

focused on the promotion of equal contract and property rights for women and the opposition to chattel marriage and ownership of married women (and their children) by their husbands (Ghorfati & Medini, 2015). Tired of being housewives, these women wanted to study and have their own careers. During a strike outside the U.S. White House in 1977, the women in attendance were well dressed in their Sunday outfits and did not resist arrest by the police – that they were white, middle-class women both appalled and appealed to the public (Kroløkke & Sørensen, 2006). Until these protests, women were not allowed to do anything without the approval of men especially in public places and this domination existed in all fields (Ghorfati & Medini, 2015). This wave was also supported by Black women, such as Maria Stewart, Sojourner Truth, and Frances E. W. Harper, who stood up for the rights of women of colour. Moreover, they advocated against the stereotypes that were placed on women, such as women not being outspoken in public because their place was at home, meeting the needs of their husbands and children (Kroløkke & Sørensen, 2006). Essentially, the goal of this wave was to open opportunities for women to be able to work, vote and have access to education. The formal recognition of women’s citizenship was the first step in an uneven, unpredictable and often contradictory process towards gender equitable citizenship (McEwan, 2001; Naggita-Musoke, 2001). In the U.S., women began attending university in the mid-1800s, and in South Africa, white women were allowed to register as students in the 1880s (UCT Online, 2011), in both cases in very small numbers.

During this wave, South African women had their historic 1956 Women’s March. The march happened after the ANC Women’s League led women from various political and ideological backgrounds to form the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) (Thorpe, 2020). The project of the FEDSAW was to support the wider anti-pass campaign, and to protest the overall ill treatment of women in South Africa. Approximately 20 000 women from diverse backgrounds across the country marched to the Union Buildings on August 9, 1956, to protest against pass laws; this march was a turning point for South Africa because it saw women’s combined abilities to define a common political claim against the state (Thorpe, 2020). But in spite of these protests and advancements, domestic relations did not come under state scrutiny and within the domestic sphere “private patriarchies’ continued to pose practical hurdles to the realisation of full

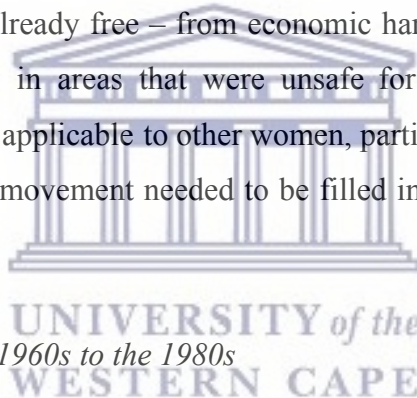
citizenship by women (Nyamu-Musembi, 2007, 177). Women's responsibilities consisted of taking care of their families. This meant that the expectations of women in their homes, especially in relation to marriage and motherhood, were not much affected or altered by their wider public participation, such as at university or in the workplace. While this wave was interwoven with other reform movements to enable women to be more involved in the world of work in all fields and not only in politics or voting (Ghorfati & Medini, 2015), there was still a strong line between what happened in the home and what happened outside of the home. The private sphere and women's full citizenship still needed to be addressed.

It is important to note that first wave feminism and the suffragette movement was led by – and was *for* – white middle class women. Feminist Betty Friedman's famous phrase, "the problem that has no name", often quoted to describe the condition of women in this society, actually referred to the plight of a select group of college-educated, middle and upper class married white women-housewives bored with leisure, with the home and children, who wanted more out of life (hooks, 1984, 1). These ideas from a great feminist writer failed to discuss who would be called in to take care of the children and maintain the home if more women like herself were freed from their house labour and given equal access with white men to the professions (hooks, 1984). She did not speak of the needs of women without men, without children, without homes, and she ignored the existence of non-white women and poor white women (hooks, 1984). As powerful as this wave was in influencing the waves that followed and feminists' ideas today, it only focused on the perspectives and oppression that white women faced, ignoring most women in the world.

In relation to this study, the events and circumstances in this first wave are useful in understanding how the exclusion of women of colour within this wave contributed to the undermining of the issues that they alone faced within society. Forbidding black women to vote, excluding them from public office, and withholding equitable treatment in the criminal justice system all substantiates the political subordination of black women (Collins, 2002). As a result, black women's issues which were contributed to by racism, which did not affect white

women, and their economic position in which they held in society, so they needed the inclusion of their issues in the women's movements.

