'A long way from earning': (re)producing violence at the nexus of shame and blame

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Symbolic violence is (re)produced within families, at the nexus of blame and shame. This paper presents an understanding of symbolic violence that extends beyond processes of internalisation, in which shame is directed against the self, to questions of processes of reproduction within families, in which shame is externalised through blame. Drawing on mother-tongue life-history interviews with mothers and grandmothers in rural KwaZulu-Natal, the paper explores how this nexus of blame and shame is situated at the intersect of race and gender. It is bound by intergenerational poverty and educational exclusion that span the apartheid and post-apartheid eras in South Africa. Our understandings of gendered poverty thus need to attend to these intergenerational processes of shaming, in which pervasive neoliberal discourses around individual effort and success mask structural constraints, with the potential to damage relationships within families and across social networks.

Key words: gender; poverty; education; symbolic violence; South Africa

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing body of literature that has reflected on the shame associated with becoming and being poor. The ability to go about without shame has been argued to be one of five 'missing dimensions' of poverty or deprivation, alongside quality of employment, agency or empowerment, physical safety and psychological wellbeing (Alkire, 2007; Zavaleta, 2007). Studies have highlighted the relationship between these dimensions: a sense of disempowerment can be 'induced by shame itself, generating feelings of inability [and] lack of agency' (Chase & Walker, 2012, p. 740), together contributing to negative psychological wellbeing. Shame is both internally felt and socially constructed, shaped by historical and contemporary discourses in popular media, government and policy narratives (R. Walker, 2014).

These processes of shaming can extend to other forms of social exclusion too, such as within the educational sector, in which poor parents are blamed for 'keeping' their children out of school, misrecognising structural inequalities such as those associated with wealth, location, ethnicity or gender (Unterhalter et al., 2012). Deficit discourses around educational

exclusion pervade both national media and policy discourses, mirroring those which stigmatise the poor, and often referring to similar groups or individuals within countries (Aikman et al., 2016; Bartlett, 2007).

This paper builds on this work by reflecting on the (re)production of shame within families in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, situated at the intersect of race and gender, and shaped by forms of violence within both the educational sector and the labour market. In doing so, it draws on a second set of literature that deploys the lexicon of violence to understand processes of shaming. In the context of poverty, symbolic violence can be seen as a process of internalisation of structural inequalities – 'both blaming the poor, and getting the poor to blame themselves for their poverty' (Bourgois, 2004, p. 427). A key mechanism of this symbolic violence is through misrecognition, in which processes of internalisation make asymmetrical hierarchies 'appear as natural' (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 170), 'legitimate in the eyes of the beholder' (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. xiii). Symbolic violence includes gender inequalities and hierarchies of power as the 'paradigmatic form' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2004, p. 272), but is not limited to gender, and includes any 'embodied form of the relation of domination' such as race, ethnicity or language (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 339). For Bourdieu, part of this embodiment of symbolic violence is in the form of emotions that include shame, a 'somatised social relationship' (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 341).

In theorising the connection between structural inequalities and processes of blame and shame, symbolic violence is understood to be on a 'continuum' of violence, in which political, structural, symbolic and physical forms of violence are seen as 'interrelated strands' which 'reverberate into the symbolic violence of self-blame and shame' (Bourgois, 2004, p. 426). Within this understanding, 'none of these forms of violence are neatly separable one from the other' (Bourgois, 2002, p. 223). As the empirical analysis of this paper will highlight, in contexts of high levels of structural violence, the material effects of symbolic violence are associated with processes of mis/recognition and perception, but understood to be no less 'real' (Bourdieu, 2004) than physical acts of violence which can work to 'obliterate…from view other forms of violence' (Žižek, 2008, p. 9).

This theorising of violence as manifesting in different forms which are all 'interrelated' is particularly clear in the South African case, where both poverty and educational exclusion can be traced directly back to state policy, with inequalities entrenched along racialised lines, and enforced by state violence. The paper will therefore begin by setting out how structural forms of violence that shape the intergenerational interactions with which this paper is

concerned have been understood in the academic representations of rural KwaZulu-Natal, offering intersectional analysis (Cho et al., 2013; Gouws, 2017) that pays particular attention to race, gender, age, ethnicity and rurality. It will then describe the methodological route involved in the generation of the life-history accounts on which this paper will draw, through ethnographic research conducted in a community in rural KwaZulu-Natal which I have given the pseudonym *Endaweni*,[1] that has been particularly shaped by these forms of intersecting inequalities. Through close attendance to language across the translated English data and original isiZulu texts, the paper builds on the discourse analysis of other work empirically exploring shame and poverty (Chase & Walker, 2012; R. Walker, 2014), in exploring the accounts of four 'illiterate' mothers and grandmothers as they discussed their hopes and aspirations for their daughters and grand-daughters. The paper will set out how, in the context of their own histories of educational exclusion and poverty, these women worked to discursively navigate their feelings of shame, at times internalising feelings of failure and 'stress', and at others transferring blame to younger generations of women in their families. The paper thus contributes an intergenerational understanding of gendered poverty at the nexus of blame and shame.

