two websites was conducted, to attain the most precise data.

The name of the director/s and the Market Theatre's involvement in the production was not always indicated. It was of course not anticipated that the records would include the race and gender demographics of the directors. While physical characteristics do not always determine race, the concept of race as an arbitrary construct, is broadly and loosely understood to refer to a group of peoples who share distinct or similar physical characteristics. As such, it is this

common understanding of race that is applied in the process of identifying directors. In the case of directors that I was not familiar with, ascertaining their race and gender profile required an online image search. In the image search, the director's name was accompanied by key words such as "theatre director" and the name of the production, in order to yield results both quicker and more accurately. In cases where there were no existing online images of the director, I returned to the full records of the Market Theatre collection, to then insert the name of the director using the find and navigate function. I would then look for records indicating photographs in which that director appears. If the above avenues did not yield results, "unspecified" would be indicated in the relevant field of the spreadsheet.

A further challenge was that some records also indicated a range of years for a single production's performance. For example, a single record of a production would note "1999–2001". It was therefore not immediately clear if the production ran during that entire three-year period, or if these years denoted other information, such as performances outside of the Market Theatre. In order to establish accurate production dates, a further search into additional electronic records with overlapping content had to be done, alongside online searches of reviews and press releases that clearly indicated the production dates for performances.

Online sources that yielded results, subsequently addressing gaps in data that still existed, included *Mail & Guardian* online, *Artslink* and the open access online resource, *Encyclopaedia of South African Theatre, Film, Media and Performance* (ESAT). While a significant amount of Market Theatre production data was obtained through cohesive records from NELM, searching additional records was still a time-consuming process, since the available data did not include information across all relevant categories.

The Playhouse

Production information was sourced from hard copy programmes housed at the institution. There were a few programmes missing, due to ongoing renovations at the time of accessing the archives. Further to this, given ongoing digitisation of the institution's archival material, data could not be sourced from the organisation's website. These gaps were subsequently addressed using other online sources.

Recording data

Available programmes were perused meticulously, to establish information across the various categories; title of production, year of production, director, director's race, director's gender, event in which production featured, involvement of Playhouse in production, genre and venue.

The relevant information was immediately inserted onto a spreadsheet; in so doing, formulating a database of productions that featured at the Playhouse between 1999 and 2018.

Challenges and limitations

A challenge with engaging the physical programmes was that some of them did not include information across all the necessary categories. While some programmes only included a brief synopsis of the production, others did not cite a year of the production, and others did not include a director's name. In cases where the director was mentioned, it was not expected that their race and gender would be mentioned in the programmes, necessitating an internet image search to determine this information. To verify the race classification of an unknown director, a name search was done. This was an attempt to link the director to a piece of written work that might shed light on the physical characteristics of the director (whether a newspaper article, theatre review, journal article, professional profile or the like). If this method failed to yield the desired results, "unspecified" was inserted in the column of race. If the director's sex could not be determined, "unspecified" was likewise inserted in the relevant column.

Internet sources proved valuable in addressing most gaps in information. Notable sites that generally contained useful information pertaining to the director's identity, year of production or venue at which a production featured, included *Artslink*, *D'Arts* (Durban net), *IOL* (Independent online), *Press Reader* and *ARTTHROB*. Unlike Market Theatre records which existed in two documents – productions per year and the comprehensive records comprising all productions from 1999 to 2018 – a mechanism was required to undertake a cross-checking process for the Playhouse records. To facilitate this process, after all the production information from hard copy programmes was inserted onto the spreadsheet, a year by year online search was conducted, from 1999 to 2018. This entailed inserting in the search bar, "Playhouse Theatre" followed by "year". The results yielded were then scrutinised for information that would close any existing gaps in the spreadsheet. After this process was complete, a comprehensive search based on festivals at the Playhouse was conducted. The Playhouse has held various festivals and programmes over the decades, including the annual and ongoing South African Women's Arts Festival (SAWAF), the New Stages Festival (including the Fringe showcase), the Community Arts Festival (CAF), the Community Arts Mentorship Programme (CAMP), the KZN Arts Showcase, as well as productions that commemorate special occasions (such as the "20th year of democracy programme" of 2014) and productions marketed as part of each festive season's offerings. An online search was conducted based on

each festival, to address any remaining gaps in data. The website whose advanced search function facilitated this process best was *Artslink*.

The Playhouse Company's annual reports span just 10 financial years – from 2008/9 to 2017/8. These reports were then engaged with in a final effort to close any gaps in information for productions that occurred during these 10 financial years. As with information that could not be obtained for Market Theatre productions, remaining gaps were categorised as "unspecified".

Artscape

Production information pertaining to Artscape was primarily sourced from the institution's annual reports. The first published annual report was for the 2001/2002 financial year; even so, this report did not include comprehensive production information. There were no existing annual reports for the financial years 1998/1999, 1999/2000 and 2000/2001. This is seemingly due to the institution's transition from being the Nico Malan Theatre Complex under the management of CAPAB, to the renamed Artscape in March 1999 – a playhouse under new management. The earliest hard copy programme that was available from the period under study includes productions from December 1999 to February 2000. In this programme and the one that follows most closely (November 2000 to January 2001), the institution is referred to as both "Artscape" and "Nico Theatre Centre". This transitional period – as reflected in the dual identification of the theatre – also clearly signified disruptions on the reporting of the institution's activities in the earlier years. Surprisingly, the institution's annual report for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 is devoid of any of the production information that was indicated in earlier reports, including title of production, genre, performance dates, producer or venue. The document only reports the number of productions or events, as well as the number of performances across the respective genres. Similarly, this same information is completely absent from the annual report for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. Fortunately, this outstanding information pertaining to productions that featured across these two financial years (2016/2017 and 2017/2018) was later sourced from the archivist through colour scans of relevant theatre programmes, which subsequently covered most gaps in information.

The first annual report that was relatively detailed in its production chronology and information was of the 2002/2003 financial year. From this annual report to the one reporting on the 2015/2016 financial year, the various productions and events held at Artscape during each of these 14 financial years were indicated. Productions and events were classified according to the following genres:

- Audience development and education department
- Concerts
- Corporate events
- Dance
- Drama/comedy
- Exhibitions
- Film and photo shoots
- Films
- Hospitality events
- Musicals/musical theatre
- Opera
- Variety shows
- Youth theatre
- Rehearsal room hire
- Other events (including meetings)

For the purpose of the study, it was productions listed under the genres of "Drama/Comedy", "Musicals/Musical Theatre" and "Youth Theatre" that were considered, given that these categories included a chronology of theatre productions and so it could reasonably be assumed that these are genres which typically have a director attached to them.

Recording data

Accessible, relevant data was then tabulated, keeping to the same categories of Title of production, Year of production, Director's name, Director's race, Director's gender, Event in which production featured, Production involvement by Artscape, Venue and Genre. Information in each annual report included the title of each production that featured during the particular financial year, the production company responsible for the production, the venue in which the production took place, as well as the genre of each production.

Challenges and limitations

Because each annual report comprised productions that featured at Artscape between the first of April of one year and the end of March the following year, it was not immediately deducible in which exact year a production showcased. For this reason, two years were initially cited alongside each production on the spreadsheet of productions that featured over the 20-year period – for example, 2015/2016.

A further challenge was posed by some of the items cited under each genre. Firstly, the combined genre of "Drama/Comedy" proved problematic. Given that this genre was articulated as a dual category, it was not directly clear whether the respective production listed under this category was either a drama or a comedy. In addition, some productions listed under this grouping were not necessarily theatre productions, but rather stand-up comedy performances. Secondly, some of the items included under the genres of "Youth Theatre" and "Drama/Comedy", were similarly not theatre productions, but instead festivals. The productions within these individual festivals were not subsequently mentioned and so could not be included in the overall tally of production information.

After the information was inserted across the categories, data that still needed to be determined was each production's director, including each director's race and gender, as well as the specific year in which the production featured. An online search of each individual production was subsequently conducted to fill those gaps. This search, which was done by title of production, yielded some information along the categories of director's name and the specific year in which the production was showcased. Outstanding information pertaining to Artscape productions over the period of study was mostly derived from online sources including *Artslink*, *IOL* (Independent online), *Press Reader*, *Weekend Special* and *Cape Town Magazine*.

Given the absence of annual reports covering the financial years 1998/1999, 1999/2000 and 2000/2001, hard copy programmes housed at Artscape's archival room were looked at. Electronically accessed colour-scans from the archivist addressed, if only in part, the absence of comprehensive production information across the annual reports for the 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 financial years. The programmes included production information from the period June, July and August 2017, as well as March, May, July, August and December 2018. This additional production data was subsequently inserted into the existing electronic table. Remaining gaps in information were, as in the case of the Market Theatre and Playhouse, labelled "unspecified".

Interviews

First Phase: Interviews with Institutional Leaders (Artistic Directors/CEOs)

The first phase of interviews was conducted with the institutional leaders of the three theatres. This study aimed to engage with institutional leaders within the specific role of Artistic Director or CEO, given that it is an individual occupying this role who is typically responsible for the selection of productions that comprise a cultural institution's artistic calendar. The three

theatres that are case studies employ different leadership structures: Mr James Ngcobo is Artistic Director of the Market Theatre in Johannesburg, Ms Linda Bukhosini is both CEO and Artistic Director of the Playhouse in Durban and Ms Marlene le Roux serves as the CEO of Artscape Theatre Centre in Cape Town – the institution does not include as part of its structure the position of Artistic Director.

As the respective leaders of the three cultural institutions, the Artistic Directors/CEOs were requested via electronic communication for in-person, in-depth interviews, all of which were granted. Interviews were carried out between October and November 2018, each an average of one hour in duration. Interviews were audio-recorded and written notes were also taken to complement the recording, as well as to bring attention to certain key words and phrases. Interviews were later transcribed verbatim for analysis. Discussants were given the opportunity to vet responses before publication.

These interviews were conducted with the aim of gaining first-hand insights from the leaders themselves around the issue of access and participation of black women directors in their respective organisations. As decision-makers of artistic programming, the institutional leaders' responses offered important perspectives, as individuals mandated to operate within the transformation paradigm that is encapsulated in cultural policy.

Each Artistic Director/CEO was subsequently interviewed to determine the institutional processes and decisions about access. These interviews, which provided insight into primary data that would have otherwise been challenging to acquire, were designed along the two thematic foci of "Background" and "Training and Capacity Building" (see Appendix A).

The "Background" questions were designed to establish each institutional leader's responsibilities in their respective position, career highlights and challenges, each one's perceptions of the state-supported theatre industry, as well as each leader's response to the critique that the same directors feature in state-supported theatre spaces.

The theme of "Training and Capacity Building" comprised many questions. These involved topics like development opportunities made available to emerging directors, efforts to recruit the works of previously marginalised groups, as well as factors determining whether a production will feature in each theatre. Questions in this section also included processes concerning funding and commissioning that are observed by the institution, as well as the relationship between government's mandate (as articulated in the 1996 White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage) and how the institution functions. This theme also addressed views on

the representation of black women theatre directors in state-supported institutions, race and gender demographics of directors who have featured in the particular theatre over the last two decades (1999–2018), and perspectives on what still needs to be done in order to realise a state-supported theatre sector devoid of race and gender inequalities where directors of productions are concerned.

Due to the extremely demanding schedules of the institutional leaders – and thus the unlikelihood of follow-up interviews – the time set aside for each interview had to be maximised. While CEO and Artistic Director of Durban's Playhouse, Linda Bukhosini consented to an interview which subsequently took place, content from this interview has been excluded from this thesis. As stated earlier, quotes from Ms. Bukhosini's interviews have been omitted from this study, as she subsequently withdrew participation. Discussion of the Playhouse is therefore based on secondary sources in the public domain.

In its aim to understand the participation of black women directors in three state-supported theatres, this study seeks to elevate the authentic voices of its respondents. Use of real names is therefore a deliberate act of recognition and privileging of the experiences of black women directors. To this end, the respondents were requested to forego anonymity. In return, as the researcher, I committed to retain the integrity of the interviewee's voice, neither misrepresenting the discussant's words nor taking them out of context. Respondents also had the opportunity to request sections of the thesis draft wherein they are quoted, for their final authorisation. Of the total 14 respondents, 13 agreed to use of their real names, while only one requested to be treated anonymously (see Appendix C). As such, this respondent is referred to throughout the thesis using a pseudonym.

Second Phase: Interviews with the 12 Black Women Stage Directors

The subjective experiences of each of the 12 directors were ascertained through in-depth, face-to-face interviews, where each director was asked questions along themes including "Education and Training", "Life as a Director", the influence of "Identity and Gender in Practice", "Accessing Mainstream Theatres" and "Legacy" (see Appendix B). Interviews took place between May and June 2019 across Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town, in different locations, including eateries, arts and cultural centres, places of work and homes. Each interview was approximately an hour and a half in length. Interviews were audio-recorded alongside written notes which were taken in cases where a follow-up question was not reflected

on the interview schedule and in order to highlight certain words and phrases. Interviews were later transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Selection of 12 Respondents[17]

The Playhouse

1999–2003: Chantal Snyman (Coloured)

2004–2008: Gcina Mhlophe (African)

2009–2013: Krijay Govender (Indian)

2014–2018: Bukelwa Cakata (African)

In the 1999–2003 interval, plays at the Playhouse were directed by Gcina Mhlophe, Sherona Panday, Shelley Barry, and Chantal Snyman, who directed on two occasions. Snyman is the only black woman director to have featured more than once during this interval (1999 and 2000) and so she is selected as a respondent. Between 2004 and 2008, the following black women directed productions: Thulile Bhengu, Mapule Mchunu, Malika Ndlovu, Smeetha Maharaj, Krijay Govender and Gcina Mhlophe. Mhlophe not only features in this interval (2007), she also features in two other intervals (1999 and 2017). Overall, she features in three of the four intervals and so is selected as this period's interviewee. During the period 2009–2013, Smeetha Maharaj and Krijay Govender were the only two directors to feature. Govender is the only one to have directed more than once during this period (2010 and 2013). She also directed in the previous interval (2006), as well as in the subsequent one (2016). For these reasons, she is selected for this period. Black women directors that featured between 2014 and 2018 include Ntsako Mkhabela, Khudjo Green, Gcina Mhlophe, Zimkitha Kumbaca, Nosipho Sikhakhane, Vanita Maharaj, Sivani Chinnapan, Krijay Govender, Jade Bowers, Amanda Forbay, Warona Seane and Bukelwa Cakata. Cakata is the only female director to have directed more than one production in this interval (2014 and 2016). She also directed a production in Artscape at the end of the previous interval (2013). Based on these factors, she is selected as the discussant for this interval.

A glaring feature at the Playhouse is that of the 20 years under examination, black women directors did not feature at all over seven years: 2002, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2011, 2012 and 2015. In the 13 years that they did direct, 19 individual black women staged a total of 28 productions at the theatre (See Table 1).

[17] The different colours across the three tables indicate the four 5-year intervals.

Table 1: Black women directors at the Playhouse, 1999–2018

Year	African women (9)	Coloured women (5)	Indian women (5)	Productions
1999	Gcina Mhlophe	**CHANTAL SNYMAN**		**2**
2000		Chantal Snyman		**1**
2001		Shelley Barry	Sherona Panday	**2**
2002				–
2003				–
2004	Thulile Bhengu			**1**
2005				–
2006	**GCINA MHLOPHE**	Malika Ndlovu	Smeetha Maharaj Krijay Govender	**4**
2007	Gcina Mhlophe	Shelley Barry		**2**
2008	Mapule Mchunu			**1**
2009				–
2010			Smeetha Maharaj Krijay Govender	**2**
2011				–
2012				–
2013			**KRIJAY GOVENDER**	**1**
2014	**BUKELWA CAKATA**		Vanita Maharaj	**2**
2015				–
2016	Ntsako Makubela Bukelwa Cakata Khutjo Green		Sivani Chinnapan	**4**
2017	Gcina Mhlophe Nosipho Sikhakhane Warona Seane	Jade Bowers		**4**
2018	Zimkitha Kumbaca	Amanda Forbay		**2**
	13 productions	7 productions	8 productions	**28**

Artscape

1999–2003: Shelley Barry (Coloured)

2004–2008: Fatima Dike (African)

2009–2013: Angie Lekota* (African)

2014–2018: Warona Seane (African)

During the five-year period 1999–2003, Shelley Barry was the only black woman to be featured as a director at Artscape. She also directed at the Playhouse over two intervals (2001 and 2007). In the following interval, 2004–2008, Natalia da Rocha and Fatima Dike were the only black women directors to feature at Artscape. Notably, Dike became the first African woman to feature as a director at Artscape (2008). She also went on to direct another six productions across the subsequent two intervals (2010, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2017 and 2018). For these reasons, she is selected as this period's respondent. Between the years 2009 and 2013, the following black women directed productions at Artscape: Mamela Nyamza, Fatima Dike, Euodia Samson, Warda Jabbar, Liesel Gaffley, Angie Lekota and Thoko Ntshinga, who directed three productions in this interval and four works across subsequent periods. Ntshinga was initially selected and subsequently declined to participate in the study. Lekota directed two productions over two intervals – at the end of an interval in 2013 and again at the start of the subsequent interval in 2014. For this reason, she is a feasible alternative. In the final interval, 2014–2018, the following black women directed works at Artscape: Thoko Ntshinga (directed on four occasions), Fatima Dike and Lee-Ann van Rooi (each directed three productions), Amy Jephta (directed twice), Mamela Nyamza, Angie Lekota, Sheila Davids, Yvonne Sisipho Mbopha, Chuma Sopotela, Jacqueline Manyaapelo, Quanita Adams, Wendy Anthonie, Siphokazi Jonas, Nadia Davids, Lebo Leisa, Motladji Ditodi and Warona Seane, who each directed once. Seane directed during this interval (2016), as well as across two intervals at the Market Theatre (2008 and 2013). Her experience as the Artistic Director at the Soweto Theatre further positions Seane as a valuable voice in the study. Given these reasons, she is selected as the discussant in this interval.

Like the Playhouse, black women directors were completely absent from Artscape across seven years: 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006 and 2007. In the 13 years that they gained access to the theatre, 23 individual black women directors staged a total of 39 productions (See Table 2 below).

Table 2: Black women directors at Artscape, 1999–2018

Year	African women (12)	Coloured women (11)	Indian women (0)	Productions
1999				–
2000				–
2001		**SHELLEY BARRY**		**1**
2002				–
2003				–
2004				–
2005		Natalia da Rocha		**1**
2006				–
2007				–
2008	**FATIMA DIKE**			**1**
2009	Thoko Ntshinga	Euodia Samson Warda Jabbar		**3**
2010	Fatima Dike			**1**
2011	Fatima Dike Thoko Ntshinga **ANGIE LEKOTA**			**3**
2012	Thoko Ntshinga	Liesel Gaffley		**2**
2013	Fatima Dike Bukelwa Cakata Angie Lekota			**3**
2014	Fatima Dike Thoko Ntshinga Angie Lekota Mamela Nyamza	Sheila Davids		**5**
2015	Thoko Ntshinga Yvonne Sisipho Mbopha Chuma Sopotela Jacqueline Manyaapelo	Amy Jephta		**5**
2016	**WARONA SEANE** Koleka Putuma Lebo Leisa	Quanita Adams		**4**
2017	Thoko Ntshinga	Amy Jephta, Lee-Ann van Rooi Nadia Davids		**4**
2018	Motlatji Ditodi Siphokazi Jonas Thoko Ntshinga	Lee-Ann van Rooi (2×) Wendy Anthonie		**6**
	25 productions	14 productions		**39**

The Market Theatre

1999–2003: Ntshieng Mokgoro (African)

2004–2008: Geraldine Naidoo (Indian)

2009–2013: Yolandi Michaels (Coloured)

2014–2018: Zinzi Princess Mhlongo (African)

Between 1999 and 2003, four black women featured at the Market as directors: Asanda Phewa, Nelisiwe Xaba, Ntshieng Mokgoro and Nadia Davids. Notably, black women directors were completely absent for three consecutive years – from 2000 until 2002 – and then again in 2006. Mokgoro is selected as a respondent in that she directed in this interval (1999) and again twice in the subsequent interval (2007 and 2008). During the next interval, 2004–2008, Dieketseng Mnisi, Rachel Paledi, Warona Seane, Lindiwe Matshikiza, Ntshieng Mokgoro, and Geraldine Naidoo directed productions. While Mokgoro was the only practitioner to direct twice in this interval, Naidoo is selected. As the only Indian director throughout both this interval and the entire 20-year period at the Market Theatre, the study elevates Naidoo's voice. In the five-year period 2009–2013, the following black women directed productions: Napo Masheane, Zinzi Princess Mhlongo (directed twice), Khethiwe Dlamini, Warona Seane, and Nadia Davids. Mhlongo helmed a production twice, however Michaels is chosen as the discussant within this period. Since the researcher understood Michaels to be the only "Coloured"[18] director throughout both this interval and the entire 20-year period, her voice is foregrounded. The period 2014 to 2018 included the following directors who showcased works at the Market: Khutjo Green, Napo Masheane, Lindiwe Matshikiza, Selloane Mokuku, Silindile Mthembu, Princess Zinzi Mhlongo, Palesa Mazamisa, Pamela Nomvete, Nomfundo Magwaza, and Lesedi Job, who directed four productions. While Job directed the most productions, Mhlongo is selected on the basis that she directed two productions in the same interval (2010 and 2011), and again in a following interval (2016).

In the 16 years that they directed at the Market Theatre, 21 individual black women staged a total of 31 productions. (See Table 3 below.)

[18] Nadia Davids would have been the most suitable respondent, having directed twice at the Market (2003 and 2009), as well as once at Artscape (2017).

Table 3: Black women directors at the Market Theatre, 1999–2018

Year	African women (18)	Coloured women (2)	Indian women (1)	Productions
1999	Nelisiwe Xaba **NTSHIENG MOKGORO**			2
2000				–
2001				–
2002				–
2003	Asanda Phewa	Nadia Davids		2
2004	Dieketseng Mnisi			1
2005			**GERALDINE NAIDOO**	1
2006				–
2007	Ntshieng Mokgoro Rachel Paledi			2
2008	Warona Seane Lindiwe Matshikiza Ntshieng Mokgoro			3
2009	Napo Masheane	Nadia Davids		2
2010	Zinzi Princess Mhlongo			1
2011	Zinzi Princess Mhlongo	**YOLANDI MICHAELS**		2
2012	Khetiwe Dlamini			1
2013	Warona Seane			1
2014	Khutjo Green			1
2015	Napo Masheane Lindiwe Matshikiza			2
2016	Selloane Mokuku Silindile Mthembu **ZINZI PRINCESS MHLONGO**			3
2017	Lesedi Job (×2)			2
2018	Lesedi Job (×2) Pamela Nomvete Palesa Mazamisa Nomfundo Magwaza			5
	27 productions	3 productions	1 production	31

Closing Remarks

While this study has focused on three of South Africa's six state-supported cultural institutions, a similar study could be undertaken to explore the participation of black women in the State Theatre (Pretoria), the Performing Arts Centre of the Free State (Bloemfontein) and Windybrow (Johannesburg). This would be with the view to offer a broader exploration of black women directors' positionality in the wider South African state-supported theatre landscape. Given this study's explicit focus on national theatres located in the three major metropolitan areas, an examination of the State Theatre, the Performing Arts Centre of the Free State and Windybrow are not within its ambit. As state-supported theatres, the Market Theatre, Artscape and the Playhouse are mandated to implement government's imperatives as articulated by the DAC in the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage of 1996. The following chapter includes a careful examination of the White Paper in its various iterations, alongside other relevant documents that describe the DAC's vision for the arts, culture and

heritage sector. An understanding of the DAC's policy and strategic plans for the arts, culture and heritage sector is fundamental if a thorough assessment is to be made for how state-supported cultural institutions are responding to these various policy and strategic frameworks, particularly in relation to the positionality of black women stage directors.

CHAPTER 2: CULTURAL POLICY

Introduction

In the literature review, scholarship addressing the initial and existing 1996 policy was briefly outlined. This brief discussion primarily considered black women's location in the cultural policy framework. This chapter proceeds to unpack the various policy iterations, with the purpose of ascertaining whether these revisions effectively address the marginal situation of black women stage directors. The three major areas of the DACST – namely, governance, arm's-length funding and access – are highlighted in Rood's (2006a; 2006b) discussion. This chapter explores the various iterations of the 1996 policy within the framework of the current Ministry's threefold focus: specifically, the eradication of poverty, unemployment and inequality. This change in direction, as articulated from the 2013 White Paper onwards, places a different responsibility on ACH activities. Although subsequent revisions conveying the DAC's intent for the sector remain fluid and subject to change, these iterations require careful consideration as they express to some degree the government department's perception of the sector going forward, and underline its involvement in ensuring the sustainability of arts, culture and heritage. The overall aim of analysing this fluctuating vision is to determine the positionality of black women stage directors. If discrepancies are evident in the 1996 policy in terms of its mediation of this group of practitioners, then a concern is whether subsequent drafts address and remedy their marginal location. If black women are not expressly included in the 1996 policy, this suggests their political exclusion against the government ideals of redress, access and participation. The marginal positionality of black women directors against the political imperatives of eliminating poverty, unemployment and inequality would again denote in subsequent policy drafts this group's political exclusion, not only from the sector but also from the larger national project of social cohesion, nation-building, transformation and economic growth. This chapter focuses on aspects of the policy frameworks which draw attention to the location of black women stage directors in state-supported theatres. Since Artscape, the Market and Playhouse are among the entities obligated by government to effect the institutional frameworks outlined in cultural policy, the reflections of the institutional leaders themselves are included in this chapter. As previously stated, while cultural policy is not the cure-all for disparities in state-supported cultural institutions, it remains the existing document which is to guide all activities in the sector.

Beginnings of the 1996 White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage

The process of compiling the 1996 White Paper was a significant event in history, marking the first time that all practitioners could participate in the creation of cultural policy. As a first step towards ensuring a democratically formulated policy, the first Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, Ben Ngubane, appointed in 1994 the Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG), whose mandate included identifying local problems in the sector and appraising global policy processes. This research was undertaken primarily by arts and culture practitioner-academics who were contracted either to arts activist groups or directly by the DACST through the ACTAG structure (Deacon, 2010: 14). These researchers were to collate their recommendations "for a new arts and culture dispensation consistent with non-racist, non-sexist and democratic ideals" in accordance with the RDP – a socio-economic policy instituted in 1994 by the African National Congress, or ANC (DACST, 1996: n.p.). Strongly driven ideologically by principles undergirding the RDP, such as representativity, inclusivity, equity, access, transformation, nation-building and diversity, and following widespread consultations with various persons in the arts and culture fraternity, ACTAG submitted a report in May 1995 to the Minister, and research members subsequently assisted in writing sections of the White Paper.

J.J. Williams (1996) broadly problematises the ACTAG report. He notes its inconsistencies in definitions of arts and culture and its endorsement of both the participation of everyone in arts and culture as well as its commodification. Unless policy frameworks include appropriate preemptive measures, the commercialisation of arts and culture is a certainty (Williams, 1996: 110). In other words, by policy default, arts and culture implicitly becomes the domain of the affluent in society. The author also observes the "curiosity" of excluding any direct reference to racist practices which during that time had characterised the promotion of arts and culture in South Africa (Williams, 1996: 112). Given the transcendent shift that had occurred in South African society, it could be reasonably expected that the racial discrimination which had up until that point characterised the arts and culture landscape would be acknowledged. He notes a further conspicuous silence "about the relationship, however tenuous, indirect and nuanced, between race and culture" (Williams, 1996: 112). He also points to the nebulous nature of objectives outlined in the report, especially on matters of funding and allocation of resources.

Williams' analysis is noteworthy in that it offers perspective on a report that was most significant in shaping the first democratic cultural policy in South Africa. His assessment

foreshadows aspects that can be similarly problematised in the 1996 White Paper and its subsequent iterations. Firstly, the matter of definitional inconsistencies and vague objectives outlined by Williams is apparent in the policy frameworks discussed in this chapter. Secondly, the author rightly acknowledges that implications around the commercialisation increasingly ascribed to the arts, culture and heritage sector must be carefully examined. Defining the sector in economic and commercial terms will have direct consequences for the social development role which arts, culture and heritage are also positioned to fulfil, including the exclusion of many from accessing and participating in the sector, especially previously disenfranchised communities and practitioners. Lastly, and closely related to this study, Williams observes the report's omission of the relationship between race and culture. Though this reflection is merited, it prompts recognition of a similar absence: the relationship between race and gender. Based on Williams' critique, this is obviously a gap not only in the actual report, but also in his own argument. In neglecting to point out the importance of the excluded and interconnected variables of race and gender, the author inadvertently overlooks any connection between race and gender. Williams' overall analysis not only lays out the foundation for the 1996 White Paper, but also provides important cues regarding omissions, discrepancies and silences across the 1996 policy framework and its subsequent versions.

A changing cultural policy landscape

The ideal of transformation has been a pursuit of the arts and culture department since the White Paper on Arts and Culture was gazetted in 1996. Then Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, Ben Ngubane, stated the following:

> In accordance with the principles of justice, democracy, non-racism and non-sexism, every sector of our society is facing change. While this may be unsettling for some, for many, it brings hope that their needs, views and aspirations will now also become part of the mainstream (DACST, 1996: n.p.).

The optimism encapsulated in the former Minister's words had however been tempered by pragmatism in the Revised White Paper of 2013:

> Post-apartheid South Africa has seen tangible and quantitative increases in the participation of previously disadvantaged groups in the Creation element of the ACH Value Chain. However, […] the active and sustainable involvement of previously disadvantaged individuals at all levels within a Cultural and Creative Industries

> institution; and in all activities of the ACH value chain, i.e. creation, production, dissemination, transmission and consumption, has yet to be achieved (DAC, 2013: 10).

Mike van Graan critiques not only the nebulousness of the recurrent objective of transformation, but along with the poorly written nature of the Revised White Paper of 2013 which seems to undermine the weightiness of its stipulated objectives, he also notes the generally unclear nature of the document's contents:

> It fails to articulate what has been achieved, what remain as challenges, how the current institutional framework is working or not, what the primary challenges within the arts, culture and heritage sector are, and thus why this White Paper is necessary from an arts, culture and heritage perspective rather than from a political, National Development Plan perspective (van Graan, 2013: 29).

In an effort to address inadequacies in the Revised White Paper of 2013, the DAC collated information deriving from nine public consultations and numerous submissions commenting on the revised document and constructed the "Policy Position Paper on Arts and Culture" (2015), which served as the government department's response in the consultative process. In the paper, the DAC note the following two key themes as fundamental in the framework of the new White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage:

- **Nation-building and social cohesion** to be central in the production, consumption, promotion, preservation and protection of South African Arts, Culture, Language and Heritage.
- Given the historical background of our country in general and the sector in particular, there is a need for **radical socio-economic transformation** in the production, consumption, promotion, preservation and protection of South African Arts, Culture, Language and Heritage (2015: 3).

Evidently, the twofold function of the arts, culture and heritage sector as simultaneously developmental in nature (expressed in the parlance of nation-building and social cohesion) and economically viable (expressed in the terminology Creative and Cultural Industries) is visible across the policy documents. Based on the DAC's agenda for the sector articulated in the Policy Position Paper (2015), these thematic concerns continue to be the preoccupation even as the new White Paper of Arts, Culture and Heritage continues to be re-imagined. The location of

black women stage directors is explored in the various policy iterations against the imperatives of social cohesion, nation-building and socio-economic transformation.

Revised White Paper of 2013: A changing vision for the arts, culture and heritage sector

The premise of the revised White Paper of 2013 is the "many changes" which have occurred in the "composition, governance and role of Cultural and Creative Industries" and which consequently "invalidates the 1996 White Paper" (DAC, 2013: 11). This terminology of "Cultural and Creative Industries" (CCIs) is explored later in this section (see pages 117-120). One of these changes was splitting the department into two separate entities from 2002: Arts and Culture on the one hand and Science and Technology on the other. Providing further justification for revising national cultural policy, the DAC notes that this was not to intentionally disregard the 1996 policy, but was rather in response to shifting priorities of the new government, as informed by changes in the political and socio-economic climate. While this seems a considered motivation for changes to cultural policy, parts of the revised document seem to obviate the warranted objectives defined in its predecessor.

In the 1996 White Paper, the DACST articulated its vision for arts and culture, as founded on Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as "everyone shall have the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community (and) to enjoy the arts ..." (DACST, 1996: n.p.). Notably, the DAC had moderated its expectations in the 2013 publication, where part of the vision was now to "ensure that as many South Africans *as possible* have access to and enjoy the ACH activities of South Africa" [my emphasis]. The government department's focal point had evidently shifted, with then DAC Director General, Minister Paul Mashatile, articulating the government's new priority for the arts and culture sector as follows:

> The new vision of arts and culture goes beyond social cohesion and nourishing the soul of the nation. We believe that arts, culture and heritage play a pivotal role in the economic empowerment and skills development of a people (DAC, 2013: 6).

The heartbeat of transformation marked South African society with the emergence of a participatory democracy. Along this focus, the DACST articulated as its overarching vision for the sector in 1996, the reconstruction and development of a fragmented society, in alignment with the democratic ideal of equality, encapsulated in both the RDP and the Bill of Rights within the South African Constitution. While the RDP seeks to ensure that particularly women and black people have an equal role in society, the Constitution similarly recognises as its cornerstone, the "equality of persons, across race, gender and culture" (DAC, 2013: 21). In line

with a new dispensation, the core principle of equality was endorsed in both these seminal legislative frameworks. The right of everyone to freely participate in and access artistic, cultural and heritage activities, underpins equality. This value was rigorously pursued, particularly during the early stages of democracy, and inevitably reflected in the 1996 policy framework. According to the 2013 revised paper, emphasis in the 1996 policy on these democratic ideals "downplays the important social cohesion, nation building and economic development role of the CCIs" (DAC, 2013: 11). While "nation building" and "economic development" are defined in the 1996 White Paper in relation to arts, culture and heritage, "social cohesion" does not appear at all in the policy framework. The term is then cited extensively in the revised paper of 2013.

It is apparent from Mashatile's sentiments, that in its new vision for the sector, the DAC attributed a great deal of importance to social cohesion and even planned to exceed it. Given its prominent feature in the 2013 paper, wherein arts, culture and heritage is largely referred to as the CCIs, the term social cohesion is applied by the DAC in relation to the economic growth and job creation potential of the sector, but moreover, to nation-building. Within the broader national objective of holistic societal transformation, the DAC predominantly situates the objectives of social cohesion and nation building alongside one another, as seen across the White Paper revisions and the document titled *A National Strategy for Developing an Inclusive and a Cohesive South African Society* (2012). In Outcome 14 of the government's Medium Term Strategic Plan, social cohesion and nation building are similarly two of eight priority areas highlighted for implementation in the 2014 to 2019 electoral term.

Reflecting on social cohesion in a South African context, Palmary (2015) notes some problems with its application, particularly by the DAC, as the government department mandated for drafting the Nation Building and Social Cohesion Strategy of 2012. Arguing that this term cannot be "unproblematically celebrated", Palmary cites the example of a mafia, who although displaying high social cohesion, do so towards negative ends (2015: 62-63). The author then points out that considering social cohesion and nation building as synonymous – by referring to social cohesion *and* nation building across the various legislative frameworks – is unique to the South African landscape. In doing so, the DAC understands social cohesion as a project of nation building (Palmary, 2015: 63). While this alignment appears a noble pursuit, its effects are not necessarily positive. During apartheid, white South Africans (particularly the Afrikaans-speaking population) demonstrated high levels of cohesion for nearly five decades in their oppression of the black majority. The result of this solidarity was that South African

national identity became the exclusive domain of whites – especially white Afrikaners (Ramutsindela, 1997; Stinson, 2009). Verwey and Quayle observe that "Afrikaner nationalism, apartheid, and Afrikaner identity were, for many years, practically inseparable" (2012: 556-557). Erasmus and Pieterse similarly maintain that "apartheid South Africa was a racially-defined democracy for white citizens" (1999: 170). This white national identity also played out in the PACs as state-supported entities. On the one hand, Joffe et al. posit that "cultural institutions are extensions of the government's social mandate and receive public funding, so they have a moral obligation to become vehicles of social cohesion" (2019: 173). On the other, Ratele argues that "the conditions under which the majority of black people exist and struggle to make meaning of their present condition as emancipated subjects persuades us to reject social cohesion as a just strategy towards radical black liberation" (2015: 47). The shortcomings of social cohesion are most palpable for black South Africans, and within historically white, patriarchal structures like the former PACs (and to a lesser degree, the independent, non-racial Market Theatre), profoundly so for black women practitioners.

