

THE MALE PERSPECTIVE: BLACK AFRICAN MEN'S HAIR PREFERENCES ON BLACK AFRICAN WOMEN - INSIGHTS FROM SOUTH AFRICA

Khulekani Madlela ✉; School of the Arts, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa

Abstract: Drawing on phenomenological perspectives and black feminism, particularly intersectionality, this article uses a qualitative questionnaire to examine the hair preferences of black African men on black African women. The article explores whether black African men prefer long, straight hair in black women. Using intersectionality as a theoretical lens, this article further examines discourses that shape black African men's hair preferences, perceptions and attitudes towards hair enhancements and hair alteration. Previous studies have shown that black African women alter their hair because they believe that black African men are attracted to women with long hair. Through examining the male gaze and the policing of women's bodies, this article uncovered what black African men consider to be the African beauty ideals. The findings from my research revealed that contrary to black African women's assumptions, black African men do not consider long, straight hair to be the standard of beauty. On the one hand, long hair was associated with beauty, femininity, and dignity while on the other hand, it was perceived as disruptive and expensive to maintain. These findings revealed that the selected men are not as enamoured with long hair as black African women believe them to be but are more appreciative of different hair types, textures, lengths, and hairstyles. The men's hair perceptions and views are shaped by factors including their own personal preferences, family members, religion, and on-going hair debates in South Africa.

Keywords: black African men, black African women, hair preferences, male gaze, male perspectives, South Africa

✉ madlelak@gmail.com

Citation: Madlela, K. (2022). The male perspective: Black african men's hair preferences on black african women - insights from south africa. *Social Sciences, Humanities and Education Journal (SHE Journal)*, 3(3), 438 – 456. DOI: 10.25273/she.v3i3.14039.



Published by Universitas PGRI Madiun. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Black hair politics is a topical and contentious subject in South Africa because it holds significance. In most African cultures, black hair signifies an individual's origins, social status, race and religion (Alubafi et al., 2018; Donahoo, 2021, Burkins, 2022). Black hair, which is gendered, racialised and sexualised has been and continues to be used to define a black African woman's beauty in South Africa. A black African woman's appearance has an impact on numerous outcomes such as other people's judgments of her attractiveness, social status, race, religious beliefs, and moral standing. Since these judgments influence societal perceptions, they can have a particularly profound impact on black African women in the community. The surveillance of black African women's bodies is informed by several discourses circulating in society. On the one hand, these economic, political, religious, and socio-cultural discourses inform the community members' views about black African women's aestheticisation while on the other hand, they influence the way women self-fashion themselves.

In their seminal works, scholars such as Sandra Lee Bartky (1990), Mulvey (1989) and Berger (1977) advance that men look at women and women watch themselves being looked at because the spectator is assumed to be a heterosexual male. This concept is best explained by the notion of panoptical male connoisseur.¹ Originally

used by Jeremy Betham in relation to an ideal prison set up, I apply this concept to a practice where black African women are influenced by the male gaze to self-regulate their physical appearance, especially their hair. Women are conscious that they are under surveillance and have been socialised to constantly survey themselves. In his canonical volume, Berger (1972, 46) notes that "to be born a woman has been to be born, within an allotted and confined space, into the keeping of men". Therefore, a woman has "to survey everything she is and everything she does because how she appears to others, and ultimately how she appears to men, is of crucial importance for what is normally thought of as the success of her life" (Berger, 1972, p. 46). He further adds that a woman's "own sense of being in herself is supplanted by a sense of being appreciated as herself by another" (Berger, 1972, p. 46).

Although there have been some changes in the traditional understanding of the male gaze, it is still relevant and impacts the negotiation of black femininity and stylisation. Previous research (Bryd and Tharps, 2001; Madlela, 2018; Mcdowell, 2000 & Thompson, 2009) shows that black women believe that black men prefer long, straight hair in black women. In addition, historically it has been argued that black women self-fashion themselves in line with the male gaze (Berger, 1972). This is still relevant today as findings from research cited above revealed that some black African women wear long hair (straightened, extensions, weaves, and wigs) to look attractive to men. The motivation for

¹ A panopticon is cells arranged around a tower, and this arrangement gives the guard a view of the prisoners. However, the prisoners can neither see the guard nor each other. Since the prisoners have

no way on knowing whether the tower is manned or unmanned or if the guard is watching them or not they tend to watch themselves.

some black women to wear long hair is based on the assumption that it looks attractive to men, therefore through this article I endeavour to establish whether black African men indeed prefer long, straight hair in black African women as some black women believe. In addition, drawing on black feminist perspectives, particularly intersectionality, this article explores the discourses that shape black African men's hair preferences, perceptions about gender, race, wealth, consumption and black hair stylisation, and attitudes towards hair enhancements and hair alteration. Such a discussion is important as it will add insights to the black hair debates in South Africa.

Informed by phenomenological scholars of the past such as Beauvoir (1949 [2010, p. 304]), I argue that black African women experience their bodies, particularly hair under the gaze of others. Women internalise the gaze and produce their hair as an object of another's gaze. Research shows that the other is usually a heterosexual male, hence, women see themselves through the male gaze while at the same time occupying the position of female subject, they are both the surveyor and surveyed. To influence how they are seen by men, some black African women alter their hair. Moreover, social norms and values also influence how people shape their bodies and other people's. Susan Bordo (1993, p. 91) notes that people's bodies are "trained, shaped and impressed with the prevailing historical forms of ... masculinity and femininity". Individuals discipline their bodies to fit into the ideal gendered body, for example, black African women relax their hair because long, straight hair is considered more feminine. With social media the pressures on black African women to adhere to certain ideals of beauty

have shifted to great lengths. Black hair stylisation is regarded as a social activity and most black women share their hair experiences online, particularly on social media and other digital platforms.

For black feminist theorists, beauty is a raced and classed site of 'Othering', hence, some third-wave feminists like Tate (2009, p. 11) argue that beauty is a "primary source of [black] women's oppression" under the patriarchal system, where they groom themselves to please men and under the racialised system wherein they try to emulate the white ideal. However, other third-wave feminists advance the idea that the beauty practices women engage in empower them and further argue that black women are not agency-less dupes. For example, Alubafi et al's (2018: p. 9) South African study revealed that black African women can choose hairstyles and perceive this as a 'recognition and revival' of their cultural heritage. Moreover, black South African women in Tshwane, Pretoria revealed that they wear natural hair as a way of embracing their heritage (Alubafi et al, 2018). In addition, the black South African women, who were interviewed indicated that hairstyling was a form of activism and that they make a political statement through their hair and hairstyle choices. Taking the debate further, from a post-feminist standpoint (McNair 2013, p. 96) argues that "being looked at, appraised and objectified" is not an "unwelcome imposition of a predatory male gaze". Furthermore, McNair (2013, p. 96) notes that it is a "choice freely entered into, made by empowered women reaping the benefits of the cultural space won for them by their feminist sisters, mothers and grandmothers from the late 1960s onwards". In other words, the above observations seem to suggest that as

pointed out earlier, black women willingly use their hair and erotic capital (Hakim, 2011) or sexuality (Paglia, 1992) to get what they want.