Poverty at the intersect of race and gender: The context of rural KwaZulu-Natal

KwaZulu-Natal has consistently been one of the three poorest of South Africa's nine provinces (SSA, 2017). Data collected through Income and Expenditure Surveys and Living Conditions Surveys shows that over the research period 47-48.4% of households in KwaZulu-Natal lived below the upper-bound poverty line, compared to a national average of 40% of households (SSA, 2017, p. 86). This measure of poverty indicates households with command over insufficient resources to purchase both food and basic needs (SSA, 2017, p. 6), and highlights the importance of intersectional analyses: 'the most vulnerable to poverty in South Africa are predominantly represented by females, black Africans, children (17 years and younger), people from rural areas…and those with no education' (SSA, 2017, p. 56).

The vulnerability to poverty represented by each of these categories can be traced back to the racialised categories which laid the 'foundation of apartheid' (Seekings, 2008, p. 3). These structural inequalities were violent, both in their effects, and in their enforcement by

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[1] This locative isiZulu word simply means 'in the place'.

state violence, discursively and materially regulating the political dominance of the white population (Gqola, 2001; Ntshoe, 2002). They were embedded into the education system through the Bantu Education Act, which excluded black South Africans from higher levels of formal education and differentiated curricula along racialised lines (Kallaway, 1984). The segregated labour market simultaneously limited black movement and exploited black labour, compounding this educational disadvantage, particularly for women (Gasa, 2008). The situation was especially severe in KwaZulu-Natal, where around 22% of the population in the years following the first democratic elections reported having no education at all (Aitchison & Harley, 2006, p. 96). Contemporary poverty and educational exclusion in South Africa remains located not only more acutely in particular provinces, but spatialised through apartheid legacies of planning aimed at racialised segregation (Todes & Turok, 2018).

As Gouws (2017) notes, however, there is a risk that continued concern with the historical racist and racialised categories and logics of difference of the apartheid era can entrench the 'matrix of oppression' that they represent. Academic analysis of forms of poverty and educational inequality has thus worked both to acknowledge the legacy of apartheid, at the same time as unpacking continuities and disjunctures since the transition to democracy in 1994. This analysis makes clear that the structural violence of educational exclusion and poverty are closely related: chronic poverty in South Africa continues to be closely linked to both lower levels of education and a lack of access to stable labour market income (Schotte et al., 2018). Gender and race both play into chronic poverty: while the years since the democratic transition have led to a 'female advantage' in education over time, this has not translated into a female advantage in the labour market (Spaull & Makaluza, 2019). While the gender wage gap is smaller for younger generations of women, it persists, and women's discontinuous labour force participation continues to be shaped by burdens of care (Mosomi, 2019). Black women with low levels of education remain over-represented in more insecure and less well-paid quarters of the informal economy, where they are more likely to be at risk of violence and physical intimidation (Rogan & Alfers, 2019).

The intransigent, uneven and dynamic nature of poverty and the shape of inequality in South Africa has led to a conceptualisation of contemporary low-quality education itself as a form of poverty trap (van der Berg et al., 2011), with racialised, spatialised and classed dimensions: educational opportunities in South Africa continue to be stratified by race, province and wealth (Spaull, 2019). Analysis of national household survey data has fleshed out this ongoing process of inequality, revealing what has been named a 'skills twist', in

which returns to Matric[2] and post-secondary education have risen while the returns to levels of education below the Matric have remained constant (Branson et al., 2012). Educational inequality has thus morphed from what Burger and Jafta describe as 'pure discrimination' on the grounds of race to differential returns to education in which race is imbued (Burger & Jafta, 2006).

In the KwaZulu-Natal context, a number of studies add nuance to the racialised and gendered dimensions of poverty and educational exclusion by reflecting on class and ethnicity, drawing on socio-cultural definitions of the Zulu household. These studies show how complex social networks can both exacerbate or alleviate adverse outcomes in contexts of high absolute poverty, including in relation to decisions about educational and other investments (Adato et al., 2007; Di Falco & Bulte, 2015). Analysis drawing on Bourdieu reveals these investments in education to be both symbolic and material: Mark Hunter's analysis of the choices of urban Zulu middle-class families, in particular mothers and grandmothers, reveals the importance of 'supporting' or 'causing to learn' (-*fundisa* in isiZulu). The provision of funding for schooling, however, creates and mediates socio-emotional bonds, in which children are then expected to return the support in later life (Hunter, 2019). These socio-emotional bonds are contextualised by discourses that frame those born after the fall of apartheid as 'born-free'– discourses that are themselves sites of contention and protest (Gouws, 2017).