It is important to note that South African society differed significantly from that of the U.S. and Europe at this time, although the ideas informing the place that women should occupy in the home with the family found expression here in South Africa, too. South African black women during this period were only working within wage labour, taking positions as domestic workers, street vendors and factory workers; those who stayed home, deferred to their fathers and husbands (Summers, 1996). Had these South African black women challenged their fathers or husbands, they were threatening the social, racial, and cultural boundaries drawn (Summers, 1996). The first wave brought forward the injustices that women were subjected to; however, it could not distinguish between types of these injustices as the perspective from which they are viewed is one of privilege. Privilege in the sense that many of the white women fighting for freedoms were in many senses already free – from economic hardship, from experiencing racist discrimination, and from living in areas that were unsafe for them and their families. This experience was something more applicable to other women, particularly working class and black women therefore this gap in the movement needed to be filled in order to build a more inclusive movement.

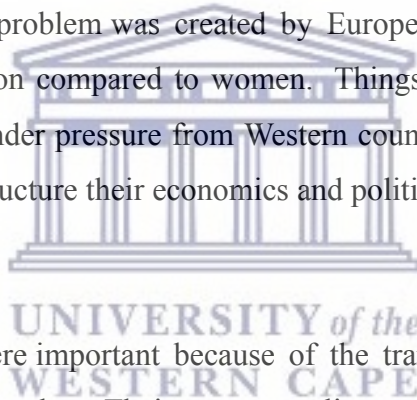


2.3.2 *The second feminist wave: 1960s to the 1980s*

The second wave of feminism was largely concerned with issues such as equality and the necessity to end discrimination. This wave was in the 1960s and 1970s when protests were centered around women's inequality not only in the context of women's political rights but in the areas of family, sexuality and work. Carol Hanisch, in her essay "The Personal is Political" (1970), coined this slogan that became synonymous with the second wave and key to this branch of feminism was a strong belief that women could collectively empower one other (DuBois, 2019; Kroløkke & Sørensen, 2006). The ideals of this part of women's liberation – eliminating racism, sexism, and class inequality – saw cultural and political inequalities as inextricably linked. Thus, radical second wave feminists were characterised by a claim for sisterhood and solidarity because they believed that the societal inequalities that women faced in

society were all linked one way or another (Kroløkke & Sørensen, 2006). The movement encouraged women to understand aspects of their own personal lives as deeply politicised and reflective of a sexist structure of power. This despite differences among women and a simultaneous investment in the slogans “Woman’s struggle is class struggle” and “The personal is political” (DuBois, 2019; Kroløkke & Sørensen, 2006).

In both the U.S. and African contexts as women began getting involved in women’s movements, they pushed for the notion of equality to be extended to their lives and circumstances as well. In South Africa there was a shift to debates in neighbourhoods within women’s organisations and in trade union locals that led to women expressing the need for social and cultural transformation, in addition to political transformation (Albertyn & Hassim, 2003). In the wider Sub-Saharan African context, women started to be involved in the women’s movement in the 1970s in response to a gendered political crisis in Africa that resulted from a larger social structural problem. This social structural problem was created by European colonisation where African men were given more recognition compared to women. Things started changing in the 1980s when African countries came under pressure from Western countries and international agencies who forced male leaders to restructure their economics and political systems, integrating women into development.



For South Africa the 1980s were important because of the transformation to black women’s lives in terms of their political freedom. Their greater quality was assumed to have been part and parcel of this freedom, yet relatively little transformation was witnessed within their homes (Iwuchukwu, 2013). During this period, the explicit prioritisation of the anti-apartheid struggle, even by women leaders, limited the process of analysing and addressing women’s grassroots concerns about rape, battery, and other forms of violence and inequality in the private sphere (Albertyn & Hassim, 2003). As a result, the tensions between upholding equality as a public norm and the everyday practices of inequality might have been easier to navigate had the women's movement found the space to explore the ideas of emancipation that were emerging from grassroots struggles. Put more bluntly, had feminism been allowed the space to deepen as an ideological discourse (Albertyn & Hassim, 2003), more progress might have been made.

This struggle for emancipation within the private sphere was also witnessed in the U.S. Families had a specific authority structure, namely, the father who is the head of the house and the main breadwinner, the woman is a stay-at-home wife and mother, with children. As mentioned before, the inequalities that occurred *within* the home were not of focus within the first wave; however, they were in the second. The family was defined as a natural or biological arrangement based on heterosexual attraction and supported by government policy (O'Grady, 2018). The idea of this family is organised around an understanding of the biological core – that men and women only could get married and create families – and this idea led to it being state-sanctioned. As a result, heterosexual marriage conferred legitimacy not only on the family structure itself but on children born in the family (Andersen, 1991; Thorne, 1992). This meant that marriage was the only valid choice for women, especially women in the middle and upper classes. This was the case both in South Africa and in the Global North, where heterosexual marriages and family arrangements were heavily sanctioned by the state. Heterosexual marriages were sanctioned because women were doing the labour at home and men were doing their labour outside and at work. These acts reproduced the family structure by reinforcing the idea that women belonged only in the private sphere and men belonged in both spheres however their domain was in the public sphere. The government sanctions were primarily to protect the idea of the home and of the family, that the domestic idea of labour had to be protected, women had to stay at home otherwise the idea would be dismantled. Kids would have to be taken to day-care; nannies would be hired resulting in the non-existent of a nuclear family. Marital supremacy – the legal privileging of marriage – is, and always has been, deeply intertwined with inequalities of race, class, gender, and region (Mayeri, 2017).