Cohesiveness of a society does not lead to necessarily positive outcomes. In the case of South Africa's policy frameworks – including the DAC's strategic plans – social cohesion is located as the vehicle through which national identity can be achieved. Implied in the parlance of "nation building" as used across these various governmental strategies, is that this active process of structuring a country in a particular way, includes certain components while excluding others. As posited by Abrahams (2016), just as the notion of nation is political, so too is the idea of a national identity. While "nation" refers to a cohesive community in a shared territory, "national identity" speaks of one's sense of belonging in that community. Just as "South African national identity" before 1994 regarded only the white population as legitimate constituents, a re-defined version of nation in a contemporary context similarly excludes certain sections of society, consequently causing fissures in a democratised notion of national identity. Across the different White Paper frameworks and strategic plans and programmes, the DAC too acknowledges the secondary status of vulnerable groups, especially "women, the youth and people living with disabilities" (DAC, 2013; 2015, 2017a, 2017b). With reference to arts, culture and heritage – or more pointedly, the CCIs – these groups are yet to be integrated into the actualisation of South Africa's nation-building agenda. As posited by Stinson, rather than a singular national identity, "the notion of a broad united South African identity shared by the majority of citizens remains elusive" (2009: 5). In a similar vein, Ndlovu asserts:

> One of the greatest challenges facing people in the process of becoming South Africans today is that of building a cohesive national identity out of diverse and competing national, cultural and ethnic aspirations and identities that were never imagined as belonging to a single nation-state (2013: 1).

Like in the 1996 White Paper, the phrase "black women" is completely absent from the 2013 policy framework. This implies the exclusion of "black women" stage directors from the government ideals of social cohesion and nation-building that are promoted throughout the revised draft.

In his keynote address at a Mzansi Golden Economy consultative conference in 2011, Minister Mashatile reinforces the DAC's position on the sector:

> We wish to reiterate that societies with greater social cohesion tend to be the ones that are more economically prosperous. This to us suggests that the pursuit of greater social cohesion is central to the achievement of our goal to build a more equal and prosperous society, underpinned by higher levels of economic growth and job creation (DAC, 2013: 24).

Mashatile locates the pursuit of social cohesion as central to government's transformation agenda, as it is social cohesion which engenders not only equality, but also increased levels of economic growth and job creation. Although the social transformation imperative which underpins social cohesion is outlined as the DAC's vision for the sector in the revised White Paper of 2013, the government department places stronger emphasis on the economic capacity of the sector's activities, in which arts, culture and heritage are regarded from the perspective of profitability and marketability. In his address, Mashatile suggests that the ultimate goal for a democratic South African society are higher levels of economic growth and job creation, enabled through the policy driver of social cohesion. The DAC positions social cohesion as a driver of economic growth and job creation. Against the absence of black women as role players in achieving social cohesion, the DAC also inadvertently excludes this group as active constituents within the overarching economic goals of job creation and economic development. As alluded to in the literature review, while policy does not make reference to any racial categories, it would be meaningful to explicitly highlight the participation of black women as the historically most subjugated group. Black men (inclusive of "African", "Coloured" and "Indian") were also historically oppressed. However, through an intersectional lens, black women were even more significantly marginalised when taking into account social categories

such as race, gender and class. Furthermore, the glaring disparities in the race and gender demographics of directors who have accessed over the 20-year period the three theatres under study (as indicated by the infographics across pages 37-39), warrant the explicit inclusion of this group in cultural policy. Although black men have historically been subjugated, this positionality has not hindered this group's frequent and continuing participation across these national spaces. Indeed, it has not deterred their inclusion from theatre activities in the past. In keeping with the government's continuing transformation agenda for all sectors, previously disadvantaged practitioners – particularly black women - should be overtly prioritised in plans, programmes and strategies for arts, culture and heritage.

Problematising phraseology in 2013 revised White Paper

A phrase typically enunciated in post-apartheid South Africa is "previously disadvantaged groups". Introducing this expression for the first time in a White Paper of Arts, Culture and Heritage, the DAC posits that "post-apartheid South Africa has seen tangible and quantitative increases in the participation of previously disadvantaged groups in the Creation element of the ACH Value Chain" (DAC, 2013: 10). While the first issue with this proclamation is its failure to immediately define this growth in concrete and measurable terms, neglecting to recognise the nuances within this phrase is the second. Within a profoundly racialised South African context, the generic parlance of "previously disadvantaged groups" denotes persons occupying the historically designated African, Coloured and Indian population groups. Elicitation of this term in the revised paper of 2013 does not necessarily consider the variable of gender, or any other system for that matter, in which oppression occurs. May offers a germane description of intersectionality's multi-axis lens: "Intersectionality examines how power and privilege operate on several levels at once and across and within categories of experience and personhood [including race, gender, sexuality, disability, social class and citizenship]" (2015: 23). Where specifically black women are concerned, Crenshaw highlights the "multidimensionality of Black women's experience" (1989: 139), while bell hooks similarly emphasises that marginalisation must be considered within "interlocking systems of oppression" (1981: 24). This prevailing silence across the various iterations of the White Paper is problematic, because in overlooking the different systems in which marginalisation is encountered, any perceived efforts to accurately gauge the participation of "previously disadvantaged groups" are invalidated. The assertion that there have been tangible and quantitative increases in the participation of previously disadvantaged groups is consequently brought into question. The increased participation of black males does not necessarily

correspond to the participation of black women – or extending this example, to black women with disabilities – whether in the Creation element or any other element of the ACH Value Chain, be it dissemination, exhibition/reception, transmission or consumption/participation (DAC, 2013: 36). The 2013 White Paper includes further key discrepancies which directly impact on the access and participation of black women stage directors. The revised policy states that "the principles and approach detailed in the 1996 White Paper reduces the role of government" with regard to:

1. development of policy and minimum standards to guide the Cultural and Creative Industries;
2. the transformation of the institutions and structures of the CCIs; and
3. the distribution of public funds to the Cultural and Creative Industries (DAC, 2013: 11).

It is however unclear how government's role was limited where the above three objectives are concerned. Firstly, under *Principles* (point 3) of the 1996 White Paper it states:

> Essentially therefore, the *prime role* of the national and provincial governments is to develop policy which ensures the survival and development of all art forms and genres, cultural diversity with mutual respect and tolerance, heritage recognition and advancement, education in arts and culture, universal access to funding, equitable human resource development policies, the promotion of literature and cultural industries. These are our "minimum standards" [my emphasis] (DACST, 1996: n.p.).

For the revised document to therefore indicate that government was somehow restricted in its role to develop policy to steer the sector is inconsistent, given that this was both its "prime role" and a definition of its "minimum standards".

Secondly, the "transformation of all arts and culture institutions and structures" is noted in the 1996 White Paper as one of "the seven *most crucial areas* to address in giving practical content to a new, just and fair arts, culture and heritage dispensation" (DACST, 1996: n.p.). Similarly, it is capricious for the cultural arm of the government to claim in the 2013 revised draft that it was limited in its role to facilitate transformation of all arts and culture institutions and structures, given that during that momentous transition period, transformation was a particularly crucial and undeniably significant factor in the process towards creating an equitable arts, culture and heritage sector.

Lastly, in response to the unfair conditions that characterised arts funding during apartheid (as seen through arrangement of the white PACs), the 1996 White Paper identified equity as one

of the operational principles that would guide national cultural policy: "Equity" means "to ensure the equitable distribution of resources to all forms of art and culture, with due regard to the specific needs of each art form" (DACST, 1996: n.p.). This definition, while laudable, presents notable gaps and silences. While resources may be proportionately allocated among various arts and culture beneficiaries, including arts and culture institutions, organisations, groups and practitioners, such that all forms of art and culture benefit, inequities may still occur. Continuing with this line of argument is that while different cultural institutions may be equitably resourced to fulfil the mandate of staging productions, discrepancies may occur between practitioners who are unevenly supported in their work to stage theatre in a cultural space. In this respect, while the specific art-form is justly resourced, equity is hampered when considering unequal distribution between its practitioners. The disproportionate spread of stage directors according to race and gender across the Playhouse, Artscape and Market Theatre over the past 20 years attests to this.

The development of policy and minimum standards to steer the CCIs, transformation of the institutions and structures of the CCIs, as well as the dissemination of public funds to the CCIs, should not be articulated in the 2013 revised paper as those which somehow constrained the government. These areas were precisely positioned in the 1996 White Paper as fundamental in the process towards facilitating an arts, culture and heritage sector that would be equitable and representative in a newly formed democracy. The 2013 policy recognises that most of the seven principles outlined in the 1996 White Paper "remain valid and critical today" (DAC, 2013: 12). However, the statement that these roles "reduced the role of government", downplays the significance that was rightly attributed to these imperatives within South Africa's fledgling democracy – a time when transformation processes had to be rigorously engaged with in order to enable a fully inclusive sector aligned to the frameworks of the Constitution and RDP. The revised paper conveys a tone that downplays those critical factors which the 1996 government sought to address. Perhaps this strategy is twofold: firstly, to mask any failures and shortcomings at implementation level, given the 17 years that had lapsed and secondly, to place significant attention on the envisioned commercial potential of arts, culture and heritage, or in the turn of phrase adopted from the 2013 revised policy, the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs).

Establishing the Cultural and Creative Industries

Following its appearance in the 1996 White Paper, the term "cultural industries" was developed comprehensively in a yearlong study which began in 1997 called the Cultural Industries Growth Strategies (CIGS). In the introduction of its foreword, the CIGS states:

> South Africa's diverse and dynamic arts and culture heritage is one of its richest and most important resources, with the capacity to *generate significant economic and social benefits* for the nation. Equally important, but less well understood, is the potential for a vibrant and dynamic arts and culture sector to *contribute significantly to the economy* of the country [my emphases] (The Cultural Strategy Group, 1998: 4).

An "industrial strategy" (DAC, 1998: 9) aimed at accentuating the economic capacity of arts and culture, the CIGS sought to introduce the cultural industries as an important sector. The strategic framework identifies the cultural industries sector as comprising these four industries: film, music, craft and publishing industries. Although the performing arts as such is excluded from the four industries selected in the CIGS study, it is included, along with its sub-sectors of theatre, dance, opera and live music, among the creative industries specified in the document of recommendations titled *Creative South Africa,* which "presents the argument for taking cultural industries seriously and develops a strategy for doing so" (The Cultural Strategy Group, 1998: 5).

Shifting to the focus of this study, in the 1996 policy framework, the performing arts is visible and legitimate as far as its contribution to the nation's cultural heritage. As observed by Deacon, heritage was considered essential in the development of a democratic society (2010: 5). Within the 1996 White Paper framework, the performing arts are accredited for their function primarily within the democratisation process. The economic potential of the performing arts is then introduced in the *Creative South Africa* report of 1998 and later in the revised policy of 2013. With regard to theatre – as the sphere of focus in this study – the DAC demarcates theatre as a sector and even suggests a theatre strategy that will provide guidelines on matters such as "developing new markets and audiences" (DAC, 2013: 56). Embedded in this language is the acknowledgement and overt re-positioning of theatre as a discipline with economic potential. This economic agenda for the overall arts, culture and heritage sector, or the cultural and creative industries, is plainly outlined in the 2013 White Paper:

> The patent political support for, and recognition of, the contribution of the Cultural and Creative Industries to the national effort to *grow the economy and create decent work*

> provides the foundation for the policy statements reflected in the White Paper in this regard [my emphasis] (DAC, 2013: 24).

Economic growth and job creation are posited as sector drivers in a newly defined sector. In the adopted lexicon of cultural and creative industries, the 2013 policy framework states that, "if correctly harnessed, the Cultural and Creative Industries can engender social cohesion, enhance nation building and contribute to economic growth and development" (DAC, 2013: 12). Echoing Mashatile's previously cited statement, the DAC in the 2013 White Paper framework imbues the CCIs with the capacity to produce social cohesion, which in turn increases a sense of national identity and contributes to economic growth and job creation. This preoccupation is evident in the plans, programmes and strategies that support the 2013 White Paper, namely: The New Growth Path Framework (NGP), the Industrial Policy Action Plan 2 (IPAP 2), the National Development Plan Vision 2030 (NDP) and the earlier cited Mzansi Golden Economy strategy (MGE).

With its focus on growing the economy for the benefit of everyone and creating decent employment, the goal of the NGP was to create 5 million jobs by 2020 (DAC, 2013: 14; 24). On a similar trajectory of economic growth, the IPAP 2 defines focused and state-subsidised interventions for the cultural industries. The NDP is another primary government initiative, in which arts and culture is ascribed the potential "to open powerful spaces for debate about where a society finds itself and where it is going" (NDP, 2012: 36). Initiated in 2011, the MGE is the largest funding source of the DAC (Joffe et al., 2019: 164). The additional strategy seeks to reinforce the DAC's commitment to ensuring that as the cultural arm of government, working alongside the CCIs, it will "contribute to shared economic growth and social cohesion" (DAC, 2013: 14). On a televised business briefing in 2013, Mashatile asserted: "In the 21st century our economy will be driven by cultural and creative industries", and even lauded the MGE strategy as South Africa's "new gold" (*Mail & Guardian*, 2013).

A profile of South Africa's cultural and creative industries was established through the DAC National Mapping Study conducted in 2014 (DAC, 2016: 37). Key findings indicated that one of the largest domains within the creative industries is Performance and Celebration, which includes theatre performances. This domain accounts for 20% of the creative industries, with the creative industries contributing 3.6% to the country's employment and 2.9% towards the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The same year that this mapping study was conducted, the Labour Market Dynamics Survey reported that employment within South Africa's CCI sector

accounted for 2.93%, or in other words, showed that 1 in every 34 jobs was cultural or creative (Hadisi & Snowball, 2017: 11). According to Hadisi and Snowball:

> While this is very much in line with what has been found in other countries, it was still a surprising result for South Africa, which has traditionally been seen as focused on primary industries (mining and agriculture) and more recently, tertiary industries such as finance and business services [which made up 13.4% of jobs in 2014] (2017: 11).

The fact that the creative industries sector contributes to a fair share of employment explains the economic imperative that the various government policies, plans and strategies ascribe to the CCIs, especially against dire unemployment rates. In terms of this study, the state-supported theatres under investigation form part of the largest domain within the creative industries. This, alongside the employment capacity of the CCIs, as revealed in the findings of the two studies respectively, would position these cultural institutions as key contributors to the country's economy. The words of Market Theatre's Artistic Director, James Ngcobo, reflects the pressure that policy places on the cultural and creative industries to be profitable: "It's another skill that I keep wherever I go and talk to young people. I keep telling them (*emphatically*): Guys, this is a business what we're doing. It's not just we come play. It's a business'" (Ngcobo, interview, 2018).

With reference to this study, framing theatre as a cultural industry brings with it a certain tension. On the one hand, this phrasing underlines the market-driven approach that the DAC attaches to the discipline, wherein a pressure exists to steer its activities towards profitability. As such, the ideal of transformation, which would greatly benefit the currently marginalised group of black women stage directors, would become absorbed by this economic imperative. On the other hand, in defining theatre as part of the cultural industries, the expectation is that the discipline's visibility would be enhanced within funding mechanisms which support its sustainability. The optimism of this latter consideration dissipates, however, when reflecting on the MGE's actualisation.

Against the well-ordered funding guidelines of the MGE, in which the performing arts in general and theatre specifically are duly recognised and included in its framework, implementation of this funding strategy is evidently undercut by alleged funding abnormalities. The DAC (now merged with the sports ministry) recently came under scrutiny for alleged funding irregularities. In an online *City Press* article, it is reported that in the 2018/9 financial year, more than R100 million in "questionable funding deals" had been paid from the MGE's

annual budget of R340 million (Blignaut & Mashego, 2019). Allegations include "unsolicited and walk-in proposals" received by the DAC's cultural development unit for funding, artists and organisations being earmarked for continuous funding over a certain period, and missing files in cases of dubious funding allocations where correct procedures were circumvented (Blignaut & Mashego, 2019). In a statement issued by the Democratic Alliance (DA) Shadow Deputy Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture, Veronica van Dyk, Minister Nathi Mthethwa alongside two other senior officials were purportedly involved in the decision-making process where millions of public monies were squandered (van Dyk, 2019).

Collectively examined, the strategic plans contained in the 2013 White paper framework are consistent with the DAC's primary goals of social cohesion, nation-building, economic growth and job creation. A notable gap and silence in the policy framework is black women stage directors. As such, this group of practitioners is erased from national government's intended vision for the sector, subsequently drawing attention to a flawed application of transformation. Just as this group is evidently failed within the 1996 framework that underscores redress, access and participation, they occupy a similarly marginal position in the revised 2013 paper.

The 2016 White Paper

The revised paper of 2016 rightly acknowledges that in order for arts, culture and heritage policy to be effective in addressing the triple challenges of unemployment, inequality and poverty, along with every factor of exclusion, and in turn realise the sector's contribution to the envisioned outcomes of job creation, economic growth, social cohesion and nation-building, it must be "regularly and thoroughly monitored and evaluated. In this regard, historically excluded and vulnerable groups must be given priority" (DAC, 2016: 78). Whilst a noble stance, this statement implicitly groups together the historically excluded and vulnerable. As argued earlier, intersectionality politics calls for the naming of the myriad variables by which groups of people are oppressed, for the magnitude of subjugation to be made overt and nuanced. Artscape CEO, Marlene le Roux, offers an illustration of the intersectional impulse that should guide cultural policy:

> You put a doll in the middle. That doll should be black, it should be from the most remote areas in KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape, of the provinces, must be a woman, must have a disability. That's the most disadvantaged doll. Then you write your policy around that doll, with implementation (le Roux, interview, 2018).

Le Roux articulates the inadequacy of cultural policy that is not constructed around what she suggests to be the most disenfranchised identity. In explaining multi-axis marginalisation, she considers race, geographical location, gender and physical ability. Le Roux indicates that an individual who is subjugated not only based on race and gender, but also through coming from an isolated region, as well as living with a restrictive condition, would encounter significant impediments in terms of access to state-supported cultural institutions. For such an individual to take part in professional arts, culture and heritage activities, cultural policy would need to include in its framework clear provisions that mediate the participation of such a person. In alluding to implementation, le Roux also underscores the need for cultural policy to translate into tangible outcomes, wherein stipulated objectives are fulfilled. Essentially, without clearly delineated interventions targeting the specific needs of each category within historically excluded and vulnerable groups, the impact of policy on these groups cannot be accurately monitored and evaluated.

While the 1996 White Paper emphasises social development imperatives aligned to a democratic dispensation, persistent economic disparities prompt a re-imagining and re-positioning of the arts, culture and heritage sector along the lines of job creation and economic growth – a tangible shift in focus when examining both the 2013 and 2016 policy frameworks. One of the principles supported by the policy measures is transformation, which according to the 2016 policy framework means "to reconfigure the personnel, programmes and collections, exhibits, performances and events in arts, culture and heritage to reflect the demographics of an African society with diverse cultures" (DAC, 2016: 6). This definition evidently deviates from the one outlined by the DAC in the 2013 draft, where transformation is described as not "a simple matter of racial quotas and targets" (DAC, 2013: 38), but rather entails developing an inclusive and cohesive society, eliminating past-bred disparities and fostering a national identity (DAC, 2013: 22).

Transformation should not be reduced to an obsession with numbers. At its basic level, transformation should be concerned with levelling the playing field by integrating the full diversity of South Africa's society. However, it should not end there. Transformation also entails – perhaps at a more profound level – a paradigm shift in an organisation's or institution's culture. This is a situation where the previously marginalised are not tokenised, but where they have the space to equally share in constructing a new ethos that also recognises and benefits them. Equality (equal opportunity) cannot be achieved before equity (giving everyone what they need, with the aim of levelling the field for all players) is established. In an online *Mail &*

Guardian article titled "Transformation reduced to numbers", Morrell appositely notes: "Nobody with any knowledge of South Africa's history can deny the importance of gender and race in questions of social justice and so it is obviously important to pay attention to these figures. But on their own they do not answer questions of transformation" (Morrell, 2013).

An additional principle indicated in the policy, and one that is closely related to transformation, is empowerment. This refers to empowerment "of all cultural practitioners, the youth and women artists, in particular" since these groups of artists "are faced with barriers to access markets, funding and institutions" (DAC, 2016: 6). Although this is a commendable observation, the 2016 White Paper presents this as an aspiration for the sector, without necessarily detailing mechanisms by which these vulnerable, socially disenfranchised groups can be empowered. The 2016 policy neglects to offer specific strategic interventions and programmes designed to shatter the barriers faced by each of these groups when it comes to accessing markets, funding and institutions.

The Nation Building and Social Cohesion Strategy in the 2016 draft amalgamates the DAC's objectives for the CCIs sector as articulated in this and the previous draft, and which can be summarised as follows:

- The Cultural and Creative Industries must contribute to economic development through the social drivers of economic growth and job creation.
- The Cultural and Creative Industries must contribute to social development and transformation, as underpinned by the ideal of social cohesion.

The National Strategy on Social Cohesion and Nation-Building was developed in 2012 to facilitate development of an inclusive and cohesive society aimed at eradicating past-bred and current inequalities, disparities and exclusions. Although the concepts of nation-building and social cohesion appear in the 2013 policy, they are articulated as a governmental strategy in the White Paper of 2016. As problematised earlier, social cohesion does not necessarily contribute to a South African nation in which all are equal and so share a common national identity. Another strategy included in the 2016 revised policy is African Knowledge Systems (AKS). This strategy entails reversing the marginal status historically ascribed to African art, culture and heritage and instead affirms the value of African material and intellectual resources. The first time "decolonisation" appears in a White Paper is in this 2016 version and is defined as "placing African knowledge, epistemology, art, culture and heritage at the centre of policies, practices, institutions and programmes" (DAC, 2016: 6). In defining arts, culture and heritage

within a decolonising agenda, the DAC overlooks the aspect of practitioners, who of course cannot be excluded from this process. Later in the policy framework, the DAC does in fact demonstrate cognisance of this factor: "Although the right to artistic expression is enshrined in the Constitution, South African society is still characterised by stark imbalances in opportunities and facilities to exercise this right, hence the ongoing drive towards the decolonisation of the arts in South Africa since 1994" (DAC, 2016: 18). Here, part of the DAC's endorsement for the continuing project of decolonising the sector is driven by persisting disparities in opportunities and access to amenities among South Africans.

Some definitions of decolonisation include that it is a process which entails deconstructing practices that privilege Western norms, to make space for the recovery and reconstruction of those that were previously marginalised (Bulhan, 2015) or understood as "the Other" by the West (Ratele, 2016: 11). Decolonisation is also the re-centering of knowledge production from particularly the global South (Seedat & Suffla, 2017). Underpinning this complex concept is ultimately transformation, which brings to the fore multi-dimensional variables including race, gender, language and physical abilities, among others. Offering a gendered perspective of the decolonisation agenda, Hassim (2018) argues that the project of decoloniality is one that is profoundly connected to feminism. Similarly, but from a particularly black feminist perspective, radical feminist Kealeboga Ramaru reflects on the revolutionary Fees Must Fall[19] movement of 2015-2016, which starkly foreground decolonisation debates in South Africa. Although Ramaru's discussion pertains to this student movement, her reflections offer insight into the overall decolonisation project approached from a black feminist perspective. She notes that although black feminists had different opinions on what decolonisation entails and as such never reached a consensus on ways to pursue this process, they "were in agreement that intersectionality would be an important part of crafting the praxis for decolonisation" (Ramaru, 2017: 91). In neglecting to underline the vital aspect of intersectionality politics in its White Paper frameworks along with their attendant strategies, plans and programmes, the DAC does not have the requisite tools for effectively engaging the process of not only transformation, but also, as in the case of the African Knowledge Systems strategy, decolonisation.

Last discussed in the 1996 White Paper two decades earlier were "the former provincial theatres, now stripped of their guise as 'performing arts councils', [which] remain important

[19] This student-led protest which began late 2015 was in response to an increase in university fees. The primary objective of the movement was to stop increases in student fees, while at the same time prompt increase in state subsidies of higher education institutions.

national arts assets fully deserving of support" (DAC, 2016: 14). The DAC continues to affirm that "the entire performing arts dispensation, formal and informal, is the jurisdiction of this policy" (DAC, 2016: 14). Despite the historical segregationist legacy which characterises these PACs, the DAC acknowledges their national significance. This notion of "national" must be problematised against the peripheral status of black women stage directors within the three "national" spaces. In November 2015, well-known writer, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, delivered a keynote address in Poland, in which he engaged with the politics of what constitutes a national theatre through the lens of his own Kenyan context. Concluding his speech, Ngugi shared his insights on some definitions of a "national theatre", including that this type of theatre is one which "dares to draw from within the nation to create images of a society of the people, by the people, and for the people" and that "it should be a place where a whole people, not just a few and the privileged, can dream big about their history and imagine big possibilities for the future" (Ngugi, 2015: 21).

Black women's under-representation in South Africa's state-supported theatre spaces, signifies this group's exclusion within the nation-building ideal that the DAC espouses for the arts, culture and heritage sector and which it articulates across the various cultural policy frameworks. The absence of national strategic interventions which would facilitate the participation and inclusion of black women in particular – as the most significantly historically disenfranchised populace – implicitly suggests an erasure of black women in the representation of nationhood.

The 2017 White Papers

The February draft (2017a) identifies as its rationale the 1996 paper's misalignment with the NDP, which is defined as "a critical policy framework for socio-economic development of our society and an instrument that attempts to deal with the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment facing our country" (DAC, 2017a: 6). In its aim to reposition the sector to contribute to the eradication of poverty, inequality, unemployment and the building of a cohesive and united society, thus accelerating transformation, the DAC seeks to integrate and emphasise the strategic value of the following "new policies":

- National Development Plan
- National Strategy of Nation-Building and Social Cohesion
- African Knowledge Systems

(DAC, 2017a: 6).

These strategies are however not new – they were introduced in previous policy iterations. Indeed, the framework of this 2017 White Paper predominantly mirrors content contained in the previous policy. Integration of the White Paper policy framework into the NDP and Social Cohesion and Nation Building Strategy, as well as the focus on AKS is an apparently enduring objective in terms of the DAC's vision for the sector. These strategic objectives, along with the MGE, are articulated from the framework of the 2013 policy to subsequent White Paper drafts.

In the preamble to the October 2017 policy revision, the DAC firstly indicates that arts, culture and heritage forms part of the NDP and MGE, which are among the government's "bigger goals" (DAC, 2017b: 3). This again is in keeping with the economic imperative within which governmental strategic plans situate the sector. Secondly, the government department confirms that since the adoption of the 1996 White Paper, "the decolonisation of the sector still leaves much to be desired" (DAC, 2017b: 3). Thirdly, just as the term or process of decolonisation is not interrogated in the first policy in which it is cited, it is similarly not problematised within this White Paper draft. Fourthly, the DAC emphasises that the gap between rich and poor in South Africa means that cultural rights and freedoms are not enjoyed by all. To this, it neglects to include that the re-imagining of the arts as a sector for commodification further entrenches the marginalisation of South Africa's majority. As Mike van Graan argues: "The arts – including theatre – are only elitist when public policy makes it so with an emphasis on the 'creative and cultural industries' that require markets with disposable income, and so excludes most citizens" (van Graan, 2019a). As alluded earlier, a focus on arts, culture and heritage as creative and cultural industries foists a market-driven approach on the sector, while side-lining not-for-profit activities that support the intrinsic value of the arts. Some of the excluded citizens within these economic goals are black women directors, since significant transformation is subsumed by profit margins. These aims are not necessarily mutually exclusive; however, their achievement begins with a cultural policy framework that recognises substantive transformation equally as it does marketability of artistic activities. Fifthly, the DAC prefaces that the rights and needs of vulnerable groups, including women, youth, children, and people living with disabilities, cannot be considered secondary. While this umbrella term of "vulnerable groups" again fails to recognise the intersectional nature of oppression, as argued earlier, implicit here is the DAC's awareness that a tendency exists for the needs and rights of vulnerable groups to be neglected and considered as auxiliary. Lastly, part of the preamble to this policy draft is that "significant progress has subsequently been made in building a new and

inclusive society to which the arts, culture and heritage have contributed" (DAC, 2017b: 4). As with previous policy iterations, this statement lacks detail. It is unclear how significant progress has been measured and what this progress even entails.

Compared to the previous 2017 draft, this revision has added the following section to its mission statement:

> Accelerate the *transformation* of the arts, culture and heritage sectors and related institutions to effectively contribute to building an *inclusive*, creative, caring and prosperous society in which the diverse creative and cultural practices, heritage and knowledge traditions and rights of *all in South Africa* may flourish and prosper" [my emphasis] (DAC, 2017b: 8).

As suggested throughout this chapter, the concept of transformation is problematic when the location of black women stage directors – as the most historically subjugated group – is considered. In neglecting to carefully examine the nuances of this term in relation to "all in South Africa", the DAC inadvertently hinders the very sector it claims it wants to transform. Instead of transformation being accelerated, it is impeded. The idea of social and economic transformation for all South Africans is a thread that runs through the different White Paper drafts, regardless of the divergent rationales underpinning each iteration. The first revision of 2013 cited that a change in government's priorities along with the "growing strength of the Cultural and Creative Industries as a whole" necessitated a policy amendment (DAC, 2013: 11), while the 2016 policy was premised on "repositioning" the democratic principles outlined in the 1996 Paper for the purpose of "accelerating transformation" to enable the sector to contribute towards social and economic development (DAC, 2016: 3). The justification for the February 2017 policy was its misalignment with the NDP and the aim to position it to "enhance" (DAC, 2017a: 6) the democratic dispensation established for the sector in 1996, while the iteration of October 2017 was to "consolidate" (DAC, 2017b: 6) the democratic dispensation established for the sector in 1996. Amidst the changing justifications, as well as unclear omissions and discrepancies between the various White Paper drafts, what is clear is the DAC's overarching strategic objective in positioning the sector to contribute towards social transformation, but primarily, economic transformation. Gastrow puts it simply: "Our government has narrowed the arts into a sector linked to job creation and economic development" (Gastrow, 2016). However, in failing to articulate transformation through an intersectional lens, the DAC also does not delineate government interventions that would facilitate social and economic transformation for all constituents. As such, the very prospect of

genuine transformation is undercut – a consequence most perceptible for black women practitioners.

"Transformation" in cultural policy: Implications for black women practitioners

South Africa's introduction to democracy motioned the beginning of major transformation in every sphere. From that point onwards, the presence and participation of the historically marginalised was to be legitimised primarily through legislative structures, including policy frameworks. The 1996 White Paper, the RDP, and the Constitution became fundamental legislation that would form a basis for the re-contextualisation and reconfiguration of South Africa's arts, culture and heritage sector. Previously the domain of the white minority, arts, culture and heritage would be positioned by the DACST as an area in which all could participate freely and equally in a democratic society. Formulation of the initial White Paper of 1996 was justifiably around the pursuit of transformation: primarily social development and secondarily, economic development. Examining the portrayal of transformation in the policy framework, gaps and silences are however conspicuous, particularly considering the location of black women theatre practitioners. While the democratic ideals of equality, redress and nation-building are rigorously pursued in the 1996 White Paper, the disparities born by the previous dispensation are not substantially addressed. Against past realities of segregation and marginalisation that were clear and unambiguous, the 1996 cultural policy framework fails to be equally unequivocal and rigorous in the guiding principles it sets out. For the DACST to articulate its vision of a re-structured sector as simply one in which everyone benefits, becomes inadequate. In proposing objectives that seek to integrate "black artists" and "black people" into the arts, culture and heritage sector of a new era, the nuances and complexities of discrimination, based on factors such as race, gender, class and language, among others, are neglected. While in its framework the 1996 policy cites the term "women" merely twice, the term "disabilities" does not appear at all throughout the entire document.

In the revised policy of 2013, distinctions are made regarding the term transformation. On the one hand, social transformation refers to efforts to build a society in which everyone can enjoy political and human freedoms, socio-economic rights and national identity. On the other, comprehensive social transformation entails forging equality, social and economic development and unity in diversity (DAC, 2013: 22).

Ultimately, transformation entails:

- Developing an inclusive and cohesive society;

- Eradicating all inequalities, exclusions and divisions of the past;
- Cultivating a "shared South African identity which incorporates diversity in a democratic dispensation"

(DAC, 2013: 22).

Similarly, while inclusion, cohesion, eradication of past-bred inequalities and promotion of a shared national identity comprising citizens united in their diversity are all laudable goals, they do not address the nuances of transformation as it affects different sections of society. In the 2013 framework, the DAC promotes targeted programmes for "previously disadvantaged individuals" or "marginalised groups" including "women, youth and people with disabilities within all Cultural and Creative Industries institutions and structures" (DAC, 2013: 32). This merging of categories once again fails to give due recognition and regard to sections of the population that essentially require different government initiatives, strategies and interventions within the arts, culture and heritage sector, such that the work towards transformation is meaningfully engaged.

The revised paper of 2013 states that "the general transformation agenda of government addresses past racial and class (economic) imbalances resultant from apartheid and aims to build an equitable, fair and inclusive society" (DAC, 2013: 38). Such a stance omits the essential component of gender. Through an intersectional lens that considers the myriad ways in which oppression occurs, this statement falls short. To cite race and class as the only two primary apartheid-bred imbalances that must be rectified and addressed in a current context is inadequate and profoundly problematic. In a policy brief advocating substantive gender equality in South Africa's policy frameworks, and referring to the RDP of the early 1990s, the current NDP, as well as its Medium-Term Strategic Framework, authors Adams and Mahomed (2018: n.p.) argue:

> Policy formulation and implementation should demonstrate that the fundamental role of the state in a constitutional democracy is to promote, protect, respect and fulfil human rights, and, in order to do so, policies should take into account the complex, diverse, and intersectional experiences of women.

The reality of black women is that this group existed within the triple oppression of race, class *and* gender (Hassim, 1991; de la Rey, 1997; Kobo, 2018). Gender discrimination continues to be a huge problem in a society that remains deeply patriarchal, and this is reflected across

various government policies, including the revised White Paper of 2013. This idea is reiterated by established theatre practitioner Fatima Dike, who stated, "You have to work in theatre three times more than men for people to take you seriously" (Dike, interview, 2019). Fellow respondent Ntshieng Mokgoro related an incident from during her time as part of an acting group in which the gross violation of women was the norm:

> Rehearsal was more like a concentration camp … the guy was just too hard on us; *bebasithuka* [they would swear us] … *wazi ukuthi masijima bebezosi enkhareja ukuthi sifake izinto zokujima – ama-tight or izinto ezimfishane* [know that when we worked out they would encourage us to wear gym clothing – tights or short clothing] (Mokgoro, interview, 2019).

Mokgoro describes the environment as abusive, and although she knew that the treatment of women by the men was wrong, she was also aware that nobody was going to do anything to address the matter. Considering such an experience, the omission of gender as a site of inequality that must be readily and radically addressed in the current context depicts gross negligence on the part of the DAC in its 2013 White paper framework.