Reforms to the educational system have not been the only response to inequality. Successive post-apartheid states have expanded the welfare state in South Africa, with a range of well-targeted social protection mechanisms which have been shown to have a significant potential to reduce the inter-generational transmission of poverty (Woolard & Leibbrandt, 2013). General Household Survey data show that more than one third of individuals (37.2%) and more than half of households (52.4%) in KwaZulu-Natal were in receipt of at least one of these social grants during the research period (SSA, 2013, p. 32). Pension grants, however, which are the most generous of these grants, are often distributed amongst family members beyond the recipients themselves, particularly within female-headed households (Mosoetsa, 2011). Women of all ages shoulder the burden of care, shaped by shifting norms around marriage and economic provision (Hunter, 2019; Lewinsohn et al., 2018). These intersecting burdens around poverty, ethnicity, gender and age are further

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[2] The Matric certificate is the South African National Senior Certificate, acquired upon completion of the 12th (final) year of school.

compounded by the severity of the HIV/AIDS crisis in the province, with caring burdens placed on older women (Schatz & Gilbert, 2012). Some communities in KwaZulu-Natal, including *Endaweni*, represent 'hotspots' of HIV prevalence (Wand & Ramjee, 2010).

In addition to these forms of structural violence associated with deep and entrenched inequalities, the spatial and political boundaries of the structures of apartheid were profoundly implicated in physical violence in the province. An 'unofficial war' in the 1980s and 90s between supporters of the African National Congress (ANC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), the Zulu nationalist party, left as many 20,000 killed (Taylor, 2002). Stoked by the direct involvement of the apartheid police and paramilitary forces, 'faction fighting' in impoverished rural areas such as *Endaweni* exacerbated classed tensions between political rivals (Mare, 2000). The '*Udlame*',[3] as it was colloquially known in *Endaweni* and communities in this area of KwaZulu-Natal, took on the significance of a proper noun with clear intersects across raced, gendered, ethno-linguistic and spatial dimensions (Hassim, 1993), as the Violence 'branded political identities onto the geography' of the province (Bonnin, 1997, p. 27). *Endaweni* was one of the communities north of Durban that became a 'flashpoint' for the Violence, particularly in the late 1980s when it intensified (Bonnin, 2001, p. 190). This Violence left its mark not only on geography of places such as *Endaweni*, but in socio-political connections, eroding senses of community, trust and social cohesion (Mosoetsa, 2011).

Researching educational exclusion at the intersect of race and gender: materials and methods

These interconnections between education, gender and violence were the focus of a broader ethnographic study from which the interview data on which this paper draws is taken (Nussey, 2019), informed by the perspectives and ethical critiques of post-colonial, critical race and feminist thinking (Epstein & Morrell, 2012; Gqola, 2001; hooks, 1990). At the core of this ethnographic data were over a hundred hours of participant-observations and thirty life-history interviews with women engaged in learning literacy through a mass national adult education campaign *Kha ri Gude* (KRG), or 'Let Us Learn'. KRG was launched in 2008 by the South African government in partnership with the University of South Africa, and ran over seven annual cycles until 2015, aiming to redress the continued prevalence of illiteracy

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[3] '*Udlame*' is the isiZulu for 'Violence'; when I refer to this period of political violence I will use a capital 'V'.

and associated injustice in post-apartheid South Africa (McKay, 2018). The thirty women whose interviews form the core of the study were distributed between four classes in the single community of *Endaweni* over the six-month cycle of the KRG campaign in 2013-14, located in an area of rural KwaZulu-Natal called the Valley of 1000 Hills. I have signalled these four classes through isiZulu locatives: the class 'on the Hill' (*Entabeni*), 'on the Road' (*Endleleni*), 'in the Hall' (*Ehholo*), and 'in the House' (*Ekhaya*). These women spanned four generations, with the youngest aged eighteen and the oldest aged ninety-five. Two interviews were conducted with each woman in addition to time spent with them during their literacy classes: an unstructured life-history interview,[4] and a follow-up interview in which I asked each woman to co-reflect on the process and impact of their participation in the literacy campaign. Each interview was digitally recorded and subsequently transcribed into isiZulu, and attributed to the pseudonym or given name which the women themselves chose.