In this article, I argue that the panoptical male connoisseur resides within the consciousness of most black African women, they internalise it. However, it is important to note that the gaze is patriarchal but not necessarily male because women also participate in rewarding and punishing those who deviate from the cultural ideals. This shows that both men and women participate in the patriarchal and heteronormative system. Tate (2009) concurs and argues that black women subject each other to the “gaze” and often compete. Mokoena (2017, p. 138) also agrees and notes that “regarding hair, the most uncomfortable gaze can be the gaze of other black women who either explicitly or silently judge each other ...”.

Using a survey questionnaire, this article explores the hair types and hairstyles that the selected 13 black African men living in South Africa prefer on black African women. This article poses the main research question: which hair types, lengths and hairstyles do black African men living in South Africa prefer on black African women? To gain more insights into the South African male perspectives, the study poses the following sub questions: Which discourses influence the black African men’s preferences, perceptions and views about black African beauty ideals and stylisation? What are black African men’s attitudes towards hair alteration and hair enhancements?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hair, which is visible and malleable, is one of the features that are used to

assess a woman’s physical appearance. Certain hair types, textures and length carry social meanings; hence Maine (2018, p. 122) aptly observes that “hair is never just hair. It has consistently served as a second, nonverbal language to express critical sentiments, telling the story of women’s lives like nothing else does”. Previous research conducted in Africa and in diaspora shows that long, straight hair is promoted as the dominant ideal beauty standard; Masina’s (2010) study found that South African magazines targeted at a black readership featured a lot of advertisements for hair relaxers and “relaxed hair dominated the representations, appearing on nearly all of the pages reserved for hair products”. Conversely short natural hair is presented as ugly and in need of alteration, for example, Patricia Pinho’s (2006, p. 275) study conducted in Brazil found that products in advertisements for ethnic hair transformed girls with kinky hair into beautiful princesses. Studies have also revealed that men prefer long hair on women as evident in findings from an American study conducted by Byrd and Tharps (2001, pp. 181-182), which showed that “masses of flowing hair are still the look desired by men and sought after by many women ...”. The male gaze often leads to body shame, anxiety, and self-objectification. Since long hair is associated with sexual desirability some black women engage in forms of self-discipline and hair alteration in service of the performance of gender.

Moreover, some studies including Thompson’s (2009) Canadian study and Madlela’s (2018) South African research have shown that wearing certain hairstyles impacts on the prospects of finding a romantic partner. Research findings from a study

(Madlela 2018), which focused on the representation of black African women in *True Love* magazine, suggest that black African women opt for certain hairstyles such as weaves because they believe it makes them look beautiful and appealing in the eyes of men. A weave is considered to be a powerful weapon that works like a magic wand and gives a black African woman an edge over others (Madlela, 2018, pp. 239-240). Thus Thompson (2009, p. 447) remarks that weaves and wigs have become a “normative part of Black beauty”. It further emerged from Madlela’s (2018) research that black African women use their hair to get what they want from men. Akkida Mcdowell’s (2000) American study revealed a similar tendency. It emerged from her study that one of the reasons for spending a lot of money on hair was to gain male attention. One of the participants from her study noted that, “to get a man, I need to beautify myself by any means necessary - including starving and having my power/telephone/hot water shut off - in favour of phat hairstyles” (Mcdowell, 2000, p. 129).

For some black African women money spent on hair is seen as an investment that helps them get more financial gain (Madlela, 2018). Since hair is malleable an individual has the power to alter it through relaxing and using hair enhancements to accentuate her appearance and fit into the prescribed ideal. The above discussion shows that in addition to disciplining their bodies through hair alteration to avoid social punishment, black women also get pleasure and specific gains from this practice.

There exists a considerable body of research on the topic of hair, however, the male perspective has not been given enough coverage. Most studies tend to

examine hair practices, the politics of black hair and highlight how black women’s hair can be a symbol of oppression or liberation. There is need for more research that focuses on men’s perceptions of women’s hair because it is a common practice for one gender to have physical standards for the other, that is have a list of qualities that they find desirable in the opposite sex. Thus far studies have focused on what women think but no research has been conducted in the South African context to test the accuracy of their claims. Using a qualitative questionnaire, this article endeavours to try to establish the veracity of the assumption that black African men prefer long, straight hair and hair enhancements such as weaves and wigs. Through this article I seek to contribute new knowledge by exploring and presenting the hair preferences of the selected black African men. Put in another way, my research tries to ascertain whether black African men are fixated on long, straight hair and prefer women who wear wigs and weaves. In addition, through this article I endeavour to highlight the discourses that inform black African men’s views and how they translate into the perceptions and experiences of black African men living in South Africa. By looking at the male gaze and the policing of women’s bodies, this article seeks to complement studies on black hair by uncovering what authentic African beauty is or should be from the black African men’s perspectives.

The hair, hairstyle preferences and perceptions are explored against the backdrop of South Africa’s colonial and apartheid past as well as the on-going hair debates in the country. In apartheid South Africa, hair was used for racial classification and people with afro-textured hair occupied the bottom

tier of the racial hierarchy. The Population Registration Act of 1950 made provisions for black people with straight hair and lighter skin tone to “pass” to the Coloured category and Coloureds with lighter skin tone to “pass” to the White category. To obtain upward social mobility and gain social acceptance, black African women felt pressured to adopt hairstyles and skin tones that resembled the Westerncentric ideal.