The DAC admits in the 2013 policy that "the Cultural and Creative Industries remain skewed" in terms of participation of women and persons with disabilities, racial participation and representation, skills development opportunities, access to arts, culture and heritage and the urban/rural divide (DAC, 2013: 38). While the current shortcomings in the sector are rightly acknowledged by the DAC, this list overlooks the degrees of gaps and silences. To view the markers of identity of race, gender and disability individually undermines the extent of oppression that exists when these variables intersect and are embodied by one individual. It is when these social identifiers are considered in relationship that the magnitude of domination and exclusion is presented most acutely.

The 2013 policy posits that the "insufficient and slow pace of transformation to date necessitates government playing a more proactive and leading role in transforming the Creative and Cultural Industries as well as the approach to the delivery of ACH to all" (DAC, 2013: 38). While this appears a valiant position, it is nonetheless a problematic one. It is not clear how the DAC deduced that transformation has been insufficient and slow. A similarly casual stance is evident in subsequent policy drafts. Across the White Paper frameworks of 2016 and the two drafts from 2017, transformation denotes the reconfiguration of "personnel, programmes and

collections, exhibits, performances and events in arts, culture and heritage" such that they "reflect the demographics of an African society with diverse cultures" (DAC, 2016: 6).

Transformation is a prevailing theme in South Africa's democratic context, identified as a principal objective across various policy documents and legislative frameworks. Against the context of human rights violations in different nations of the world, the *Human Development Report*, first published in 1990, explores a human rights and human development agenda for the 21st century across all the nations and territories in the world (United Nations Development Programme, 2010). At national level, South Africa published its own Human Development Report in 2000, in which the challenges of transitioning to a democracy are noted as ensuring political freedom, building an equitable society and economic development (Human Development Report – South Africa, 2000). According to Maloka (2019), the response to each of these challenges is political transformation, social transformation and economic transformation. The Human Development Report – South Africa notes that "the central challenge is whether South Africa's transformation will attain the objectives of human development for the majority of those who have been excluded from mainstream society" (2000: 5). The superficial tone accompanying the concept of transformation in the above extracts from the White Paper iterations is glaring, particularly considering the need to realise an equitable society.

Defining its philosophy of transformation, the DAC states that it is composite, structural and "must be rooted in policy and governance" (DAC, 2013: 38). The DAC then declares that this description denotes a significant shift from considering transformation "as a simple matter of racial quotas and targets" (DAC, 2013: 38). Such a stance is problematic and does not inspire confidence in the government department's perception of transformation. If the concept of transformation is trivialised at its most rudimentary level – whereby it is gauged by racial quotas and targets – it is unclear how it can possibly be assessed and engaged with at more complex stages. While transformation should not end at quotas and targets, this would certainly be a viable starting point where redress, access and participation are concerned. The DAC's viewpoint is equally sticky when considering the term in its nuanced form. Transformation is essentially a radical change in structures and processes. In the context of contemporary South Africa, the term speaks to a fundamental shift within the various spheres of society such that everyone is visible, included, and participates equally.

The 2013 revised paper notes some measures that will be used to examine the extent to which the economic arm of the CCIs has transformed. One of the measures is the removal of obstacles that hinder the "active participation of women, youth and persons with disabilities in the economy of the Creative and Cultural industries" (DAC, 2013: 39). Such a measure is to "ensure equitable access to and active participation of, previously disadvantaged individuals" (DAC, 2013: 39). The under-representation of black women in the key role of stage director in state-supported spaces stands opposed to these measures and, as such, brings into question the transformation objective of the economic arm of the CCIs.

Problematising the typical nature of policy documents, Deacon notes the following: "Created in different contexts and for different purposes, policy documents may contain significant silences and contradictions which may also hamper implementation" (2010: 2). Inevitably, if implementation is impeded due to policy discrepancies, so too will transformation.

The full integration and participation of specifically black women practitioners needs to be stipulated and highlighted within cultural policy frameworks as a strategic intent by government. Respondent Yolandi Michaels articulates the necessary co-operation that should exist between the DAC and the cultural institutions it supports: "I believe that there needs to be space crafted for a black and a female director and that it has to be part of that theatre's strategic plan, and not just the theatre – it must come down from national" (Michaels, interview, 2019). Unless the DAC acknowledges the intersectional and interconnected nature of oppression, which consequently merits different modes of inquiry and interventions for previously marginalised groups, arts, culture and heritage will seem transformed, equal and fully inclusive insofar as policy is concerned. But at a practical institutional level, implementation will inevitably fall short where redress, representativity and equally meaningful participation of all practitioners is concerned. To delineate marginalised groups as "youth, women and persons with disabilities" or as "vulnerable groups" is not only to overlook the critical component of race, for example, but it also fundamentally neglects the interconnecting nature of experience, wherein the magnitude of discrimination is played out and made more manifest. In practice, the sector thus remains skewed, consequently undercutting much-needed work towards transformation.

Despite the White Paper's aim to protect and support all practitioners – particularly black people', "black practitioners" and "previously disadvantaged and marginalised communities and individuals" such as "women, persons with disabilities and youth" – disparities in artistic

practice at state-supported theatres remain deeply entrenched. This state of affairs should be attributed not only to phraseology flaws and discrepancies in policy, but also to historically-borne injustices and neo-liberal cultures which further entrench exclusion in a contemporary context. In her article *Rights and Realities* (2006), gender equity scholar Mary Hames argues that constitutional frameworks and mechanisms prove inadequate when it comes to eradicating gender inequalities. Progressive laws on paper do not necessarily translate to substantive rights for black women, since "policies and laws can only be meaningful and just if the most marginalised in society benefit" (Hames, 2006: 1326-1327). Hames' argument is that paper rights can have a real, substantive impact on black women's lives only when all the other systems in society support those rights. Policy by itself is inadequate in ensuring that the "women sensitive" laws outlined therein actually materialise if racist, patriarchal structures exist in the larger societal context. As previously posited, although cultural policy is not the only consideration, it is a reasonable starting point when it comes to facilitating greater visibility and participation of black women stage directors at state-supported cultural institutions.

Concluding Reflections

From the initial 1996 White Paper, through to the latest draft of 2017, the cultural arm of government has continuously and unwaveringly positioned the arts, culture and heritage sector as a tool for both social and economic development. In adopting the terminology of cultural and creative industries, both the DACST and DAC have explicitly highlighted the economic potential of this sector. Through the policy frameworks of the White Papers, along with other sector-specific interventions and strategies, growth of the cultural and creative industries remains a clear governmental priority. CCIs are heavily reliant on public patronage and organised along margins of profitability. State-supported institutions, whose artistic activities are largely not subsidised by government, are in the precarious position of exploring alternative means of survival. An added challenge is the vague rhetoric exemplified by the White Paper frameworks, in which black women theatre practitioners are simply cited among "historically disadvantaged" or "vulnerable" groups. In its failure to formulate plans, programmes and strategic national objectives targeted towards the significant inclusion and participation of black women theatre practitioners, the DAC has continuously provided a nebulous policy framework which it proposes should guide the arts, culture and heritage practices of state-supported cultural institutions. The marginal situation of black women stage directors in the 1996 White Paper is evidently maintained in subsequent iterations. The "fundamental

transformation" (DACST, 1996: n.p.) that the previous Ministry hoped to realise in the arts, culture and heritage sector in 1996, is evidently incomplete more than 20 years and four White Paper iterations later. The 1996 White Paper and subsequent drafts outlining the DAC's strategic intent for the sector reveal the fundamental and continuing exclusion of black women practitioners.

CHAPTER 3: GATEKEEPING

Introduction

While Artscape and the Playhouse share a history as performing arts complexes under the management of white, Eurocentric, male-headed provincial performing arts councils (PACs), whose offerings were predominantly for the socially elite white populace, the Market Theatre paved its own path as an independent, racially integrated theatre. In keeping with the DACST's vision for fundamental transformation of the sector, the PACs underwent major reconstruction, including new management and their conversion into playhouses accessible to all practitioners regardless of race, gender or any other factors of exclusion. Their facilities had to be available for rent and their management and boards had to be representative. In addition, each institution would start receiving gradually decreasing subsidies over the following three years (1997, 1998 and 1999), whereby financial support from the state would cover only operational costs, including maintenance of infrastructure, staffing and other "essential activities" (DACST, 1996: n.p.). After all, budgets would now have to be distributed between nine provinces, as opposed to the previous four. "Within an emerging framework of co-operative governance", provinces and local municipalities would need to take "primary responsibility for funding of the PACs" (DACST, 1996: n.p.). In fact, the 1996 White Paper stipulates that "cultural institutions which are currently publicly-funded would need to become more commercially driven and organised along business lines" (DACST, 1996: n.p.).

With the Market Theatre having joined the fold of state-subsidised theatres from 2003, all three theatres exist today as state-supported cultural institutions, which, for the first time since each one's emergence, are led by black individuals. Though occupying markedly different leadership roles, Marlene le Roux, Linda Bukhosini and James Ngcobo are each equally responsible for mediating the gap between policy and practice in these institutions. As posited by Oc (2018), leadership does not occur in a vacuum, but is rather contingent on the setting in which leaders exist. This chapter focuses on the institutional processes governing the Market, Artscape and Playhouse. The discussion also includes the voices of Artscape's CEO Marlene le Roux, as well as James Ngcobo, the Artistic Director of Market Theatre, since they are the individuals who ultimately shape artistic processes and programming at the two theatres. Discussion of institutional processes at the Playhouse is facilitated through secondary sources, including annual reports and media accounts.

The DAC defines the primary function of its six cultural institutions as the "staging of productions" (DAC, 2013: 45). As government-gazetted institutions, this role must be framed within the 1996 White Paper, as the policy currently governing South Africa's arts, culture and heritage sector. Responses of the institutional leaders reveal funding as the primary component that enables each theatre to fulfil its mandate to stage productions. Aspects that are further considered include the commercial viability of productions, perceptions held by institutional leaders about black women stage directors, commissioning, tokenism and transformation. These areas collectively elucidate the issue of access and participation of black women stage directors within these three theatres.

State-supported Theatres as Gatekeeping Channels

Leaders of cultural institutions are accountable to certain norms which have over a period of time become naturalised as "excellence" and "success". These are norms shaped by a broader climate of neoliberalism, the commercialisation of the arts and the role of state-funded theatres in "nation-building" (as social engineering and not democratic transformation). They are standards which have been formed by the historical and ideological legacy of South African state-funded theatres, where as much as the race and gender dynamics of leadership have changed, those pertaining to practitioners accessing these spaces have not radically shifted. Ngcobo's and le Roux's respective responses are understood within the framework of the particular institutional legacies and histories of the theatres that they lead. These histories and legacies, alongside strenuous funding arrangements and the overarching governmental imperative of positioning the arts and culture sector as a tool towards equality, employment and poverty alleviation, would undoubtedly make helming these theatres, or "gatekeeping"[20] channels, a challenging undertaking.

Individual agencies operate within particular and complex contexts. Nevertheless, it is important that the influence (albeit limited) of institutional leaders be acknowledged, since practitioners hoping to access state-supported theatres traditionally engage the artistic leader, who essentially is the key representative of the theatre's artistic norms and standards and consequently, the conduit for productions and practitioners that access the space or not. An emphasis on institutional legacies and histories would be to deny le Roux, Ngcobo and indeed

[20] A term coined by Kurt Lewin (1947) and applied in media analysis to signify the process of selecting and shaping content that will be disseminated through communication outlets and ultimately consumed by an audience.

Bukhosini agency as change makers in the artistic landscape of the theatres they respectively helm. As figures of artistic leadership in a democratic context, Ngcobo, le Roux and Bukhosini bear the immense task of actively shifting inherited and hegemonic artistic practices and championing the inclusion and participation of all practitioners, as outlined in the White Paper, and this, despite constraints in the institutional environment. This leadership responsibility is in no way to dismiss the real quandary that state-supported theatres have found themselves since the White Paper of 1996 was drafted: on the one hand, these spaces have to be fully transformed to reflect a democratic dispensation, yet on the other, the funding required to support this overarching transformation agenda is minimal to non-existent. In order to circumvent these financial challenges, state-supported theatres find themselves operating as gatekeeping channels – selecting and granting access predominantly to marketable artistic products. Since patriarchal, racist institutional histories recognised productions mainly by white (especially male) practitioners, this legacy continues, in that in a contemporary context, space at the three theatres under investigation, seems to be reserved primarily for male directors (black and white), followed by white women directors. The activities of the arts, culture and heritage value chain – that is, creation, production, dissemination, transmission and consumption (DAC, 2013: 10) – evidently benefit the same recognisable directors at state-supported theatres. Consequently, these theatres which on paper are to represent all practitioners equitably, in reality, function as gatekeeping channels that maintain historical institutional practices and standards in order to remain sustainable. Lewin recognises the complex terrain that gatekeepers must navigate. In determining content that is included and granted access, gatekeepers and their specific environments "have to be considered as one constellation of interdependent factors" (1947: 338). A major factor in the state-funded theatre environment, and one which has constrained the agency of institutional leaders, is funding.

Funding

Publicly supported cultural institutions submit their annual reports to the Minister of the DAC in accordance with the provisions of the Public Finance Management Act of 1999 (Act 1 of 1999). This Act requires that the council of each institution ensures that each one keeps detailed and accurate records of its financial matters. As declared cultural institutions in terms of the Cultural Institutions Act (no. 119 of 1998), Artscape, the Market Theatre Foundation and the Playhouse Company are state-supported flagship institutions which together occupy an "elitist or favoured space because of their regular and direct support from government" (Joffe et al. 2019: 165). Each theatre is eligible to receive funding across the three spheres of government.

The theatres also form part of the largest domain within the creative industries and supposedly contribute significantly to the economy. In a Fin24 newspaper article, Jen Snowball, cultural economist from the cultural statistics research arm of the DAC, the South African Cultural Observatory declares: "South Africa's creative economy contributed over R90.5bn to the national economy or 2.9% of the GDP in 2013 to 2014, exceeding, for instance, the contribution of agriculture to the GDP (2.2%)" (Snowball, 2017). Despite the important contribution of the CCIs to the South African economy, this industry remains infamously under-funded. This is evident when examining the annual reports of the three theatres under investigation. While available annual reports for the Playhouse cover 12 financial years (2007/2008 to 2018/2019), 11 are available for Artscape (2007/2008 to 2017/2018) and eight for the Market Theatre (2011/2012 to 2018/2019). To offer a comparable analysis of the funding landscape of Playhouse, Artscape and the Market, the seven annual reports that are common between the institutions are considered: 2011/2012 to 2017/2018.

The Market, Playhouse and Artscape receive an annual operations grant from the DAC, which according to the 1996 White Paper is for the intended purpose of covering core salaries, core infrastructure and "other essential activities" (DACST, 1996: n.p.). Along with this annual funding, each institution is given a further state subsidy from the DAC known as capital works funding, which is a conditional grant towards liabilities associated with essential maintenance of buildings and property. Part of the yearly grant is for establishing infrastructure, while maintenance of these facilities is enabled through capital works funding. As such, the capital works grant is not directed towards support of artistic output. Being state-supported institutions mandated to produce and present artistic works, the "essential activities" that the annual grant covers along with infrastructure and staffing should realistically refer to artistic productions. Though the DAC clearly mandates its six declared institutions with the core function of staging productions, the performance activities of Artscape, the Market and Playhouse are however not given adequate support. Although the Market Theatre is not a former PAC, its establishment as a state-subsidised performing arts institution from 2003 denotes its inclusion in the organisation of publicly funded cultural entities, as outlined in the 1996 White Paper.

Ngcobo and le Roux highlight funding among their greatest challenges, and both institutional leaders echo that state subsidies do not sustain artistic work. While Ngcobo states that government funding is for salaries, which makes fundraising vital, le Roux notes that government support is only for infrastructure. Le Roux hires out the Opera House to generate revenue to support productions, and conveys determination and a sense of agency in ensuring

Artscape's sustainability: "I must make this space work, because it's a state theatre. I'm not going to wait on the Minister" (le Roux, interview, 2018). Employing a business model and fundraising are efforts to facilitate the sustainability of artistic activities in these theatres. When examining the funding situation of the three theatres over the seven financial years, the Playhouse would similarly need to engage measures to support its core responsibility of presenting artistic works.

Over the seven financial years, the DAC has made annual operations grants largely available through the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), and capital works funding through the Special Capital Expenditure Grant (SCEG). Other government funding mechanisms have included the Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority (CATTHSETA), a grant facilitating skills development for the purpose of contributing to economic growth, as well as the Incubator Programme.

According to the South African Government website, the MTEF, which was adopted in 1998, is "a transparent planning and budget formulation process within which government establishes contracts for allocating public resources to their strategic priorities while ensuring overall fiscal discipline". In the first national budget review outlining the framework, National Treasury states that the MTEF "aims to ensure that budgets reflect Government's social and economic priorities and give substance to Government's reconstruction and development commitments" (1998: 1). The MTEF continues with government's RDP agenda of transformation which requires the "reprioritisation of resources in favour of the previously disadvantaged" (Department of National Treasury, 1998: 1). National Treasury asserts that "medium term planning is essential for the transformation of South African society" (1998: 1). In setting out medium-term expenditure priorities, government has identified several priority areas across which resources are allocated provincially and nationally. Three-year budgets are compiled for areas including education, health, welfare, the criminal justice system, social security information systems, and poverty relief programmes. The MTEF essentially aims to allocate public resources in line with government's overarching strategic imperatives of social and economic transformation. The exclusion of the phrase "cultural and creative industries" in National Treasury's document in which the MTEF is explained, suggests this as a low-priority area of government – this, despite its supposed significant contribution to the national fiscus. In neglecting to include publicly funded cultural institutions as a key area in medium-term expenditure planning, government overlooks these national spaces within its strategic imperative of social and economic transformation.

The SCEG is a capital works allocation from the DAC for repair and maintenance on buildings, while CATTHSETA is discretionary grant funding specifically for skills development. The DAC has also made available the Incubator Programme grant to support new and upcoming practitioners and organisations, and gives marginal funding to some of the three theatres towards the support of productions and projects. Although the National Lottery is within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, funding allocations from this entity are considered, given that the proposal to earmark for arts and culture 5% of monies raised through the state lottery is first specified in the 1996 White Paper framework (DACST, 1996: n.p.). Moreover, both the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Arts and Culture are government departments and, as such, operate within similar political mandates.

State funding allocations, production earnings and production expenditure per theatre over seven financial years: 2011/2012 to 2017/2018

Tables 4 to 12 below present the available figures regarding the funding of the three theatres per year and overall for the seven financial years. The figures (’000) denote millions in rands.

Table 4: Funding, 2011/2012 (’000)

	DAC Operations Grant	Provincial Government	Local Municipality	National Lottery	Capital Works/Project Grant	Box-office Earnings	Production Expenditure
Playhouse	36,000	6,400	3,000	0	26,600	4,100	12,700
Artscape	42,300	0	0	1,700	*67,000	2,800	10,800
Market	**23,000	0	0	0	2,800	Unspecified	8,200

*R34 million was from national government while R33 million was from provincial government.
** Funding allocation is through the MTEF

Table 5: Funding, 2012/2013 (’000)

	DAC Operations Grant	Provincial Government	Local Municipality	National Lottery	Capital Works/ Project Grant	Box-office Earnings	DAC Operations Grant
Playhouse	38,400	6,700	4,300		3,300	4,000	14,000
Artscape	45,000	0	0	0	**41,200	4,000	13,400
Market	24,600	0	0	4,700	13,800	Unspecified	10,100

*Funding through the SCEG
**R39 million rands was from national government while R2.2 million was from provincial government.

Table 6: Funding, 2013/2014 ('000)

	DAC Operations Grant	Provincial Government	Local Municipality	National Lottery	Capital Works/ Project Grant	Box-office Earnings	Production Expenditure
Playhouse	40,500	7,000	3,800	0	*13,400	3,400	14,000
Artscape	48,000	0	0	1,600	**59,900	2,750	12,700
Market†	‡26,200	0	0	7,100	16,100	Unspecified	11,700

*Funding through the SCEG

** R45.6 million and R14.3 million was received from national and provincial governments respectively.

†Market Theatre received production funding of R833 333

‡Funding through the MTEF

Table 7: Funding, 2014/2015 ('000)

	DAC Operations Grant	Provincial Government	Local Municipality	National Lottery	Capital Works/ Project Grant	Box-office Earnings	Production Expenditure
Playhouse	43,000	7,400	2,250	0	*6,400	1,200	11,800
Artscape	51,000	0	0	1,600	**127	3,500	12,500
Market†	‡27,800	0	0	4,700	40,900	Unspecified	12,500

*Funding through the SCEG

**Artscape received a CATTHSETA grant (DAC) of R127,000

†Market Theatre received additional production funding of R1 million

‡Funding through the MTEF

Table 8: Funding, 2015/2016 ('000)

	DAC Operations Grant	Provincial Government	Local Municipality	National Lottery	Capital Works/ Project Grant	Box-office Earnings	Production Expenditure
Playhouse	41,600	7,800	3,000	0	*23,000	1,400	17,500
Artscape**	53,300	709	0	0	20,700	2,700	9,700
Market	†29,000	0	0	4,000	43,000	Unspecified	14,000

*Funding through the SCEG

**Artscape received R197,000 as part of the Incubator Programme

†Funding through the MTEF

Table 9: Funding, 2016/2017 ('000)

	DAC Operations Grant	Provincial Government	Local Municipality	National Lottery	Capital Works/ Project Grant	Box-office Earnings	Production Expenditure
Playhouse	43,800	7,800	3,000	0	*20,400	5,900	16,500
Artscape**	55,900	473	0	0	23,700	3,000	23,000
Market†	‡42,400	0	0	2,000	25,000	Unspecified	12,600

*Funding through the SCEG

**Artscape received close to R1.4 million towards the Incubator Programme

†Market Theatre was the recipient of a project grant of R4.4 million

‡Funding through the MTEF

Table 10: Funding, 2017/2018 ('000)

	DAC Operations Grant	Provincial Government	Local Municipality	National Lottery	Capital Works/ Project Grant	Box-office Earnings	Production Expenditure
Playhouse	49,800	8,100	750	0	*5,300	803	14,100
Artscape**	58,700	577	154	0	18,400	1,100	9,200
Market†	‡44,500	0	0	0	2.5	Unspecified	15

*Funding through the SCEG

**Artscape received R1.2 million as part of the Incubator Programme

†Market Theatre was the recipient of a project grant of R3.8 million
‡Funding through the MTEF

Total state funding allocations, production earnings and production expenditure per theatre over seven financial years: 2011/2012 to 2017/2018

Table 11: Total funding, 2011/2012 to 2017/2018 ('000)

	DAC Operations Grant	Provincial Government	Local Municipality	National Lottery	Capital Works	Project Grant	Box-office Earnings	Production Cost
Playhouse	354,200	1,759	154	4,900	230,900	2,924	19,850	91,300
Artscape	293,100	51,200	20,100	–	98,400	–	20,803	100,600
Market	217,500	–	–	22,500	144,100	10,033	Unspecified	84,100

Over the seven financial years under examination, total grants from the DAC across the combined three spheres of government – national, provincial and local municipality - excluding capital works funding and project grants, illustrate a largely uneven funding landscape, with the Playhouse sitting at R364,400,000, Artscape at R356,113,000 and the Market at R217,500,000.

In addition, the figures show a precarious funding climate. Funding at the provincial government and local municipality levels are grossly disproportionate, as in the case of Artscape and Playhouse, or altogether non-existent, as evident with the Market Theatre. Support through the national lottery is additionally problematic – while the Market Theatre received 450% of Artscape's grant over the seven fiscal years, the Playhouse did not receive any state lottery subsidy. Funding allocations from the DAC for productions specifically, are equally concerning – while the Market Theatre was the recipient of three times the project grants allocated to Artscape, the Playhouse again received zero funding support earmarked for productions. Box-office revenue seems to be the most uniform of the figures. While the Playhouse generated approximately R1 million more than Artscape's box office earnings, these figures are not specified in the Market Theatre's annual reports. The Playhouse, as recipient of the most overall state funding, also incurred the greatest portion of production costs. Artscape received the second highest allotment of government grants, while sustaining the second highest production expenditure. Lastly, the Market Theatre was recipient of the least state support and went on to incur the smallest production expenses. This pattern can be understood since a theatre's production expenses are likely to be in relation to subsidies received, more so if a significant portion of the total revenue is through state support. Nevertheless, the box office income of the three institutions, alongside marginal allocations towards specifically productions, along with high production costs, means that revenue is marginally augmented against tight production budgets. The allocation of capital works funding is evidently on a

needs basis where the maintenance of buildings and property is concerned. The large Artscape theatre complex, which announced plans for a R1.5 billion worth makeover in 2012 (*Mail & Guardian*, 2012), received the most overall capital funding (over R230 million), followed by the Market Theatre, which was the recipient of just over R144 million in capital works grants. The Playhouse received the least capital works subsidy, at over R98 million.

Outside of state support, the operating income generated by each theatre at the end of each fiscal year – whether through box-office revenue, donations, sponsorships, bar sales, commission from hire of performance venues, and so forth – would not be enough to ensure each one's continuation. While neither le Roux nor Ngcobo stated this explicitly, their fervent statements on state subsidies indicate that sustainability of the respective theatres is a difficult undertaking against small funding allocations. Le Roux's statement, "Government only gives us money for the infrastructure" (le Roux, interview, 2018), was echoed by Ngcobo, who equally emphasised minimal funding directed towards artistic productions: "The grant that we get from the Department of Arts and Culture is for salaries" (Ngcobo, interview, 2018).

The funding situation of these three cultural institutions that are heavily reliant on state subsidies elucidates each one's focus on the commercial viability of productions.

Commercial viability of productions

The focus on the commercial viability of arts, culture and heritage, or the cultural and creative industries, is evidently twofold: to position the sector as a tool that can contribute towards eradicating government's triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality, but also as a means to offset the marginal state subsidies that severely undermine the sustainability of state-supported cultural institutions. Alongside this economic imperative for the sector, the DAC also attributes a social development role to arts, culture and heritage. In the 1996 White Paper, the DACST identifies the "integration of arts and culture into all aspects of socio-economic development", as one of "the seven most crucial areas to address" (DACST, 1996: n.p.). Laudable as this goal is, this dual function that government ascribes to the sector's activities is not easily attainable within existing funding arrangements.

Le Roux reinforces how Artscape circumvents this dichotomy: "I have a business model of hiring out the Opera House to sustain the works that we need to do […]. I hire out in order to do the transformational work" (le Roux, interview, 2018). The largest of three performing venues at Artscape, the Opera House, has a seating capacity of approximately 1,500. An elaborate, well-equipped theatre, the venue mostly stages large-scale musicals. Making the

Opera House available for hire therefore supports both Artscape's commercial endeavours and social development goals.

Against the commercial endeavours outlined in the 1996 White Paper for publicly-funded cultural institutions, the state-supported Artscape operates as a business concerned with featuring productions that can generate revenue, in order to produce works that are not-for-profit, such as the institution's schools programme, which le Roux describes as "huge" (le Roux, interview, 2018). Le Roux highlights this programme perhaps due to her own background – not only did she hold the position of Director of Audience Development and Education for 14 years at Artscape, she also worked as a subject advisor in the Education department.

Similarly, cognisant of the need to showcase commercially viable work – particularly against a precarious funding climate – Ngcobo explains that the role of the Artistic Director has had to evolve as a result. In the numerous boardrooms in which he finds himself, he asserts: "You can't be 'arty'. There's no time for that" (Ngcobo, interview, 2018). Ngcobo is emphasising that due to the pressure to curate artistic works that are likely to turn a profit, his responsibilities have had to extend beyond just creative direction to considerations of financial viability. This notion of arts as business is equally articulated by le Roux:

> What people don't realise is we don't get money for doing the arts, so we need to look at you [to] make money. You have a product. But if your product is not good, who's going to come? Then it's got nothing to do with us. The people don't want to see your product – finish and klaar[21] (le Roux, interview, 2018).

Within policy framework, state-legislated cultural institutions such as the Playhouse, Artscape and Market are positioned as businesses, and consequently, the primary criterion is for productions to be profit-generating products. In the absence of adequate state subsidies, this market-driven focus aids publicly funded institutions to continue functioning as playhouses "which are obligated to present and provide infrastructure for performance" (Joffe et al; 2019: 168). At the same time, the social development objective for arts, culture and heritage – which, according to the 1996 policy should be working in tandem with its economic aims – becomes subsumed in the commercial potential of artistic products. In this contemporary landscape, historically marginalised practitioners must navigate a professional arts and culture playing

[21] 'Klaar' is the Afrikaans word for 'finished'. The widely used colloquial phrase 'finish and klaar' therefore emphatically expresses the finality of a matter.

field in which their exclusion was previously legitimised, while also experiencing the burden of creating work that must primarily be profitable. Black women stage directors – as the most historically disenfranchised group – are among the most implicated practitioners.

We still don't have black women directing

Production figures between 1999 and 2018 illustrate that black women stage directors are consistently the least represented group of practitioners, both in production output and individual directors accessing the three theatres – in relation to their black men, white women and white men counterparts – across the three theatres, though to varying degrees. Considering the "non-racist, non-sexist and democratic ideals" maintained by the 1996 White Paper, the issue of "black women" is a profoundly political one, as Ngcobo and le Roux reflect. The dearth of black women directors featuring in key state-supported theatres is acknowledged and lamented by Ngcobo. He gives credence to his viewpoint by citing fellow black male actors who share his sentiment:

> I just think theatres in the past just never gave a space to black women and now we have to do it […] I have never been directed by a black woman. We sat with Siyabonga Twala, all South African actors, Sello Maake, and all of them say we've never been directed by a black woman. It's sad (Ngcobo, interview, 2018).

In pointing out that he has never been directed by a black woman – in nearly 30 years as a professional actor – Ngcobo underscores the grave paucity of this group. Further, in citing fellow black men actors who similarly bemoan the absence of black women, Ngcobo seems to forge an alliance with black men who also acknowledge the paucity of their counterparts. He presents this as not just a "black woman" problem, but one which negatively affects black men practitioners too. Ngcobo however does not proceed to illustrate how, in his capacity as Artistic Director, he is actively disrupting the space that privileges him – by virtue of both his position and gender identity. In a patriarchal, post-apartheid society, black men continue to be favourably located in relation to black women. Asked about his views on black women directors in state-supported theatres, Ngcobo cites Lesedi Job, Pamela Nomvete, Sibongile Khumalo, Siya Makuzeni, Thandi Ntuli and Nomvula Xaluva. He maintains: "There's a lot [of black women directors], and the idea is that we need to make room because there's more white women directing in this country" (Ngcobo, interview, 2018). Of the six black women Ngcobo mentions, four are music artists, while only two work as theatre directors, and as such, are the only two that are relevant given the focus of this study. In mentioning a group of black women

in which more than half are not even stage directors in the conventional sense, Ngcobo inadvertently reinforces the paucity of their presence.

At the same time, it is also worth acknowledging that when considering the overall visibility of black women artists at the Market, it is clear that Ngcobo champions the cause for this group's presence. Since his tenure, the Market has given space to several black women artists across various categories who have been "firsts". These practitioners include Thando Lobese, who was the first black woman to design the set of an Athol Fugard production, and Palesa Mazamisa, who wrote and directed a work in 2018 that became the first script by a black woman to win the Naledi Award for Best New South African Script. Since Ngcobo was appointed as Artistic Director of the Market Theatre in 2013 – making him the "first black[22] person to fill the position full time" (Smith, 2013) – there has also been a steady increase in the participation of black women stage directors. In the five-year period immediately following his appointment (2014–2018), seven black women featured as directors across 10 productions (Lesedi Job featured as a director on four occasions), as compared to only five black women who directed six productions between them (Princess Zinzi Mhlongo directed twice) in the preceding five years (2009–2013). Though the growth in black women directors is commendable and certainly a move in the right direction, the numbers indicate that there is a considerable way to go before parity is achieved.

Le Roux was appointed CEO of Artscape in 2015 after occupying the position in an acting capacity for three years. She explains that Artscape rejects the title of an Artistic or Creative Director. She asserts that "if you have an Artistic Director, it's only that person's work that you're going to see" (le Roux, interview, 2018). Instead, Artscape observes a process of collective curation, which entails a panel of specialists selecting productions across the various genres for showcase at the institution. Le Roux justifies this choice by stating that "we have more artists on stage and give more jobs for artists, so then it's not just about one person" (le Roux, interview, 2018). While her perspective has merit in that this democratic, participatory approach should facilitate a varied artistic programme, the implementation of this approach is evidently challenging. An examination of stage directors that have featured during the last 20 years at Artscape illustrates a pattern: if it is not the same names that have generally appeared over the years, then it is white men directors who have directed the most productions, while works by black women stage directors have been featured least. The last Creative Director at

[22] While John Kani – a black man – was Executive Director of the Market Theatre, James Ngcobo is the first Artistic Director of the theatre.

Artscape was prominent theatre practitioner, Mandla Mbothwe, who filled the role from 2014 to 2016. As is characteristic of this position, Mbothwe had overall responsibility for selecting productions that would comprise Artscape's artistic calendar. During his short time as Creative Director, 13 black women featured as directors in 14 productions (only Thoko Ntshinga directed twice), compared to six black women who directed 12 works between them in the 5-year period immediately prior. These figures illustrate an interesting tension when considered alongside le Roux's aversion to having a Creative Director. Le Roux maintains that an individual in this position would effectively hamper diversity and variety in the artistic programming. She further argues that fewer artists would have an opportunity to showcase their artistic work if Artscape favoured the route of the single Creative Director. However, when Mbothwe was in charge, there was a very deliberate and intentional centring of a variety of black women stage directors. Under Mbothwe's creative leadership, there were notably more black women artists whose productions featured at Artscape than in any of the preceding years of collective programming.

In her role as the first black woman CEO at Artscape, le Roux's experience is multi-layered. Her responses reveal her immediately recognisable location within intersectionality politics: race, gender and disability. Living with a physical disability, le Roux is active in the arena of disability activism, even responsible for driving the disability strategy for national government. She has also been involved in chairing strategising meetings for social cohesion at national government level. As her first project at Artscape, she renovated the entire theatre to make it accessible to persons with physical disabilities. Le Roux's encounters with race and gender seem to equally inform her activist outlook. As the first black woman at the helm of an institution whose historical legacy can be defined as overtly white, male and racist, le Roux states that one of the main things she committed to doing at Artscape "was to let the ghost of Nico Malan start to rest" (le Roux, interview, 2018). The historical legacy associated with the Nico Malan Theatre (later renamed Artscape) is an aspect of the institution that le Roux aims to dismantle in a new dispensation. As an institution under CAPAB's management that overtly catered to white audiences and interests, "The Nico" was considered anti-black by blacks and whites alike, even after mixed audiences were permitted from the mid-1970s. Artscape's CEO further proclaims that "as a black woman sitting here, I *must* show them this place won't go down. So, I work 150 hours [a week] because I must show the generation that comes after me that you *can* run a place like this" (le Roux, interview, 2018). In this statement, le Roux asserts on the one hand her capability and competence as a black woman leading a state-run institution

– especially one as grand and historically racialised as Artscape. Notably, le Roux neither ascribes weakness to her position as simultaneously black and woman, nor does she include that she lives with a physical disability. Though she also comes from an impoverished background, le Roux clearly points out: "I am *not* disadvantaged anymore. I have arrived" (le Roux, interview, 2018). She navigates leading a historically white and male-dominated, state-supported cultural institution in a patriarchal society, and does so embodying a compound identity. If to be a black woman is to be disenfranchised and in the shadow, then to be a black woman living with a disability "is [to be] even more deeply in shadow" (Spivak, 1994: 82-83).

It seems that le Roux's declaration is a direct refutation of the social stigma and political reticence typically ascribed to being "Coloured", a woman, and living with a disability. Intersectionality has been used as an analytic approach in understanding stigma. While Turan et al. (2019) explain that "intersectional stigma" is a concept that has emerged to characterise the convergence of multiple stigmatised identities within a person or group, Jackson-Best and Edwards (2018) cite specifically race, gender and physical disability among social identities that can be disparaged. Le Roux appears to resist the intermediate location historically ascribed to Coloured identity, the secondary status occupied by women in patriarchal societies and the discrimination that can form part of the reality of physical disability. Le Roux seems to assert her political voice as someone occupying these intersecting systems of oppression.