Within these research encounters, a key dimension of power sat at the intersect of race, ethnicity and language: while at the time of the research I spoke isiZulu well, I am not a native or fluent speaker. Each interview was therefore co-conducted with an interpreter who has chosen to be named as Phili, who worked on the adult literacy campaign, and who herself lived in the community of *Endaweni*. This mediated cultural interpretation has been critiqued in the anthropological field as a kind of 'hidden colonialism', for its failure to make visible and recognise the contributions of local or participant-informants (Sanjek, 1993). I have therefore made Phili's interventions visible in the data, detailing her questions, and her affective responses to interviewees' accounts in laughter or exclamations. My concern to make her visible is both an ethical one, but also analytical, to make the clear the evidence that enters into a socio-linguistic interpretation, bringing both the translation and translator 'out of the shadows' (Wong & Poon, 2010). The isiZulu text is therefore given in footnotes for each of the extracts in this paper, with discursive analysis conducted across the two languages, offering space for innovative inter-linguistic analysis that challenges traditional power hierarchies. This conscious decision to work not just with translated, English data speaks to postcolonial and decolonising concerns of the field around marginalised languages and their position in academic knowledge production (Tikly & Bond, 2018).

During the research in *Endaweni*, I did not ask direct questions about violence. Violence, however, emerged in all thirty of the core life-history interviews, in

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[4] This unstructured life-history interview was opened with the invitation, 'Please think of the course of your life, in relation to education, beginning when you were born, and up until now. Please tell me your story'.

multidimensional forms. All the interviews included discussion of forms of structural violence, most commonly through gendered discrimination and its intersections with raced and classed inequalities and exploitation. The four women whose life-history accounts are discussed in this paper included reference to both past and contemporary political, physical, sexual and emotional violence: intimate partner and domestic violence, rape, suicide, violent crime, and murder during the Violence in the 1980s and 1990s. As I have discussed theoretically, however, there is an ethical obligation to explore meanings made through both discourse and the practice of violence, and to attend to symbolic and structural as well as physical forms (Heslop et al., 2019). Answering such concerns, physical violence is an important context for this paper, but is not the aspect upon which it focuses.

Through reflexive fieldnotes which I took throughout the research, my own practices as an embodied-researcher-subject further aimed to attend to the ways in which power was embedded in the inter-subjective research space (Haraway, 1988). Within a context in which race is both 'everywhere and nowhere' in many conversations (M. Walker, 2005), my own positionality as a white researcher from a country with a colonial relationship with South Africa needs to be acknowledged. I have needed to work to fight the urge to 'disidentify' (Ahmed, 2004) from the troubling nature of whiteness in South Africa, as well as elsewhere. Reflexivity offered a tool to work with the 'problem of doing representation' (Pillow, 2003, p. 181), but an imperfect one - my gendered and raced identity shaped both what could and could not be done and said, as well as my own interpretations of the data. I have therefore included questions which reflect my own classed and raced commitment to education as a source of success and hope at points where they may have shaped the discussion, and (re)produced the very symbolic violence that this paper is aiming to critique.

'A long way from earning': (re)producing violence at the nexus of blame and shame

The theme and title for this paper were prompted by the words of a learner in the *Ehholo* class, Virginia (aged 57, interview 23.10.2013). This paper engages deeply with the context and implications of being a 'long way from earning'.[5] It asks how the structural violence of poverty associated with this distance shaped inter-personal relationships between women within families, and explores how the link between the structural violence of poverty and the

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[5] *Mina ngisekude kabi ukuhola*

material and symbolic value of education manifested as symbolic violence in forms of 'stress' and 'tiredness', as well as negative relational emotions of feeling 'tired with', that could slip into relational constructs of blame.

Each of the forms of structural and political violence signalled above – particularly associated with poverty and educational exclusion at both provincial and national levels – profoundly shaped the lives of the four women whose life-history accounts are the focus of this paper. Neither Khonzeni nor Virginia, aged 59 and 57 respectively, had ever attended school: their life-histories were shaped by socio-cultural expectations of Zulu girls to stay at home, and overlaid by the apartheid system of schooling and the instigation of the 'Bantu Education Act' which was brought into force two years before Khonzeni was born. For Busi and Veronica, aged 35 and 42 respectively, and of similar ages to the daughters of Khonzeni and Virginia, it was the school boycotts of the 1970s and the Violence in *Endaweni* which closed schools and shaped the later years of their education. For both women, however, this was overlaid by gender, particularly in early pregnancies that led to both dropping out before they reached Matric. Finally, the paper reflects indirectly on a third generation of women – the grand-daughter of Virginia, and the daughters of Busi and Veronica – who belong to the 'born-free' generation, but whose lives are nevertheless constrained by racialised and gendered structural inequalities, and upon whose shoulders an inter-generational weight of hope rests.