Black hair was denigrated (Barnard, 2000, p. 351) and continues to be accorded lower status in democratic South Africa as evident in certain school policies that prohibited black African girls from wearing Afrocentric hairstyles at school (Pather, 2016). In 2016, a white teacher at Pretoria Girls High described black natural hair as ugly and an Afrocentric hairstyle as resembling a bird’s nest and further threatened black pupils with expulsion if they did not chemically straighten their hair. To avoid expulsion from school, some black African girls are compelled to embrace the dominant ideals. In addition, mainstream media still advances the dominant ‘white’ ideal of long straight hair. For instance, global media outlets still alter or Photoshop celebrities such as Beyoncé and Rihanna’s photos in order to fit this ideal. Furthermore, Madlela’s (2018, p. 122) study found that *True Love* magazine featured many women with long, straight hair on its covers and on the advertisements for hair products. Constant exposure to the dominant white ideal can inform black African men’s views because media images can be internalised and influence people’s hair preferences, attitudes, and beliefs. However, black African men’s preferences and perceptions are not only shaped by media messages, the

family and prevailing socio-political climate also impact values relating to physical appearance.

Although Western beauty ideals were forcefully imposed on black African women to the extent that they felt compelled to embrace the dominant standards to fit in (Abulafi *et al.*, 2018), there is a move towards redefining and repositioning black hair. For example, although mainstream media promotes the long, straight hair ideal, counter-hegemonic initiatives spearheaded by influential people such as musicians and politicians seem to promote black pride and are encouraging black people to embrace their natural hair. For instance, the incident at Pretoria Girls High mentioned above led to a protest. Black pupils at other schools also protested against hair and language policies that they perceived as racist. Following the Pretoria Girls High incident, some schools in South Africa amended their hair policies (Ngoepe, 2016). However, although there have been some gains, the issue of denigrating black hair keeps surfacing at schools (Baloyi, 2021). Another example of activism is what came to be known as the Clicks hair saga. In 2020 there was public outcry following the posting of the TRESemmé advertisement, which portrayed black hair as “frizzy and dull” and “dry and damaged” and a white woman’s hair as long straight and good (Lindeque, 2020) on the Clicks website. The South African opposition party, Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) shut down Clicks stores, and the racist advertisement was removed from the brand’s website and TRESemmé products pulled out from the shops.

South Africa’s contemporary environment is characterised by conflicting discourses that are promoted in mainstream media and those

advanced by counter-hegemonic initiatives as well as people's own principles, preferences, values; political, cultural, and religious beliefs. This article examines the extent to which these conflicting messages influence black African men's hair preferences on black African women and notions of the ideal African beauty standards.

METHOD

To gain more insights, the research adopts a qualitative research design. A self-administered qualitative questionnaire was used to collect data. The sample was drawn using snowball sampling techniques. The inclusion criteria is as follows; a person, who self-identifies as a heterosexual black African men, who is aged 18 and above, is a South African citizen or an expatriate from the African continent currently living in South Africa. All the ethical considerations were observed, the issue of confidentiality and anonymity is addressed through withholding the names of the participants and using code names in this article.

A questionnaire containing open-ended questions was distributed to 20 people but 13 responded amounting to 65 per cent response rate. The demographics of the 13 respondents are as follows; in terms of nationality nine are South African, one Malawian, two Nigerian, and one Congolese. The participants are aged between 25 and 50, with a mean age of 38. Twelve respondents live in Pretoria and one in Mafeking. The respondents' level of education ranges from bachelor's degree to honours and masters to PhD. In terms of monthly income; two respondents did not provide answers. Out of the 11 who filled in the answers,

one is unemployed, one earns R10,000-R15,000 while the rest have a monthly income of over R35,000. It is noteworthy that the sample consists of respondents, who are highly educated and earn a substantial amount of money probably due to using snowball sampling. It appears the informants gave the names of referrals who are like them in terms of level of education, age, and income. The relationship status of the men sampled is as follows, eight are in a relationship with a black African woman; three are currently single but have previously been in a relationship with a black African woman and two are single and looking to date a black African woman.

The data was analysed using thematic content analysis and the following themes were uncovered: first, hair quality, which includes good and bad hair, natural hair, and Afrocentric hairstyles versus unnatural or fake hair, hair and hairstyle preferences - length, texture, and type). Second, is black stylisation and aestheticisation that comprises symbolism of a black woman's hair, favourite and least favourite hairstyles; and hair, gender, wealth and consumption. The third theme, hair and racial interpellation encompasses attitudes towards hair alteration and hair enhancements and the fourth is sources of influence covering family, religion, celebrity culture and counter-hegemonic initiatives. The findings are presented and discussed in the section that follows.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The themes that were identified using thematic content analysis are each discussed in detailed below beginning with hair quality.

Hair Quality

Given that the objective of the study is to uncover the hair preferences of black African men on black African women, it is important to explore the hair quality that is considered desirable. Most respondents described good hair as hair that is well-kept and attractive, and well-maintained hair. For some respondents, including A, a 44-year-old South African man, good hair is “neat” and clean. Respondent F, a 32-year-old South African, concurred and noted that good hair is “clean hair without odour. The texture and size can be amended with chemicals” but not with hair enhancements. For some black African men good hair is “long and soft”, and “very neat hair, soft and manageable hair”. For some respondents, emphasis was on the natural aspect, the responses ranged from good hair “should be natural”, “should be natural, black, combed and stylish”, “natural hair that is neat and cut”, and “should be natural, clean and simple to maintain”.

Ten out of 13 respondents said natural hair was desirable and feminine. For some black African men natural hair brings out the natural beauty of the woman, for example, respondent E, a 38-year-old South African, stated that natural hair is more attractive because it “shows the natural beauty of a person”. A 49-year-old South African (respondent H) highlighted that “natural hair makes black African women more feminine because it shows their natural beauty” while M, a 46-year-old South African man noted that “natural hair shows the natural beauty of a woman”. A 34-year-old Malawian (respondent B) stated that he has never been attracted to wigs or weaves because for him “natural is inherently attractive, maybe because I am a Christian. My mother and sisters have natural hair...”.

Respondent D (25-year-old South African) finds natural hair “which is not artificial” desirable. A 38-year-old Nigerian man (respondent L) echoed the same sentiments as D adding that ‘natural hair is tender even when relaxed. Weaves and wigs do not look authentic, you cannot even see the scalp’. Others like respondent I (39-year-old South African) and J (35-year-old South African) do not just like natural but like it short and clean. Respondent J stated that “clean, natural short hair attracts me to an African woman. It just has a magical attraction; it shows the true natural self. It is like what you see is what you get”.

Of the remaining three, C (40-year-old Nigerian man) cited weaves as desirable hairstyles while for F relaxed long, black hair with smooth texture is attractive. For respondent G, a 29-year-old man from the DRC, all hairstyles including “natural, relaxed, weaves and wigs as long as the hair is pulled up into a ponytail” are nice.