On the other hand, le Roux's statement seems to exemplify the age-old adage that if you are black, you are expected to work exponentially harder than your white counterparts. The pride with which le Roux expresses this sentiment suggests that this fundamentally flawed notion has become part of our socialisation and a formula for success. Exploring oppression through a black feminist disability framework, Bailey and Mobley (2019: 22) posit:

> How many of us grew up with parents who warned us of having to be twice as good as our white counterparts? Designed to fortify Black children against the profound racism that is masked in a masquerade of meritocracy, this notion of having to be "twice as good," while often true, also marks the difficulties with discussing […] physical disabilities within Black communities.

Given the feminist framework that informs their discussion, Bailey and Mobley (2019) foreground the compounded difficulty that black women encounter. Enculturated into the idea that working twice as hard is the way to attaining success in a discriminatory society, black women in fact remain victimised within the vectors of power of racism and sexism. Through

this adage, black women are socialised into a form of resisting these oppressive structures by outwardly denying their existence and impact on their lived realities. When disability enters the equation, black women are further pressured to exist outside of the hardship that being black, female and physically challenged can bring. Bailey and Mobley continue: "Black people cannot afford to be disabled when they are required to be phantasmically abled in a white supremacist society" (2019: 22). In discussing the fact of her physical disability only negligibly, perhaps le Roux did not wish for her ability to be questioned or compromised as a "Coloured" woman running a historically white and male-dominated institution, and especially one of Artscape's magnitude. Shelley Barry expresses a similar sentiment when identifying herself: "I see myself first and foremost as a woman of colour, with a disability in brackets" (Barry, interview, 2019). In parenthesising the aspect of her physical disability, Barry implies that she considers this an unimportant aspect of her identity.

When considering the participation and access of black women at Artscape, le Roux's point of reference is evidently staffing demographics. While she displays an acute awareness of her own intersecting experience as black and woman – resisting the disadvantage typically attributed to these social markers – le Roux seems to also approach race and gender dynamics from a human resources perspective. She relays that technical training for her is a vital area of the arts, given its capacity to provide employment. As such, she started a technical training programme where she determines the number of women – specifically black women – that occupy technical positions at Artscape. Although part of le Roux's primary undertaking as CEO is the noble goal of "fast-tracking women" and "bringing women into the fold", her preoccupation is evidently not on black women as stage directors. In fact, she argues that "we concentrate too much on the arts" (le Roux, interview, 2018). When asked about her perceptions of the representation of black women stage directors, le Roux's response is framed around the workplace environment that makes an institution function: "There are *enough* black young women that can do the job. I'm training up black women to take over my job, but if you're not up to stream and you're not hungry for this job, what can I do?" (le Roux, interview, 2018). Despite numerous efforts to explain that it is the shortage of black women practitioners – specifically stage directors – that is the focus of this study, le Roux insisted on the subject matter of black women within the staffing component of Artscape. Perhaps le Roux pays close attention to the issue of black women as employees at the institution, more so than this group's participation as stage directors, due to her position as an executive head, and moreover, one

who is not a creative arts practitioner. This is unlike Ngcobo and Bukhosini, who are not only Artistic Directors, but also creative arts practitioners themselves.

A unique leadership structure exists at the Playhouse, in that Bukhosini occupies both the roles of CEO and Artistic Director. Like le Roux, Bukhosini held the position of Education and Development Director, before being appointed Artistic Director in December 2003 at a time of "poor management, questionable use of public funding and a board in tumult" (*Independent Online*, 2009). Three years later, she then took up the additional portfolio of CEO. Bukhosini explains: "I arrived at a time when the eThekwini municipality had decided to withdraw its funding because of existing difficulties. We have had to work hard to get this decision reversed and to nurture ongoing relationships" (*Independent Online*, 2009). The article lauds Bukhosini's leadership, stating: "She also reinstated credibility in an arts complex many potential funders, provincial and national, had written off" (*Independent Online*, 2009). While Bukhosini brought a measure of stability to an ailing Playhouse, her dual position has been the subject of controversy in recent years. An article titled *Drama at the Playhouse* reports Bukhosini's response to this criticism: "I did not create any position. I applied for it. Some of the people that are attacking me applied for this position and they did not get it. Some of the unhappiness emanates from people who did not get the position and I had nothing to do with it" (Buthelezi, 2016). Allegations of nepotism and maladministration have also been levelled against the institution's CEO and Artistic Director. At the time that the article was published, 3,000 Durban artists who had "felt oppressed" by Bukhosini, signed a petition against her that would culminate in a protest march under the hashtag #LindaBukhosiniMustFall. The movement was organised by Durban actors and brothers, Bongumusa and Musawenkosi Shabalala, who both head up the Umsindo Theatre Projects based in uMlazi (Buthelezi, 2016). On the dissatisfaction of Durban-based artists concerning a lack of opportunities at the Playhouse, Bukhosini retorts: "It's not true that The Playhouse Company has no opportunities. There are a variety of programmes, including […] the SA Women Arts Festival […]. The opportunities are available" (Buthelezi, 2016).

The SAWAF was started in 1995 by Gita Pather "as a developmental space exclusively for women artists in an arts industry dominated by men and masculinist structures" (Reddy & Wyllie, 2000: 98). In a review of the SAWAF five years later, Reddy and Wyllie (2000) describe the shifts that have occurred in festival offerings. While the event was premised on showcasing women's narratives and issues affecting women – including stories articulated by men – Bukhosini's selection of works seemed to give special attention to groups historically

marginalised also within the systems of class and race. As such, the 2000 SAWAF instalment presented an anomaly. The inclusion of a commercial production which located race and gender issues on the periphery, as well as the overall dominance of white artists was a concern for the authors. According to Reddy and Wyllie, "the voices of the truly disadvantaged and 'othered' were marginal" (2000: 99). Within the 20 year-period under investigation, the race and gender demographics of South African stage directors at Playhouse's SAWAF are presented in Table 12:

Table 12: Race and gender demographics of directors at Playhouse's Women's Arts Festival, 1999–2018

White women	Black men	Black women	White men	Unspecified
15	15	13	7	7

The trajectory of stage directors at the SAWAF reveals that white women and black men have dominated since 1999, while black women follow closely, with white men having directed the least. From 2011 to 2015, black women directors did not feature at SAWAF during the entire five-year period. On a platform dedicated to women's issues, black women stage directors should certainly occupy a position of heightened visibility; particularly given that Bukhosini's curation has since the earlier years of the SAWAF pointed towards an awareness of gender issues alongside race and class.

As the Artistic Director of the Market Theatre, Ngcobo's responsibilities are separate from those that were until recently held by Ismael Mahomed, who announced in May 2020 his resignation as the Market Theatre's CEO. Discussion with Ngcobo was generally punctuated by narratives of personal artistic achievements, travels around the world, and his vision as Artistic Director, which is marked by a strong inclination towards intercontinental collaborations, cross-lingual productions and the recontextualisation of well-known classical texts. This framing of his responses attests to his artistic aptitude. From engaging with Ngcobo, it is evident that he has his finger firmly on the pulse both at the Market Theatre and in terms of the global performing arts terrain. In his capacity as creative director, Ngcobo maintains that there's "a certain ilk of people" whom he chooses to come and work at the Market (Ngcobo, interview, 2018). When asked about the factors that determine whether a production showcases at the Market, Ngcobo responds:

> There's a certain quality in a production that screams "Market Theatre" that I will not be able to give you a long, convoluted story on it, but there is a certain standard that our audiences have gotten used to; that you are able to watch a piece and go: "This is it", you know. It sounds like a very lame answer, but it's that (Ngcobo, interview, 2018).

To seek further clarity on whether black women directors are considered and indeed elevated as part of this "ilk of people" and just how the Market facilitates their participation, Ngcobo replies:

> Just look at the Sophie [Mgcina award] and look at everything. We've done more than any other theatre. There is not a time when an installation of whatever year that I put together where we don't have black women directing. That's what we do (Ngcobo, interview, 2018).

Notably since occupying his position as Artistic Director, Ngcobo has established the Sophie Mgcina Emerging Voices award. Inspired by the life and work of legendary actress, composer and teacher, Sophie Mgcina, the award acknowledges and celebrates practitioners across various artistic disciplines, whom Ngcobo stresses "*must* be emerging" (Ngcobo, interview, 2018). The winners of this award include Lulu Mlangeni (2014 – dance and choreography), Dominique Khayelihle Gumede (2015 – playwriting and stage directing), Sonia Thandazile Radebe (2016 – dance and choreography), Lesedi Job (2017 – stage directing), and Anje Cronje (2018 – architectural art). Award recipients include three black women, one black man and one white woman.

In establishing the participation and visibility of black women stage directors at Artscape, the Market and Playhouse, the aspect of commissioning is an important consideration. In her capacity as CEO, le Roux has a team of people that fulfil this role. Artistic Directors Ngcobo and Bukhosini identify practitioners themselves who they deem appropriate for extending financial support to. The potential harmful bias that can emerge with one person undertaking such a task cannot be denied. Ngcobo and le Roux explain the process of commissioning in their respective institutions. Ngcobo states: "Well obviously, I commission people that I've heard write very nicely, I've heard they direct nicely, or I've seen their work" (Ngcobo, interview, 2018). Ngcobo continues to describe the process: "In commissioning, I like to commission people who have started. That's why I love the word "emerging" – people who have started – because I think there are other institutions that are teaching from scratch and we're not that" (Ngcobo, interview, 2018).

On the one hand, Ngcobo celebrates the term "emerging". On the other, award-winning stage director, Ntshieng Mokgoro, bemoans the idea that black women directors are generally perceived as not fully professional (Mokgoro, interview, 2019). In 2009, she expressed this same viewpoint – at the time, she had been directing professionally for ten years, yet still

regarded as an "emerging" director (Lekalake, 2013: 115). It appears that, applied to professional directors, this term is undermining and misplaced. Typically associated with black women stage directors – including those who are experienced – "emerging" then becomes a discriminatory label.

From Ngcobo's statements, practitioners who are commissioned by the Market are those who are in one way or another, visible to the creative director. Furthermore, these are artists that must typically be growing in prominence. This subjective criterion for determining practitioners that are actively pursued by the cultural institution is also narrow in that it considers only artistic prowess, while neglecting the policy imperatives of redress, access and participation. A dual focus on artistic ability and transformation would situate black women directors – as historically subjugated practitioners – at the forefront of commissioning opportunities. A feasible approach would therefore be establishing criteria that consider both affirmative action and artistic merit.

On Artscape's commissioning process, le Roux explains: "People apply, there's a committee that sits and they put it forward to us. That's it. I've got nothing to do with it. As a CEO, I must run the company" (le Roux, interview, 2018). Personally selecting productions is not in the scope of le Roux's portfolio as CEO. Nevertheless, le Roux offers a unique understanding of what commissioning entails. Furthermore, her response reveals that consensus on what commissioning entails can be contentious. While a practitioner can feature in a season or project at a cultural institution following the success of a proposal that was forwarded, an artist can also be showcased without sending an application, but through being sought by the theatre. Again, le Roux's response points towards a predominant focus on executive responsibilities, which does not seem to facilitate key artistic decisions. Because commissioning entails fully resourcing a work, the failure to prioritise black women in these processes suggests a general lack of confidence in the quality of productions directed by this group of practitioners. Speaking on behalf of black women stage directors, Warona Seane states: "Very few of us have gotten commissioned for a *season* at any of the main spaces" (Seane, interview, 2019).

While bemoaning the "travesty" of a dire lack of black women directors on state-supported platforms, including the fact that he himself has never been directed by a black woman, Ngcobo's only tangible intervention is the prestigious Sophie Mgcina award. The award, though vital, does not take place over an extended period, such as a director whose production features in a season at the theatre. Nonetheless, Ngcobo's tone does depict an urgency where

the lack of black women directors is concerned. At various points in the interview, he acknowledges that this situation must change and places responsibility on state-supported theatres to steer this transformation:

> There's a lot [of black women directors], and the idea is that we need to make room (Ngcobo, interview, 2018).
>
> ...
>
> I just think theatres in the past just never gave a space to black women, and now we have to do it (Ngcobo, interview, 2018).
>
> …
>
> It's for theatres to go out of their way to give that space to black women (Ngcobo, interview, 2018).
>
> …
>
> We still don't have black women directing, and the idea is we have to mentor them and we have to create a visibility of them (Ngcobo, interview, 2018).

Ngcobo repeats the same sentiment throughout the interview, perhaps to illustrate that he understands the need for black women stage directors to be more visible at the Market. However, in the absence of efforts through which works by black women theatre directors are actively recruited, it can be assumed that practitioners who generally feature at the Market Theatre are those whose productions have successfully attained a certain standard of excellence, of whom black women are the fewest.

Artscape has indeed made strides in being accessible to typically marginalised communities, including those living with physical disabilities, as well as integrating black persons into managerial positions. Nonetheless, the representation of black women stage directors is not yet on par with that of black men, white women and white men directors, the particularly dominant group. Perhaps le Roux's primary emphasis on the inclusion of black women as constituents of Artscape's workforce – rather than their participation as theatre practitioners – is informed by her primary executive role at the institution. It seems she has proximity to her role as CEO rather than as supreme signatory in Artscape's artistic programming.

Then to the question of whether black women directors simply do not exist or if they are indeed present, but for whatever reason are not being given opportunities to showcase their productions, Ngcobo maintains:

> They are there but they were never given opportunities for whatever reason. They are there. There's some amazing women, I mean how do we find the Lesedis? They are there. It's for theatres to go out of their way to give that space to black women (Ngcobo, interview, 2018).

Ngcobo then highlights the aspect of quality that le Roux also alludes to:

> I'm directing now – the whole designing team is black women. I don't do black because black has to be done. It's black excellence – that's what I'm after. To just be black for me is not enough. You've got to be black and wanting to push your envelope to death (Ngcobo, interview, 2018).

The above two statements by Ngcobo reveal a certain tension and complexity in the engagement between state-supported theatres and black women directors. In the first quote, Ngcobo uses Lesedi Job as evidence for the definite existence of other black women directors. He further asserts that it is the responsibility of theatres to go the extra mile to find these women and to facilitate their inclusion. In the second proclamation, Ngcobo then posits that he does not just hire black practitioners merely based on race, thereby illustrating a clearly anti-tokenistic stance. On the one hand, Ngcobo acknowledges that theatres must go out of their way to find these women and create space for them because "they are there". On the other, he conveys the message that the Market Theatre does not have them there just because they are black. The designing team could certainly comprise black women who are professional, deserving and excellent. However, given the few black women who have accessed Market Theatre between 1999 and 2018, Ngcobo seems to suggest that most of those who "are there" do not meet the institution's standards of excellence. It can be inferred from the single example of Lesedi Job that the Market Theatre's doors are not open as wide as they could be for more black women directors to enter.

The tension between tokenism and transformation is foregrounded when considering the representation of historically marginalised individuals in the current context. One of the discussants, Princess Mhlongo, alludes to a system of tokenism at state-supported theatres: "They must choose *one* and then that's the focus, you know, for that period" (Mhlongo, interview, 2019). In the case of the single lauded black woman director, questions emerge around whether this success is based on meritocracy or democracy's affirmative action.

"Tokenism" or "Transformation"?

Noted as one of the seven most crucial areas in the 1996 White Paper, transformation is a governmental imperative to be applied to all arts, culture and heritage structures and institutions. This concept is the overarching principle that frames cultural policy and so exists as the blueprint guiding the activities of state-supported cultural institutions. When asked about the Market Theatre's relationship to cultural policy, James Ngcobo asserts:

> We serve that – we absolutely serve that. I think we are sitting at the moment at the DAC with what I think is one of the finest Ministers of Arts and Culture [Nathi Mthethwa] we've ever had, because he's so visible and this incubation programme that he's started to get the young and expose them to the arts. The struggle was to free black people, gay people, women (Ngcobo, interview, 2018).

Ngcobo commends the DAC minister for the incubation programme that seeks to expose the youth to the arts. He applauds this initiative in that it is a realisation of transformation ideals espoused by cultural policy, since the incubation programme aims to bring exposure to the arts to a group that is defined in cultural policy as "vulnerable". Ngcobo then cites other groups whose freedom was fought for in the apartheid struggle: "black people, gay people, women". Ngcobo rightly recognises racism and sexism as struggles that mostly defined liberation politics in South Africa's history. The acknowledgement of black people, gay people and women does not however articulate the unique struggle that "black women" historically encountered – and indeed continue to face – as an equally historically marginalised group. Although Ngcobo recognises the marginalisation attached to these distinct categories, like cultural policy, he does not point out the intersectionality of these groups of people. Ngcobo's words also seem to reflect the tenuous nature of "transformation" as elicited in the White Paper. The complexity of this concept is similarly articulated by Marlene le Roux:

> You can't just throw words around of "transformation" and "social cohesion". You need to understand what do you mean by social cohesion, because our communities have changed. If you're black and I'm black, you can't assume I have been poor (le Roux, interview, 2018).

Le Roux problematises the homogenous description of "black" as outlined in cultural policy. While the 1996 White Paper defines South Africa's population in terms of "black" and "white", subsequent iterations describe targeted groups within the sector as "youth, women and persons with disabilities". These definitions miss the nuances within each race category or social

marker. The classifications of "black" and "white" fail to give attention to additional markers of difference such as gender and class. In addition, the fact that vulnerable groups are conveyed as a collective similarly obscures the intersecting systems of domination that may be at play within each group.

A notion closely connected to the concept of transformation is tokenism. Le Roux recounts that during her tenure as Director of Audience Development and Education, she was the only woman on the executive: "I said no, I can't sit on this executive and be development manager. I'm nobody's token. So then my fight started" (le Roux, interview, 2018). As a black woman with a physical disability, le Roux actively resists the status of token appointment. Asked about her perceptions of the representation of black women directors in state-supported theatres, le Roux responds: "I have *no* time for tokenism, just to tick the boxes. I *don't* have. I really don't have time" (le Roux, interview, 2018). Even with other black women seeking to access Artscape, le Roux, like Ngcobo, clearly takes an anti-tokenistic approach.

To the critique that the same directors feature on state-supported stages, Ngcobo asserts:

> Well, make something exciting yourself, because you know it's very easy to say all those things – it's very easy. But come and see why Lesedi has been given her third play at the Market in 2018. Come and see. Then I hope you'll have an answer (Ngcobo, interview, 2018).

Accomplished actress and director Lesedi Job made her directorial debut in 2017 with Mike van Graan's *When Swallows Cry*. She went on to become a recipient of the prestigious Sophie Mgcina Emerging Voice Award. This achievement was followed by the rare accomplishment of directing four productions at the Market Theatre over two consecutive years: two in 2017 and another two in 2018. Alongside the strides she is making as a black woman theatre director, Job is also keenly aware of the challenges. When asked about the greatest challenge currently facing young female directors, Job responded:

> I think there isn't enough mentorship around young women in the arts in general. There is also, and I will be specific, yes it's female but it's also black female. I can count female directors that I know of, that I respect, that I've worked with. Black female directors? There are very few (in *Sarafina Magazine*, 2018).

For Job, the lack of black women directors in theatre is firstly due to a lack of mentorship and secondly, a dearth of black women directors that younger aspirant black women directors can look up to. As one of the few that occupy this role, she attributes her directorial recognition

and accomplishment to opportunities by industry players such as James Ngcobo and Mike van Graan. Job encourages opportunities, but also quickly adds a caveat:

> I'm all for us giving opportunities but not just for the sake of trying to create a variety of female directors or black female directors. Maybe it's not something that someone can do, so maybe let's not go out there and give it to everyone, but as a director, spot that in an actress and encourage it and then give them the opportunity (in *Sarafina Magazine*, 2018).

While the rationale behind Job's statement can be appreciated in that it demonstrates advocacy of directorial merit as opposed to race and gender demographics, these are nonetheless the words of a black woman director who continues to enjoy opportunities and access to a state-supported space that few other black women stage directors share. Although Job continues to acknowledge that "it really is for institutions to open up the doors and go, 'Here is the opportunity to direct'" (in *Sarafina Magazine,* 2018), her position brings into question the detrimental rhetoric of tokenism, or a kind of counterfeit transformation. On an even broader level, Job's situation could indicate a crisis of neoliberalism, in which access is influenced and in fact facilitated by factors such as a higher education qualification, networks or wealth. Job's university degree, training as a singer, and successfully making it to the Top 32 of the televised singing competition *Idols*, locate her favourably along the lines of education, skills and widespread exposure. Within neoliberal politics, black women directors that have not enjoyed such opportunities may essentially find themselves excluded from state-supported spaces, which themselves are founded on the neoliberal capitalist tenet of being as profitable as possible. Since a neoliberal system generally supports the participation of individuals who benefit its continuation, transformation within state-supported theatres is hampered. Further, given the handful of visible black women stage directors, these theatres are positioned as evidently tokenistic, despite le Roux and Ngcobo implying the contrary. The lack of professionally trained and respected black directors in these three theatres, along with the recycling of names, points precisely to tokenism.

Further troubling the issue of tokenism are the tensions that are inevitably created between the tokenised black women director and the larger community of black women directors. Immense pressure can also be experienced by the tokenised black woman to meet the directorial standards of "excellence" and "success" upheld by the space. The tokenised black woman is also at risk of being profiled as the singular black woman director who represents all black

women directors, and so through her visibility, access and significant participation, the under-representation of black women directors can become nullified.

Final Thoughts

Without state subsidies, Artscape, the Market and Playhouse would cease to exist. While these state-funded entities are significantly covered by the DAC through the annual operational grant, under-funding remains a critical issue. To circumvent this funding crisis, there is a stark focus on the commercial viability of productions at cultural policy level and alternative initiatives, including fundraising as well as hiring out performance venues at institutional level. The access and participation of black women practitioners is the most severely strained against a complex, uneven and altogether precarious funding landscape. Against the nebulous nature attributed to transformation in the 1996 White Paper framework, this group of artists is further disadvantaged. In the absence of even the phrase "black women" in the policy, along with an emphasis on artistic activities as business, the participation of black women stage directors is not explicitly addressed – neither in policy nor at the three state-supported institutions under investigation. In the absence of clearly defined objectives that facilitate the significant inclusion of black women stage directors in state-supported theatres, artistic directors explain the deficiency of these practitioners through upholding anti-tokenistic attitudes. The situation of the single black woman director lauded as exceptional brings into view the problem of tokenism, in which fissures are formed between the tokenised and the larger community of fellow black women still estranged from these state-supported spaces. The arts and culture funding situation, along with the absence of clear strategic policy objectives that enable the inclusion of black women stage directors in national theatres, absolve state-funded institutions from imparting greater visibility to these black women practitioners as a group. Consequently, transformation as both advocated in the 1996 White Paper, as well as underpinning the primary funding tool of the three theatres – the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) – is not sufficiently realised.

CHAPTER 4: PRACTITIONERS

Introduction

The 12 black women interviewed for this study – namely Shelley Barry, Bukelwa Cakata, Fatima Dike, Krijay Govender, Angie Lekota, Princess Zinzi Mhlongo, Gcina Mhlophe, Yolandi Michaels, Ntshieng Mokgoro, Geraldine Naidoo, Warona Seane and Chantal Snyman – each directed at least one production between 1999 and 2018 at the Artscape Theatre Centre, the Market Theatre or the Playhouse. This group of practitioners has had initial access to these state-supported theatres in various ways. While Michaels directed on a state-funded platform after requesting a meeting with the Market Theatre's then Artistic Director, Malcolm Purkey, Seane was commissioned to direct a production after doing a script-reading. Three of the directors accessed state-supported theatres through an association with the cultural institution: Mhlophe's opportunity came through a directing residency, Dike's via a writing programme, and Lekota was essentially promoted from the role of director's assistant to sole director after Thoko Ntshinga had to leave the process. Cakata, Snyman and Barry directed productions after pursuing the conventional route of writing and submitting proposals. Mhlongo, Mokgoro, Govender, and Naidoo were either invited for a season, or to showcase a few performances following successful runs on alternative platforms, including the National Arts Festival or a festival within the developmental umbrella. While these practitioners have differences in educational background, training and access to mentorship, they share a similar experience of navigating state-supported theatres as black women. This, to varying degrees, has impacted their continued access to these three theatres. A precarious funding landscape has also significantly affected their careers.

Financial Constraints: If it's not commercially viable, don't do it

Lekalake explores three possible factors to explain the dearth of black female directors in the contemporary mainstream theatre landscape. Firstly, she argues that contrary to the White Paper's mandate to enable wider access to arts and culture development, black women stage directors are excluded from support within mainstream theatres. She posits that commercial viability is apparently emphasised as the primary objective of state-supported spaces (2013: 122). In other words, it seems as though these institutions will financially back productions that they deem profitable. These are essentially shows that will put "bums on seats". This seems to be a long-standing concept, which against the parlance of "cultural and creative industries", appears to have gained much momentum. Mhlophe recounts that as her show *Somdaka* sold

out nightly during the late 1980s, there was contention on why the audience was so black. This criticism was brought to a halt by her retort: "Excuse me, I was told you wanted bums on seats. I don't remember discussing the colour of the bums" (Mhlophe, interview, 2019).

In the climate of limited arts funding, not only are state-supported theatres prioritising the commercial viability of productions, but some theatre practitioners also emphasise the necessity to position the arts along the lines of financial feasibility. Geraldine Naidoo, who has worked in the Innovation division at Standard Bank for the last six years, opines quite frankly: "You need to treat your show the same as you would a business. It is essentially your business. And I think that's the stance I take very strongly and I think if it's not commercially viable, don't do it" (Naidoo, interview, 2019). Although Naidoo works in the corporate sector, she studied drama and enjoyed exposure to artistic practices from a young age. Her father, who mostly raised her and her older brother after their mother passed away when Naidoo was just two months old, would often take them to the Alhambra Theatre. She would also watch plays at the Battersea community hall in Reservoir Halls – the Durban suburb in which she grew up. Further experience of the arts was through speech and drama at school.

Naidoo relocated to Johannesburg in 1995 and enrolled for a Bachelor of Arts in Dramatic Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), which she pursued until Honours' level. It was at university that she met her husband and future artistic collaborator, Matthew Ribnick. The pair have since produced three comedies: *The Chilli Boy* (2002), *Hoot* (2005) and *Monkey Nuts* (2009). Written and directed by Naidoo and performed as one-man shows by Ribnick, the couple's offerings, according to Naidoo, have enjoyed "resounding success" over the years and continue to be performed to packed houses in various venues around the country, including corporates and schools (Naidoo, interview, 2019). Naidoo's focus on shows that are likely to be profitable is evident in that she continues to present work that she first wrote and initially directed more than ten years ago. Interestingly, Naidoo did not study directing at university. Her entry into the profession was inspired by Ribnick's strong ability as a performer, alongside a lack of performance opportunities in Johannesburg. She recounts a conversation at the start of their artistic partnership: "I said, stuff working with other people. We'll do something ourselves. So he was like, what can we do? And I said, fine, I'll write something, I'll direct it and you act in it" (Naidoo, interview, 2019).

Hoot featured at the NAF in Makhanda (formerly Grahamstown) in 2005. After a successful run at the NAF, the show was invited to participate in the 969 Festival at the Market Theatre

that same year. Naidoo explains the idea behind the festival: "Grahamstown is 969 kilometres away from Johannesburg, so hence the name 969. So what they do is they bring five or six or seven shows from the festival to give Johburg audiences a taste of what was at the festival" (Naidoo, interview, 2019). These productions are then showcased at whichever Johannesburg venue is vacant at the time. In the year that *Hoot* featured at the NAF, the Market Theatre happened to be available. This show has in fact been the only one that Naidoo has directed at a state-supported theatre. The major theatres at which she often showcases her work are independent spaces, including the Elizabeth Sneddon Theatre (Durban), Joburg Theatre (Johannesburg) and the Baxter Theatre (Cape Town). For Naidoo, financial feasibility is the determining factor for where she features her work, which for her, excludes state-supported theatres: "So if you want to put commercially viable work on, it's not gonna work in those places. You've got to be careful about where you produce your show as well, if you want audiences and audiences with money" (Naidoo, interview, 2019). Due to their "dodgy" locations and limited dining options, Naidoo argues that "people with money will go to places that are perceived safer or offer more", such as theatres in mall or casino settings (Naidoo, interview, 2019).

Like Naidoo, well-known theatre and television director, actress, MC and comedian, Durban-born Krijay Govender, similarly highlights location as an element which has a direct bearing on patronage: "Now the sad thing is the theatres are moving into the casinos so places like the Playhouse now … I don't know if they can compete with the casinos" (Govender, interview, 2019). Govender describes the stark differences between traditional theatre institutions and casinos as a far more attractive performance venue: "The casinos are offering your R10 parking, safety, which is a big South African thing and they're offering you restaurants – not just one coffee shop which sadly all our theatres have – a variety of bars, kiddies entertainment and then for the gamblers, they're offering you the casino" (Govender, interview, 2019). She maintains that "the actual product is no longer the focus – the focus is the surrounds" (Govender, interview, 2019). Of course, if the environment is appealing to theatre-going audiences, productions featured in that space have a greater likelihood to succeed.

An alumnus of the then University of Natal – presently the University of KwaZulu-Natal – where she studied Speech and Drama until Master's level, majoring in directing at Honours' level, Govender went on to pursue various aspects of the arts. While she has a bond with the Playhouse, having directed numerous productions there, including *Buckled* in 2010, *Glued* in 2016, and even her Honours directing project, *Women in Brown* – which was featured in the

mid-1990s after another production was cancelled – Govender is clear from the outset that the various kinds of entertainment she does are primarily motivated by earning capacity. She posits: "What I've realised as a female is that your strength and your independence is so linked to your economy. That women that don't have money, don't have a voice, is sad" (Govender, interview, 2019). At the same time, she articulates her preferred vocation: "Honestly, theatre will always be a first love. It is still the most fulfilling experience being on a stage and finishing a show. Being on a set and finishing a project now is not as exciting as stage" (Govender, interview, 2019). She proceeds to describe her connection to the stage: "For me going back and doing theatre plays is almost like oxygen" (Govender, interview, 2019). Govender also expresses her concern: "The Playhouse is still one of my favourite venues, for all that it meant to us in the 90s, but I don't know how it's gonna survive" (Govender, interview, 2019). Govender's sentimental attachment to the Playhouse is clear. Nonetheless, she focuses on entertainment work that will be the most commercially feasible, to maintain her independence and voice as a woman.

This tension between passion and financial stability is similarly voiced by Yolandi Michaels, who contemplates how life would have turned out had she continued the path of the performing arts. Michaels' professional theatre directing debut was the play *Loving Lulu* at the Market Theatre in 2011, which she helmed after approaching the institution's then Artistic Director, Malcolm Purkey, who had been her professor at university. After her directing stint, Michaels worked that same year at the Market in a producer capacity where she headed up the production team – she has since not returned to professional directing. In fact, she indicates that this is a role she is unlikely to ever take up again in the future, given the improbability that the professional theatre industry could adequately support her standard of living. However, her sense of inner conflict is perceptible: "The thing that's always, I suppose, been there in my journey has been, I don't know, a kind of, a personal, I suppose a stumbling block, around whether this is something I could see as a career that would be something that would lead to the lifestyle that I wanna live, you know" (Michaels, interview, 2019). Alongside her sister, Michaels currently co-directs an events agency that focuses on brand activations and events, with clients that are predominantly corporates and big brands.

Born and bred in Johannesburg, between Soweto and Eldorado Park, Michaels attended the same private school from grade one until matric, where she studied drama. She later enrolled at Wits University for a degree in Dramatic Arts, with majors in directing, film and performing arts management. Her exposure to artistic activities occurred much earlier on at the Montessori

crèche she attended, and she considers herself as having always been a creative. Even from childhood, she would organise Christmas pageants at home, where she would dress the other children and require adults to pay a fee of five cents to watch. Although Michaels "loved" her degree and had an "awesome experience" at university, she also notes the uneasiness she felt in her pursuit of an arts qualification: "I think I also felt what was a kind of equally strong pull – a sense of that I'm playing somewhat … like, where do I go after here, you know, 'cause it's not a 'real thing'" (Michaels, interview, 2019). Michaels received a merit award in directing, took her play titled *Somebody Say Something* about black women's identities (which she wrote and directed) to Grahamstown, toured the play around the world and had it performed for three years. Despite this, she left university with a strong sense of apprehension: "I came out with, oh my God, who am I gonna be? What am I gonna do? I don't want to be poor. And like actually, I've been *playing* for four years, you know?" (Michaels, interview, 2019).

The unsustainability of the arts sector and the attendant fear of financial lack is a sentiment shared by Angie Lekota. Lekota was born in the rural areas of Eastern Cape and primarily identifies as a Xhosa woman with a deep love for her language. Growing up, she had a keen interest in the arts, often participating in drama performances in primary school and providing entertainment in beauty competitions at high school. After high school, Lekota enrolled at Pretoria Technikon to study Analytical Chemistry. Feeling disconnected from her own class and lecturers, yet known on the arts campus, she knew that the performing arts was the route she wanted to pursue. She recalls that when she brought up the topic with her family, "they actually did say, you can't go into drama because you're gonna die broke. They had that belief" (Lekota, interview, 2019). She subsequently enrolled at the Arts and Media Access Centre (AMAC), a bridging institution in Cape Town, which became her formal introduction to the performing arts. Interfacing with Cape Town-based artists working in the industry throughout the year, including Lee-Ann van Rooi, Mandla Mbothwe and Jaqueline Dommisse, Lekota says of AMAC: "That's where I got a really, really good, solid foundation" (Lekota, interview, 2019). After a successful audition at the University of Cape Town, she studied drama in 2004, with a major in Acting, and has been in Cape Town ever since. Lekota qualified as an actress and has been working in the industry since 2008. Although she did not study theatre directing, Lekota delved into this sphere of the performing arts after meeting Thoko Ntshinga, who had come in to teach isiXhosa texts to her Acting class. Having both a love and proficiency for the language positioned Lekota well in her new role as Ntshinga's directing assistant of isiXhosa set-works at Artscape. Ntshinga has featured significantly at Artscape as a director of isiXhosa

texts for the institution's school programme. Through her association with Ntshinga, Lekota subsequently got her first solo directing opportunity at Artscape. Throughout the interview, Lekota relates that though she has directed two productions at the institution, being referred to as a director still feels unfamiliar. Her ongoing project is management of her industrial theatre company. She defines her current preoccupation: "I'm mostly interested in the employment of the artist, so I'm more interested now in the business of the arts: how do I help other artists to get employed? How do I bring more exposure into the arts, but exposure that will end up meaning finance?" (Lekota, interview, 2019).