The forms of structural and physical violence in the educational and political spheres interplayed in the women's accounts with forms of domestic violence and personal loss. Khonzeni opened her life-history by describing herself as 'without parents, without a mother, without a father, and without a brother'[6] (Khonzeni (aged 59), *Entabeni* class, Interview 1, 17.10.2013). She had been abused by the Aunt who cared for her when she was young, forced into a marriage and abused by the family of her absent husband, and violently challenged when she tried to seek work without a valid passbook during the apartheid era. Khonzeni was one of three of the thirty women learning in the core classes who disclosed suicidal thoughts. But her relationship with her daughter offered both a source of resilience and a source of stress, of hope and aspiration, shaped by an inter-generational interdependence that was located in this broader history of abuse, racialised inequality and financial insecurity.

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[6] *Mina abazali anginabo. Anginaye umama, anginaye ubaba, angina mfowethu.*

For Khonzeni, who had 'never, never'[7] been to school, who was 'still a year away from her pension', and who worked for three days a week in a role cleaning the road for the municipality, the act of sending her single daughter (now aged thirty) to school had been a conscious one, because:

> She is the one who should help me, because I am not educated. But she hasn't got work. She reached Matric, and then she worked as a domestic worker, but that bad little piecemeal job quickly came to an end.[8]
>
> *Khonzeni (aged 59), Entabeni class, Interview 1, 17.10.2013*

These inter-generational interactions could thus form elements of social networks – my daughter helping me – and discursively shaped attitudes around what constituted education and its outcomes. Khonzeni's hope that her daughter would get work (*umsebenzi*) after reaching her Matric, however, ended with the disappointment expressed by the diminutive 'little piecemeal job' (*itohwana*) and the description of even this short-term work as 'bad'. Khonzeni's daughter had been unemployed for two years, and did not have the money to pay to photocopy her CV for applying for jobs (Khonzeni (aged 59), *Entabeni* Class, Interview 2, 16.01.2014). Her daughter's unemployment led to food insecurity, compounded by a lack of social networks associated both with the death of Khonzeni's husband (despite the familial abuse), but also the shame of asking neighbours for help:

> We just stay without, staying without at home until the sun goes down, it is better if we just go to sleep just like that. It was better when her father was alive.[9] [...]
> We just stay, with a difficult life. You might see homes of other people staying just like that, but it's hard to tell someone your secret, so we only stay, my daughter and me, just us. (*silence*) [10]
>
> *Khonzeni (aged 59), Entabeni class, Interview 2, 16.01.2014*

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[7] *nhlobo, nhlobo*

[8] *Iyona ezongisiza ezintweni eziningi, ngoba mina angifundile. Kuthi umsebenzi akakuwutholi. Wafikile u-10, wake wasebenza emajalidini, kodwa kwashesha kwaphela lelo tohwana elibhedayo.*

[9] *sike sihlale siswele, ukuswela hlale lize lishone ilanga ekhaya kungcono silalaele njenak. Bekungcono kukhona ubaba wakhe*

[10] *impilo enzima ungabona imizi yabantu ihleli kanti kuba nalokho bunzima ongeke utshele umuntu kwimfihlo yakho kuphela sihlale nengane yami kuphela*

The experience of Khonzeni's daughter exemplifies the kinds of uneven returns to education and the 'skills twist' that has been discussed in the literature above. What interests me here, and I think is indicative of the damage that such a powerful aspirational discourse in the context of structural violence can do, is the way that these uneven returns translated into a notion of individualised failure, in which shame can quickly slip to blame. These slippages intersect with norms and constructs of gender, as the discussion below of the experience of Virginia from the *Ehholo* class highlights.

In reflecting on her own childhood, Virginia described socio-cultural expectations for girls that did not include school, which she had never attended. For Virginia, education and work were closely linked, in the powerful discourse of how best to 'move forward' with life:

> If you are educated, you can continue forward *(-qhubeka phambili)*.[11]
>
> > *Virginia (aged 57), Ehholo class, Interview 1, 23.10.2013*

Virginia's hope around education had shifted over the generations, however, as she first 'motivated' (*-qhuba*) her daughter and then her grand-daughter. 'Motivation' and 'moving forward' were expressed by correlates of the same verb in isiZulu (*'-qhuba/-qhubeka'*), suggesting positive signifying chains that drew together education, social networks, and socio-culturally appropriate forms of support and respect. For Virginia, this motivation was further shaped by experiences of political violence; Virginia's two sons had been killed in the Violence in 1984 and her daughter was the 'only one left':[12]

> If you are educated, you can get a well-paid job, just like I sent my daughter now to be educated (*-fundisa*). Because I am not educated it is better for me to drive on (*-qhuba*) my daughter, my granddaughter.[13]   [...]