Family in this wave of feminism was very much about white parents and their children, nuclear family in lovely suburban areas. Black families were not part of this idea not only because of race however what race meant for ones' socio-economic status. In South Africa black women had to be domestic workers, cleaning and looking after white women's homes and children and therefore could not be at home raising their own children. This was the similar case for African American families, and this is why there were growing movements that included women of

colour and indigenous women in search of sisterhood and solidarity (Rampton, 2008). These feminists wanted to show the relationship between race, class, and gender oppression to show that there was more to the movement than freeing women from the home. The idea of the home itself needed to be challenged and changed. Second wave feminism continues to coexist with what is termed third-wave feminism.

2.3.3 The third feminist wave: 1990s to present

The third wave of feminism arose as a response to perceived failures of the first and second waves, including the continued focus on the oppression of white women and ignorance of the differences in oppression experienced by women of different races, sexual preferences, classes, and age groups (O'Mara & Lorde, 2000). Third wavers seek to challenge or avoid the over-emphasised experiences of upper- and middle-class white women. Further, they propose a different politics that promotes a holistic idea of women and challenges the notion of universal womanhood and articulates ways in which groups of women confront complex intersections of gender, sexuality, race, class, and age-related concerns (Kroløkke & Sørensen, 2006). According to Spelman (1988) and King (1988) this wave aims to avoid hierarchised oppressions or treat one form as more fundamental than another.

A further failing of the earlier waves was that they were unable to find a way of understanding multiple oppressions as simultaneous, inseparable, and interlocking. This conceptualisation was rooted in the work of theorists of the 1980s: Kimberlé Crenshaw, a scholar of gender and critical race theory who coined the term intersectionality to describe the ways in which different forms of oppression intersect (O'Grady, 2018), and Judith Butler (1999), who argued that gender and sex are separate, and that gender is performative. Crenshaw and Butler's combined influence has been foundational to the third wave's embrace of the fight for all women's rights as a fundamental part of intersectional feminism. The third wave has been more inclusive, as it has more consciously linked social location, women's experiences, and their epistemic perspectives. Since the 1990s, feminists from the Global South have had a profound influence on the relationship between feminism and nationalism, and on the centrality of struggles for recognition, freedom, and decolonisation in feminist thought.

The history of women in South Africa is the history of their oppression due to patriarchy – a system of domination which persists in South Africa, and has done so since pre-colonial times (Pretorius, 2006). However, in the case of black women, it has been justly argued that under apartheid they suffered from the triple oppression of racism, sexism and classism which characterises the country's history (Pretorius, 2006). As many feminist commentators have noted, representational claims can all too easily be incorporated into liberal democracies in ways that do not challenge the fundamental constitution of the public sphere as narrow and distinct from the private sphere (Albertyn & Hassim, 2003). In 1994 the Charter for Women's Effective Equality – a kind of manifesto for the women's movement – did open some space in which to consider how the notion of women's empowerment might be more concretely specified (Albertyn & Hassim, 2003). However, the inclusion of a clause that guaranteed substantive equality that would assist in removing the structural determinants of inequality proved one of the most challenging and revealing obstacles to gender equality. Traditional leaders objected to its application to customary law, demanding that communities that are subject to customary law and traditional authority should remain exclusively so (Albertyn & Hassim, 2003). This reluctance from traditional leaders represents the push and pull of society in recognition of the necessity of giving women substantive equality, of empowering black women to the same extent as white women and black and white men.



Substantive equality is the explicit or implied starting point for most laws and policies affecting women, as it addresses areas of private subordination (the family, freedom from violence, reproductive choice) (Hassim & Gouws, 1998). The main argument of the feminists of the '90s was that substantive equality was the socio-economic conditions of women's lives that required that they be given the right to choose, protection against violence or equal decision-making powers in the family (Kroløkke & Sørensen, 2006). The commitment to substantive equality required sensitivity back then and requires that same sensitivity today. Many black women are still under-educated about and under-served by these rights and freedoms, not only within their private spaces but as well as in their public. The feminists of this wave paved the way for other feminists to look beyond gender inequalities.