This concern about the profitability of the arts is echoed by award-winning theatre director, Princess Mhlongo. While Mhlongo appreciates the opportunities she has received to direct both locally and internationally, after 10 years in professional theatre she has started to question the nature of the industry, wherein the sustainability of working artists like herself is overlooked. Mhlongo's knowledge of the industry is long-standing: she was first exposed to professional theatre from high school, where she was part of the Witbank Youth Programme, an after-school initiative run by Ismael Mahomed. Recounting her experience of this programme, Mhlongo exclaims: "I went to Grahamstown for the first time – I was able to watch 50 shows" (Mhlongo, interview, 2019). She considers this experience as having formed the base for her interest in and understanding of the professional arts industry. Studying drama and specifically theatre directing at Pretoria Technikon became for Mhlongo more of a discovery of the theory of the arts, since she had by that point enjoyed significant exposure to the practical aspect of it. Now as a working artist in the professional theatre industry, Mhlongo has spent the last three years reflecting on the viability of her craft: "I started to question what theatre is as a business, you know? And I think that became a hard reality of, we still have a long way. We still haven't figured it out" (Mhlongo, interview, 2019). She posits that South Africa's theatre structures "sugar-coat what the real business of the arts should be, especially theatre. Because you're selling a product at the end of the day" (Mhlongo, interview, 2019). Though committed to her chosen profession, Mhlongo laments: "We're not taught that it [theatre] should be a business and that's my struggle with it. Because then, if it's not a business, then I'm always relying on State – on handouts" (Mhlongo, interview, 2019). She continues: "I think I've always wanted to see myself as an international director, you know, not as just a South African" (Mhlongo, interview, 2019). It was exposure to international platforms such as the Edinburgh Festival which highlighted for Mhlongo the importance of perceiving and treating professional theatre as a business. Not only do these spaces expose her work to an international audience, but this

alternative platform becomes a way by which to circumvent much of the funding shortages that define South Africa's arts landscape. Among her greatest lessons in directing, Mhlongo notes learning and experiencing the business aspect, where she has not just shaped the artistic product, but also where she has been at the forefront of selling it to an audience. She strongly opines that directing and the commercial aspect of the practice must work together: "It's so important for me that they go hand-in-hand 'cause otherwise you'll have artists when Ministers are selected, *sizo khompleyina vele* [we will definitely complain] because the Minister is now our boss, you know, and there's some expectation of free money" (Mhlongo, interview, 2019). To break herself away from relying on state subsidies in order to make work, Mhlongo continues in her struggle to be an independent artist.

Supporting Artistic Freedom: It's a painful process, but we need it for some reason

Alongside the concern of productions that will put "bums on seats", black women theatre directors have also had to negotiate challenging mentorship scenarios, whether as mentors, or usually as mentees. An essential component of training and capacity building, mentorship serves to either enable or hinder the access and participation of black women directors in state-supported theatres. Key impediments highlighted by practitioners include the complete absence of opportunities or information for mentorship programmes, a lack of emphasis on the business aspect of theatre within the mentoring process, duration of the mentorship, as well as practitioners who typically occupy the role of mentors and mentees.

Warona Seane has worked across the various mediums of theatre, television and film, taking on such roles as teaching, writing, directing and performing, as well as producing. She enrolled at the University of Cape Town (UCT) to study towards a diploma in Speech and Drama, which included a directing class, and recently qualified with a Master of Arts degree. Seane also teaches at the institution's Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies Department. Her interest in directing was piqued by the late Peter Hayes, through the way he conducted his class. Seane says: "The way he ran it was very open and you could just do whatever it is that you wanted" (Seane, interview, 2019). She continues: "That was the thing that made me actually, like, I can do this" (Seane, interview, 2019). With the experience of directing productions at four of South Africa's six state-supported theatres – including the Market, Playhouse, State Theatre and Windybrow – as well as occupying the role of Artistic Director at Soweto Theatre from 2013 until the start of 2016, Seane is well-versed about institutional artistic processes. Commenting on the Market, she acknowledges that while the cultural institution has initiated some

mentorship projects, "the mentors have mainly been white women and black men, for the kinds of works that you were expecting that there might be a black woman in here" (Seane, interview, 2019). The Market Theatre's current mentorship avenue is the long-standing Zwakala Festival. Now in its 27th year, the festival aims to provide a platform specifically to community-based practitioners to acquire artistic skills through a fieldwork programme. A director is then attached to each play before the productions are subsequently presented at the theatre in festival format. While mentorship is cited on the Market Theatre's website as Artistic Director, James Ngcobo's "biggest commitment" since joining the theatre in 2013, according to seasoned practitioner, Seane, these opportunities to mentor are seldom occupied by black women.

Like numerous black people under apartheid, Dike has a background of Bantu education.[23] She says of her notable skill in playwriting and directing: "[I am] self-taught on the job" (Dike, interview, 2019). This however is a situation that the veteran theatre practitioner would not change. She beams: "I think the way I got into theatre was the best way. I was not pre-informed by sitting in a classroom being taught. I was learning. I was seeing people doing amazing things on stage" (Dike, interview, 2019). Dike's playwriting ability emerged during her time as a stage manager at The Space in Cape Town. During her time at the multiracial theatre, she was also part of a poetry group called Green Mambas, based in Langa Township. When the poet who was to perform at The Space was unavailable, Dike narrates: "Brian Astbury, the one who was supposed to be the director when the theatre opens, turns around and said, 'Oh, why are we going to look for other people? We've got our own Black here. Fats is here'" (Dike, interview, 2019). Dike's skills grew not only in stage management, poetry and playwriting, but also later in directing and mentoring. Like Seane, Dike similarly unpacks the mentorship process as a hierarchical relationship between the white mentor and the black mentee. Reflecting on her own theatre experience during apartheid, Dike points out that two white men, Barney Simon and Roy Sargeant, took on the roles of mentors – or as they were referred to, "sounding boards" – in developing her scripts (Dike, interview, 2019). Dike describes what she would do in response to changes made to her work: "Next year I will go to sit down and re-write all of that again, my way" (Dike, interview, 2019).

Likewise, Mhlongo recounts an experience in which she resisted imposed creative ideas from a mentor. Her professional directing debut was Zakes Mda's *And the Girls in Their Sunday Dresses* at the State Theatre in 2008. At the time, the state-supported theatre was looking for

[23] An inferior form of education designed to equip black South African students for menial labour and passed through the 1953 Bantu Education Act, Bantu Education was a product of the segregationist apartheid system.

young storytellers and so Mhlongo pitched her script and it was selected. As part of preparations towards presenting the work, she was assigned a black man as a mentor. Though the play did very well at the State Theatre, Mhlongo also received criticisms, which she attributes to the mentorship. She notes that parts of the production were not her decision, but rather, reflected her mentor's artistic choices. At the conclusion of her two-year contract with the State Theatre, the production moved on to the Market. For this subsequent showcase in 2010, Mhlongo asserts: "I did it the way I want it. I removed everything that I didn't want there" (Mhlongo, interview, 2019). Both Dike's and Mhlongo's experiences, alongside Seane's statement, highlight that within the mentorship process, black women directors can find themselves in a position where they are required to capitulate their creative autonomy to their black men, white women and white men counterparts.

Seane points out the exclusion of black women directors in the Market Theatre's mentorship programmes. A similar pattern is observable at the Playhouse. Durban's state-supported institution has two incubation spaces, namely the Community Arts Festival (CAF) and the Community Arts Mentorship Programme (CAMP), which started in 2010 and 2015 respectively. Like the Market Theatre's Zwakala Festival, both developmental platforms focus on training community-based artists. While the CAF involves taking existing productions and developing them for a professional stage, where a select few are presented as a festival, the CAMP entails a series of workshops designed to provide training in drama skills, including acting, scriptwriting, voice and dance and stage management, which culminate in a production that the group develops from scratch. Of the 36 mentor opportunities in the CAF during five years of available programme information (2010–2013 and 2018), black women have featured as mentors on three occasions (Gcina Mhlophe has featured once, while the late dancer Zinhle Gumede was a mentor on two occasions). Similarly, of the 36 mentor spaces in the CAMP, only five have been filled by black women (singer/musician Xolisa Dlamini has occupied this role twice and dancer/choreographer Leagan Peffer, has been a mentor three times). At Artscape, the New Writing Programme – which was created in 2001 by Roy Sargeant, who also mentored extensively on the programme until he left the institution – was changed to the New Voices Programme in 2015, incidentally the year after Mandla Mbothwe joined the institution as Creative Director. Markedly, a steady increase in productions directed by black women has featured as part of the New Voices Programme. The annual programme – which according to the Artscape CEO "aims to reclaim and restore dignity and confidence to individuals and communities that have been disregarded and under-represented in the past"

(*Weekend Argus*, 2018) – includes Dike, as well as poet, writer, performer and producer, Siphokazi Jonas, whose roles entail reading submitted scripts, selecting those that will be produced for the stage, mentoring directors for some plays, while directing other productions themselves. As black women theatre practitioners, Dike and Jonas are well-suited to mentor artists in a programme which foregrounds society's most marginalised persons and groups. As much as Artscape has a mentorship programme to which two black women director mentors are attached, more seasoned black women could certainly be enlisted for this role.

On the reverse side of the paucity of black women mentor directors, Ntshieng Mokgoro, winner of the Standard Bank Young Artist Award in 2008 and founder of independent theatre space, Olive Tree, discusses the problem of the perpetual development of black women directors: "*Thina sahlala simenthor'wa soze sife silokhe* … [We are always being mentored, and it will happen until we die …]. We never get to a stage where we say, we are professionals. We are always being mentored" (Mokgoro, interview, 2019). Though Mokgoro is today an award-winning director, she comes from a community theatre background and has no formal academic qualification. Her professional theatre-directing journey started off as a hobby. Working as a librarian at the Alex Centre Library – located in the township of Alexandra, her hometown – part of Mokgoro's job description included running a book club for children. One day, she got the idea to make the stories fun by dramatising them with the children. Shortly afterwards, she quit her job and started a community theatre group. After a friend's encouragement, Mokgoro applied to the Market Theatre Laboratory where her play was subsequently selected to be part of the Market Theatre Community Festival. Explaining her motivation for resigning from her job to pursue directing on a full-time basis, Mokgoro declares: "It's just a passion. When you love something, you love something, and you forget about everything else. You forget about the money. You forget about everything" (Mokgoro, interview, 2019).

Though Mokgoro showcased her professional directing debut more than 20 years ago, she bemoans the amateur status generally attached to black women practitioners. Disability rights activist, Shelley Barry, who made a transition from theatre to documentary filmmaking, concurs in exasperation: "We cannot stay in incubators our entire lives. You know what I mean? It's like incubate, incubate, incubate, incubate! We are tired of the incubator" (Barry, interview, 2019). Black actress and director, Faniswa Yisa, echoed this concern in a Facebook post in 2018: "How many theatre institutions in Cape Town have had a black female director without the umbrella of 'emerging' or 'development'?" (van Graan, 2018).

Mokgoro has also experienced being a mentor, and articulates the complexity of mentorship: "It's a painful process, but we need it for some reason" (Mokgoro, interview, 2019). She highlights the challenges of the process, including ill-equipped mentors, mentees who are unwilling to be taught, and cultural institutions that fail to provide adequate support and resources, leading to the artistic functions necessary in mounting a play becoming the responsibility of the mentor. Such difficulties would certainly weaken the significance of mentorship. Naidoo problematises the very concept of mentorship in the industry. She does not take this term at face value, instead questioning exactly how one even comes to qualify as a mentor or to consider oneself one. Reflecting on mentorship in light of her own experience, Naidoo announces: "Nobody has ever approached me – I just want to put that out and I would like to think of myself as being highly successful, having won Fleur du Cap awards, having filled out theatres across the country and internationally ..." (Naidoo, interview, 2019).

When it comes to mentors in the industry, Naidoo's misgivings are clear: "So when they have these mentorship programmes, I think where I'm concerned, is what are these mentors teaching them?" (Naidoo, interview, 2019). Her concerns are reiterated by both Mhlongo and Govender. While Mhlongo posits: "I'd rather be mentored in the business, but not the creative" (Mhlongo, interview, 2019), Govender similarly asserts that "the biggest problem that the arts industry in South Africa has, and particularly theatre, is the lack of knowledge of how finances work" (Govender, interview, 2019). She maintains that if state-supported theatres such as the Playhouse want to truly mentor, they have "got to help with the finances of a business; how to market your show – because that's very important" (Govender, interview, 2019).

Mhlophe and Dike offer their insights on mentorship from the perspective of seasoned black women directors. Both without any formal training, Mhlophe and Dike have been in the professional theatre industry for over three and four decades respectively. Although Dike has been a recognisable theatre practitioner since her first play *The Sacrifice of Kreli* in 1976, her entry into Artscape as both mentor and director began nearly three decades later, through her association primarily with Roy Sargeant. With a desire to be remembered as a playwright, director and mentor, Dike ascribes the lack of mentorship to a shortage of knowledge that this is an available path in the professional theatre industry. She describes a mentorship initiative that she is working on alongside fellow veteran practitioner, Thoko Ntshinga, which is aimed at developing new play scripts written by young people and includes a call for mentors and black women directors that can be attached to each work.

On the other hand, while Mhlophe firmly believes that "you need to have the generosity to share some of your skills and experiences with others" (Mhlophe, interview, 2019), she also highlights the pressure and expectations on older practitioners in the mentorship of aspirant artists: "So it is that wanting to be mentored, to say okay, done that, got Gcina Mhlophe's name, okay, next. Sometimes it is about ticking the boxes. Do you really, really want to be mentored?" (Mhlophe, interview, 2019). A prominent artist, Mhlophe is today the recipient of seven honorary doctorates. Like Dike, she pronounces, "I was trained on site" (Mhlophe, interview, 2019). After seeing a praise poet in Eastern Cape where she resided with her mother, Mhlophe moved to Johannesburg. She articulates the epiphany she had: "I had woken up to the fact that I can use the voice in presenting. This unusual, very different voice that I have, and so in Johannesburg, I started making little waves" (Mhlongo, interview, 2019). She then started performing poetry at political rallies, where she was subsequently noticed by Maishe Maponya who invited her to play the lead role in his play *Umongikazi*. As a recognisable name with an enduring presence in the industry, Mhlophe is often approached for guidance. Relating an incident of being approached by an ill-mannered young person who was essentially making demands on her time, and nonchalant in her expression, Mhlophe suggests that this is unfortunately a norm in her experience.

The complexities of mentorship articulated by respondents point towards a process which is both necessary and flawed. While each of the three state-supported theatres has at least one mentorship programme, the nuances within the practice signpost barriers when it comes to the access, participation, visibility and longevity of black women theatre directors. Some black women directors such as Mokgoro and Barry bemoan overstaying in the incubator where they are seldom seen as professional, and others like Mhlongo and Dike resist the creative agency that they essentially surrender in favour of the mentor's directorial choices. Still, while some such as Govender, Mhlongo and Naidoo highlight the lack of financial training in the mentorship process, others like Seane underscore the shortage of black women who even occupy the role of mentor. In addition, it seems that despite a willingness to transfer their skills to the next generation, older directors like Dike and Mhlophe also have to navigate the challenges of either initiating collaborations with fellow experts in informal mentorship processes, or ensure that they simply make themselves available to the younger generation who may not necessarily be committed to a process of being mentored. Mentorship is not the only process that these practitioners must navigate, however. Some directors recount experiences of victimisation in not only state-supported theatres, but in their careers in general.

Patronage and Infantilisation: We are being undermined and overlooked

Narratives of discrimination shared by some respondents highlight Dike's words that, "we live in patriarchal societies" where black women are "undermined and overlooked" (Dike, interview, 2019). The stories recounted by the black women directors are experienced not only across the Market, Artscape and Playhouse, but also in other state-supported theatres, as well as in their overall career experiences.

In 1989, during a politically turbulent period, Mhlophe became the resident director at the Market Theatre. As the first black woman, this appointment garnered plenty of publicity. Mhlophe recalls: "You wouldn't open a newspaper or a magazine without hearing about this first black woman resident director" (Mhlophe, interview, 2019). She also recounts the challenge of being without a budget yet expected to deliver. As part of her residency, Mhlophe not only ran workshops and participated at the Market Theatre Laboratory, but she also curated a storytelling festival, where she performed alongside three other black women – Olga Mbini, Zamambo Mkhize, and Winkie Direnko. She recalls: "We started the very first storytelling festival probably in the whole of South Africa during my residency at the Market Theatre, and it was fabulous" (Mhlophe, interview, 2019). After successfully presenting the festival, Mhlophe was informed she would be directing that year's Christmas production, even though she was a writer of neither comedy nor musicals. In 1990, she then wrote and directed a play called *Somdaka*, about a man who repeatedly fails at school and refuses to leave the village to work in the mines. Instead, he creates beautiful garments on his sewing machine. Mhlophe recounts that against the political climate, people wanted a play that would offer relief: "Many people came to see the show, asking at the Market Theatre, which one is more mild, that is not political? ... We want one that is more mild" (Mhlophe, interview, 2019). As with her seemingly apolitical play *Have You Seen Zandile?* the adage of the "personal is personal" equally underpins the simultaneously personal and political narrative of *Somdaka*.

Somdaka was subsequently invited to the African Women in Theatre Conference in Zimbabwe. Around this time, Mhlophe's residency was renewed and she was to start her second year in the position of resident director. However, following "a collision with someone who was politically connected" in Zimbabwe, she was fired (Mhlophe, interview, 2019). Mhlophe explains that on the day of the performance at a teacher training college in Tshitungwiza, heavy rains and hail on the zinc roof made the performance inaudible. Her request that the audience quieten down was indeed followed by silence and she proceeded to sit next to Zimbabwe's

Minister of Arts and Culture, Steven Chifunyise. The play garnered applause and generated a lot of conversation at a discussion forum the next day. Mhlophe then narrates:

> And then comes the word that I was horrible. I told the audience to shut up. I was disrespectful, I forget that I'm a woman and I disrespected Steven Chifunyise. I don't remember Steven Chifunyise looking at me, being disappointed in me. I don't think Steven Chifunyise had a problem with me being female … so several things escalated about me disgracing my mother body, the political organisation … it was political. And I refused to apologise, so when I refused to apologise *kwacacake ukuthi* [so it became obvious that] I'm being terminated with immediate effect (Mhlophe, interview, 2019).

As much as Mhlophe's experience took place before the period examined in this study (1999), it highlights not only the longstanding challenges of gender discrimination in patriarchal spaces, but also points to how marginalisation can occur under the guise and as a result of political agendas, irrespective of the era. Despite having successfully curated South Africa's first storytelling festival with limited resources, Mhlophe's contract was not renewed because she made her disapproval clear; furthermore, it was as a black woman during apartheid South Africa.

Nearly two decades after Mhlophe's termination from her position at the Market, Mokgoro narrates an exchange with the institution's then white male director during a time when her professional directorial profile was growing. In 2007, Mokgoro directed *Thursday's Child*, a drama about a young girl who is abandoned by her mother, repeatedly raped by her mother's boyfriend, and falls pregnant. The play went on to win an award at the Zwakala Festival. The following year, she directed *Antigone* for the Flair Festival. Mokgoro's adaptation of Jean Anouilh's Antigone was described as "rigorously intelligent" (Independent Online, 2008). Seane, a fellow participant at the festival, explains that the Flair project was premised on finding "emerging female directors" and assisting them in the process of working on a scripted text, showcasing their productions, with the winning play subsequently receiving a season at the Market (Seane, interview, 2019). Each of the five women received R10, 000 for their respective productions. After being awarded the Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Drama in 2009, Mokgoro directed *Olive Tree* which featured at the NAF, State Theatre and Windybrow. Subsequently slated for a run at the Market, Mokgoro describes the theatre's white male Artistic Director's reservations about the play, which were based on spiritual themes and ritual content that "he did not understand" (Mokgoro, interview, 2019). He advised Mokgoro on the storyline to a point where she felt it "became more diluted" and became a case of "a

black work seen through white eyes" (Mokgoro, interview, 2019). Making sense of this incident, Mokgoro concludes: "It's that time when, as a woman, you have to prove yourself five times more than a male, or than your white counterpart – so it was difficult for women. Like, for some reason we were not trusted in the spaces" (Mokgoro, interview, 2019). Mokgoro articulates the preferential treatment that was, and continues to be, given to white women directors:

> I fought and I argued with so many Artistic Directors; whether black or white at that time. I think my stand was, we need more female directors; we need more doors to be opened for us. We had a lot of white directors like Lara Foot … Janice Honeyman … Clare Stopford. I mean they are good, you know, but space for them was not scarce as us, if they knocked on the door (Mokgoro, interview, 2019).

Durban-born collaborative theatre-maker, Chantal Snyman offers her experiences of the Playhouse, which, like Mokgoro's account, underscores race inequalities in state-supported spaces. Snyman first enrolled at the University of Cape Town. Finding the experience disappointing, she left a year into her studies to continue at the then University of Natal. With its strong focus on traditional texts she had encountered at high school, the "white male dominated" Durban institution presented for Snyman an equally disheartening experience. She subsequently attained her degree at the University of Natal. Her penchant for theatre-making that rarely begins with the written text stems from her time at Convent High, an experience which afforded her myriad opportunities to create artistic work. Continuing with her theatre-making after high school, Snyman subsequently sent proposals to the Playhouse. The two plays she directed featured 20 years ago as part of two instalments of the theatre's SAWAF: *Snapshots of a Life* in 1999 and *Diva* in 2000. While Snyman admits that speaking about her experiences as director in both plays will be quite an "intellectual exercise", given the many years which have passed, she proceeds to recollect the experiences with clarity: "What I know about those two works is that you don't get much support. I didn't get much support from the Playhouse" (Snyman, interview, 2019). Snyman notes that although she was given both a space and a technician to support the two productions, she also opines that "there's always this sense that you must just take what you get and make the most of it" (Snyman, interview, 2019). Contrasting this experience with that of the Goethe Institute, Snyman highlights that the support she receives when making work for the German cultural institute is "exponential" (Snyman, interview, 2019). As much as she attributes this to sufficient funding, she also adds: "You know, the Playhouse doesn't seem to me to not have the funding, but it's also about the

way they organise themselves and also maybe about the way they think about the people who make the art. Are we important, you know?" (Snyman, interview, 2019). Emphasising this point, Snyman rhetorically asks: "If we're not Dorothy Anne Gould or if we're not somebody from – a big name in Johannesburg – Janice Honeyman ... do we matter?" (Snyman, interview, 2019). Reinforcing her experience of Durban's state-supported theatre, Snyman not only points to the race discrepancies, but also to the gender disparities: "Playhouse is not a woman-friendly space" (Snyman, interview, 2019). She indicates that she has no recollection of any programme between her first point of contact with the institution in 1999 and today where the development of women artists has been made a priority, be it the training of lighting designers, sound designers, writers or directors.

Asked if she thinks there are tensions between African, Coloured and Indian people, Snyman does not offer a direct response, but instead conveys her resistance against constructions that are foisted upon individuals and groups, including race, as they subsequently confine those who are to be identified by them: "You get told who you are and then you come to this place carrying that, like a card maybe, card-carrying members. But you never ask yourself, like, who am I beyond that, you know?" (Snyman, interview, 2019). She advocates opposing labels that were never self-inscribed, and demonstrates a strong sense of agency where an unquestioned acceptance of naming takes place: *"*And if you are told who you are, as we all are, and you accept it and you never ever interrogate it and you never ever push back, you know? What a limited life" (Snyman, interview, 2019). Though Snyman firmly rejects categories of identity including race, she is still acutely aware of the race inconsistencies that locate black women practitioners unfavourably in relation to their white counterparts. While "Coloured" individuals "may seek to transcend racial identifiers", they "find themselves conscious of and defined, by self and others, in relation to these signifiers" (Hammett, 2010: 248). Nonetheless, these individuals continue to exercise agency "in the making of their own identities" (Adhikari, 2013: ix).

Lekota relates her experience of gender discrimination at Artscape, where she directed two productions: a set work that was produced as part of the annual schools' programme in 2013 and a second production the following year. Lekota describes her experience of the first play: "I had to fight so much with Artscape. The actors were unhappy, they're paid late, they're not paid, the hours. Oh, there was so many politics with Artscape" (Lekota, interview, 2019). She further relates the difficulty of negotiating a salary – with a sense of puzzlement, she explains that she was paid as a director the same amount she had received the previous year as a

performer at the cultural institution. Lekota also narrates that her performers only had access to the main stage one day before the opening; a delay which was further exacerbated given the large cast of 20 members. She continues: “I really needed a bit more time. It was difficult. It was difficult. I cried” (Lekota, interview, 2019). Lekota recalls that it was only the technical manager who assisted: “Everyone that I spoke to before that was, like, ‘no, there’s gonna be this set on that day’, ‘there’s gonna be that’, ‘I’m busy with that’. No one was interested in helping me. I think I was angry after that. I was too angry. I was, like, I don’t want to come back to this place” (Lekota, interview, 2019). Describing her experience as a woman director, Lekota connects it to this distressing situation, since the altercations she had at Artscape were with technical crew who were men: “I see myself going, ‘screw you’, things like that, screaming at people and shouting and getting frustrated at the men I was talking to at Artscape. That’s my experience. It’s not easy … it’s been tough” (Lekota, interview, 2019).

While most of the discussants have dealt with marginalisation within a cultural institution, Bukelwa Cakata narrates her experiences of race and gender prejudice at the level of provincial government. Born and bred in rural Eastern Cape, Cakata was exposed to artistic practices during her childhood by singing in community choirs. After matric, she got a bursary to study towards a Bachelor of Music with Education at the then University of Transkei – present-day Walter Sisulu University. Thereafter, she enrolled for an Honours degree at the same institution, majoring in English and Music. With her formal training and musical background, Cakata decided to start a music department at Umlazi High School, where she taught for nine years. Failing to see any impact the music education was having on learners, she grew dissatisfied and thought of an idea to start an after-school arts and culture programme, where those who were serious about music could join. In 2006, she shared this frustration with a friend, Ndileka Santi, who had come to Durban to work for the Natal Society for the Blind as a disability specialist – Santi proposed that this arts and culture group comprise people with disabilities. That same evening, the two women came up with the concept of African Sinakho Arts. The same year, they started the organisation and it grew to a point that Cakata resigned from her teaching job in 2011 to focus wholly on the performing arts group. In terms of roles, Santi is the Managing Director, handling the administration of the organisation, and Cakata is the Artistic Director, primarily directing all the productions of African Sinakho Arts. Since their inception, African Sinakho Arts has had close to 20 runs across various theatres, including Artscape, the State Theatre, PACOFS and the Opera Theatre. Having started off with a group of 19 artists, Cakata now directs approximately 80 members.

Cakata did not envision that she would one day be a theatre director, since she has no formal training in this aspect of the performing arts: “I was not planning to be a theatre director. I wanted to do a music group … I wanted to train people and showcase them; that’s what I wanted to do – purely music” (Cakata, interview, 2019). As a black woman navigating the role of directing a performing arts group comprising artists with physical disabilities, Cakata has encountered numerous incidents of prejudice.

Of her directing experience, she admits that “there have been more challenges than successes” (Cakata, interview, 2019). She states that, initially, theatre staff would not know how to handle her cast because, “it’s people with disabilities and there is a lot of them” (Cakata, interview, 2019). Continuing, Cakata says, “especially your white theatres – like PACOFS – they would actually say, you are bringing 80 artists? That’s a lot of people to be crammed on a stage” (Cakata, interview, 2019). Interpreting such attitudes, Cakata concludes: “Already they think you have no idea what you are about to do and when the show is over, they actually say, ‘Oh, okay’, with an air of ‘she pulled it off’” (Cakata, interview, 2019). With a sense of optimism, she states: “That actually helps – the fact that people expect less – because when you outdo their expectations, then it’s a milestone, than for them to expect a lot and then you underperform” (Cakata, interview, 2019). Cakata’s description of “white” theatres such as PACOFS immediately points to the racialised nature of state-supported theatres, perhaps where some are “whiter” than others. Commenting on the race dynamics at state-supported theatres in general, Barry opines: “I think theatre in this country is still a white male domain – largely” (Barry, interview, 2019). She continues to note quite candidly: “I think theatres are very elitist institutions. They need to transform drastically” (Barry, interview, 2019).

Notwithstanding Cakata’s positive outlook, her narrative further suggests that it is these “white theatres” that tend to hold prejudicial attitudes against her group of performers, all of whom are black youth living with physical disabilities. Cakata relates an incident concerning another state-supported theatre: “When I did not receive any help in State Theatre, they could not put it in writing that we will not fund the show, because they are sort of obliged … to support initiatives for people with disabilities ...” (Cakata, interview, 2019). Cakata indicates that the group can access state-supported theatres because these institutions “have to” feature artists with disabilities “because it looks good on their profile” (Cakata, interview, 2019). Unlike these institutional mandates, Cakata makes it clear that on the side of African Sinakho Arts, the aspect of a physical disability is not the deciding factor for being part of the group: “We are not taking artists because they are disabled; we take only those that are talented. Those that are

highly talented … that display potential" (Cakata, interview, 2019). Though Cakata accredits the opportunities she has received to assistance from women such as the then MEC of Arts and Culture in KwaZulu-Natal, Weziwe Thusi, as well as the Playhouse's Linda Bukhosini, she also alludes to the idea that being among few disability arts groups is somewhat of an advantage.

Discussing the aspect of race in terms of the organisation itself, Cakata states: "I think for others it would have been better if this was managed by a white person, because you know, they would know that he probably knows what he's doing" (Cakata, interview, 2019). In terms of the resistance she has faced, Cakata admits: "There are many instances where I felt that this thing would have been very far if it was managed by a white person" (Cakata, interview, 2019). She continues: "Disability theatre is not something new; it's only something that white people do … as a gesture" (Cakata, interview, 2019). Cakata recounts an incident with a woman from the government department responsible for the upliftment of rural communities, in which their marginalisation as a black-run organisation was stark: The woman suggested, "It would be better for you if you partnered with an organisation that we have sponsored" (Cakata, interview, 2019). Cakata therefore deduces that she and Santi were essentially advised to associate their performing arts organisation with a white-owned organisation, since "the only organisations for people with disabilities are white-owned" (Cakata, interview, 2019). Making plain the funding implications that such advice carries, Cakata states: "They [this particular government department] only give to those white-owned organisations" (Cakata, interview, 2019).

Cakata also narrates an instance of blatant bigotry. She and her business partner Santi met with the Minister of a certain government department who wanted the group to conduct a rural community project, including a tour. The Minister requested that they submit a proposal, which he subsequently endorsed. The organisation was to be allocated a budget of R23 million and this financial decision was part of the budget speech that year. Cakata recounts the comments made by a public official in the Ministry to Santi, in a follow-up telephone conversation:

> His first comment was that "this money could have built a *lokishi* [township]". *Wathi* [He said], "*lemali oyifunayo* [the money that you want] could have built the whole settlement *yabantu* [of people]. Number two, you expect us to give R23 million to two girls?! … Do you even have families? This Cakata girl, is she even married?" (Cakata, interview, 2019).

Cakata recounts the suggestion the public official proceeded to make: "'Why don't you get a company that we can fund and then they can fund you?'" (Cakata, interview, 2019). She articulates their response: "We said, 'No, we are an [entity] of our own. She has expertise in the disability sector, I've got expertise in performing arts. What is missing here? We've got accountants that handle our funds, so why did we need a third element?'" (Cakata, interview, 2019). Displeased with this reply, the public official retorted that the government department simply cannot give money to "two girls" and again questioned whether they had relatives. Just as in the case of Mhlophe's unfair dismissal as resident director at the Market Theatre, Cakata and her partner encountered blatant sexism which was evidently a smokescreen for political agendas. The absurdity of the public official's questions about Cakata's marital status and family points towards a deliberate diversion where the release of the funds is concerned. Although fully supported by the Minister, the project, which would have entailed setting up a theatre space in a community that has never before been exposed to theatre, as well as provide employment for several artists, never materialised. Not only was the public official's insistence on including a needless third-party problematic, but the fact that this substantial Ministry-approved expenditure was completely and successfully diverted from its intended purpose is highly questionable.

Cakata concludes: "Taking African Sinakho Arts seriously as [an] organisation has been a challenge from the word go and it has been made clear that it would have been better if it was managed by white people because they would trust that they can [deliver]" (Cakata, interview, 2019). Cakata has not only had to deal with prejudice based on her race and gender, but she also must address bias where the physically challenged artists she works with are concerned. In addition, political interference poses a great challenge in respect to funding the activities of the performing arts group, subsequently increasing the burden of sustainability.

Though Shelley Barry's lived experience is as "a woman of colour, with a disability in brackets" (Barry, interview, 2019), she has enjoyed access and a degree of privilege. Barry grew up in a very artistic family where she would workshop and direct productions which she and her cousins would perform for the adults at family gatherings. She enrolled at a government primary school where she stayed for just one year, because her parents wanted to give her a better education, since "a state school under apartheid was not the greatest" (Barry, interview, 2019). Barry then started attending a private school which offered various artistic subjects, including Drama which was also an extra-curricular activity. Recollecting the experience, she muses: "I was just, like, I have just arrived in heaven" (Barry, interview, 2019). She later

returned to a state school that had very minimal facilities, as her parents could no longer afford private education. She then enrolled at the University of Cape Town in 1989 to study English and Speech and Drama. Barry completed her undergraduate degree, followed by a higher diploma in Education in Speech and Drama, since her passion was in both teaching and performing.

Since Barry's qualification lacked a strong practical component, she would workshop plays with her greatest collaborator at university, Anthea Carolus. Through this partnership, she discovered her strength as a director. Then in 1996, Barry was shot in an incident of taxi violence, which left her permanently paralysed. Not only did she have to negotiate being a woman of colour in a young post-apartheid South Africa, but now one with a disability. Despite her identity as a black woman living with a disability, Barry continued collaborating with Carolus, creating a one-hander titled *En Route to Bury Sara Baartman* in the late 1990s. She worked with Sara Matchett and Rehane Abrahams of the Mother Tongue Project, in which she performed poetry and was also part of Remix Theatre, a dance group which integrated people with disabilities, with those who are able-bodied. Barry was also involved in a production with a black women's writing collective, WEAVE – Women Education and Artistic Voice Expression. The group published an anthology of works, as well as a stage production at Artscape based on the writings. At the time of our interview, Barry related that she was preparing to take a virtual reality piece to Artscape a few months later. Having accessed Artscape a few times throughout her theatre career, Barry lauds Cape Town's grand state-supported theatre:

> Artscape Theatre was actually very instrumental too, because you know you had Artscape and you had the Baxter. And the Baxter always felt like a very inaccessible space. But Artscape was kind of like home. I always found that, and Marlene le Roux … even when she was in the position of audience development … you knew that the door was open at Artscape (Barry, interview, 2019).

Barry says: "Artscape is changing definitely under Marlene's careful hands" and adds that "it's not only me that feels this way. I know of a lot of people that think of Artscape as the theatre home away from home; in Cape Town anyway" (Barry, interview, 2019). Barry's words seem to denote that her access into Artscape is credited to Marlene le Roux in her previous role as Audience Development. Considering Lekota's experience alongside the marginal representation of black women directors at Artscape, it is difficult to conclude that the institution is an accessible space to all. On the one hand, Barry, along with "a lot of people"

she knows, may simply be fortunate to consistently find an open door at the institution, together with the few black women directors whose works have featured on the institution's stages over the past 20 years. On the other hand, Barry could be a beneficiary of what le Roux articulated as her primary objective when she took on the position of CEO at Artscape: "I started first with the disability project. I renovated this entire theatre, front part, to make it … accessible for persons with disabilities" (le Roux, interview, 2018).

The narratives discussed above highlight the discrimination encountered by black women directors, who navigate state-supported theatres not only through the multiple-axis lens of race and gender, but in the case of Cakata and Barry, also physical disability. While Cakata is a black woman dealing with prejudicial attitudes towards her physically challenged artists, Barry is a black woman who herself lives with a physical disability. From Cakata and Barry's respective narratives, it can be deduced that the access which both women have had at state-supported theatres can be credited to governmental arts policy that mandates state-supported entities to accommodate "people with disabilities" (DAC, 2013), as well as an executive head whose primary objective is the inclusion of persons with disabilities. Based on the number of black women directors without physical disabilities that have typically accessed the Playhouse, Market and Artscape between 1999 and 2018, the inclusion of this group in state-supported spaces, in general, is evidently not a government priority.

The intersectional approach that frames our discussion of the 12 black women directors' experiences does not end with considerations of race, gender and physical ability, but also includes the problem of class.