The respondents agreed that bad hair was repulsive; they described it as “uncombed and untidy hair”, “ugly looking, not neat”, “coarse and brittle hair that easily breaks”, “untidy hair without washing”, “hair that is dirty”, “unkempt hair” and “any unnatural hair i.e. wigs and extensions”. These findings revealed that on the one hand, the respondents defined good hair in terms of desirable attributes such as cleanliness, neatness, colour, texture (softness), length and naturalness. On the other hand, negative qualities were used to describe bad hair. In other words, bad hair was presented as undesirable and the opposite of good hair.

The term “natural” was cited by many respondents. Natural hair was presented as desirable while unnatural

hair was referred to as bad. The definitions of natural hair offered by the respondents were quite revealing, ranging from “hair that an individual is born with”, “hair that is not modified by any means of alteration available”, “hair that has never been treated with chemicals or other stuff women use for stretching hair”, “hair that is not relaxed or artificial” to ‘the original hair, which might be treated or relaxed”.

It appears the respondents gave contradictory and at times conflicting responses, however, this could be explained by clarifying the term “natural hair”. The term “natural hair” is used to refer to hair that grows from the scalp in its altered and unaltered state as opposed to unnatural or “fake” hair like wigs and weaves. In some contexts, “natural hair” is used to describe hair that is not altered by heat or chemicals as opposed to processed hair, for example, relaxed or straightened hair.

Preferred Hair Length

Following from the above discussion, still under the broad theme of hair quality is the sub-theme preferred hair length. The respondents were divided in terms of hair length they prefer; seven indicated that they like long hair while five said they prefer short hair and only one respondent said he liked both long and short hair.

While it is believed that some black African men prefer black African women with long, straight hair because they have internalised the dominant beauty standards my research revealed both new narratives and old patterns that shape the South African black communities’ understanding of the intersectionality between hair, gender, and race. Findings revealed that long hair was associated with sexiness,

beauty, femininity, womanhood, and dignity. For some black African men preference for long hair stems from their own personal reasons and tastes. Some pointed out that they want something to play with. For respondent B long hair is sexy and beautiful, “imagine touching and playing with long hair”. For some black African men long hair is easy and nice to handle. Respondent F pointed out there are times when he feels like brushing his partner’s hair, but “short hair is rough and does not motivate”, hence his preference for long hair. Some men like to run their fingers through smooth long hair, as a result prefer relaxed long hair. For example, respondent G likes long hair and “it must be soft because I like running my hands through it, I like touching it”. Respondent L confessed that he appreciates women with long natural hair and for him the beauty of a woman comes out with her hair and “the longer the hair the more beautiful she is”.

The insights given above appear to suggest that black African women’s hair is gendered and sexualised. With regards to narratives of sexiness, there are those that work for and some that work against feminine empowerment. While on the one hand, black African men prefer long hair because it communicates womanhood and dignity, on the other hand, it is considered to be irritating. Respondent H believes that black African men dislike long hair because ‘it is costly to maintain, and money is a scarce commodity’ while J stated that long hair “is disruptive during sex you have to dig and dive to prevent it coming to your face”. Hair length preference also depends on a woman’s body type as respondent G noted “long hair may not look good on a slim person. Hair has to be proportional to body size”. Another recurring theme

was preference for hair/hairstyles that bring out a woman's natural beauty; hence respondent M stated that black African men dislike long hair because "it is not natural as African hair does not stretch much except when relaxed".

The five black African men, who indicated that they like short hair prefer it because maintenance costs are lower compared to long hair. For instance, respondent I explained that he likes short afro hair in a woman because it is neat, manageable, and cost effective and respondent J prefers short hair in a romantic partner because they "can take a shower or bath together" since with long hair the water becomes greasy and he hates to see fallen hair strands in bathing water.

Some old patterns still shape black African men's understanding of the interlinked relationship between hair and gender. For example, it emerged that certain hairstyles such as chiskop (clean shaven head) and fade (cutting hair on the sides and leaving it long in the middle) do not look good on women, "they make a woman look like a boy/man". Short hair was cited as one of the least favourite hairstyles because according to respondent G "hair is part of a woman's beauty why should one remove it". Respondent L concurred and remarked that hair makes women presentable, and he appreciates "women who take care of their hair. A woman who cuts her hair seems to be saying 'I don't have time'. To grow long hair brings out attributes such as patience".

When asked to list sexy hairstyles in black African women that make them take a second look, the respondents' answers were wide-ranging from "short natural hair", "short hair is sexy because it is natural. No hidden costs", "natural long hair", "long and short weaves and wigs", "relaxed hair, which is long

enough (8cm), smooth in texture, shiny and black in colour", "cornrows, it looks so natural. It appears to be part of the person. This hairstyle says, 'it is me, take it or leave it'", to "braided hair because it looks sophisticated and intricate".

Findings revealed that the selected black African men tended to approach women with different hairstyles. For example, respondent J approaches women with relaxed hair, dreadlocks, braids, and weaves but also considers other factors like appearance and personality. Respondent K approaches women with different hairstyles, however, he stays away from weaves, wigs, and dreadlocks. Respondent D is drawn to women with different hairstyles ranging from short hair, afro, and relaxed hair. Although respondent E approaches women with different hairstyles he prefers natural hair. Respondents M and B also prefer women with natural hair.

Respondent H only approaches women with short hair because 'they appear to be real, nothing hidden' while respondent A specified that he tends to gravitate towards women with S-curl. Respondent I is drawn to women who wear weaves because he believes they are "more approachable compared to women with natural hair, which symbolises value". This shows that some men judge women based on their physical appearance, particularly hair. These men's assertions resonate with Berger's (1972, p. 46) observation that men inspect women before treating them and the way a woman looks determines how men will treat her.

However, for some the hairstyles worn by women do not matter as there are other traits a man looks for in a woman. Hairstyle and hair length do not matter for respondents F and C; they look beyond the hairstyle. Respondent L

concurred and stated that he appreciates long hair “but that is not what draws me to a woman. What draws me to a woman is intelligence”.

These findings show that contrary to black African women’s beliefs and assumptions that black African men prefer women with long straight hair, some black African men find women with short natural hair and Afrocentric hairstyles such as cornrows and braids truly attractive. The discrepancy between the women’s beliefs and reality as espoused by black African men could be because women tend to equate their own standards of beauty with the men’s. Findings revealed that black African men do not necessarily consider long hair to be the standard of beauty. They are not as enamoured with long hair as black African women believe them to be. The above responses show that black African men are more appreciative of different hair types, lengths, textures, and hairstyles.