> I won't help [my daughter] with anything! It is her that should help me because I was trying to educate her (*-fundisa*)! Now I won't help with anything. It is me that lives with her child. She lives with my sister in [nearby place]. She phones her child, maybe

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[11] *mawufundile uyakwazi ukuqhubeke phambili*
[12] *Nezingane esasinazo, zashona ngodlame, kwasala eye ntombazane*
[13] *mawufundile, uyakwazi ukuthola umsebenzi osile, njengoba efundisa ingane yakhe manje. Ngoba angifundanga kungcono ngiqhube ingane yami, umzukulu wami.*

she phones her when she wants make-up, something like that, small things because she doesn't have any money. She isn't working.[14] [...]

For me, I was hoping that she would get well-paid work, because she is the one that is better, she went a little bit to school. She has a little bit of knowledge, she's not like me. Perhaps she would have been the one to get better work, I was encouraging her that she should reach [Matric], so that she could have got better work.[15]

Virginia (aged 57), Ehholo class, Interview 1, 23.10.2013

Virginia, who had a piecemeal job (*itoho*) as a domestic worker at the time of the research, drew together in her account several different themes of the faith in education and the way in which unfulfilled investments can lead to becoming 'tired' (*-khathele*), in Virginia's case with her daughter, about whom she expressed frustration that she 'is not working' and a sense of blame ('she phones her when she wants make-up'). Virginia was hoping that her daughter would get well-paid, 'better work', because she was 'better', with a 'little bit' of school attendance, a 'little bit of knowledge', but these kinds of hopes, representing the emotional bonds discussed in Hunter's (2019) work above, went unfulfilled.

Virginia thus both presented a lived experience of education not leading to work for her daughter simultaneous with an ongoing investment in the discourse that being educated would lead to well-paid work, which she had now transferred in hope and motivation of her grand-daughter:

Actually, I can say that I am tired of my daughter (*-khathele*). I can say that now I would drive on (*-qhuba*) the child (grand-daughter), because she (my daughter) is already old, and she has never tried to get piecemeal work, she has not tried to try things for herself. I can say that I would tell her, 'never do nothing'. Because I hope that my grand-daughter will just study. I think that she will do the Matric, she can finish hers.[16]

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[14] *angimsizi ngalutho. Uyena ofanele asize mina ngoba ngangizama ukumfundisa. Manje, angimsizi ngalutho. Nami ngihlala nengane yakhe. uhlala nodadewethu e[place]. Iyamufonela ingane yakhe mengabe imfonelile ifuna amacosmetics, kanjalo, izinto ezincane ngoba akukho imali. Akasebenzi.*

[15] *Ngiye ngifise sengathi angawuthola umsebenzi osile, ngoba yena ugcono waya kancane esikoleni. Unalo ulwazana, akafani nami. Mhlawumpe yena angathola umsebenzi ongcono, ngangimuqhubela ukuthi akaze afike ka-Standard 10, ukuze akwazi ukuthola umsebenzi ongcono.*

[16] *okusho ukuthi ingane yami ngakhathala. Ngathi sengizoqhuba ingane, ngoba usemdala naye, akazame amatoho azizamele. okusho ukuthi ingane yami ngakhathala. Ngathi sengizoqhuba ingane, ngoba usemdala*

Virginia's disappointment in her daughter, expressed by her becoming 'tired', adhered both to her age ('she is already old'), to her not 'trying to get piecemeal work', to not even 'trying to try'. Virginia did not associate her daughter's unemployment with her early pregnancy which had meant leaving before attaining her Matric, nor with raising her child without any support ('the father of the child never paid anything, never did anything at all'[17]), nor did she acknowledge that her daughter may not want a piecemeal job, but rather blamed her for 'doing nothing'. Such material and psychological investments in the value of education when countered with lived realities were even more painful, but not recognised as gendered, raced or structural constraints, instead attributed to individual failure and the absence of individualised effort. The visibility of education as a resource translated to the blame which adhered to judgments that those with education but without work were doing nothing, not even 'trying to try'.

For Virginia, this 'doing nothing' was powerfully contrasted with her own attempts to work, and to support and motivate her grand-daughter, despite her own illness, and the unemployment and illness of her husband:

> I don't know how I will drive her on (-*qhuba*), how I will send her to College, because I only work just for the three days. It would be better if her grandfather was still earning money. But now he doesn't earn anything. I myself am a long way from earning... now I don't know. My life is not good. Weh! I can say that I am ill with different things, bone problems, sugar (diabetes), BP, bone problems.[18] [...]
>
> [My granddaughter wants to do] nursing, she said that she does not want to be a doctor. But now where would I get that power/money (*amandla*)? Where would I get that power/money (*amandla*), when it's just all on me?[19] [...]

