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Title: Positionality, digital society and the global south. A feminist ethic approach for older women.

The discourse on older persons and technology has opened up an important view regarding the issues of development, access and agency. In global South countries such as South Africa, older persons who are women are faced with the role of being a care giver to digitally literate children, more so their grandchildren who have an even higher level of this literacy. As older women in an Africa society, they have been culturally valued as the gatekeeper/custodians of African value systems. Further, their wisdom and caring nature plays an integral role in preserving these values systems within the ever-changing society. In light of colonisation, the social structure in Africa became exposed to a patriarchal system of power, (Mikaere, 2019), social stratification on the basis of wealth and ownership of goods, and racially motivated spatial control amongst other things. Accordingly, this spatial control further informed certain groups of people to live in rural homesteads, or in urban cities for work because of their status as working class labourers in mines or factories. Yet, there was a minority group that lived in suburbs which were considered to provide be a better quality of life by being closer to useful amenities, such as good schools, public service, public pools, libraries, etc. This positions older black women at the peripheries of gender and socio-economics, and living in disadvantaged communities. It is at this intersection that the experience of older women from disadvantaged communities in the global South becomes so important to explore. Moreover, in the context of what has now become a digital society, there is an enhancement of their positionality in the mentioned peripheries. To illustrate is UNHCR (2024:1), revealing UN's definition of older person being 60-65 years old, placing them in the cohort from baby boomers to earlier generations when it comes to digital literacies. With their minimum exposure to technology from their infancy compared to later cohorts, older persons are lagging behind that of recent generations. Older women are being necessitated to adapt to and carve their role of care and preserving African values in the digital society. The objective of this paper to draw on from focus group discussions of twenty older black women from a disadvantaged community in the global South, in particular South Africa. Their agency in roles of care in the milieu of their care giver roles to their digitally advanced teenage grandchildren serves as an important reference point to analyse this possibly altered role of care. As a result, this paper makes the claim that a feminist ethic approach is fit to analyse the positionality and agency of older black women in their role of care in a digital society.

Mikaere, A. (2019). Colonisation and the imposition of patriarchy. *A Collection of Writings 1999-2019 Volume II*, 114. First Published 2019 by Te Kotahi Research Institute Hamilton, Aotearoa/ New Zealand