Black Stylistation and Aestheticisation

The findings revealed that most of the sampled black African men believe that a woman’s hair and the way it is styled reveal a lot of things including age, class, and attitudes towards black stylisation/aesthetics and its cultural, financial, and psychological implications.

Symbolism of a black African woman’s hair

According to respondent B, a black African woman’s hair or hairstyles can signify manners, respect, and values. For respondent C a woman’s hair “communicates culture, dignity and a

sense of self-worth” while for others it symbolises personality. Respondent F stated that “most girls who colour-block hair like entertainment and going to clubs and those who wear expensive hairstyles like money; they are high maintenance”. According to respondent L “extreme colour like yellow may mean they are fake not real to themselves but may also be decorative. It could also mean that they are carefree”. Respondent G noted that hair “gives a bit about the person but not everything, for example someone who cuts hair on one side means they are an artist or celebrity, they do it to gain attention”. For respondent H hairstyles signify “some sort of ‘status’ in women. Cosmopolitan hair shows loose morals”. The notion of ‘cosmopolitan’ hair relates to the Western ideals of beauty and is associated with bad behaviour. Respondent K noted that hair represents how a woman presents herself to the world, her self-worth. He further argued that hair says a lot about a woman, for instance, “cornrows represent a cultured woman who has accepted herself as an African, she is confident”, adding that “hair also reflects on how a woman takes care of herself. Weaves and wigs suggest that a person is not complete, she needs to take someone’s hair to make herself complete”. The above discussion speaks to how black African men police black African women’s bodies and their appearance.

Hair can signify a woman’s age and personality. For instance, respondent L, recalled taking up issue with his wife when she braided her hair and left the ends loose. He remarked that he felt it “was not finished and looked more like what young people in their teens and twenties do” adding, “certain hairstyles bring unnecessary attention to the wearer”. For respondent L

hairstyles depict a woman's personality and he believes that "with a hairstyle that looks half-finished a woman may appear as someone who is not thorough". The above comments about the significance of hair, echo Maine's (2018, p. 122) remarks that hair tells a story about a woman's life.

The respondents seemed to be aware that in most African cultures, hairstyles have significance, they carry and convey certain meanings. For instance, respondents C and I stated that their favourite hairstyles on a black African woman are braids and dreadlocks because they 'project the traditional African culture largely associated with black people' and respondent D likes afro hairstyle because it "demonstrates pride of being African and it further leads to high self-esteem because one values being African". Afro is also respondent M's favourite hairstyle because "it makes a woman natural".

For respondent K the most favourite hairstyle in a black African woman is cornrows because "they look clean, natural and creatively done". Respondent L shared the same sentiments with K, he believes that cornrows "show how organised African hairstyles can be. This hairstyle displays skills of the person weaving/braiding hair".

Lastly, respondent J likes short hair because it reflects "a natural person in a lady, not expensive to maintain and it does not make the pillow dirty". It is worth noting that the cost-effectiveness of maintaining hair was one of the recurring themes. Most black African men noted that they prefer hairstyles that are affordable. Another issue that

was often mentioned was that good hair is clean/tidy while bad hair is dirty/unkempt. There were also some inconsistencies that were observed, for example, short hair was mentioned under both favourite and least favourite hairstyles probably because different men have different preferences owing to personal tastes and sources of influence or discourses, they draw from. The above discussion shows that examining the intersectionality of the different factors such as class, age, and gender rather than exploring each separately gives a better understanding of the multiple factors that shape black African men's hair preferences on black African women (Crenshaw, 2005, p. 283).

Hair, Gender, Wealth, and Consumption

While black African women believe that a weave gives a woman a competitive advantage (Madlela, 2018, pp. 239-240), the respondents pointed out that the relationship between hair, gender and wealth is complicated. This observation raises the question: are women who wear expensive hairstyles such as wigs and weaves rich and appealing to men? Only one man, respondent C confessed that he is not well-informed when it comes to wigs and women who wear them. The rest of the sampled men had mixed reactions, some noted that to some extent hair can signify a woman's financial status while others pointed out that wearing an expensive wig or weave does not necessarily mean that the wearer is rich because there could be a sponsor, usually a male blesser.²

² The term "blesser" is a colloquial term for sugar daddy. It is used to refer to a phenomenon where an older man, who is usually married, sponsors the

expensive lifestyle of a younger woman or several younger women in exchange of sexual favours.

Respondent E noted that some black African women who wear expensive wigs and weaves are rich “while others are provided for by people close to them”. For respondent F, it all comes down to how one defines the term “rich” and explained “if rich means having a lot of money that an individual worked for, I disagree. In South Africa, those who wear expensive hair date rich people. However, there are rich women who have expensive hair”. Respondent K believes that black African women who wear expensive hairstyles have blessers adding that “the young women are taken care of by older men. But there are also professional women who use their own money”. Respondent L remarked that appearances can be deceptive because a “woman may ask her boyfriend or husband for money to make her hair and you think she is rich” while respondent M believes that most black African women cannot afford expensive hairstyles “but are sponsored by the [male] partner”.

My research revealed other dynamics that are tied to wearing expensive weaves. Respondent G observed that some women “can budget for it over a long period of time, hence; hair cannot determine economic or financial status”. For respondent H some black African women who wear expensive weaves are rich “but others are living beyond their means”. Some respondents said wearing an expensive weave did not signify a woman’s financial status but a tendency towards following trends in the media and succumbing to societal pressures. Respondent I commented that some black African women wear expensive weaves because they are simply following trends they see on television and “they believe that weaves make them beautiful”. Respondent J stated

that black African women wear expensive hairstyles because “they just want to look attractive to modern men. Weaves are a trend and if you do not have one some people regard you as ugly. It works like make up”. Respondent B noted that these women “are not rich it is just a preference I think because I have seen poor fellows wearing expensive hair perhaps with other agendas”. For respondent D most women who wear expensive weaves do so to “subscribe to social trends”.

Most of the respondents seem to believe that men pay for the women’s hairstyles and that women style their hair to look good for men. These assertions point to gender role interpellation. Regarding hair, wealth, gender, and consumption to look good for men, some respondents pointed out that a man should take care of his partner’s hair because a woman’s hairstyle impacts on a man’s self-esteem, self-confidence, and ego. For this reason, some men have taken up issue with their partners’ hair, however, respondent G cautions that the matter should be handled tactfully “to avoid offending her and getting into a fight”. Respondent F concurred and contributed that “although it sounds like a man is controlling, the hairstyle of your partner represents both parties”.