Class at the intersection

As a collective, the discussants differ in social class. Of the 12 respondents, nine had access to higher education institutions. The Statistics South Africa General Household Survey of 2018 revealed that the different population groups have unequal access to higher education. According to Statistics SA Chief Director, Isabelle Schmidt, Africans comprise the majority populace accessing institutions of higher learning (SABC, 2019). However, the respective percentage of Whites and Indians attending these institutions is proportionally higher than that of either Africans or Coloureds (SABC, 2019). The numbers of black people (in this case, Africans and Coloureds) attending tertiary educational institutions has, from the inception of the survey in 2002, remained significantly lower (SABC, 2019). Given these results, this sample population has enjoyed a level of access and privilege. Three of these nine women

(Barry, Michaels and Snyman) were also each enrolled at a private institution during their earlier schooling, while one (Govender) had the opportunity after matric of studying overseas as part of a rotary exchange programme. Notably, these women are four of the five "Indian" and "Coloured" respondents in this study, which attests to the social stratification which positioned "Coloured" and "Indian" population groups more favourably than "African" within the broader "black" community. The five "Coloured" and "Indian" respondents responded to the question of privilege.

While Barry considers herself a black woman, she articulates the degree of privilege that she enjoyed during apartheid: "We were still more privileged, as people of mixed race … It wasn't the greatest of privilege, but there was privilege, you know; being labelled 'Coloured' and growing up in apartheid, as opposed to being labelled 'Black'" (Barry, interview, 2019). As such, she had the opportunity of enrolling at the University of Cape Town. On her experience at tertiary level, Barry relates: "I felt very intimidated at UCT as a woman of colour in 1989. I was like probably one of few ['Coloured'] students in class. I felt the academic environment very white, very intimidating. I was suddenly very insecure" (Barry, interview, 2019). Though Barry had experienced some liberties throughout her earlier schooling, she was suddenly confronted by an inferiority complex, as a mixed-race woman amongst a majority of white students – moreover, at the height of apartheid. Though her access to a predominantly white university as one of only a few black students denotes a level of privilege, it was also an experience which presented discomfort and isolation. This is reiterated by Adhikari, who observes that "under white supremacy, coloured communities often found themselves isolated and powerless" (2013: xx). As in Barry's experience, "Coloured" identity often revealed tensions between relative privilege and a sense of inferiority.

As a "Coloured" woman, Michaels shares Barry's sentiments. On the question of whether she feels privileged in the context of South Africa's historically-contrived racial identities, Michaels forthrightly responds in the affirmative: "Yes I do … I can't even pretend that I don't walk through the world, you know, with a certain amount of privilege. I do" (Michaels, interview, 2019). She firstly notes her skin-tone privilege: "The fact that I'm light-skinned, and *being* light-skinned is associated with beauty in a black community" (Michaels, interview, 2019). Michaels' statement introduces colorism as a site in which the domination, or in her experience, privilege, of black women is enacted. Black feminist writer Alice Walker is widely regarded to have coined the term "colourism" in 1982. In one of her essays in the three-part collection titled *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens* (1983), Walker continues to address this

concept, which is closely related to racism, in its similar preoccupation with bias based on skin colour. An intra-racial prejudice based on skin tone, colorism entails the favourable perception and treatment of light-skinned individuals, in relation to their darker-skinned counterparts. Directing her words to the community of black women, Walker declares: "Colorism, like colonialism, sexism, and racism, impedes us" (Walker, 1983: 291). While black women can be victimised through white imperialism, gender oppression, or racial discrimination, the marginalisation that occurs amongst black women of different skin tones requires the same urgency as an equally persistent form of discrimination. Michaels continues: "I find that even in a kind of work environment, white people deal better with me, you know, because they think like I'm an easier black to digest" (Michaels, interview, 2019). Magaisa explains the degree of privilege that individuals such as Michaels obtain: "It is assumed that for light-skinned individuals, life is a little easier, that they face less racism and are at the receiving end of more opportunities than their darker-skinned counterparts" (2016: 6).

Although Michaels acknowledges the preferential treatment she has received among both the black and white communities, she also narrates her interactions with other Coloured girls growing up: "There were other Coloured girls who in my community […] for them I was too black" (Michaels, interview, 2019). She continues: "Coloured girls in my community were like, *wie dink sy is sy?* [who does she think she is?], you know; like, also I went to a private school. So […] my cultural experience was very different" (Michaels, interview, 2019). Michaels' experience points towards a double-othering: on the one hand, she was isolated on the basis of being "too black". Her behaviour was evidently perceived as lending itself to blackness and perhaps consequently regarded as a tainting of the Coloured community's perceived superiority to Africans. Adhikari notes that Coloured identity has historically been shaped around a simultaneous connection with whiteness and a distancing from Africanness (2013: xiv). On the other hand, Michaels' rare experience of exposure to private schooling as a young Coloured woman attracted the critique that she was diverging from societal norms typically associated with "Colouredness". While her access to private education denoted privilege, it also signified estrangement from her community.

While Snyman agrees with privilege afforded based on her racial identity, she also questions broader questions of privilege: "I'm pretty sure that I have enjoyed privileges. I think all people in all societies – I don't think we are only oppressed – I think we all have places where we have privilege" (Snyman, interview, 2019). She proceeds to frame her response within the context of performance, rather than considering her daily lived reality as a "Coloured" woman:

> I can't honestly say that I think that I have been privileged; in fact, I think that I have been disadvantaged by how other people see me. I'm not talking about like directing, but I know about performance – I've certainly felt that prejudice there because I've had people say that to me: "No, but you wouldn't be able to play that role; I mean, look how you look" (Snyman, interview, 2019).

In articulating experiences as nuanced, whereby an individual can be privileged one moment and marginalised the next, Snyman offers a perspective that is by no means invalid. However, her response can be read as nonspecific, without proximity to her own experiences as a "Coloured" woman. It is upon considering her educational background that Snyman's own positionality of simultaneous privilege and exclusion beomes clear. Snyman attended a well-resourced convent high school in Durban's suburbia, where "there were about six or seven… black and brown girls" (Snyman, interview, 2019). While she explains that "it was a great school environment", she is quick to add, "but it was also 1981, Durban, South Africa. It was still during apartheid … It was very, very early days and the dominant culture of the school was white" (Snyman, interview, 2019). Though she enjoyed access to the private school as a young "brown" woman and lauds the overall environment, Snyman recognises her presence in a system shaped around a predominantly white culture. She proceeds to articulate the dichotomy between her days at school and home: "So there would be that experience in the day and then going back to Wentworth in the afternoons. It was quite … there was quite a lot of conflict in trying to be in the two spaces and try[ing] to integrate the two spaces within myself" (Snyman, interview, 2019). While Snyman had the rare opportunity of accessing private education in a setting of white enculturation, she would return home to the unique culture of her "Coloured" community in Wentworth. Like Michaels, Snyman's upbringing involved a constant parallel negotiation of white culture and coloured identity.

Govender and Naidoo also reflected on the question of privilege as women of Indian descent. Govender clarifies: "I was privileged in terms of opportunities; definitely not finances" (Govender, interview, 2019). The opportunity to study abroad came as a result of a successful application. On her experience in Oregon, United States, during the mid-1990s, she explains:

> I was the only person of colour. It was a completely white school – I was the only person of colour and it completely messed them around, because at that stage, the idea of a South African of Indian descent … I never bothered to mention that I was from Indian descent. I just said I was South African – speaking English (Govender, interview, 2019).

Govender continues to primarily identify as South African. She maintains: "I get very exhausted when I hear people saying 'as an Indian, as an Indian'… But you're *not* an Indian. You're the furthest thing from an Indian because you are South African, and when you meet the real Indians you realise how 'un-Indian' you are" (Govender, interview, 2019). In her book *What Gandhi Didn't See: Being Indian in South Africa* (2018), Durban Indian writer, Zainab Priya Dala, similarly explains that she relates more as a South African, than as a woman from India. Perhaps this decision echoes the idea presented by Radhakrishnan in her exploration of the gendered politics of Indian identity in post-1994 South Africa: from the mid-1990s, "racial meanings have become increasingly central to the issue of national identity" (2005: 263). In primarily identifying as South African, Govender and Dala perhaps resist the ambivalent location historically associated with Indian South African identity. Furthermore, cultivating unity in diversity and forging a sense of national identity under the metaphorical "rainbow nation" continues to be an imperative of government.

Responding to the question of whether she feels privileged in the context of South Africa's historically contrived racial identities, Naidoo first replies: "No, I don't think so" (Naidoo, interview, 2019). This reply is followed by a comment that the question posed is "deep", before she finally admits: "Look, I do feel privileged, because I think I have access to a lot more than say someone in a township, to be able to put on something. Yes, it was our own initiative, grit and stuff, but I do think a *huge* part of it is privilege" (Naidoo, interview, 2019). It takes Naidoo a push or probing to acknowledge the relative privilege she has had as a South African of Indian descent. When she eventually admits to the privilege she has enjoyed, Naidoo also attributes her success as a black woman director to hard work and perseverance. There is admittedly a sense of tension between a recognition of her privilege and acknowledgment of her hard work and industriousness.

While the five women directors of Coloured and Indian descent have experienced opportunities of access in both a historical and current South African landscape, this privilege has not been without uneasiness, isolation and a sense of not quite belonging. Across the Market, Artscape and Playhouse, Coloured and Indian women stage directors have occupied the least space from the category of black women directors over the last 20 years (see Tables 1–3 in the Introduction). Perhaps these groups of practitioners tend to consider the financial viability of their productions above any other factors, and as such, either pursue arts spaces that support the sustainability of their work, or other professions altogether.

An additional space that seems to inform the practical participation of black women is motherhood.

I'm a mother

For most discussants, motherhood forms an integral part of their identity. This aspect of their lived experiences presents an additional layer to negotiate in their work as theatre practitioners. This fact exemplifies Audre Lorde's often-cited observation: "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not lead single-issue lives" (1984: 183). Lorde's statement holds true especially for black women, since this group's life experiences intersect along various matrices in which oppression manifests. The varied and nuanced narratives of this study's sample population have so far been discussed through the lens of primarily race, gender, class and physical ability. These factors are echoed in Patricia Hill Collins' statement that "mothering takes place within specific historical contexts framed by interlocking structures of race, class and gender" (1994: 56). This group of women navigates motherhood not only from very particular realities of race, gender, class and physical ability, but in doing so, the role of motherhood is located as a further site of marginalisation where their meaningful participation in the theatres under focus is concerned.

When asked to describe herself, Dike replies: "First and foremost, I'm a woman, I'm a mother and I'm a grandmother" (Dike, interview, 2019). To this same question, Mokgoro responds similarly: "I am a wife, I'm a mother, I'm a sister, I'm a daughter, I am a theatre practitioner" (Mokgoro, interview, 2019). In a similar vein, when describing herself, Michaels' first words are, "I'm a mom. I'm a single mom and I have two kids" (Michaels, interview, 2019). It is evident from the respondents' insights that the mothering role is one that is profoundly cherished. In her book, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (1984), bell hooks notes that the feminist movement regarded motherhood as a hindrance in the lives of women, while neglecting to clarify that this however was not the case for all women: "Had black women voiced their views on motherhood, it would not have been named a serious obstacle to our freedom as women" (hooks, 1984: 133). This is another example of how the feminist movement fundamentally omitted the perspectives of black women, thereby justifying the emergence of the black feminist movement. The author proceeds: "Historically, black women have identified work in the context of family as humanizing labor, work that affirms their identity as women, as human beings showing love and care, the very gestures of humanity white supremacist ideology claimed black people were incapable of expressing" (hooks, 1984:

133-134). In a similar vein, Cherryl Walker articulates in a newly-formed South African democracy, the meaning that was ascribed to this nurturant role: "… there is historical evidence of different groups of women constructing identities for themselves *as mothers* which challenged the dominant conception and strengthened them in relation to oppressive state and employer practices" (1995: 435). The arguments posed by both hooks and Walker highlight not only the altruistic nature of motherhood, but also the political resistance and agency that has been associated with this role. Part of the activism of motherhood today is the notion of the working mother, who chooses to embrace the distinct roles of nurturing in the private sphere while also contributing to society in the public space. Govender articulates the congruence which should occur between working and mothering:

> It's a choice that you make, and what we have to do is not frown upon that – and never say to women, you have to either be this or that. You do both, but what needs to change is the system so that you *can* do both; so that you can go and be present at home and make sure that your kids are taken care of and you can work. *I* know that I am a better mother because I am a working mother, and that just works for me (Govender, interview, 2019).

As much as women's agency is demonstrated in undertaking these dual roles, the strain associated with the life-altering responsibility of mothering is also foregrounded. Snyman recalls quite vividly the circumstances surrounding her production, though it was showcased at the Playhouse 20 years ago: "*Diva* was not so well received and there was a reason for that. It was quite unfinished that work […] I was a very new mother. I had just had *Kirsten[24] – she was a few months old – and I remember being very tired and feeding her on the set, carrying her around a lot" (Snyman, interview, 2019). She continues to describe the overall production as "quite intense" (Snyman, interview, 2019). Snyman shares that directing her mother in the play, while simultaneously negotiating the role of being a mother to a new-born, was an immense and onerous undertaking; one which inevitably shaped her memory and experience of the work.

Like Snyman's challenging experience, Michaels recounts that her pursuit of a directing opportunity at a state-supported theatre was not around smooth circumstances: "At the point when I went to the Market Theatre, I was a mom of two small babies and I was trying to get back into my career, and I realised that this was my opportunity actually to really try and go

[24] A pseudonym.

into the arts properly" (Michaels, interview, 2019). As a single mother, Michaels' efforts at attaining a balance between career and motherhood are significantly pronounced. On the one hand, in seeking an opportunity despite being a mother of two small children, Michaels reinforces hooks' idea that mothering for black women is not necessarily a hindrance. On the other, although the stigma of single motherhood has declined over the years (Ngabaza, 2010: 46) and with a notable increase in single motherhood (Fourie, 2018), Michaels' continued participation directing at a state-supported theatre as a single mother to two small children, would have been a plausible challenge. Moreover, this primary responsibility, along with her scepticism that theatre could sustain her lifestyle, would have hindered further participation in professional theatre.

At the helm of a state-run theatre, Marlene le Roux is aware of the unique needs of her female staff, especially those with children. In her forthright manner, le Roux outlines her plans for Artscape:

> My next project is to have a crèche because a stage manager works at night – they have babies. Now they bring their babies with. They stage manage there – new norm. If you have a problem, it's your problem. She's looking after her baby and stage management (le Roux, interview, 2018).

A mother herself, Govender is equally mindful of the mothers with whom she works:

> The practicality of being a mother affects directing. I'm also aware that the female actors that I have, if they have children, have the same responsibilities. So that's where I'm a better director because I'm lenient on that – with female fellow employees or colleagues. Even on screen, I know what it is that a woman has to do to be there at that show, and it's a choice (Govender, interview, 2019).

Naidoo is another discussant who exercised a choice between the work of mothering and theatre directing. Relating a period when she temporarily stopped working so that she and her husband could travel abroad, Naidoo says: "After that we decided, okay, we would like to settle down now and have a family and I didn't want a nomadic lifestyle with a little one […] I said when I have a little child, I want to be grounded and I don't want to be out at night every night" (Naidoo, interview, 2019). Naidoo's words highlight that for women who choose both a career in the arts and parenting, the demands of professional theatre must be juxtaposed alongside considerations of motherhood. Lekota also narrates her experience of negotiating and facilitating this balancing act, during her first professional production at Artscape: "I had

known I'm going to get the job, but I didn't know I was pregnant. So by the time we started rehearsals, I was like, pregnant!" (Lekota, interview, 2019). As Lekota relates the story with delight, there is also a sense that the pregnancy was, in retrospect, a discovery that would change her level of involvement in theatre directing.

Mhlongo's preoccupation with the business aspect of the performing arts and its capacity to sustain the artist is evidently informed to a large extent by her role as a mother:

> The reality is, it is your profession, you know. So it *has* to work for you. So once you're [planning] to start a family … you have to participate as a working individual […] You can't pretend it. So that's where you have to be realistic on how you're using your talent to do that for you every day (Mhlongo, interview, 2019).

Mhlongo highlights the importance of being an income-earning partner in a parenting relationship. There is a sense of restlessness in Mhlongo's tone as she relates her ideas about this dichotomy between working and mothering. An award-winning theatre practitioner active in professional directing, Mhlongo continues doing her work, with the yearning that it can one day be a career that can sustain her and her family.

Challenging historical legacies through challenging works

Black women directors are central in the process of the unravelling of power in South Africa's performing arts institutions in a contemporary context. The productions of the few directors that have occupied these spaces in a 20-year period bear testament to a shifting of deeply entrenched white, patriarchal standards, which historically have shaped these national theatres. Often engaging with narratives of black women through the lens of class, religion, sexuality and spirituality, this group of artists has over the two decades certainly been the shapers of groundbreaking, evocative and challenging works at Artscape, Playhouse and the Market.

Warona Seane notes: "Most of the work I've done has been centered on women" (Seane, interview, 2019). Of her one-woman show titled *Insignificant Others* which she wrote and directed in 2001, Shelley Barry observes, "It wasn't often that they [the audience] were seeing a woman of colour up on the stage, doing her thing, talking about her body, talking about race, talking about privilege, talking about all kinds of things" (Barry, interview, 2019). In fact, Barry underlines the impact of self-written narratives. She relates that this is how her generation of black women practitioners functioned in state-supported theatres in the early 1990s: "We were performing stuff that we had written ourselves from our own perspective and having that

agency to represent storytelling in our own words and actions. That's power and I think that will always remain power" (Barry, interview, 2019). Lekalake advocates that women need to tell their own stories (2013: 123). The author posits that if all black female directors embrace the route of writing their own narratives, it will both guard against stereotypical or inadequate depictions of black female experiences and provide opportunities for black female theatre practitioners to direct narratives that articulate their experiences (Lekalake, 2013: 124). Gcina Mhlophe demonstrates this power in that she generally directs productions that she has written herself.

Even in instances where black women directors have not written their own works, there is often a deliberate centering of black women's experiences and perspectives. In 2010, Princess Mhlongo showcased a narrative which centers on two black women – a domestic worker and a prostitute - Zakes Mda's *And the Girls in Their Sunday Dresses*. That same year, Mhlongo directed *So What's New?* Written by Fatima Dike, the play, which focuses on four township women, explores how black African women use the informal sector for financial survival. In 2015, Napo Masheane directed *A New Song* – the work for which she was lauded as the "first black female director to have her show featured on the Market Theatre's main stage, the John Kani Theatre" (Bambalele, 2015). Set in a middle class Johannesburg suburb, the play narrates the stories of nine domestic workers who find themselves in the "City of Gold" with hopes and dreams. In 2016, Koleka Putuma directed *Mbuzeni* at Artscape. *Mbuzeni*, told in isiXhosa, follows four orphan girls who are isolated from their village and live near a cemetery. Obsessed with burials, the girls continuously defy burial rites. Zimkitha Kumbaca, who was appointed in 2020 by James Ngcobo as the Resident Director of the 27th Zwakala Festival, directed *Confessions of a Blacklisted Woman: She Bellows*, which featured at the Playhouse South African Women's Arts Festival in 2018. The work deals with issues of women abuse, patriarchy and the general representation of black women in contemporary South Africa.

Along with productions that have intentionally centered the narratives of black women in some way, black women directors have also navigated the contentious issue of sexuality. In 2011, Yolandi Michaels directed at the Market *Loving Lulu*, a production which explores a lesbian love relationship between two black women. In 2014, Motlatji Ditodi's *Chomi*, which also explores gay identity, showcased at Artscape. In 2018, Lee-Ann van Rooi directed *Rokkie*, which follows the journey of a 50-year old transgender individual from the Cape Flats to the gender reassignment. That same year, Lesedi Job directed the "lesbian play" (Ngcobo, interview, 2018) *Meet Me at Dawn* for showcase at the Market Theatre.

Narratives of war and crimes have often been a subject for creative exploration by black women directors over the 20 years under investigation. Ntshieng Mokgoro's *Umdlwembe* was featured at the Market in 1999. Mokgoro explains that "*umdlwembe*" refers to an informant during the apartheid era (Mokgoro, interview, 2019). Given its political subject matter, the show caused such a stir that some members of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) Youth Brigade approached Mokgoro after the final showcase. One of the young comrades proceeded to tell her frankly: "You are lucky [Themba Khoza[25]] is not here. He was going to kill you". While *Toe Ravensmead Nog Tiervlei Was* - directed by Sheila Davids at Artscape in 2014 - focuses on the forced removals of the 1950s, Amy Jephta's *Soldaat*, also featured at Artscape that same year, tells the story of a 21-year old man who prepares an assault against a group of men terrorising his community. Khutjo Green's *Between Love and Prayer,* which featured as part of the 2016 South African Women's Arts Festival (SAWAF) at the Playhouse, looks at the stories of enslaved, objectified and mutilated women who work on a mealie farm. Set in the Middle East, *Scorched*, which featured as part of the 2017 instalment of the SAWAF and directed by Jade Bowers, tells a narrative of civil war and forced migrations. In 2018, Lesedi Job directed *Congo* at the Market Theatre. A political thriller featuring veterans John Kani and Robert Whitehead, *Congo* shines a spotlight on the crimes of humanity that were enacted against the people of Congo, under the nation's 23-year old rule by King Leopold.

Despite the controversial nature of the themes of religion and spirituality, this has not been uncharted territory for black women directors. Ntshieng Mokgoro describes her directing style as symbolic and representational, with her productions often making use of imagery that evokes the ritualistic and spiritual: "But when I started tapping into the spiritual space or spiritual realm, I found myself using cloth more than anything, I found myself using candles, I found myself using water, I found myself using soil" (Mokgoro, interview, 2019). In 2014, Chuma Sopotela's performance art installation titled *Ngokomzekeliso Wakhe* was featured at Artscape. Similar to Mokgoro's directorial style, Sopotela's work explores the shaping of an individual by using the elements of sand and water, which symbolise life. In terms of religious subject matter, Sisipho Yvonne Mbopha directed in 2015, a physical theatre piece about holding onto the Christian faith, titled *Secret Flames.* In 2003, Nadia Davids directed her self-written award-winning one-woman play, *At Her Feet*, which explores the world of Islam through the eyes of

[25] Khoza was known as a controversial leader of the IFP, suspected of inciting black-on-black violence between ANC and IFP supporters in the 1990s (*Mail & Guardian*, 2000).

four Muslim women in a post 9/11 context. Quanita Adams' *Syria*, which similarly explores the complexities of Islam, showcased at the Market in 2016.

Through engaging evocative themes and subject matter, black women directors are continuously shifting elitist, patriarchal and racist boundary lines at these historically exclusionary cultural institutions (in the case of the previous PACs that managed the modern-day Playhouse and Artscape). The creative contributions of black women directors spanning the 20 years this study examines, point towards endless possibilities where this group as a "disciplinary constellation of power" (2005: 57) is concerned.

On the periphery at state-supported platforms

Indeed, the discussants' intersectional experiences point towards the marginal location of black women, which has been a consistent occurrence across the Playhouse, Artscape and Market between 1999 and 2018. The graphs below depict the number of productions that have been directed by each race and gender category of director (including international), according to five categories: "commissioned", "women's festival", "largest venue", "platforms for new or developmental works" and "theatre season". Classifying productions within these categories highlights the race and gender groups whose works have generally garnered greatest visibility across the three theatres respectively.

In the discussion of the research design, the significance of selected categories in organising production information is explained (see pages 84-85). The groupings which have so far not been addressed include "event in which production featured", "involvement by theatre" and "venue". "Commissioning", "women's festival", and "largest venue" are directly related to "theatre involvement in production", "event in which production featured", and "venue" respectively. While the category of "platforms for new and developmental work" is aligned to the key theme of training and capacity building, the classification "season" delineates productions according to length of production run, as follows:

- Short run: refers to performances of between 1 and 4 days
- Season: refers to performances of 5 or more days
- Festive season: refers to performances over the December period.

The number of productions in terms of theatre seasons is displayed as individual graphs. Short runs refer to productions that showcase over the shortest period, a season comprises works that

feature from five days to a number of weeks and lastly, productions that feature during the festive season denote a repertoire that is considered to have a wide appeal and therefore likely to put bums on seats.

Overall, examining the number of productions by black women directors within these categories deepens understanding of the nuances of this group's positionality across the Playhouse, Artscape and Market.

The Playhouse

Table 13: Number of productions at the Playhouse by race and gender across selected categories, 1999–2018

	Black women	Black men	White women	White men	International
Commissioned	–	2	–	–	–
Women's Festival	15	16	14	7	1
Largest venue (Opera House)	4	8	1	10	1
Platforms for new or developmental works	3	43	10	7	–

Productions in the category "platforms for new or developmental works" featured predominantly across two community theatre initiatives, namely the New Stages Festival, and the Community Arts Festival. Both programmes are platforms on which selected community arts groups showcase their productions in festival format.

Table 14: Number of productions at the Playhouse by race and gender according to production season

	Black women	Black men	White women	White men	International
Short run	4	13	3	5	2
Season	3	17	14	11	1
Festive season	4	7	2	13	–

The category "theatre season" also includes productions in school programmes, as well as shows to commemorate events.

Artscape

Table 15: Number of productions at Artscape by race and gender across selected categories, 1999–2018

	Black women	Black men	White women	White men	International
Commissioned	2	3	–	1	1
Women's Festival	4	5	4	2	1
Largest venue (Opera House)	–	5	6	26	16
Platforms for new productions	5	7	6	18	1

Artscape's platforms for new works have included the Collaborations programme – which seems to have had intermittent instalments between 1999 and 2004, as well as the New Writing

Programme, which later became the New Voices Programme. On this latter platform, productions by black directors – men and women alike – featured on markedly more occasions from 2015 onwards.

Table 16: Number of productions at Artscape by race and gender according to production season

	Black women	Black men	White women	White men	International
Short run	3	17	8	21	6
Season	9	28	70	100	14
Festive season	–	2	15	22	3

The "theatre season" category also accounts for productions directed and showcased at other festival platforms. As such, the following events are included: the Cape Women of the World Festival (Cape WOW), the Cape Town Festival, the annual Suidoosterfees, the Heritage Festival, the Spiritual Festival, the recent Youth Festival, as well as the African Youth Theatre and Dance Festival. This category also comprises productions directed within children's and schools programmes.

The Market

Table 17: Number of productions at the Market by race and gender across selected categories, 1999–2018

	Black women	Black men	White women	White men	International
Commissioned	–	–	–	–	–
Women's Festival	2	–	4	–	1
Largest venue (Main Theatre/ John Kani Theatre)	2	28	9	20	3
Platforms for new work and developmental productions	10	35	2	1	1

There is no information with regard to productions that were commissioned works during the 20 years under investigation. In addition, the Market Theatre held its first women's arts festival in August 2002. There is no further information of festival instalments beyond 2003. Productions that featured in 2002 were directed by two white women – Sara Matchett and Charmaine Weir-Smith. The following year's programme comprised works by Nadia Davids and Lara Foot, Coloured and white women respectively. The line-up also included a production by Swedish director, Maria Weisby, as well as Asanda Phewa and Louise Denysschen – black and white women directors respectively – both whose productions featured as part of a student platform at the festival.

Of the 28 productions by black men, James Ngcobo is accounted for on 16 occasions – he directed four of these productions before his appointment, while 12 have featured at the

Market's largest performance venue during his position as Artistic Director. Ngcobo is contractually obligated to direct three works a year at the institution (SABC News, 2013).

Table 18: Number of productions at the Market by race and gender according to production season, 1999–2018

	Black women	Black men	White women	White men	International
Short run	4	8	2	3	5
Season	13	72	55	69	10
Festive season	2	12	5	8	–

The two primary developmental platforms at the Market Theatre have been the Barney Simon Young Directors and Playwrights Festival, and the Zwakala Festival. While the Barney Simon Festival is aimed at developing the scripts of emerging talent, which then culminate in selected scripts being attached to directors and receiving a production run, the annual Zwakala Festival is focused on developing the artistic skills of specifically community-based practitioners. Those undergoing skills training as directors are then attached to a work and allocated a mentor in the directing process. Productions are ultimately showcased at the Ramolao Makhene Theatre (previously the Market Theatre Laboratory). There was also the once-off Flare Festival in 2008, which featured the talent of six emerging women directors.

In search of space for our work

Considering all the issues discussed up to this point, space is clearly a persistent issue for black women theatre-makers. Discrimination on the basis of any factor of exclusion – including race, gender and physical disabilities – across the Playhouse, Market, Artscape and other state-supported theatres is a key factor that has compelled black women directors to seek alternative spaces in which they can freely create and showcase their work.

On her theatre directing experience that dates back more than 20 years, Barry highlights lack of funding, resources and rehearsal space as constant challenges. In a contemporary context, Seane encounters similar situations. Of the approximately 10 productions she has directed, Seane has been commissioned for three, essentially implying that her responsibility is coming into the theatre for the sole purpose of directing a production. For a majority of works she has directed, Seane explains that she would have to source the funding, rehearsal space and performance venue. Echoing this limiting factor of space, Mhlongo poses the questions: "How do we approach space … if space is an issue in creating work? How do we *have* our own and *own* our own?" (Mhlongo, interview, 2019). To address this concern and against the enduring struggle towards visibility in state-supported theatres, some black women practitioners are creating independent performing arts spaces. While establishing independent venues provides

agency for these practitioners, it remains a choice that presents its own unique challenges, as expressed by Mhlongo and Mokgoro.

Although she founded a non-profit organisation – an independent, experimental space called The Plat4orm, which existed over two spaces in three years but has since closed due to maintenance expenses – Mhlongo indicates that she could not really do her work there, "because there were so many people who needed space" (Mhlongo, interview, 2019). In the context of significant need for artistic platforms, she bemoans the lack of unity among existing independent spaces, where it seems that though the respective founders share a common goal, each one struggles alone. Relaying her struggles in the Plat4orm's upkeep, Mhlongo brings in race dynamics: "I don't want it to be about colour, but sometimes it's just simple as that, you know – that it's hard for a white owner to invest … even if you're doing a good job. Even if you're doing a good job. 'Cause we were doing a good job in those two places, and both places required just a push" (Mhlongo, interview, 2019). She seems compelled to introduce race in this discussion, seeing as it is a notion that did not feature in most of her life: "*ibackground yami* [My background] has never come from race. I've experienced race in many ways, you know, but I wasn't brought up with race, you know. I come from a convent school, you know, so [in] a convent school, you're only taught love" (Mhlongo, interview, 2019). Mhlongo appears to suggest that it is white people who not only patronise and support theatre – since professional arts has historically been this group's domain – but also, who have the economic capacity to do so. From Mhlongo's words, it seems that this assumption also came with the expectation of financial backing from specifically white investors. There is a sense of loss in Mhlongo's words as she recounts how a lack of unity among like-minded artists, together with a lack of financial support, led to the shutting down of an artistic endeavour that had a lot of potential. Mhlongo also highlights that international platforms like the Edinburgh Festival have the ability to showcase work by transforming unconventional spaces such as university classrooms. Furthermore, she notes that there are no technical issues experienced when using those spaces. Closer to home, the NAF also provides an example of how properly managed festivals can provide an extraordinary number of performance venues. However, with the NAF taking place anually, the issue of space remains a consistent challenge for artists the rest of the year. As such, Mhlongo laments the lack of performance space in South Africa or creativity in reimagining space in order to create work; specifically works that require a specific type of space.

Discussing the emergence of Olive Tree Theatre, Mokgoro says in exasperation: "I just gave up. I just gave up. I was like, this is nonsense, so I need a space" (Mokgoro, interview, 2019). Mokgoro opened Olive Tree Theatre in 2012 where it was housed in Yarona Mall in the Johannesburg suburb of Wynberg. The independent performing arts company moved into its own space in 2018 in the Johannesburg township of Alexandra and was launched on Human Rights Day that year. While the Olive Tree Theatre's existence is liberating, being a space not just within close proximity to the predominantly black community, but also one where artists' work is not subject to gatekeeping and where creativity is in no way stifled, Mokgoro is quick to point out the challenges with such a set-up:

> The whole idea of having the theatre space was dedicated to black – specifically to black female directors – to say, guys here's the space, you can do whatever that you want to do. But also the challenge becomes that, you would hope that these Artistic Directors would come and watch the plays and select the plays, you know, from there, but it's still a struggle (Mokgoro, interview, 2019).

Mokgoro suggests that in creating a platform dedicated to showcasing works by black women directors, the expectation was that these directors, who are marginally represented in state-supported theatres, would finally have a visibility ascribed to their work. To this end, in 2013 the theatre began running its annual women's festival, which was entirely enabled through fundraising. However, due to lack of funding, the theatre has not held an instalment since 2018. In establishing the space, the hope was also that these productions helmed by black women would be recognised by state-supported institutions. Instead, Mokgoro notes that the perception of such spaces is that "you are competing with the bigger institutions" (Mokgoro, interview, 2019). Mokgoro proceeds to state matter-of-factly that "government also still doesn't believe in black … it's still a hassle, it's still a challenge" (Mokgoro, interview, 2019). Olive Tree Theatre does not receive any state support.

Notwithstanding the challenges articulated by Mhlongo and Mokgoro, Seane highlights the political agency illustrated by the act of creating independent performing arts spaces. She posits that, unlike the previous generation of black practitioners who wanted to access publicly funded institutions since they were historically denied the opportunity, there are now theatre-makers "in the process of centralising the margins" (Seane, interview, 2019). If "to be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body" (hooks, 1984: ix), Seane highlights a process of agency whereby some black women directors are deliberately detaching themselves from the "main body" – the collective spaces typically ascribed visibility and which garner

widespread government support – to assert their voices and visibility in peripheral spaces. By engaging this sound postcolonial strategy, these practitioners centre not only these previously unnoticed spaces, but also themselves as theatre-makers most often overlooked in state-supported theatres.

For Snyman, the allure of alternative spaces is prompted by her disdain for the "political game-playing" that seems to come with accessing state-supported theatres (Snyman, interview, 2019). In terms of accessing these theatres, Snyman offers thoughtful questions: "I've asked myself, so what am I doing in this space? Am I legitimising it? And where are my sisters, you know? Where is the work of my tribe of creative sisters? So, am I the token?" (Snyman, interview, 2019). While Snyman has not established an independent performing arts platform like Mhlongo and Mokgoro, she prefers such spaces as they facilitate a separation from the politics associated with state-supported cultural entities, which is mainly their insignificant representation of black women directors. Reflecting the collective impetus that marks her theatre-making, Snyman considers participation in a state-supported theatre as not isolated from the inclusion of fellow women practitioners. She ponders whether involvement in such a space alongside only few black women would merely serve as the appearance of transformation in state-supported spaces. Against her extensive background of "making theatre out of nothing" (Snyman, interview, 2019) and performing in non-traditional performance spaces, Snyman offers a pragmatic outlook: "Because those spaces have excluded me, not personally, but because I haven't been one of their voices as a black woman, I haven't been one of their preferred – and again, that is my perspective – I haven't been one of their preferred candidates or groupies, alternate spaces are more appealing to me" (Snyman, interview, 2019).

Considering the challenges that black women directors typically encounter in state-supported theatres, some like Mhlongo and Mokgoro have chosen to detach themselves from them by electing to establish independent spaces. Since a departure from state theatres is used as a necessary strategy by black women directors to facilitate the visibility of their work, these practitioners are consequently excluded from the awards that recognise productions at state-supported theatres. Mhlongo observes: "If you look, we're showcasing the work [at] independent spaces […] I know no one came for my show […] So, *angazi basebenza njani* (I don't know how they work)" [Mhlongo, interview, 2019). Similarly, Mokgoro notes with a strong sense of disapproval:

> *The people who will keep getting awards is people who are working every year because their work is being recognised every year or it's being seen every single year so they are within the system, so they are there. So once you step outside… I mean this Naledi Theatre thing is also a bullsh**; they don't even come […] They need to come to these independent theatre spaces because that's where a whole lot of umsebenzi owenzakalayo* (work is done) [Mokgoro, interview, 2019].

The exclusion of independent spaces from awards processes highlights gaps and flaws in the very concept of rewarding theatrical excellence.