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naye, akazame amatoho azizamele. ngingathini nje ngoba noma ngingamutshela ngeke enze lutho. Ngoba ngiyafisa uGrand-daughter ufunde nje. Angithi uzowenza uMatric, uqeda kwakhe.

[17] *ubaba wengane akazange ayikhokhele akazange enze lutho nje.*

[18]*Angazi ukuthi ngizomqhuba ngani, ngizomuyisa ngani kumaCollege, njengoba ngisebenza nje u3 days. Kungcono noma umkhulu wakhe useyahola. Manje akakaholi. Mina ngisekude kabi ukuhola, manje angazi. Nempilo kumina ayisekho kahle. We, ngathi nginokugula okuhlukene, amathambo. Shukela, BP, amathambo.*

[19] *inursing, wathi akayifuni ufuna ukuba udokotela. Manje ngingawathathaphi lawo amandla? ngingawathathaphi lawo amandla, njengoba kiyimina nje?*

I think that there is nothing else [to tell you], because I have given out everything which I held inside. Particularly about the child of my child, I was hoping that she would be someone, but the power/money (*amandla*) is not here (*awekho*).[20]

Virginia (aged 57), Ehholo class, Interview 1, 23.10.2013

Virginia's description of herself as a 'a long way from earning' thus signified a range of different ways in which her life, and her children and grand-children's lives, were subject to structural and resource constraints. Virginia's piecemeal work (*itoho*) did not lead to '*amandla*', emphasised by her repeated, spatial question – 'where would I get that *amandla*?'. The word *amandla* in isiZulu is a political one, carrying a range of signifiers around power, protest, and forms of capital. Virginia's specific, spatialised assertion framed this power/money/capital as absent: it is not here (*awekho*). This distance (understood through the figurative distance of distance from political, social and economic capital) was nevertheless internalised as an embodied burden of poverty in Virginia's account: 'it's just all on me'. This 'all on me' is captured again in isiZulu by a locative, and could be translated (in other contexts) as 'it's at me / my house' – the pressure to work and to motivate her daughter and grand-daughter was described in the most proximal of terms. The distance from *amandla* was felt in an embodied pain, which Virginia 'held inside' herself, and which manifested itself in multiple illnesses – bone problems, sugar, diabetes – which were further exacerbated by the absence of social networks ('it would be better if her grandfather was still earning money'). The structural violence of poverty was enacted on Virginia's own body and misrecognised as individualised failure, experienced as individualised 'stress'. Virginia passed away just after my return to the UK in 2014, aged 58.

The partial recognition of the structural violence that the distance framing of *amandla* suggests was echoed in other learner accounts too. Like Virginia, Busi deployed a spatial metaphor to frame her distance from *amandla*. Perhaps unlike others, Busi recognised that it was proximity to *amandla* that enabled 'trying', and that would make possible the actualisation of potential, and of hope, in these new times of opportunity:

Charley: Why would you like your daughter to continue with studying?

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[20] *Ngicabanga ukuthi akukho okunye, ngoba ngikuphe konke obekungaphakathi, njenga ngane yontanami bengifisa ukuthi ibe umuntu manje amandla awekho. ngingawathathaphi lawo amandla, njengoba kiyimina nje*

Busi: […] For her, I am hoping that it might happen. All the children in these times of ours, I can say the children can learn, a child in these times of ours, when they get the opportunity, they should study. I like that now, when I might get close to that money/power (*amandla*) I would try, do you see?[21] […]

Busi (aged 35), Endleleni class, Interview 14.11.2013

Like Virginia and Khonzeni, however, the hope that Busi expressed for her daughter was unfulfilled, and it was at this point in the interview that Busi's distress was most manifest. My question that pivoted on 'change' prompted a breakdown in Busi's composure. She (re)produced the kinds of investments in education noted earlier in this paper, but through her tears: an affective response that was caught in both distance from *amandla*, and the hope that 'these times of ours' might offer, in what she had felt should be 'usual' for children born of her daughter's generation:

Charley: What do you think will change if your daughter continues with her education?
Busi: --- (*cries*)
Charley: Would you like to stop?
Phili: Shall we stop, Sisi?
Busi: (*crying, translated by Phili*) If she can continue, she will find a good life.