In most African cultures, men have been socialised to believe that they are the providers and should take care of their families. The ideological state apparatus such as the media, families, and churches interpellate black African men by conditioning and training them to think in a certain way and adopt certain ideas, beliefs, and values. Interestingly, findings from my research revealed that 10 respondents do give their partners and family members money to do their hair while two do not

and one was noncommittal. Respondent M simply said, “not really” and did not elaborate on whether he gives or does not give his partner money for hair. Respondent C clearly stated that he does not give his partner money for haircare because “she never asks, however, if she did I would” and respondent H’s partner maintained “her hairstyles until she stopped wearing wigs”.

Respondent B, who wants his partner to remain natural “only provided money for hair food but not extensions”. Some respondents like D give their partners money when they request; others contribute on a monthly basis. For instance, respondent I contributes once a month to the styling of his partner’s hair and respondent K gives his daughter R700 per month. For respondent F it depends on the longevity of her hairstyle but on average he gives her “R300 every two to three months. It also depends on whether I have money or not”. Respondent G contributes R400 every three months “otherwise she pays for her hair”. Respondent J, who is currently single used to give her R500-R1,000; “R1,500 was the highest money I ever gave to her for hair”. Respondent E does not contribute often, he gives R2,500 per annum while respondent L, who is married to a black African woman says his wife “controls the family’s money and its safe in her hands”, so she is the one responsible for drawing up the budget and deciding how much she allocates towards her hair needs.

Most respondents pointed out that they prefer hair/hairstyles that are easy to maintain, cost effective and not expensive to maintain. The above shows that to some extent black African men influence the way black African women take care and style their hair through financial contributions. Black African men also impact on black women’s

stylistic as evident in that some men discourage women from wearing certain hairstyles or using hair enhancements.

One major takeaway regarding hair, gender, and consumption to look good for men is captured succinctly by respondent L, who observed that “if you want everyone to appreciate you, you will fail. Just be who you are. If you have grey hair leave it after all in most African cultures, it is linked to wisdom and respect”. He encouraged black African women to be “themselves not go wanting to be what they are not”, adding “no matter how hard you try to please people you will never please everyone”.

Racial Symbolism of Hair, Attitudes Towards Hair Alteration and Hair Enhancements

The selected black African men’s attitudes towards hair alteration using colour and relaxers; and enhancements such as weaves, wigs and extensions varied. Some stated that they are “not bothered”, “do not have reservations, those who prefer it must wear it” and “do not have a problem with that” while others categorically stated that they hate them.

With regards to hair enhancements, respondent I expressed a dislike for extensions while respondent G thinks “extensions used for braiding are fine, to some extent they look nice”. It is important to note that using extensions to braid hair represents hybrid black stylisation. Many respondents noted that they disliked wigs and weaves because they “hide the true self of an African woman”. Some black African men have taken up issue with a partner or a relative, who uses hair enhancements. For instance, respondent H persuaded his partner to stop wearing wigs while respondent K

had issues with a friend's child who was wearing a wig because it "looked like thatch". Respondent J hates hair enhancements because they make a woman look good until they take them off, "then you see a different look or person".

Findings revealed that hair alteration was perceived to be much better compared to wearing hair enhancements like wigs and weaves. Some respondents said they do not have a problem with hair alteration using relaxers and dyes. Respondent I stated that he did not mind someone altering her hair because it shows that they "really care about their hair" and respondent M stated that he can "live and does live with it [a woman who alters her hair]" although he prefers is natural.

Others emphasised on the woman's comfort with respondent C noting that he is not bothered "as this depends on the woman's preference, comfort and what makes her confident". Respondent E and C agreed with C adding that "people must use or have any hair type that they feel comfortable in". Respondent J also noted that he is fine with hair alteration if "ladies feel comfortable and free".

However, hair alteration was still viewed negatively by other respondents because they believe black African women who alter their hair are trying to emulate white women. According to respondent H black African women "are changing who they are" and respondent L perceives hair alteration as "going to extremes trying to imitate white women" and encourages black African women to be proud of they are.

These observations brought to the fore the issue of racial symbolism of hair and highlighted that hair is racialised and dichotomised into "black"

and "white". Some respondents underscored affirming black pride through hair. Authentic blackness was associated with afro hair, Afrocentric hairstyles such as cornrows and braids while straight weaves and wigs were believed to symbolise whiteness. Some respondents pointed out that black hair is intricately tied to black authenticity, and noted that black African women who wear weaves, relax, and dye their hair are not black enough but are trying to emulate white people. Findings of my South African study are similar to Ingrid Banks' (2000, pp. 43-44) American research, which found that hair altering techniques such as relaxing or straightening are indicative of "a hatred of black physical features and an emulation of white physical characteristics".

Respondent H noted that by wearing weaves and wigs black African women think they are enhancing their beauty "whereas they are actually undermining their Africanness". Respondent K concurred with H and stressed that wigs and weaves send a message to the world that "black women do not accept themselves as beautiful, so they have to enhance their beauty and looks by borrowing other nations' hair, which is a sign of weakness". In addition, K noted that wigs and weaves are "unnatural and [wearing them] shows that a person does not accept themselves as they are and lack confidence. It makes women look weak, they lack character and expose themselves to ridicule as they cause confusion whether a person is black or white".

Some respondents voiced their concerns against the use of "fake" hair and wearing other people's hair. Respondent I hates hair enhancements because he does not support anything

that is “artificial and un-African” while respondent L has no problem with relaxing but has issues with wearing white people’s hair. Respondent F disclosed that he supports the use of dye and relaxers “as long as the hair belongs to her [the woman]”. For respondent G relaxing is fine but he felt that dyeing with loud colours was not good. These men’s remarks echo Pinho’s (2006, p. 275) findings, which revealed that some black Brazilian women who straightened their hair were “accused of denying the ‘natural blackness’, or of desiring to whiten themselves”. The above discussion introduces the subject of policing black women’s hair. The respondents seem to be echoing prominent figures such as the late South African jazz musician Hugh Masekela, former South African president Jacob Zuma and South African Minister of Finance Tito Mboweni, who have spoken out against the practice of altering hair among black African women. This shows that as much as black hair is racialised it is also gendered.

Altering hair and wearing wigs and weaves was also seen as a sign of lack of confidence. For instance, respondent D felt that many women wear wigs and weaves because “they are not comfortable with their natural hair”. The same sentiment was echoed by respondent F, who commented that “those ladies lack confidence on their own hair”. However, respondent F also pointed out that some women resort to wigs and weaves because it is time consuming to maintain natural hair. Wearing hair enhancements was also linked to media influence with respondent B stating that some women watch too much TV and are influenced by what they see on the screen.