Biased Assessments of Merit

Theatre awards, for all intents and purposes, should recognise and reward theatrical prowess. This is not a straightforward undertaking, however, but one that has sparked much controversy in the wider industry. Durban's Theatre Awards – which came about after the FNB Vita Awards were discontinued – came to an abrupt end after 15 years, as a result of "a lack of support for the awards by the whole industry and considerable negative criticism without accompanying offers of constructive engagement, accusations of racism and unsatisfactory demographic representation both in terms of the panel and the resulting recipients of awards" (Taylor, 2018). On the Johannesburg scene, the Naledi Theatre Awards reveal skewed race and gender demographics since their inception in 2003 (van Graan, 2018), while Cape Town's Fleur du Cap awards were recently protested by a group of four black women theatre practitioners – namely, Chuma Sopotela, Buhlebezwe Siwani, Zikhona Jacobs and Mamela Nyamza – complaining about the lack of representation of black women theatre-makers (van Graan, 2019b). Insights from some responses convey the complexities of accolades in the industry.

Some discussants perceive accolades as a measure of success, such as Naidoo, who fails to understand how she has never been approached to be a mentor director, given that she has been a recipient of numerous Fleur du Caps. Naidoo suggests that receiving this esteemed award should have given her enough visibility to be considered a mentor. Mokgoro expresses that recognition typically follows receiving an award, while Michaels posits that recognition gained after attaining an award is "not specific to this industry" (Michaels, interview, 2019). At the same time, Mokgoro points to the superficial nature of this type of acknowledgement. On the Standard Bank Young Artist Award specifically, Mokgoro explains that after you win "people want to claim you" (Mokgoro, interview, 2019). As you begin to assert your own opinions that

may counter those held by the institutions or producers, "then you are distanced" and no longer getting work (Mokgoro, interview, 2019). She continues to underscore the lack of support, especially in the categories of theatre and dance: "I've seen a whole lot of us coming and then completely gone, and then you disappear and we don't know where you went" (Mokgoro, interview, 2019). From Mokgoro's insights, an award offers fleeting success, since unequal power relations and inadequate support are among the primary factors that cause award winners to slide into obscurity. In a light-hearted tone, Barry says: "And look here, while we're at awards, we do not want a nice golden statue; give us *cash*. Gold-plated at that" (Barry, interview, 2019). Barry emphasises that recognition of theatrical excellence should come in the form of money since this would offer tangible benefits.

Mhlongo, a fellow recipient of the Standard Bank Young Artist Award, narrates that she had not presented any noteworthy works at the time of receiving the award. It was later explained to her by a Standard Bank official that the reward is bestowed to artists who demonstrate potential for the future. She also notes, however, that "not everyone gets that award, you know. And the people who don't get it have to do the work first, you know, to get that award. So it's a question of how do they get to that work?" (Mhlongo, interview, 2019). Mhlongo's account highlights two issues: firstly, there are evident discrepancies in criteria for the award – while she was informed that she was a recipient due to her promising work, she indicates that some artists have to make the work first, before consideration. Secondly, referring to work featured in independent spaces, Mhlongo points to the reality that these practitioners cannot be considered for the Standard Bank award, since their work is outside the ambit of visible platforms like state-supported theatres. Alluding to the flawed nature of theatre awards such as the Naledis, Mhlongo further posits that in the absence of clear criteria, "the ones who have got the opportunity are the ones who are going to win" (Mhlongo, interview, 2019). Mokgoro offers her opinion of the Naledis more bluntly: "This Naledi Theatre thing is also a bullsh** – they don't even come. I mean, there was a meeting last year that … they need to come to these independent theatre spaces because that's where a whole lot of *umsebenzi owenzakalayo* [work is being done]" (Mokgoro, interview, 2019).

Another factor that taints the legitimacy of theatre awards is both the subjectivity of accolades in general, as well as the closed nature of the industry – a point that both Dike and Naidoo articulate. Prominent practitioner Dike offers four fervent "no's!" when asked whether or not she thinks black women directors generally get awarded adequately for their work. She attributes part of the significant exclusion of black women directors from state-supported

theatres, generally, to cliques. Patronage would certainly prove detrimental for practitioners who are not considered part of an institution's inner circle. Consequently, exclusion from the space, as alluded to by Mhlongo, denotes one's omission from awards processes. Dike notes that there are practitioners who are "specifically Baxter people" or "Artscape people", highlighting this as a problem which "has to break" (Dike, interview, 2019). This sentiment is echoed by Naidoo: "The awards is [sic] so flawed. I think whatever awards there are, it's very much a 'who knows who', who's come to that show … I think those awards are quite a shambles" (Naidoo, interview, 2019).

Mokgoro highlights that discrepancies in allocation of resources also has a direct bearing on eventual award winners. With this, she bemoans the general lack of support that black women directors receive – while an Artistic Director may get a few million to mount a production, a black woman would only get a marginal budget. In underlining this skewed support, Mokgoro also points to its unintended outcome – the flawed nature of awards: "At the end of the day, when the Naledi Theatre comes, they are judging you on the same scale. How do you even compare a person *othola ibhajethi yeR250,000 nomuntu othola iR3 million* [who gets a R250,000 budget with a person who gets R3 million] and put them under the same category? There's not even a competition there" (Mokgoro, interview, 2019). Mokgoro proceeds to articulate the conundrum in which these practitioners find themselves: "How do you get [an] award if you're not creating work every year? You can't. How? And the people who will keep getting awards is people who are working every year because their work is being recognised every year or it's being seen every single year, so they are within the system" (Mokgoro, interview, 2019). In a similar vein, Barry notes the inadequate rewarding of black women directors in awards: "They're first of all hardly even getting in the door, let alone getting awarded" (Barry, interview, 2019). She then adds: "It *is* important to acknowledge people's work. But, just be fair, of who gets there in the first place" (Barry, interview, 2019).

Prompted by Faniswa Yisa's question on social media in which she highlighted the problematic status of "emerging" and "development" that Cape Town theatres perpetually attach to black women directors, Mike van Graan proceeded to write an article about the South African awards landscape. While he focuses on the Naledi Theatre Awards, the purpose of his insights is that "awards reflect our industry" (van Graan, 2018). Furthermore, while van Graan offers a summary across the various award categories, only the "Best Director" grouping is considered. Over a 15-year period (2003–2017), there have been a total of 90 nominees in the category of "Best Director" in a play or musical. Of the 90 nominations, five have been black women. All

five were nominated only from 2013, which is 10 years since the award's inception (Warona Seane in 2013, Princess Mhlongo and Khutjo Green in 2014, Jade Bowers in 2016, and Lesedi Job in 2017). Among the same 90 nominations, there have been 28 white women. In terms of winners since 2003, black men have won across six years (Mpumelelo Grootboom in 2005 and 2009, James Ngcobo in 2006, Aubrey Sekhabi in 2011 and 2014, and Khayelihle Dom Gumede in 2015). This is followed by white women, who were award recipients across five years (Janice Honeyman in 2003, Yael Farber in 2007 and 2013, Lara Foot in 2008, and Sylvaine Strike in 2012). In terms of white men, Craig Freimond was the winner in 2004 and 2010, while black women award recipients included Jade Bowers in 2016 and Lesedi Job the following year.

Van Graan concludes that "more opportunities need to be provided for black African women directors ... It is not necessarily that the talent does not exist and needs to be 'developed'; it is about having *time and support* to hone one's craft and opportunities to present one's work with the *highest possible production standards*" [my emphasis] (van Graan, 2018). Against van Graan's observation, I return to previous statements made by Marlene le Roux and James Ngcobo respectively.

> But if you're black and you don't give me a product which is of quality, hello sweetie pie! ahah! and I give you an opportunity? I have no time for tokenism, just to tick the boxes. I don't have. I really don't have time (le Roux, interview, 2018).

> I don't do black because black has to be done. It's black excellence – that's what I'm after. To just be black for me is not enough (Ngcobo, interview, 2018).

Both le Roux and Ngcobo convey a clearly anti-tokenistic stance, highlighting their shared position against this obligatory practice. Nonetheless, both their utterances prove problematic where the inclusion of black women is concerned. On the one hand, le Roux neglects to give due attention to the training and capacity building that some practitioners in this group would require, given historical disparities. In an unsupportive environment, it is unfeasible how work with the "highest possible production standard" – borrowing van Graan's words – can be achieved. Furthermore, against the marginal situation of black women directors at Artscape between 1999 and 2018, le Roux suggests that while she would have given opportunities to these artists, their artistic products are found wanting in quality – this assessment seems to apply to both "emerging"/"developing" directors and fully professional directors. On the other hand, Ngcobo prioritises excellence, which is in fact supported by a number of black women directors who expressed the importance of productions of distinction. However, Ngcobo's

statement is challenging in a few ways. Firstly, he suggests that black practitioners in general have an expectation that they must be considered on the basis of their race; secondly, his explanation does not address the matter of black women specifically and lastly, given the rare occurrence of black women directing at the Market Theatre over the 20-year period examined in this study, what can be inferred from Ngcobo's comment is that the dearth of black women directors at the Market can be attributed to mediocre work. Considering the few black women that have accessed these spaces, le Roux's and Ngcobo's insights seem to suggest that black women directors – whether those that are developing or those who are established – typically create theatrical works of a lower calibre than their counterparts. Both institutional leaders articulate a stance which suggests that a considerable number of black women directors are generally not at an appropriate level to display their productions at Artscape or the Market Theatre. Given the fact that black women directors are similarly the least represented at the Playhouse, it can be inferred that Durban's prime cultural institution also sets in place seemingly neutral standards that effectively keep black women out.

Ultimately, to each her own

While the financial instability of professional theatre has led some black women directors to abandon this work, either on a full-time basis or at all, others continue to navigate the precarious funding landscape through conscious efforts towards the financial feasibility of productions. Still other directors elect to showcase their work in commercial venues, such as casinos and malls. These strategies are evidently to facilitate the sustainability of the practice, especially within the difficult and complex state of arts funding. Not only does this group of practitioners struggle for longevity in the profession itself, but they are confronted by additional factors that further obstruct their participation. Firstly, although mentorship is fundamentally a process of imparting guidance, it is one which has exposed some black women directors to unequal power dynamics in which their creative freedom is stifled. Secondly, discriminatory practices based on race, gender and physical ability have been an impediment in their access and participation in state-supported spaces. In circumventing these challenges while seeking platforms on which to give visibility to their work, some practitioners have elected to establish independent spaces. This initiative too has proved challenging: between high maintenance costs, lack of investment, the absence of state support and lack of collaboration, these independent venues are either short-lived or continue to struggle. The myriad challenges faced by black women in state-supported theatres and independent performing arts spaces point towards this group's unfavourable location at both the centre and the centralised margins. Furthermore, in what can

be interpreted as the opinion that the work of black women directors is largely substandard, institutional leaders do not seem to position the theatres they helm as open to this group of practitioners, whether through structured training and capacity programmes targeting specifically aspirant black women directors, or by making opportunities available for established black women directors to consistently present work and mentor others.

Overall, each of the 12 respondents accessed the Playhouse, Artscape or Market Theatre between 1999 and 2018 from diverse backgrounds and through different opportunities. Of these directors, Mhlongo, Mokgoro, Cakata, Dike, Lekota and Seane remain consistently active in a professional theatre career. Though Mhlophe's productions have recently featured mainly at the Playhouse, she regards herself as first and foremost a storyteller. Some practitioners, like Naidoo and Govender, have chosen to pursue creative ways of navigating the professional theatre space. An advocate of commercially viable work, Naidoo's permanent employment in the corporate sector supports the fully self-funded shows she directs on a part-time basis at independent venues. Similarly concerned with the lack of revenue in professional theatre located in traditional venues, Govender has subsequently become a recognisable name outside of conventional theatre spaces. She remains actively involved in the arts, mostly directing for television and film, and occasionally directing and performing in stage productions at popular entertainment venues. Barry's venture many years ago into her first love, filmmaking, signified a permanent conclusion to her theatre directing. While Snyman works as a coordinator at a non-government organisation creating youth-focused educational theatre, Michaels is adamant that she will never actively work in a directing or performing arts career. She remains in a creative environment, only a corporate one.

The collective experiences of the 12 discussants draws attention to a key shortcoming of our contemporary arts and culture landscape, that, being the way in which our democratic present deprives the nation of the creativity and artistic leadership of powerful black women directors, while also discriminating against these women as individuals and as artists. Respondents who have ceased to work as directors have done so due to constraints which have markedly impeded on artistic creation and expression. The thwarted ideals conveyed by some of these participants more than 20 years since the 1996 White Paper was drafted, bring into question the DACST's vision for arts and culture, as founded on Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that "*everyone* shall have the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community (and) to enjoy the arts ..." (DACST, 1996: n.p.).

CHAPTER 5: POLICY, PROCESSES AND PRACTICE

Introduction

This study started with the premise that black women theatre directors are under-represented in three state-supported theatres in a contemporary context: Playhouse (Durban), Market Theatre (Johannesburg) and Artscape Theatre Centre (Cape Town). Production information conveys that over the 20 years under investigation (1999–2018), this group of practitioners has been marginally situated in relation to their black men, white men and white women counterparts. The aim of this exploratory study was to therefore determine the factors which contribute to this under-representation, by examining the relationship between cultural policy, institutional processes and practice. The results indicate that black women theatre directors are located at the periphery in these state-supported theatres due to discrepancies in cultural policy, as well as the general philosophy and processes in these theatres – both of which subsequently impede this group's practical participation. The analysis of results confirms that most of the respondents are of the opinion that Artscape, Market and Playhouse – and arguably state-supported theatres in general – do not recognise black women theatre directors, as this role has mostly been occupied by black men, white men and white women theatre directors over the 20-year period.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section unpacks the major findings from the three key components of the study: firstly, the narrated experiences of the black women directors; secondly, the processes observed by Artscape, Market and Playhouse and lastly, analysis of cultural policy. Each finding is then interpreted, followed by a discussion of its implications in relation to the visibility of black women directors across the three theatres.

Recommendations for the themes outlined in section one are addressed in section two. Where section one unpacks major findings of firstly practitioners, secondly, of the processes observed at Market, Playhouse and Artscape and lastly the White Paper, the second part of the discussion on recommendations begins with cultural policy, since cultural policy determines the sector's activities, including the ways in which DAC-funded institutions are to function. Policy recommendations are followed by suggestions for state-funded institutions – as the key role-players mandated to implement policy objectives – and finally, recommendations are made for black women theatre directors, as participants in state-supported theatres.

The discussion of major findings illustrates how this study has sought to answer the key research questions it initially set out:

1. How does cultural policy enable or hinder the meaningful participation of black women stage directors at state-supported theatres?
2. How do Artscape, the Market and Playhouse mediate the significant contribution of black women theatre directors in their respective institutional processes?
3. What challenges has each director encountered, or continues to encounter, as a black South African woman, when it comes to accessing state-supported theatres in a contemporary context?
4. What insights can be drawn from the collective experiences of the directors, where the under-representation of black women directors, in relation to their black male, white male and white female counterparts, is concerned?

Section 1: Findings and Analysis

Practitioners

Formal education in theatre directing is mostly helpful

A major finding is that nine of the 12 discussants have a higher education qualification – eight from historically white institutions and one from a historically black university. Half of the total respondents qualified in specifically theatre directing. Three respondents have no formal education qualification. Two of these three interviewees gained prominence as practitioners during the apartheid era and the other respondent came through the route of community theatre more than 20 years ago.

Results further convey that formal education – even if in theatre directing – does not seem to significantly reduce the difficulties generally encountered by black women directors in their efforts to access and participate freely in state-supported theatres. This finding corresponds to the literature by Lekalake (2013) which has largely informed this study. Making reference to her own experience, the author posits that a formal qualification does not guarantee access into state-supported theatres.

Regardless of level of education, most respondents cited several challenges in their access of state-supported theatres during the 20-year period under investigation. The discussants were evenly spread across the wide-ranging explanations for exclusion or strained participation. These reasons included the legacy of these spaces as white and male-dominated, a lack of

knowledge in how to access these theatres, a lack of training, a lack of openness in these spaces, structural deficiencies within these theatres, a paucity of women leadership, a lack of a dialogue between older and younger black women directors and a deliberate choice on the part of state-supported theatres to exclude this group of practitioners.

Formal education aids black women's access into state-supported theatres to some degree. It is an added advantage in cases where the qualification is in theatre directing. With programmes structured to comprise both a theoretical and practical component, students who enroll would typically gain knowledge in the various aspects of directing for stage. This implies that a higher education qualification is a critical starting point for black women seeking to gain access into state-supported theatres in a contemporary context. In a complex higher education climate that is lately characterised by student unrest on the matter of increasing tuition fees, a significant proportion of students would be excluded as possible participants at state-supported theatres. This would consequently perpetuate the historical status quo of national cultural spaces as the domain of the "haves" in society.

"Coloured" and "Indian" respondents identified as "black"

A further major finding is that respondents occupying the historically contrived racial labels of "Coloured" and "Indian" mostly rejected these classifications and identified as "black". Along with identifying as "black", some of these women also described their identity as "mixed-race", or as having "black and brown experiences" or as "South African".

The discussants are aligned both geographically and politically as a community of women who have mostly encountered marginal access of state-supported theatres in a contemporary postcolonial, post-apartheid South African context. Their alliance is reinforced in that although "Coloured" and "Indian" respondents gave recognition to their national identity or their mixed-race identity and experiences, they identified themselves primarily as black. These nuanced descriptions of their blackness highlight the material differences between "black" cultures which are acknowledged within a postcolonial feminist framework (Mohanty, 1984). Furthermore, in determining their respective identities, these women position themselves as historically subaltern agents (Spivak, 1994).

In South Africa's apartheid history, "Coloureds" and "Indians" were located within the ruling white minority and it was the black African majority who bore the brunt of apartheid oppression. While "Coloured" and "Indian" respondents do not feign equality with the black African population group, but instead describe the nuances of their diverse experiences of

blackness, as well as acknowledge their privilege in relation to black Africans, they mainly identify as black. This becomes both a resisting of historical, divisive racial categories and a forging of alliances between Coloured, African and Indian women directors. In regarding these respondents as a collective of black women comprising three distinct racial groupings, their under-representation in state-supported theatres is glaring.

Experience and accolades do not necessarily ensure seamless encounters

Aspects such as accolades and previous theatre directing work signifies a theatre practitioner who is typically developed and equipped in the skills and experience of theatre directing – some to a point of receiving awards in recognition of theatrical excellence. The results however suggest that these factors do not seem to necessarily pave a way for a smooth navigation of state-supported theatres by black women directors. This finding is consistent with the most current literature about the paucity of black women directors. In her chapter in which she profiles three black women professional theatre directors, Lekalake (2013) highlights that training, experience and awards do not automatically support the meaningful and unstrained participation of black women directors in state-supported theatres in a current context.

An unexpected result is that among the different reasons cited by the respondents to help explain the marginalisation of black women, the idea that state-supported theatres may not necessarily consider works by this group of practitioners as commercially viable was not explicitly indicated. Recent literature alludes to this connection (Lekalake, 2013). However, most respondents did acknowledge that productions which typically feature on the stages of state-supported theatres include “international” and “Eurocentric” shows (usually musicals with international titles), Afrikaans-sponsored productions, works by Artistic Directors (black men were mentioned) who are regarded as “big names” and so would “ensure that people come” and finally, plays that are “cheap enough to do”, “keep the doors open” and put “bums on seats”. These productions are deemed financially feasible and usually attached to black men, white men or white women directors.

Relationship between longevity in state-supported theatres and nature of experiences

Another major finding from the data is that except for the two older-generation respondents, a sense of struggling in state-supported theatres seems to largely define the collective theatre directing experiences of most of the black women that were interviewed. Insights revealed that as much as the discussants accessed these theatres within these 20 years, they have encountered various challenges over this period, whether in continued access to these spaces, or in their

experiences while participating on the inside. Difficulties cited include small budgets, flawed mentorship processes, overt discrimination based on race, gender and physical disability, being generally overlooked for awards, and artistic leaders and theatres with limited confidence in the directing abilities of black women. The results reveal a correlation between the nature of experiences cited by respondents and their longevity in the professional theatre industry. This suggests that state-supported theatres tend to value only those veteran black women who have demonstrated the commercial viability of their work over an extended period. By extension, this conveys a general mistrust and lack of confidence on the part of these cultural institutions in younger black women directors (in the case of this study, these are those that began directing professionally after 1994). The two older-generation women – in their 60s and 70s respectively – alluded to negative directing experiences not from the contemporary period under exploration, but during apartheid, in their fledgling years as theatre practitioners. In their overall directing experiences during the 20-year period, the two women have been sought after by state-supported institutions. This suggests that in such cases, these theatres willingly take up the responsibility to accommodate these practitioners, with the intention to offer a pleasant experience of the institution. On the other hand, the remainder of black women directors – in their 30s and 40s – narrated myriad negative encounters.

The overarching implication is that unless a black woman has had an enduring professional theatre directing career spanning decades, this group of practitioners must generally work exponentially harder than their counterparts in order to be recognised in state-supported theatres. This idea echoes Michele Wallace's argument in her classic book, *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman* (1979). In this work, Wallace argues that the Superwoman trope has imposed notable damage on black women. Although seemingly an accolade for black women and a symbol of their resilience, this trope in fact disenfranchises black women and drives them to overwork and exhaustion, in the face of unrelenting racist and patriarchal demands. In racist, patriarchal systems, the Superwoman trope places value on black women only when they are strong, productive and of use to others. As the most disenfranchised of any society, black women are perpetually subjected to having to prove their capabilities, knowledge and skills. By societal norms, success for black women is typically harder to attain in relation to their black men, white women and white men counterparts. This fosters the mentality that a black woman must be grateful for a seat at the table, and emphasises this group's erasure through the oppressive systems of racism and sexism. In addition, a younger generation practitioner like Lesedi Job – who was cited by most respondents as successful – could on the

one hand be recognised as exceptional and exceedingly industrious, or on the other hand, acknowledged as the single, lauded black woman director, whose visibility and achievements give a false impression of transformation, whether substantive or otherwise.

Located at the margins in state-supported theatres and independent spaces

Results further indicate that the under-representation of black women directors in state-supported theatres is because some directors elect to showcase their work in independent spaces – this was the case with half of the respondents. Through fear of financial lack, one discussant has left theatre directing altogether. While two interviewees have established independent spaces as a direct result of prolonged exclusion and lack of support from state-supported spaces, others choose popular platforms of entertainment, be it television or film, as well as directing plays in fringe spaces or at theatres in casinos and malls to support the commercial viability of work and sustainability of the artist.

As a result of the various challenges encountered in state-supported theatres over the 20 years under examination, some discussants have chosen to exit these state-supported spaces. While directors who target fringe theatres in malls and casinos have added financial security – as there is no reliance on government subsidies, with significant costs such as marketing being facilitated through big-budget advertising handled by the entertainment company – those directors who establish alternative spaces face a significant challenge against a lack of both state support and investment. Starting an independent space demonstrates agency, yet remains a particularly risky initiative. Against a usually unstable sector that is predominantly supported by ever-dwindling arts funding, as well as marred by embezzlement of funds, and where a substantial portion goes towards maintenance of infrastructure and staffing rather than artistic productions, the sustainability of state-supported theatres is indeterminate. If in their struggle to survive, these national, mainstream, key spaces largely exclude black women directors, it is unlikely that this group of practitioners would gain recognition and government support operating from peripheral spaces. This ultimately denotes that black women directors mostly do not have a space – be it mainstream or alternative – in which their work is visible and sustainability supported.

The departure of black women directors from state-supported theatres – whether in pursuit of alternative, financially feasible platforms, or to establish their own spaces, implies that their marginalisation is an issue that they are responsible for addressing and solving. In leaving these mainstream spaces, the imperative to address this discrepancy as systemic or institutional is

weakened. At the same time, these practitioners must make their livelihoods, which state-supported theatres evidently disenable.

Black women directors explore topical and important themes

A further finding across the three theatres during the 20 years under investigation is that black women directors have explored daring, controversial and relevant subject matter. Productions which have explored class, sexuality, religion, spirituality, war and crimes have often centered black women and their experiences.

In choosing to shape and tell stories that not only deal with thought-provoking themes, but also which deliberately center the most disenfranchised identity historically, black women directors are actively disrupting historical and indeed continuing institutional cultures and norms at state-funded theatres.

Implications of Findings

Measures which should arguably make space for black women practitioners to access and participate in the professional state-supported space – whether formal education and training, experience or awards – seem to prove inadequate. The resistance to giving space to black women directors in such theatres locates these platforms as closed to this group of practitioners. The marginal location of black women directors along the pursuit of commercially viable productions by state-supported theatres suggests that this group of artists is predominantly considered as not having the capability to direct work that will draw in audiences to the extent that patronage proves profitable. The substantial neglect of stories shaped by black women directors in state-supported theatres has three major implications:

1. Experiences and vantage points – Professional theatre would be devoid of the perspectives of black women and narratives of black women's experiences. The unique voices and experiences of black women would be peripheral and so the theatre landscape would not be enriched by this group's artistic vision which would have been informed by their individual and collective experiences and vantage points. The marked absence of the unique artistic and directorial input and perspectives of a large segment of the national population means that audiences are mainly exposed to artistic direction and aesthetic norms shaped by the vantage points of certain dominant groups. Alice Walker poignantly captures the necessity of valuing the artistic creativity also of black people: "What is needed in the articulation of art, or life, is the larger perspective. Connections made, or at least attempted, where none existed before, the straining to

encompass in one's glance at the varied world the common thread, the unifying theme through immense diversity" (Walker, 1990: 335). Black women's theatre directing, creativity and knowledge generally, has overall relevance and is important for all. In subduing these narratives, not only are black women directors disempowered, but the theatre landscape characterises the historical status quo.

2. Legacy – The under-representation of black women theatre directors could likely harm the legacy of black women as theatre directors. Future generations of arts practitioners would not have enough examples that would illustrate directing as an aspect of professional theatre practice that was accessible even to a significant number of black women.
3. Political imperatives – The cultural and creative industries are positioned as a tool in addressing the three-pronged governmental objectives of creating employment, alleviating poverty and dismantling inequality. Black women directors' distinctly peripheral location in government-supported cultural institutions would indicate that they are excluded as beneficiaries or participants of this national imperative.

State-supported Theatres: Artscape, Market, Playhouse

Black women directors least across geographies and categories

The first major finding is that while there are variances in terms of most represented groups across the Playhouse, Market and Artscape, black women directors have consistently remained the most under-represented group across all three theatres. This under-representation is established through their positionality across these categories: women's festivals, largest venue and theatre season.

The minor representation of black women directors across the three cultural institutions further suggests that geographical location is not a factor which determines or impacts on the extent of participation of this group of practitioners. Their negligible location across state-supported theatres in South Africa's major metropolitan areas points towards flawed policy imperatives and institutional processes that do not mediate the adequate access for the sample population. In addition, the few slots that this group of practitioners has occupied (considering available information) across various categories is problematic. Women's festivals, by design, showcase the narratives and experiences of women and as such, should have women – black and white – as a significant presence. The largest venue speaks directly to seating capacity. It follows that the larger the venue, the greater the patronage that is anticipated. Lastly, since a theatre season

refers to the length of a production, longer runs – which generally occur over the festive season – are deemed particularly commercially viable.

Scarcity of black women directors and their productions

White men, white women and black men have not only directed the most productions across the three theatres, but it is also these groups which comprise directors who have showcased works on multiple occasions at the same theatre. Individual black women either rarely return in their role as directors, or in instances where they feature repeatedly in a theatre, it is only negligibly in relation to their black male, white female and white male counterparts.

The evident trend across the three theatres is that there has over the last 20 years been a marginal increase of black women directors in each 5-year interval. Notably, the last interval (2014-2018) has seen the most number of black women participating in all three institutions. This could be due to a number of reasons, including perhaps, and hopefully, some degree of effort by each of these institutions towards intentionally including black women directors. This increased representation encourages other black women to pursue this career when they see themselves represented in others. The sharpest increase in the representation of black women was at Artscape during this same interval (2014-2018), where the number of directors doubled that of the previous interval. This seems to coincide with the period of the sole creative directorship of Mandla Mbothwe, whose vision may have been to actively include black women stage directors.

In terms of total percentages of directors that featured at the three institutions over the entire 20-year period, black women made up 14% of total directors at Playhouse, 10% of total directors at the Market and 9% of all directors at Artscape. The percentages of total productions were only marginally less per corresponding theatre, with black women accounting for 13% of all productions featured at the Playhouse, 9% of all productions at the Market and only 7% of productions showcased at Artscape. These percentages might immediately give the impression that conclusions can be drawn regarding how these regions impact numbers. However, considering gaps in data, this is not feasible, except in the case of Johannesburg's Market Theatre. While both Durban's Playhouse and Artscape in Cape Town have 23% of productions that are unaccounted for, Market Theatre only has 2% of unspecified productions. These are productions with missing data regarding the race and gender of directors. Definitive conclusions regarding the relationship between region and numbers can therefore only be

justifiable in the case of Market Theatre because the data is reliable. As such, comparisons cannot be made between data that has distinctly different degrees of reliability.

The ongoing dominance of black men, white men and white women directors on mainstream theatre stages - whether in sheer numbers of directors or through multiple directing opportunities being given to the same individual directors - indicates a very skewed contemporary theatre landscape which reflects the inequalities of the bygone era.

Archives and reports do not reflect paucity of black women directors

A second finding is archival material which is incomprehensive to varying degrees. Only the Market Theatre production records are organised and held by an external institution in digitised format. As such, the Market yielded significantly less unspecified productions. Material for the Playhouse and Artscape is housed by each respective institution, in no particular order. A related major result was the inconsistencies of annual reports – not only were there gaps in information in some institution's reports, some had no reports at all.

Incomprehensive or unsystematic archives essentially mean that some production information cannot be accounted for, especially with regards to the director attached to a production. Similarly, gaps in annual reporting do not represent accurately the theatre's overall activities from the preceding year.

Alongside the overarching ideal of transformation, the implication of inconsistent archiving is greater for black directors. In this vein, Morris (2006) observes that the work of white South African theatre directors is much better archived than that of their black counterparts. Similarly, gaps in annual reports mean that key information about productions featured in each theatre is not readily available, which consequently undermines the accuracy of research work that requires this data. Pearce (1998) made reference to the generally poor documentation of productions in the country. More than 20 years later, this remains an ongoing issue. The establishment of bodies like SACO while encouraging, do not seem to be improving the situation.

Incompatible leadership structures hinder black women directors

A further finding is the different leadership structures in each cultural institution: Artscape has a CEO and has since discontinued the position of Creative Manager which was filled for the last time from 2014 until 2016; the Playhouse has an individual in the dual role of CEO and Artistic Director; while the roles of CEO and Artistic Director are distinct, and occupied by two individuals at Market Theatre. With reference to the two institutional leaders whose

responses are included in this study, explanations cited on the representation of black women stage directors seem to be informed by the diverse organisation of management in each theatre.

Although Artscape primarily engages a process of jointly selecting shows comprising the artistic calendar, the CEO is the final decision-making authority on curation. Based on engagement with Artscape's CEO, the visibility of black women stage directors is overlooked, while emphasis is instead on the inclusion of black women as relates to the staffing component of the theatre. This focus seems to derive from executive roles and responsibilities which primarily entail keeping the institution afloat, particularly in the context of scarce government subsidies for artistic productions. The panel specialists may also maintain partiality in selection of works that are eventually approved by the CEO. At the Playhouse, the CEO is also the Artistic Director who makes the final selection of shows to be featured in the theatre. Within this dual position, the Playhouse institutional leader is within close proximity to both the financial and artistic aspects of the theatre, which she has to address simultaneously. Similarly, the pressure towards financially viable productions given the dire funding landscape means returning to established directors who are usually black men, white men and white women. In terms of the Market Theatre, while insights from the Artistic Director reveal a clear and deliberate foregrounding of artistic objectives and choices that shape the theatrical programmes, his responses revealed that a substantial amount of time is spent fundraising and sitting in boardroom meetings. The fact that few black women directors have accessed this theatre similarly suggests that the pressing need to support the sustainability of the institution surpasses the need for the equitable representation of artists.

Black women directors are rarely mentors

A further major finding is that in their entry into the three theatres, three discussants were mentored by white men, one by a black man and another by a black woman. Five respondents did not receive any mentorship at all. One discussant was mentored by approaching directors who could assist in various aspects of the production, while another practitioner was mentored by a white female who was her educator at high school. From the seven directors that had mentorship opportunities, only two were through programmes at state-supported institutions.

In cases where discussants have been mentored, it has scarcely been by fellow black women. Those who have occupied the role of mentor have mostly been white men and white women, with a single instance of a black woman mentoring another. Much of the mentorship that has been engaged by respondents was through self-initiated efforts. Furthermore, the absence of

black women directors conveys the idea this group does not have the credibility or expertise to lead a process of training and capacity building.

Training seems to not be a priority

A final major finding is that training has not been accessible to a majority of the sample population. Theatre training may include internships, practical job shadowing or master classes in stage directing. Not only limited to theatre directing, this training may also take the form of comprehensive programmes structured around developing a range of skills necessary for the professional theatre industry, such as the technical, financial and marketing aspects of theatre production. Two respondents were exposed to training through an intensive development programme for selected women directors, one had the opportunity to direct her play at Grahamstown, another worked as an actress in an industrial theatre company, gaining significant insight into the directing aspect of the arts, and one received training as part of a theatre company of collaborative theatre-making. Seven interviewees received no training.

The five directors who had the opportunity to access training did so through various means. Only two respondents mentioned a festival produced by a state-funded theatre as the site in which their training took place. Like mentorship, training seems to primarily occur on the basis of the individual's resourcefulness.

Tokenism and its repercussions

Both institutional leaders express distaste for tokenism. However, this damaging practice seems to be at work in both theatres, given that very few black women have accessed these spaces over a 20-year period, in relation to their black male, white male and white female counterparts.

Tokenism in practice removes the responsibility from cultural institutions for ensuring that considerable opportunities are made available for black women directors, alongside their black male, white male and white female counterparts. The notion of tokenism is also damaging for black women directors in view of the lack of training, mentoring and funding opportunities to ensure equitable access; where instead of addressing these issues, a successful black woman director becomes the "exceptional" representative. This is aligned with the vexed issues of "quality" and "standards". For instance, in rejecting tokenism in the sense of selecting works by black artists only on merit and "quality", the question arises, quality by whose definition? Consequently, if the norm at these state-funded theatres is that productions directed by black women consistently do not fit the Artistic Director's subjective criteria of quality and standards,

the transformation ethos is eroded. This is in the same way that a biased assessment of merit leads to some practitioners receiving accolades for their artistic work, while others whose work might be deemed equally meritorious, do not.

Implications of Findings

The under-representation of black women directors in the three theatres implies the exclusion of this group of practitioners from theatre institutions in key geographical areas. This suggests that black women directors are generally overlooked and not given opportunities to rightfully practice their craft, as espoused by the 1996 White Paper. This fundamentally undermines the transformation of publicly-funded institutions as cited in the original policy document. In addition, the negligible participation of black women stage directors from women's arts festivals renders narratives from this group insignificant. Further, the absence of these theatre-makers from venues with the greatest seating capacity, as well as over longer seasons, including the festive period, suggests that management of state-supported theatres do not have confidence that productions helmed by black women could support the objective of commercial feasibility and profitability from bums on seats.

In addition, within the context of incomplete and incomprehensive archives and annual reports, access for black women directors cannot be accurately ascertained. The unintended consequence of discrepancies in archival records is that cultural institutions have no way by which to assess whether their processes mediate the inclusion of this group of artists, and moreover, whether these processes would consequently facilitate proper transformation of these theatres.

The absence of an artistic director whose single responsibility is the curation of programming is likely an additional impediment in the meaningful contribution of black women stage directors. The nonexistence of a sole artistic director means that it is unlikely that an important feature such as significant transformation would be given due regard, especially given the burden of enabling sustainability. While the Market Theatre is the only institution with an Artistic Director who in theory solely fulfils this role, the fundraising responsibilities involved in this position forces them to deviate from the primary task of artistic direction and programming. Responsibilities divided between both the financial and artistic aspects could undermine making concerted efforts towards representativity of practitioners and so ultimately, impede transformation.