Busi (aged 35), Endleleni class, Interview 14.11.2013

Veronica too expressed this language of power, of overlapping and intersecting forms of social, cultural and economic capital, and of investments in 'trying' for her children as well as for herself. Veronica had had trouble with an unregistered college from which she had been unable to recover R7000 (the equivalent of six month's wages for her), and which she had paid in fees for her daughter:

I am trying all the time, so that my children can study, so that they might continue. But I can say, I can just say that I'm a single parent, these ones do not have fathers. I

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[21] *kodwa naye ngiyafisake kungabi-ke sonke nje ngane esikhathini samanje ngathi izingane zingafunda ingane esikhathini samanje uma ilithola ithuba ifunde. Ngiyathanda manje mengase ngithole amandla ngingazama uyabona*

don't know where to get support from, but me, I'm just trying. I want them to continue forward (-*qhubeka*).[22] […]

(*in English*) But now I'm feeling tired, and there's nothing that I can do. R7000 it's not a small money, it's a lot of money for me. […]

(*in English*) I'm trying by all means to make it not 'stress' (*laughs*).

Veronica (aged 42), Endleleni class, Interview 1, 14.10.2013

Veronica's laughter here was humourless, the 'stress' of 'trying' as a 'single parent' without support, and subject to exploitation by unregistered colleges that took advantage of hope and literal and figurative investments in education that had left her 'tired' and conscious that 'there's nothing that I can do'. For Veronica too these burdens were gendered, laid at Veronica's feet; she described three of the four fathers of her children as having each in turn 'run away'[23] from their financial and emotional caring responsibilities, and who, in her words, had 'left' her both with four children to care for and with HIV positive status (Veronica, (aged 42) *Endleleni* class, Interview 1, 14.10.2013).

Structural and symbolic violence thus expressed itself in affective ways in all of the women's accounts: in silence (Khonzeni), in tears (Busi), in empty laughter (Veronica), and in repeated rhetorical questions and exclamations (Virginia). So too it was embodied in each of their accounts, in being 'tired', in feeling 'stress' and 'pain'. For each of these women, physical violence, loss and absence was overlaid by (gendered) burdens of care and the weight of poverty that enacted the interrelated structural and symbolic forms of violence on their bodies, shaping inter-generational dynamics in (re)producing symbolic violence through relational dynamics of blame and shame.

Discussion and concluding thoughts

These findings powerfully resonate with and counterbalance a range of themes brought out in other studies in South Africa which reflect on the ways in which hope and opportunity without resources or power can perpetuate structural and symbolic violence (De Lannoy &

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[22] *Yah, ngiyazama zonke izikhathi nje, abantwana bami bafunde bangaqhubeka. Noma ngizothi, ngizothi nje ngi single parent, noma abanye baye abasena baba. Manje lona omunye angikwazi ukumlekelela noma support ngike ngizame kuthi. Ngiyathanda baqhubeka phambili*
[23] *wabaleka!*

Swartz, 2015; Swartz et al., 2012), but which focus on the experiences of young men in navigating these structures and pathways into and out of criminality and violence, or consider the perspectives of urban, middle class Zulu families (Hunter, 2019). As a counterpoint to these studies, a focus on rural mothers and grand-mothers, navigating simultaneously their own educational pathways and those of their daughters, offers a different constellation to this community-level analysis.

This paper also contributes to the shame and poverty literature, exploring how even those who experience processes of shaming can themselves consider structural inequalities 'natural' or 'legitimate' (Bourdieu, 2000; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Unlike other studies which have highlighted how the Othering processes of blame can extend to people in poverty who are 'not like us' (Chase & Walker, 2012), this paper highlights blame at the most proximal of relationships, in which social capital can both offer hope but work to exacerbate structural inequalities through discourse if unfulfilled. Misrecognising the structures of the labour market and of the burden of care, this symbolic violence sits at the intersect of race and gender, adding an understanding of the significant damage to both relationships and physical and mental health that such misrecognition can engender. A relational understanding of shaming in this way fleshes out two particular 'reverberations' of self-blame and shame (Bourgois, 2002), by setting out first how such reverberations are (re)produced across relationships between mothers, daughters and grand-daughters, and second, how structures are turned inward and experienced on the body.

I want to end with a final reflection. In writing this paper, I have been deeply concerned not to blame these mothers and grandmothers for blaming the women in their families. Processes of blame need to be contextualised, as I hope that this paper has been able to do, in ways that ensure that we do not reproduce the very symbolic violence that we are aiming to critique. This paper is thus relevant not only to the South African context, but of concern to other contexts in which 'interrelated' forms of violence contribute to the misrecognition of structural inequalities, particularly, but not exclusively, at the intersect of race, gender and rurality. Understanding how misrecognition contributes to feelings of blame and shame can help address the socio-political burden of poverty and care, across generations of families.

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Biographical Note

Charlotte Nussey is a Research Fellow at UCL's Institute of Education, University College London. Her work focuses on intersecting inequalities and questions of social justice in education and international development, with a particular interest in gender, violence, language, discourse, and theories of capabilities.

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