Other respondents stressed that there was nothing wrong with hair

alteration and enhancements and using them does not mean one is emulating white people. Some of the sampled black African men, including responded E underscored that everyone has “a right to have hair type of her choice”. Respondent A felt that there was “nothing wrong with taking pride in one’s looks” while respondent C noted that what is “culturally acceptable changes with time and is a mix of a variety of sources. Being black is not exclusive to hairstyle”. Findings revealed that black African men believe that black African women wear wigs for other reasons not because they want to emulate white people. Respondent G explained, “they are just looking for something to make themselves look nice. For some it is to conceal a receding hairline”. Respondent G’s insights resonate with Mokoena’s (2017, pp. 137-138) observations that some black women are “forced by circumstances to wear wigs, weaves, or relaxed hair”. Respondent I stated that these women “want to be part of beauties and they believe that imported weaves and wigs gives them beauty” while for respondent M “the commercialisation of wigs and weaves has grown so much that black women use them without much consideration”.

The above discussion appears to suggest that the selected black African men prefer both Western and Afrocentric aesthetics. The assertions also highlight how the dynamics of natural, naturalised, Afrocentric and Westerncentric notions feed into black stylisation.

Sources of Influence

The culturally available discourses that were cited as sources of influence included religion, family members,

counter-hegemonic initiatives, and celebrity culture showcased in the media and on the red carpet.

Some respondents reported that the way the women they know, including family members, friends, and colleagues, maintain their hair influences their views and hair preferences in romantic partners. Respondent B likes natural hair and attributes his preference to being a Christian and influences of hairstyles worn by family members, that is, his mother and sisters. He introduces the religious angle, a thread that was developed by respondent K, who believes that one's religion and culture play a role on the issue of hair and hairstyles. He gave an example of some churches that do not allow women to relax their hair or to wear wigs and weaves and noted that he believes that in some cultures, women are required to cover their hair "probably because men are insecure".

Others like respondent E stated that the women they know keep short hair and also wear weaves and wigs, but their styles do not have a bearing on his hair preferences in a romantic partner because he does "not go by the hairstyle but rather the character of the person". Respondent K, whose relatives wear long waist-length braids with beads, dreadlocks sourced from other people's hair does not approach women with dreadlocks because he has "seen dirty dreadlocks" and this has influenced his perceptions. Respondent L stated that for lack of time and due to problems with hair growth, his relatives wear wigs, and some relax their hair while those with a lot of time sit down and braid their hair. However, their hairstyling choices do not influence his hair preferences in a romantic partner because he likes natural hair and

"appreciates ladies with long natural hair".

My research found that most of the respondents were influenced by Afrocentric views as well as new global trends such as cosmopolitan and Afropolitan views. Many confessed that their perceptions were influenced by the trends and looks that they saw in magazines and on the red carpet. Respondent F noted that "celebrities like Beyoncé with their beautiful hairstyles motivate you as a man to buy for your partner. As a man you want your woman to be well-presented and it also boosts your confidence that I am dating a beautiful lady". The above is a reference to the interpellation of celebrity culture and Transatlantic influence, and the extent to which black female celebrities based in Hollywood influence trends in South Africa.

A tendency towards glocalisation was also evident. Some respondents warned against copying global trends; respondent G cautioned black African women from imitating styles because famous people are wearing them as "it may not look good on them since people are different", adding "women like to imitate, they must just be themselves". Those leaning more towards the Afrocentric view cited the example of Miss South Africa, who won an award with her natural hair. Noteworthy is that men who like wigs and weaves such as respondent C are influenced more by new global trends such as cosmopolitanism in the form of the looks, they see in magazines and on the red carpet than women they know, for instance, family members and friends.

Owing to the debates and conscientisation around black hair in recent years, it was expected that black African men would demonstrate a high preference for Afrocentric hairstyles on

black African women. Findings revealed that among the selected black African men some do prefer Afrocentric hairstyles, such as cornrows and braids while others like long, relaxed hair, wigs and weaves, however, some are also drawn to Westerncentric hairstyles.

Findings revealed that the ongoing black hair debates in South Africa do not seem to have a lot of influence on many black African men who participated in the study; other sources such as family, religion and personal tastes seem to shape hair preferences and black African men's perceptions about beauty standards and stylisation.

CONCLUSION

The findings revealed both new narratives and old patterns that shape the intersectionality between hair, race, wealth, and gender. The selected black African men highlighted that a black African woman's hair carries significance, and it can be easily manipulated to achieve different looks and identities.

The men, who were surveyed revealed that on one hand, women with long hair are seen as beautiful, sexy, feminine, and patient while on the other hand, long hair was perceived to be disruptive since it gets on the way during intimate moments and hair strands can clog the shower drain. Findings showed that short-haired women come off as sexy and real, and men are attracted to them because their hair is less expensive to maintain. However, respondents who believe that short hair is undesirable noted that it makes a woman look boyish. My findings are in line with Erasmus' (1997, p. 16) observation that "hair is gendered, racialised and sexualised".

Some of the most cited favourite hairstyles are afro, braids, short hair, and cornrows while the least favourite included weaves and wigs because they are unnatural and black African women who wear them are believed to be emulating white people. In addition, some men are attracted to women with natural hair because it brings out a woman's natural beauty whereas others are drawn to weaves and wigs because they believe women who wear them are more approachable. These findings suggest that racism, gender, sexism, and class intersect and impact black African women's stylisation.

There are both similarities and variations between men and women's perceptions relating to hair and hairstyles that black African men find desirable on black African women. On the one hand, findings showed that most of the sampled black African men are open-minded, they believe that women should be free to choose the hairstyles, hair types and lengths they want to wear. The word "comfort" was used by many black African men who felt that women should wear any hairstyle if they are comfortable with it. Norms and values keep changing and the men believe that black African women have the power to choose what they want. However, having said that, on the other hand, some men confessed that they have taken up issue with their partners' hairstyles.

The study found that although black men do like long hair, they do not venerate it to the level black African women think they do. Contrary to what black African women think, findings showed that men are more appreciative of different hair types, hairstyles, and hair lengths. Although they have preferred length and type most said they approach women with different

hairstyles, type, and length. This suggests that hair preference is a matter of personal choice. The deciding factor for most of the men is that the hair should be clean and tidy. The respondents agreed that dirty, greasy, unkempt hair is not good. More than the length, texture, type of hairstyle, the emphasis was on cleanliness, neatness and being tidy. The results seem to suggest that black African men do not hold the limited view that black African women assume they hold, they are open-minded and find women with different hair textures, lengths, and styles attractive.