Not only do the skewed race and gender demographics which characterise the mentorship process reinforce black women's peripheral positionality at publicly-funded theatres, but state-supported institutions need to generally prioritise training as an essential component of capacity building. This is particularly important for emerging artists who require assistance in order to effectively develop their skill. In the absence of institutionally-run training programmes, the playing field of professional theatre is not levelled. As such, historically marginalised practitioners – especially black women – are not adequately supported in the necessary skills development and training.

Considering the percentages in both production output and in the number of individual directors that have accessed the three theatre spaces in the last 20 years, much will have to shift by way of policy and institutional processes, in order for black women directors to meaningfully practice their craft on an equitable playing field, especially in a democratic context.

Policy

"Black women" practitioners excluded from policy frameworks

A major finding in the 1996 White Paper is that the terms "black women" (and indeed all race and gender categories) and "disabilities" do not appear. In its framework, the White Paper cites groups that will be prioritised in terms of redress and equal participation, namely "black people" and "black artists" in the currently applicable 1996 version. In subsequent policy revisions, "black people", "black practitioners" and "previously disadvantaged and marginalised communities and individuals" such as "women, persons with disabilities and youth", are stipulated categories. This implies that black women or black women with disabilities for example are not specifically and overtly catered for in the central policy objectives of redress and equal participation.

The phrase "previously disadvantaged and marginalised communities and individuals" is much too broad and vague. In the context of the transformation imperative embedded within cultural policy, the terms "black artists", "black people" and "black practitioners" neglect to highlight the unique needs of black women practitioners, as well as black women practitioners with, for example, disabilities. The various ways in which the sample population has accessed state-supported theatres between 1999 and 2018 underscores the importance of redressing past inequalities experienced most by this group, through an intersectional lens. In terms of intersectionality – the concept deriving from Black Feminist theory – a substantial portion of women directors should have had their initial entrance into these theatres through programmes

specifically aimed at giving their work a platform, as the group historically subjugated through the interlocking nature of systems of oppression, including race, gender and in some instances, physical disability (hooks, 1986; Crenshaw, 1989; Hill Collins, 2000). The multiple avenues through which the 12 discussants initially accessed state-supported theatres over the 20 years under examination highlights that their participation in these spaces seems to be a hit-or-miss situation.

Financial feasibility overrides transformation and equality

A further finding is that while the initial White Paper of 1996 predominantly refers to arts, culture and heritage, the various iterations primarily describe the sector as the cultural and creative industries.

Emphasis on the cultural and creative industries suggests that arts, culture and heritage activities are organised along the lines of profitability. This is especially the case for activities within publicly-funded institutions like Artscape, the Playhouse and Market. Through the parlance of cultural and creative industries, commercial viability is prioritised above all other aspects, seemingly including transformation. This focus undermines the ideals espoused in the 1996 White Paper, including equality, participation of everyone in the sector and transformation.

Implications of Findings

Outside of definitions in cultural policy which elucidate precisely the unique strategies and programmes targeting specific historically marginalised groups and communities, the transformation imperative is undermined. This will negatively impact the meaningful participation of black women theatre directors in state-supported theatres.

Furthermore, a market-driven focus on arts, culture and heritage can subsume the transformation objective. The pursuit of commercially viable artistic activities means that cultural institutions will likely predominantly feature productions directed by black men, white men and white women – the group of practitioners who have historically accessed these spaces. While artistic directors would place a greater sense of credibility on these artists, they would likely be disinclined to showcasing works directed by black women stage directors.

Final Remarks

The major findings in this study suggest that black women directors face unique challenges in DAC-funded cultural institutions. Although this study examined the location of black women

directors in three of South Africa's six state-funded cultural institutions, the researcher maintains that similar results would likely be yielded from investigating practices at the other three theatres. Black women navigate historically white and male-dominated, government-subsidised spaces, as the previously most subjugated group, in a patriarchal order undergirded by political influence. The complexity of black women directors' positionality in state-supported theatres fundamentally undermines the function of education, training, experience and awards in facilitating their significant access and meaningful participation. Considering the haphazard nature of black women directors' entrance into these theatres, and in the absence of directing opportunities targeted at this group, the artistic abilities of black women directors are further undermined and overlooked. Furthermore, a lack of policy strategies that explicitly mediate the inclusion of black women directors reinforces the 1996 White Paper's description of state-supported institutions' transformation as "putative" (DACST, 1996: n.p.). For this study to yield such results more than 20 years into democracy is problematic, worrying, and even tragic, as it points towards an untransformed sector in which the marginal location of black women does not appear to have significantly shifted.

Section 2: Recommendations

Recommendations for practice

Policy

Cultural policy needs to be explicit in its definition of "previously marginalised groups: youth, women and black persons". Each one of these distinct categories requires a unique strategic approach, which needs to be overtly articulated, otherwise transformation remains an unachievable, theoretical ideal. Furthermore, the nuances within these respective categories must be considered, since the needs of "women" and "black persons", differ markedly from strategies that "black women" or "black women with disabilities", for example, would require. As the most historically marginalised group, black women must be explicitly inserted into the framework of cultural policy. As a decisive measure in redressing historical inequalities, these artists must be visible as prime beneficiaries of government support. Policy should have clear, unambiguous directives for state-supported institutions. In line with transformation ideals espoused by government in especially the initial White Paper of 1996, policy could set out quotas in terms of black women artists that must have access to these theatres across the various genres of work.

- Funding of black women directors must be a national imperative

> *Like any environment, the environment won't shift unless it's a strategic imperative.* (Yolandi Michaels, interview, 2019).

Two respondents stressed that the DAC needs to set aside in its budget substantial funding earmarked for supporting productions by black women theatre-makers. They highlighted that unless there is a strategic objective established at national level that is aimed towards the significant inclusion of black women directors, the environment of state-supported theatres will remain unchanged.

Finally, at a broader level, if apartheid was an ideological machination, as stated earlier in the thesis, it suggests that the repressive system was firmly founded and perpetuated upon the principal belief that whites were inherently superior to blacks. All aspects of society, including the cultural policy frameworks that governed arts activities and funding processes at former PACs, were shaped by and operated within this exclusionary, racist agenda. In a post-apartheid democratic landscape, there appears to be an equally pervasive and exclusionary ideology at play, which continues to produce a national landscape of profound disparities along the lines of race, gender and class, among other factors. The situation of black women directors in the three theatres over a period of two decades is an example which illustrates this continuing inequality.

If policy framework is to truly benefit previously disadvantaged people - of which black women are a part - it begins with a fundamental ideological shift. Societal structures must be reorganised to reflect ideals that recognise the significant contributions of all peoples, regardless of race, gender, class or any other variable of difference. This mindset would in turn inform all spheres of society, including the arts, culture and heritage sector. Since cultural policy is a document of the national government, its impact is primarily determined by the collective beliefs of society's political actors. Until this necessary ideological change occurs among those who have political power, there will be little to no urgency in ensuring that cultural policy framework is as overtly inclusive as possible. Consequently, cultural policy will remain a theoretical picture of redress, equality and transformation.

State-supported theatres

- Institutional processes must enable equal access and participation

  > *The bigger picture is, these structures need to give everyone a fair chance* (Zinzi Princess Mhlongo, interview, 2019).

It was suggested that institutional structures are flawed in that they seem to recycle directors, thereby excluding many others. It was proposed that a system of rotation could be applied in which directors apply to have their work feature in a state-supported theatre. After the theatre has selected the directors who could possibly feature over a specific period, the general public could then access the shortlist and be the ultimate decision-makers as to the shows that should be showcased during that period. The general public would not be confined to the databases of these spaces, as this might not yield the desired result of "opening up" these spaces. It would instead include all interested arts and culture stakeholders. In effecting such a process, not only do audiences have agency in terms of the productions they view, but through rotation, a diversity of directors have opportunity to access state-supported theatres. In addition, the number of directors that would access these theatres in this process of rotation would be aligned to the quotas outlined in cultural policy frameworks.

- More black women directors should be featured in seasons, and commissioned

  [s]o they play a hyper-visibility game in Women's Month, right, where we are only good for festivals really, not necessarily for a season. We are good for 16 Days of Activism[26] *as well, but not for a season* (Warona Seane, interview, 2019).

While some respondents highlighted the need for state-supported theatres to recognise black women directors beyond the extreme visibility ascribed to this group during Women's Month – doing so by giving these practitioners a season – others suggested that these theatres should create opportunities where only black women directors are invited to pitch for a production. The director with a successful presentation would subsequently be commissioned to develop the concept into a fully-fledged production that would feature at the state-supported theatre stage. Considering the recommendation of a system of rotation, all noteworthy concepts could be developed and staged as productions over time.

- Training and mentorship must be holistic, structured and inclusive

  Who are they using as mentors? Are these mentors teaching them how to be commercially viable? (Geraldine Naidoo, interview, 2019).

[26] Fully titled '16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children', this global campaign is observed annually from 25 November to 10 December, with the aim to oppose violence and abuse against women and children, as well as create awareness of this issue.

A few respondents made propositions around mentorship programmes. While some emphasised the need for training in the financial aspect of professional theatre practice, so as to support both the viability of productions and sustainability of artists, one respondent maintained that training programmes must follow a clear trajectory: mentorship should be followed by paid internship opportunities, which would then be followed by assisting those who have completed these mentorship programmes to find employment. Additional recommendations on mentorship included nuanced and inclusive mentorship programmes, where aspirant black women directors would have the opportunity to be mentored, while established black women directors would feature significantly as director mentors. Another proposition that could further streamline the mentorship process could be clearly structured contracts specifying rules of engagement for both mentees and mentors.

- Co-operation is necessary between state-supported theatres and independent performance spaces

  Government don't even look at our side. They know we exist, but they don't even care (Ntshieng Mokgoro, interview, 2019).

One respondent's recommendation was that state-supported theatres adopt independent spaces not only to showcase developmental work, but also to feature a theatrical season in cases where the state-supported artistic programme is at capacity. She continued to suggest that five or six plays could each receive a small government subsidy to support a two-week run at the independent space, where the budget could be administered by the DAC.

In addition to these recommendations and in support of practitioners who have elected to establish independent venues, state-supported theatres could adopt the space/s in their respective city and allocate part of their institutional operations budget to the artistic activities of these independent spaces. Further, fieldworkers from the state-supported theatres could visit these independent venues to identify productions that would then be considered for a season at the parent theatre. Each state-supported theatre could further evaluate its audience development strategy to ensure that synergies exist between its own audiences and those that typically patronise its adopted independent space/s.

- A key recommendation for state-supported theatres is for comprehensive archival material to be stored in a digitised format, to facilitate ease of access. Similarly, these institutions should consistently present uniform and adequately detailed annual reports

each year. As the starting point of determining practitioners that have accessed these spaces, this information would prove useful.

- A further proposition relates to organisation of leadership. The occupancy of the positions of CEO and Artistic Director by an individual (Playhouse), the absence of a designated Artistic Director (Artscape), or an Artistic Director whose responsibilities are increasingly shifting towards financial concerns (Market), depict leadership structures in which the role of curation and artistic programming is not the singular concern. While there should certainly be collaboration between the executive and creative roles for the purpose of unified institutional processes, these distinct roles should ideally be performed by two individuals – or individuals with a knowledge and stake in both roles.

Practitioners

This study's respondents offered several recommendations for ways in which black women directors can actively market their work to the power holders at state-supported theatres. While one respondent offered a politically astute critique of why black women should be expected to undertake additional steps that are not required for black men, white men and white women directors, another maintained that black women directors have consistently made efforts to access state-supported theatres, to no avail. Considering financial concerns and life's responsibilities, including motherhood, one respondent posited that black women's departure from theatre directing may not necessarily be an issue of access, but simply the decision for a different life. Another respondent simply stated that one must position oneself to be visible. Some discussants offered more specific recommendations.

- Black women directors should confront state-supported institutions

  Currently, the only thing is that I'm black and woman. And come with the facts. When last did you do this? Let me give you an opportunity to rise. You need this. You need me. I think right now that's the only card. We'll talk different things later (Angie Lekota, interview, 2019).

One respondent suggested that these practitioners should challenge state-supported theatres with the affirmative action card – whereby black women directors are given access based primarily on race. This was advocated as the determining factor in black women's access of

these spaces. This interviewee suggested that this exists as the only option for facilitating participation of black women stage directors.

- Black women should jointly approach state-supported theatres

  If you go in randomly and you state your case and someone else comes in randomly and states their case, it's not gonna be as powerful as a collective (Shelley Barry, interview, 2019).

Rather than black women directors approaching state-supported theatres as individuals, they could do so as a united front with a collective voice. A respondent proposed that after several failed attempts by a collective of theatre-makers to meet with the leadership of a state theatre, the group could proceed onto social media platforms as a means of outcry against the cultural institution. This discussant opines that lobbying would be an effective tool in drawing attention to cultural institutions that uphold discriminatory practices.

- Enhance marketing through celebrities and brands

  You've almost got to like name-drop (Krijay Govender, interview, 2019).

It was suggested that associating one's production with famous personalities and known brands could enhance its visibility and marketability to the relevant stakeholders. The commercial viability of a production seems to underpin this proposed strategy, since prominent persons and brands would be the main drawcard, rather than the director attached to a work.

- Cooperation is essential between young black women directors and their seasoned counterparts

  We need to get to a point where we can all come together and work (Fatima Dike, interview, 2019).

Established black women directors and their younger counterparts could be involved in mentorship relationships that are not necessarily facilitated by state-supported institutions. This recommendation speaks to the willingness of both parties to engage in a process of guidance on the one hand and being teachable on the other.

- Black women directors can showcase on technological platforms

  You can do a shorter version of your play and go and showcase it (Gcina Mhlophe, interview, 2019).

It was suggested that creating either a short version of the production in the form of a storyboard, or alternatively, video-recording a rehearsal for showcasing to relevant stakeholders, could be beneficial for displaying the capabilities of the director. This director emphasised that practitioners can in this way maximise the advantages of technological advancements in this day and age.

Concluding Considerations

Examining these recommendations broadly, it is evident that each one requires the cooperation of state-supported theatres. The efforts made by black women stage directors in accessing these cultural institutions are contingent upon these theatres acknowledging the paucity of this group of practitioners and lobbying for their significant inclusion and participation with the DAC, who would subsequently insert these suggestions in cultural policy.

Essentially, if problems at policy and institutional level are addressed and remedied, black women directors would approach initiatives in marketing their work in a supportive, non-discriminatory and fair environment. Since barriers would be broken down in cultural policy and at state-funded theatres, the efforts of this group of practitioners would prove meaningful. Their stories would have equal space alongside those of their black male, white male and white female counterparts. The uniqueness of black women's voices would be safeguarded and black women directors ascribed visibility in a contemporary South African theatre context. Theorising the subaltern, Gayatri Spivak observes that subalternity must not only pose the question "who should speak", but more crucially, "who will listen?" (Spivak, 1990: 59). If cultural policy and state-funded theatres would amend their frameworks and processes respectively, to be equally accommodating of black women directors as to their black men, white men and white women counterparts, then the possibility emerges for the efforts made by this group of practitioners to prove successful.

Conclusion

Between the overarching transformation agenda which informs cultural policy and the undeniably commercial pursuits of under-funded state-supported institutions, black women are in a bind. The narrated experiences of the 12 respondents underscore myriad problems that this group of practitioners has encountered over the two decades in focus. Although it has been over 25 years since black individuals could freely participate across all spheres of society – including professional theatre practice at publicly-funded cultural institutions – the contributions of black women stage directors have remained distinctly low at the Playhouse,

Market and Artscape. This thesis therefore aimed to explore the factors causing this paucity, using a methodology that would purposely centre the narratives of black women who have directed at least one production in one of these three theatres. Elevating the voices of these directors becomes a political act, in that through the methodology of narrative inquiry black women are shifted away from the utmost peripheral location to which they were historically assigned – a space characterised by reticence and invisibility. The discussants offered candid accounts of their respective experiences of state-supported theatres, including negative encounters. Collectively, they are positioned as Spivak's subaltern agents, who, although located as the most previously subjugated subjects on the margins of South African society, speak for themselves and do so on their own terms.

In the 1996 White Paper, the DACST highlighted publicly-funded institutions, including the former Performing Arts Councils, as a principal area in need of significant redress. The cultural arm of government proceeded to outline the various measures that would indicate that the work of transforming these institutions had indeed begun. Laudable as this goal is, it remains, many years later, one that is yet to be achieved. In the absence of clear policy objectives that mediate the meaningful participation of black women, transformation is undercut. In addition, the DAC as the current arm of cultural matters should hold accountable the institutions it financially supports. To ensure that transformation of its institutions is carried out effectively, a starting point could be for the DAC to mandate its agencies to submit every financial year the numbers of directors according to race and gender. These figures would indicate practitioners who have not only accessed the respective performance venues in each state-supported theatre, but also those that have been tangibly supported by each institution through training programmes, opportunities for being mentored as well as mentoring and funding of artistic productions. Without these figures, transformation simply remains a lofty, baseless concept. Armed with these numbers, however, the DAC can begin to construct clear strategic policy imperatives that facilitate transformation rigorously by ensuring equitable access to all practitioners across every sphere of the cultural and creative industries. Moreover, the DAC cannot expect these institutions to continue functioning in a context where significant budgets are allocated for staffing and maintenance of buildings, with barely enough capital to sustain their core function: the mounting of productions. If the work of producing works of artistic quality is insufficiently supported, that will be the demise of our national theatres. Outside of implementing such changes, not only is the ideal of transformation severely weakened but the relationship between state-supported theatres and the DAC exemplifies the metaphor: "He who pays the piper, calls

the tune"; it is thus a mere political project. One of the 12 respondents in this study, Shelley Barry, appositely articulates the implications of the evident idea that to be a black woman director is not enough in the state-supported theatre space, given the gross under-representation of this group:

> *Just 'cause we're here and breathing, should be enough reason to be able to get into the theatre! I think that's another way of excluding people, saying, oh well, you've been excluded all your lives and just because of that, doesn't mean you have to be included now. So in other words, they [are] then inherently carrying on the legacy of apartheid, which largely excluded black women more than black men even, of course. But black women are of the most marginalised people. Black women with disabilities? Don't even talk!*
>
> *For me, that's just not wanting to transform the evil of apartheid. That's like, we don't want to examine this, we don't want to figure this out, we don't want to research it, we don't want to question it, we don't want to question ourselves. Let's not bother ourselves too much about black women wanting to be directors. That's what that says to me. We've got more important fish to fry* (Shelley Barry, interview, 2019).

Barry's words highlight the intersectional reality that characterises black women's oppression – more so, black women like herself, living with disabilities. In disregarding this group of practitioners, these theatres inadvertently perpetuate apartheid hegemony. If the magnitude of black women's subjugation must be explored and understood through the lens of intersectionality, it means that efforts towards redressing these past inequalities must be negotiated through the same multi-axis approach, at the levels of both cultural policy and state-supported cultural institutions.

Recommendations for Future Research

Since this study examined three of South Africa's six state-supported theatres, there is scope for future research to investigate the location of black women directors at the three state-supported theatres that have not been considered in this research: Windybrow Centre for the Arts in Johannesburg, the State Theatre in Pretoria, and the Performing Arts Centre of the Free State (PACOFS) in Bloemfontein.

Secondly, there is opportunity for future research to include engagement with relevant DAC constituents such as Director Generals or Deputy Director Generals, with the aim of establishing how cultural policy is developed. Such a discussion would prove invaluable in

gaining a deeper understanding of government imperatives for the sector. This would in turn shed light on the specific location of black women directors in state-supported theatres, as articulated by cultural policy frameworks. Furthermore, such a discussion could culminate in a policy brief.

Lastly, future research around the location of black women stage directors might include focus groups with the CEOs of state-supported theatres. This exchange would elucidate the financial aspects of running the respective institutions, including allocation of funding and the ways in which sustainability is achieved against the continued and dire shortage of state subsidies for the arts and culture sector.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Questions: Artistic Directors/CEOs

Background

1. As the person at the helm of the institution, what do your responsibilities include?
2. For how long have you occupied the role of institutional leader (Artistic Director/CEO)?
3. What have your career highlights been since occupying this role? (In the case of a dual position, please speak around both roles: CEO and Artistic Director).
4. What challenges do you often encounter in this role (Artistic Director/CEO)? (In the case of a dual position, please speak around both roles: CEO and Artistic Director).
5. How would you define, generally, the mainstream theatre industry?
6. How would you respond to the critique that the same directors feature in mainstream theatre spaces?

Training and Capacity Building

7. What opportunities are available for developing emerging directors?
8. Are there any efforts to recruit the works of previously marginalised groups in particular i.e. Black men and black women? What are some of the processes around this?
9. What factors determine whether a production will feature in this particular space, or not?
10. Could you share around the funding processes that the institution observes?
11. As an institution that commissions works, could you share what the process of commissioning works entails?
12. Are there any other ways that you haven't mentioned, by which a production could feature in this particular space?
13. What is the relationship between government's mandate (as articulated in the Revised White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage – 2013 publication of the Department of Arts and Culture, the National Development Plan 2030), and how this institution functions?
14. What are your views on the representation of black women theatre directors in mainstream institutions?
15. What are the race and gender demographics of directors who have featured in this mainstream institution over the last two decades? (1999–2018)

16. What in your view still needs to be done in order to realise a mainstream theatre sector where there are no race and gender inequalities where directors of productions are concerned?

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent Form (including samples)

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

For research with human participants

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date:

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Ms. Noxolo Matete from the Drama and Performance Studies Department at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

You are being invited to consider participating in a study titled ***She's Seldom Seen Wearing Her Director's Hat Here:*** **interrogating the representation of black women directors in three mainstream theatres in contemporary South Africa**. This study involves research around the visibility of black women directors across three mainstream South African theatres in a contemporary context, namely Artscape Theatre (Cape Town), Market Theatre (Johannesburg) and The Playhouse (Durban). The aim and purpose of this research is to explore the factors that lead to black women directors accessing and working in these spaces. The study is expected to enroll as its participants, black women whose productions have featured at the three theatres between 1999 and 2018. The study will also include as its participants the respective Artistic Directors of the three theatres. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be one in-depth face-to-face interview that is 1.5 to 2 hours in duration. The study is funded by the National Research Foundation.

It is not expected that this study will pose any risks and/or discomforts.

I hope that the study will make an important contribution towards understanding some of the barriers for black women directors and make a contribution towards the archiving of contemporary theatre history. Further to this, I hope that the study will have a significant bearing on relevant policy where the practical location of historically marginalized theatre practitioners in a contemporary context is concerned.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (**approval number HSS/1446/018H).**

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at the following:

Ms. Noxolo Matete
Email: [redacted]
Tel: 031 260 1076
Cell: 0739091860

Alternatively, you may contact the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, at the following contact details:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION
Mr. Premlall Mohun
Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: [redacted]

Participation in this research is voluntary and participants may withdraw participation at any point. In the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation the participants will not incur any negative consequences.

In addition, no costs will be incurred by participants as a result of participation in the study.

All data will be stored in a secure location for a minimum period of 5 years, in arrangement with the supervisor. Thereafter, all computer-stored data will be permanently deleted.

Sample 1:

INFORMED CONSENT (Edit)

I …MARLENE LE ROUX…… (Name of Participant) have been informed about the study entitled ***She's Seldom Seen Wearing Her Director's Hat Here:*** **interrogating the representation of black women directors in three mainstream theatres in contemporary South Africa** by Ms. Noxolo Matete.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without incurring any negative consequences as a result.

I have been informed that I will not incur any costs as a result of my participation in the study.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at the following:

[redacted] (email)
0312601076 (work)
0739091860 (cell)

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview YES

[redacted] 27/11/2018

Signature of Participant

Date

_____ _____

Signature of Witness **Date**

(Where applicable)

_____ _____

Signature of Translator **Date**

(Where applicable)

In its aim to understand the participation of black women directors in three of South Africa's state-supported theatres, this study seeks to elevate the authentic voices of its participants. Use of real names is therefore a way of recognizing and articulating the experiences of black individuals and their navigation of these theatres in a current context. To this end, the participant is requested to forego anonymity. Nothing incriminating or anything that jeopardizes the career/livelihood of the participant will be included in the study. Where participants are doubtful, the researcher will send sections of the thesis draft where participant is quoted, for participant's approval.

I hereby consent to forego anonymity and agree to use of my real name in the final thesis:

[redacted] _____

Signature of Participant Date

Sample 2

I, LISCELLE (SHELLEY) BARRY (Name of Participant) have been informed about the study entitled *She's Seldom Seen Wearing Her Director's Hat Here:* interrogating the **representation of black women directors** in **three mainstream theatres in contemporary South Africa** by Ms. Noxolo Matete.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without incurring any negative consequences as a result.

I have been informed that I will not incur any costs as a result of my participation in the study.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at the following:

[redacted] (email)
0312601076 (work)
0739091860 (cell)

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION
Mr. Premlall Mohun
Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: [redacted]

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview (YES) / NO

[redacted]

Signature of Participant — 21/06/2019 Date

Signature of Witness (Where applicable) — Date

Signature of Translator (Where applicable) — Date

In its aim to understand the participation of black women directors in three of South Africa's state-supported theatres, this study seeks to elevate the authentic voices of its participants. Use of real names is therefore a way of recognizing and articulating the experiences of black individuals and their navigation of these theatres in a current context. To this end, the participant is requested to forego anonymity. In return, the author agrees to retain the integrity of the interviewee's voice, neither misrepresenting the interviewee's words nor taking them out of context. Additionally, nothing defaming, incriminating or threatening to the career/livelihood of the participant will be included in the

[redacted]

Signature of Participant — *9 December 2019* *Date*

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions: Black Women directors

Background

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself (Probe: name, age, biography)
2. Tell me a little bit about the community/communities you grew up in (Probe: geographical location, access to services, access to cultural and recreational activities and resources, exposure to creative industries, aspirations and influences to work in the creative industries)

Education and Training

3. Could you tell me about your educational background? (Probe: subjects, exposure to the creative industries)
4. Could you share about training you may have received to equip you as a director? (Probe: formal qualification i.e. Higher Education, community art centres, NGO interventions, incubation spaces in theatres etc.)
5. When did you decide that you were interested in directing?
6. What made you want to venture into directing?

Life as a Director

7. For how long have you been working as a director?
8. Could you tell me about your directing experience? (Probe: Challenges, triumphs, failures, successes, audiences, support, funding, actors, access to space – rehearsal & performance, geographical location – which geographical areas have you directed in? What has been your experience of each space?)
9. Thinking back on the training you received, do you think you received adequate training? How would you change or improve your education/training if you could?
10. What additional training and/or capacity building do you engage in to improve your practice currently?
11. Do you take up other roles in addition to directing, when working on a production?

Identity, Gender and Practice

12. What influences you as a theatre director? (Probe: mentors, history, contemporary life)
13. How does being a woman affect your directing practice? (Probe: resources, access, opportunities, industry relationships)

14. How does being a black ("person of colour" for Indian and Coloured directors) affect your directing practice? (Probe: resources, access, opportunities, industry relationships)

B. **Follow up questions directed to Indian and Coloured women directors:**

- This study uses "black" as an all-encompassing term, in that it includes Africans, Indians and Coloureds. Do you personally position and identify yourself as black?
- In your experience as a woman director, would you say there are tensions between the race groups: African, Indian and Coloured?
- Do you feel privileged in the context of historically contrived "black" identities (i.e. African, Coloured, Indian)?
- Is there an expectation for work by Indian, Coloured and African directors to feature at particular geographical spaces or in specific theatres?

15. How would you describe your directing approach/style/signature?
16. Are you drawn to any particular themes in terms of the productions you direct? (Probe: history, contemporary, personal narratives, works that challenge contemporary politics)

Accessing Mainstream Theatre Spaces

17. Could you explain what the process entailed for your production to feature in this mainstream theatre space?
18. How many productions have you directed that have featured in a mainstream theatre space (Probe: Playhouse, Market Theatre or Artscape Theatre, State Theatre (Pretoria), Windybrow (JHB), Performing Arts Centre of Free State (Bloem)?
19. How many productions have you directed elsewhere? What has been the difference between working in mainstream theatre spaces and fringe venues?
20. How has your work been received in the mainstream theatre?
21. What is your view about the current mainstream theatre sector? (Probe: challenges, barriers, triumphs etc.)
22. Do you think that mainstream theatres recognize black women directors? Please explain.
23. What can/should mainstream theatres be doing to better accommodate or recruit the works of black women directors?
24. What is your view of the productions that typically constitute mainstream theatres? (Probe: do these productions employ similar subject matter/aesthetics? Do they have the same directors? Are the directors whose works feature usually of the same race and gender? Are there more developmental productions or professional productions, or is it equal?)

25. What can black women directors be doing to market their work to power holders in these spaces?
26. Does age give one a certain legitimacy when it comes to accessing these spaces?
27. What is your perception of the representation of black women directors in mainstream theatres? Are they under-represented? Are they fairly represented?
28. As a black woman director whose production has featured at least once in a mainstream theatre, you are in the inside, as it were. In your opinion, what factors are currently keeping aspirant black women directors out of such spaces?

Legacy

29. Please name any accolades you may have received in your work as a director? (Probe: do you feel theatre directors in general get more recognition after being awarded an accolade? Do you think black women theatre directors are awarded adequately for their production work?)
30. How would you like to be remembered as a black South African woman director? (Probe: Themes of your works? Stage aesthetics of your work?)

APPENDIX D

Ethical Clearance Letter

1 October 2018

Mrs. Noxolo Matete 205515044
School of Arts
Howard College Campus

Dear Mrs.Matete

Protocol reference number: HSS/1446/0lSH
Project title: She Is seldom seen wearing her director's hat here: interrogating the under-representation of black women directors In **three mainstream theatres in contemporary South Africa**

Full Approval - Expedited Application
In response to your application received 17 August 2018, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL.**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.....
Professor Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

cc Supervisior: Dr Alude MahaIi
cc. Academic Leader Research: Professor JK Zeller
cc. School Administrator: Mr Christopher Eley

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Westville Campus, Govan Mbekl Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 **Facsimile:** +27 (0) 31 260 4609 **Email:** [redacted] /

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APPENDIX E

Gatekeeper Letters

ARTSCAPE

31st July 2018

Ms. Noxolo Matete (PhD candidate)
E-mail: [redacted]
Department of Drama and Performance Studies
School of Arts
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Durban 4041
Supervisor: Dr. Alude Mahali
Email: [redacted]

Dear Ms. Matete

RE: ACCESS TO THE ARTSCAPE THEATRE FOR RESEARCH STUDY ON REPRESENTATION OF BLACK WOMEN THEATRE DIRECTORS IN SELECTED MAINSTREAM THEATRES

Thank you very much for inquiring for permission to research the representation of black women theatre directors at the Artscape Theatre.

I have the pleasure of informing you that you have been granted permission by the Artscape Theatre to conduct research titled ***She's Seldom Seen Wearing Her Director's Hat Here*: Interrogating the representation of black women directors in three mainstream theatres in contemporary South Africa**.

Kindly note the following:

1. Interviews may only commence once the Artscape Theatre has received written confirmation from the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (by way of an approval number).
2. The Artscape Theatre will not provide any financial resources for this research.

3. Please ensure that you adhere to all procedures and protocols of the Artscape Theatre Centre when making use of the institution's archival material.

You may contact Celeste Reynolds (archivist) on 0214109860 Celeste Reynolds archive@artscape.co.za.

We look forward to hosting you at the Artscape Theatre for your study.

Yours sincerely

Marlene Le Roux

Chief Executive Officer (Artscape Theatre)

MARKET

Dear Ms. Matete
02 July 2018

Ms Noxolo Matete (PhD candidate) E-mail: [redacted]

Department of Drama and Performance Studies
School of Arts

University of KwaZulu-Natal Durban 4041

Supervisor: Dr Alude Mahali Email: AMahali@hsrc.ac.za

RE: ACCESS TO THE MARKET THEATRE FOR RESEARCH STUDY ON REPRESENTATION OF BLACK WOMEN THEATRE DIRECTORS IN SELECTED MAINSTREAM THEATRES

Thank you very much for inquiring for permission to research the representation of black women theatre directors at the Market Theatre.

I have the pleasure of informing you that you have been granted permission by The Market Theatre to conduct research titled ***She's Seldom Seen Wearing Her Director's Hat Here:*** **Interrogating the representation of black women directors in three mainstream theatres in contemporary South Africa.**

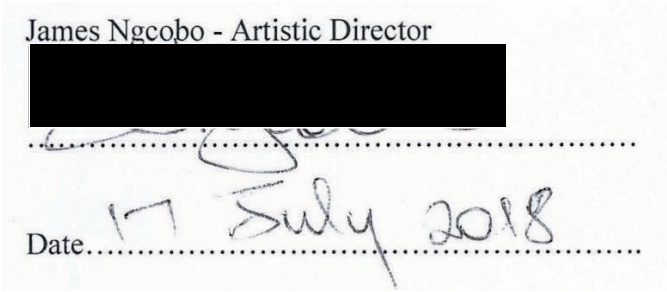
Kindly note the following:

1. Interviews may only commence once The Market Theatre has received written confirmation from the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (by way of an approval number).
2. The Market Theatre will notprovide any financial resources for this research.
3. Please ensure that you adhere to all procedures and protocols of The Market Theatre when making use of the institution's archival material.

You may contact (Zodwa Shongwe) on (011 832 1641 x 209).

We look forward to hosting you at The Market Theatre for your study.

Kind Regards,
The Market Theatre



PLAYHOUSE

Dear Ms. Matete

21 June 2018

Ms Noxolo Matete (PhD candidate) E-mail: [redacted]
Department of Drama and Performance Studies School of Arts
University of KwaZulu-Natal Durban 4041
Supervisor: Dr Alude Mahali Email: [redacted]

RE: ACCESS TO THE PLAYHOUSE COMPANY FOR RESEARCH STUDY ON REPRESENTATION OF BLACK WOMEN THEATRE DIRECTORS IN SELECTED MAINSTREAM THEATRES

Thank you very much for inquiring for permission to research the representation of black women theatre directors at The Playhouse Company.

I have the pleasure of informing you that you have been granted permission by The Playhouse Company to conduct research titled ***She's Seldom Seen Wearing Her Director's Hat Here:*** **Interrogating the representation of black women directors in three mainstream theatres in contemporary South Africa.**

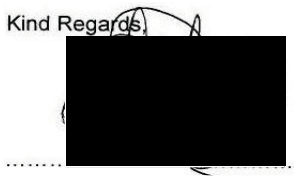
Kindly note the following:

1. Interviews may only commence once The Playhouse Company has received written confirmation from the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (by way of an approval number).
2. The Playhouse Company will not provide any financial resources for this research.
3. Please ensure that you adhere to all procedures and protocols of The Playhouse Company when making use of the institution's archival material.

You may contact Charlene Moodley Bezuidenhout on (031) 3699400 or [redacted]

We look forward to hosting you at The Playhouse Company for your study.

Kind Regards,



Linda Bukhosini – CEO & Artistic Director
The Playhouse Company
Date: 25/06/2018

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LETTER CONCERNING EDITING

3 Hillsview Road,
Grahamstown 6139
19 July 2021

To Whom It May Concern

I, Andrew Grewar, declare that I have done careful copy editing of the PhD thesis, "She's seldom seen wearing her director's hat around here!: Interrogating the Paucity of Black Women Stage Directors in Three State-Supported Theatres in Contemporary South Africa (1999–2018)" submitted by Noxolo Matete to the Department of Drama and Performance Studies, School of Arts, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

I have also checked her extensive list of references, and am assured that valid use has been made of all sources of information used in the thesis.

I can be contacted at the above address or by phone on 063 1966 035, or via email at [redacted]

Signed

[redacted]

Andy Grewar (Copy Editor)

[redacted]

Noxolo Matete (Student)