Regarding discourses, it emerged from the findings that the men are not influenced by the counter-hegemonic initiatives per se, they were other sources of influence that shaped their preferences. Hair preferences are largely dependent on a man's lived experiences including socialisation, beliefs, and personal tastes. Family members and friends influence a man's perceptions and preferences, for example a respondent whose female relatives have natural hair prefers short natural hair in a romantic partner.

One of the strengths is that the article uses a questionnaire with open-ended questions and presents the opinions and attitudes of the sampled black African men. However, although the findings offer an insight into the respondents' perceptions more could have been gained through use of face-to-face in-depth interviews. The findings cannot be generalised, they only represent the views of the selected black African men, who participated in the study. Future research could benefit from using a bigger sample and in-depth interviews.

REFERENCES

Alubafi, M., Ramphalile, M. and Rankoana, A., 2018. The shifting image of black women's hair in Tshwane (Pretoria), South Africa. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 4(1), p.1471184.

Barnard, R. (2000). "Contesting Beauty." In *Senses of Culture: South African Culture Studies*, edited by S Nuttall and C-A Michael. Cape Town: Oxford University Press:344-362.

Baloyi, T. (2021). Cornwall Hill College: Pupil breaks down as she details racism at school. [O] Available: <https://www.thesouthafrican.com/news/cornwall-hill-college-pupil-breaks-down-as-she-details-racism-at-school/> Accessed on 22 July 2022.

Bartky, S.L. 1998 (1988). "Foucault, Femininity and the Modernisation of Patriarchal Powers." In *The Politics of Women's Bodies*, edited by R Weitz. New York: Oxford University Press:25-45.

Bartky, S.L. (1990). *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression*. New York: Routledge.

Berger, J. (1972). *Ways of Seeing*. London: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books.

Beauvoir, Simone de, 2010 [1949], *Le Deuxième Sexe*, Paris: Éditions Gallimard. Translated as *The Second Sex*,

- Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier (trans.), London: Vintage.
- Bordo, S. (1993). *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Boy, 12, banned from school for 'cornrow' hairstyle takes his battle to High Court. [O]: Available <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1385591/Boy-12-banned-school-cornrow-hairstyle-takes-battle-High-Court.html>. Accessed on 12 July 2017.
- Burkins, A., (2022). "Strands of Power, Tools of Resistance: Black Hair and Consciousness as Concept and Medium". Masters dissertation. University of North Carolina.
- Collins, H.P., & Sirma, B. (2016). *Intersectionality*, Cambridge: Polity.
- Crenshaw, K. (2005). "Mapping the margins: intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color (1994)." In *Violence Against Women: Classic Papers*, edited by RK Bergen, JL Edleson and CM Renzetti. Boston: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon:282-316.
- Donahoo, S., 2021. Why We Need a National CROWN Act. *Laws*, 10(2): p.26.
- Erasmus, Z. (1997). 'Oe! my hare gaan huistoe': hair-styling as black cultural practice. *Agenda* 32:11-16.
- Girl says Florida school threatening expulsion over her 'natural hair'. Fox News.
- [O] Available: <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2013/11/26/florida-school-threatens-girl-with-expulsion-over-her-natural-hair-report-says.html>. Accessed on 12 July 2017.
- Hakim, C. (2011). *Erotic Capital: the Power of Attraction in the Boardroom and the Bedroom*. Basic.
- hooks, b. (1990). *Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics*, Boston, MA: South End Press.
- Hunter, M.L. (2005). *Race, Gender, and the Politics of Skin Tone*. New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.
- Lindeque, M. (2020). Clicks Pulls all Tresemme Products in Wake of Protests over Racist Hair ad. [O] Available: <https://ewn.co.za/2020/09/08/clicks-pulls-all-tresemme-products-in-wake-of-racist-hair-ad> Accessed on 22 July 2022.
- Madlela, K. (2018). "Black Hair Politics: the Representation of Black African Women on *True Love* Magazine Front Covers and Hair Advertisements." Doctoral dissertation. University of Pretoria.
- Maine, M. (2018). Hair and the 'Body-self' of Women with Body Image Despair and Eating Disorders." In *Feminist Interrogations of Women's Head Hair: Crown of Glory and Shame*, edited by Barak-Brandes S and Kama A. London: Routledge:111-123.
- Masina, N.L. (2010). "Black like me: representations of black women in advertisements placed in contemporary South African magazines." Master of Arts dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

- Mcdowell, A. (2000). "The art of the Ponytail." In *Body outlaws: young women write about body image and identity*, edited by O Edut. Seattle: Seal Press:124-132.
- McNair, B. (2013). *Porno? Chic!: How Pornography Changed the World and Made it a Better Place*. London: Routledge.
- Mokoena, H. (2017). '... if Black Girls Had Long Hair'. *Image and Text*, 29:127-144.
- Mulvey, L. (1989). *Visual and Other Pleasures*. London: Macmillan.
- Ngoepe, K. (2016). Parktown Girls High amends hair policy following racism claims at Pretoria school [O] Available: <http://mg.co.za/article/2016-08-31-parktown-girls-high-amends-hair-policy-following-racism-claims-at-pretoria-school>. Accessed on 30 September 2016.
- Paglia, C. (1992). *Sex, Art and American Culture*. New York: Vintage.
- Pather, R. (2016). Pretoria Girls High School pupil: I was instructed to fix myself as if I was broken. [O] Available: <https://mg.co.za/article/2016-08-29-pretoria-girls-high-school-pupil-i-was-instructed-to-fix-myself-as-if-i-was-broken/>. Accessed on 8 July 2022.
- Pinho, P. (2006). "Afro-aesthetics in Brazil." In *Beautiful/ugly: African and diaspora aesthetics*, edited by S Nuttall. Durham and London: Duke University Press:266-289.
- Tate, S.A. (2009). *Black Beauty: Aesthetics, Stylistation, Politics*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Tate, S.A. (2017). "Libidinal Economies of Black Hair: Subverting the Governance of Strands, Subjectivities and Politics". *Image and Text* 29:94-110.
- Thompson, C. (2009). "Black Women, Beauty, and Hair as a Matter of Being". *Women's Studies* 38:831-856. Taylor and Francis.