2.4 Ground-up, community-based women's organising

The power of community-based organising is in the sense of justice about an issue and the power of ordinary people to influence people in powerful positions, whose power always depends on cooperation from many, many people. Although such movements occur all over, it is quite hard to trace where they first occurred or even termed. Zajicek et. al (2003) noted that periodisation based on the national movement and in major cities does not accurately describe the course of the movement at the grassroots level in smaller cities. Furthermore, the lack of attention to what happened outside large cities has obscured the centrality of the movements to the development of women-oriented services and the greater integration of women into the economic and political structure in mid-size (Zajicek et al., 2003). As unclear as this term may be, the way it is and has been used differs in every society.

The 18th century organisers of women's movements in Europe created motherist movements, deploying the language of nurturance and women's responsibility for the children and family life (Boris, 2002). They protested food costs, staged anti-eviction demonstrations, and lobbied for price and rent controls (Boris, 2002). These women were black and white, Polish, and Jewish, native-born, urban and rural. It can be noted that these movements started from community gardens, street art and neighborhood watch campaigns, rallies, protests, and eventually led to large-scale revolutions. These bottom-up initiatives enabled these women to voice their concerns and act as agents of change. In contrast to the power structures implemented by traditional top-down organisations, so-called grassroots activism is often spontaneous, non-hierarchical, and volunteer-driven. Analysing how the rural women's community-based activism in Iowa started – in relation to the suffrage movement – Egge (2009) argued that while some of the reasons are unclear, what is clear is that these women sought power over resources and the ability to bring about change in their lives. These women fought for this by relating their activism to everyday experiences as mothers, as farmworkers, and as members of the agricultural community. Similarly, Devine (2013) noted that with their role within the family and larger rural community, women saw themselves as vital partners in the farm household who provided important economic support to the prosperity of the family and community. The men accepted women's involvement within the agricultural community, and rural women could participate in political

activities under the pretense of the traditional model of farm families (Egge, 2009). It is important to note that the community-based activism influenced the private and the public sphere as seen in the case of Iowa; however, whether they were successful in the private sphere is more difficult to measure than that of the public. It can be argued that this connection between the two spheres plays into the assumption that once women have been empowered in the public sphere, they will become more empowered in the private sphere.

Bottom-up approaches and movements make use of a variety of strategies to fundraise, increase voter registration and encourage political engagement. These movements can give you the momentum you need to address a community concern, win an election, or advance a public policy agenda. As indicated earlier, in South Africa, the drafting of the Women's Charter by the Federation of South African Women resulted in the organisation of the historic mass anti-pass campaign on 9 August 1956 – a day which is now celebrated as National Women's Day (Hassim, 2014). Their concept of equality referred to substantive equality. By this, they meant attention to the systemic ways in which gender power operates through both the economy and family-household (Hassim, 2014). Other organisations such as the United Women's Congress (UWCO) in the Western Cape, the Federation of Transvaal Women (FEDTRAW) and the Natal Organisation of Women (NOW) organised women around the core of issues which stemmed from local community concerns (Hassim & Gouws, 1998). These concerns were of immediate relevance to their gendered responsibilities (or in Molyneux's terms, their practical gender needs) such as service delivery in the township's rentals, and health; these became the basis for the emergence of a grassroots consciousness of gender (their strategic gender interests) (Bealle et al, 1987; Jaffee, 1987 & Patel, 1988). Their membership included veterans of the 1950s women's struggles, young black women (both educated and working-class) and a small number of white academic and professional women (Hassim & Gouws, 1998).

According to Michau (2007), community mobilisation adds up individual interventions, strives to build on what is achieved by the group, and has an overview of how various activities will slowly come together to change the problematic gender inequality norms that women face in society. This mobilisation is responsive, participatory, and is based on a holistic analysis of the root cause of the subordination against women within their homes and in their public lives. It is

this mobilisation that is relevant to this study: how Gatesville’s women’s mobilisation empowers participants, and whether it enables them to challenge the gendered issues they face in their home as women, mothers and wives. Further, whether they challenge the gendered issues they face as women and leaders in their community.

In conclusion this chapter reviewed literature on women’s mobilisation and the women’s movements associated with the three dominant waves of feminism, and it has linked this to community-based activism and how influential ‘ground-up’ or ‘grassroots’ activities can be for those partaking in them. This analysis is helpful in understanding how women’s activism can empower the women who directly participate as well as indirectly change the communities and societies they are part of.

The following chapter looks at the theory that will be used to analyse the data in the study.



CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, building on the previous chapter that looked at the women's movement, and its evolution across distinct waves of feminism – I will discuss feminist theory. In particular, because this study is focused on exploring and understanding women's participation in both the public and private sphere, and the possibilities for emancipation in one to influence equality in the other, I will explore radical feminist theory. Further, because the women in my case study of Gatesville may experience multiple forms of inequality or discrimination at one time, I will explore intersectional feminist theory as an additional aspect to this framework.

Throughout this discussion that follows, I will define and situate the key concepts employed in this framework: patriarchy, (in)equality, sexism and oppression.

3.2 Radical feminist theory

The first and most fundamental theme of radical feminism is that women as a social group are oppressed by men as a social group and that this oppression is the primary oppression for women. Radical feminist theory gives my study a language with which to talk about the public-private space issue and Intersectionality gives me the language to talk about the different forms this common oppression takes for poor women, for black women. It could also extend to disabled women and queer women. Radical feminism stresses that emancipation or equality on male terms is not a total revolution of the social structures – men cannot determine women's equality and freedoms. Thus, the elimination of the processes of patriarchy are essential.

bell hooks (1984) states that radical feminism works for the eradication of domination and elitism in all human relationships, where systems such as patriarchy and sexism are completely done away with. Radical feminists hold that the root of women's oppression lies in both the public and private spheres, and that both have to be the focus of efforts to emancipate women. This theory does not focus solely on any specific group, any particular race or class of women; instead, it has the power to transform everyone's lives in a meaningful way (hooks,

1984). Radical feminists articulate how race, class, sexual orientation, gender, and other social identities define daily lived realities that are more complex than models that focus primarily on universal or common struggles of women (hooks, 1981). These models argue that all women are oppressed, which implies that women have a lot in common, from their experiences in society to their preferences, that factors such as race, religion, sexual preference, etc. do not create significantly diverse experiences that determine the extent to which they feel the oppression of sexism and/or patriarchy.

Patriarchy is the oppressing structure of male domination. This type of male control is most visible as it is exercised in every aspect of women's lives, both public and private. In a patriarchal society, all women are oppressed. All women have to struggle against a culture that tries to tell them how to look, how to mother, how to wife, how to dress, how to talk, act, reproduce, and so on. The structures of patriarchy are committed to the maintenance and reinforcement of male hegemony in all aspects of life. To this end, institutions such as the law, religion, and the family perpetuate the construct of an inferior position for women. However, the extent to which this happens in both the public and the private sphere, and the extent to which this implicates class, race, ability, and sexuality, varies significantly. For example, experiences of black working-class women in relation to the experiences of white middle-class women and how power and structural inequalities are embedded in structures (Gouws, 2017). White women's race is invisible and yet white women's experience is often used as the experience of all women.

Particularly in South Africa, women's roles in the development of the country was limited and this, in turn, prevented their equitable access to employment, health and education (Wetzel, 1993). These barriers were the reason why the integration of women in decision-making processes in the various spheres of life was limited as women's roles have always revolved around their presence in the family and home, as dictated by society (Lillicrap, 1987; Weaver & Hill, 1994; Santho, 1995). These patriarchy-perpetuating institutions aim to direct and protect the distribution of power and privilege to those who are male, apportioned according to social and economic class and race. Because of their proximity to white men, white women get more of the power and privilege than black women. Radical feminists argue that this privilege is why it is

important to dismantle the root of injustices and inequality, which they locate primarily in the private structures of patriarchy, in the home. Further, the root cause of oppression for women is this idea that it is ‘natural’ and therefore good and right for them to be devoted wives and mothers – carers. To want to be more is to exceed their ‘natural’ role. But it is not natural – it is constructed to protect patriarchy and the dominance of men’s interests and needs; to provide endless amounts of inexpensive domestic labour; to ensure that society reproduces this order over and over. If women no longer have to be married, or have babies, or give up their lives to serve others, then they can do all the things men can do and the social order will be overturned. The public sphere would have no choice but to change. Thus, change the private first; reimagine roles for women from the home out, give them all the choices and the rest will inevitably follow. There will be changes in how children are raised and educated and clothed and socialised, as well as in how men and women relate to one another and so on.

For example, laws that have limited women’s participation in public life, such as labour and voting laws as well as those prohibiting women from owning property or opening a bank account without their husband’s permission (e.g., in the first wave). In the late 19th and early 20th century, as women began to go to university, vote and so on, there was a transition from patriarchy in the private sphere to the public sphere (Rosicki, 2012). This meant that, as more women entered public life, the ways of controlling them that had previously been restricted to the home were expanded.

Sylvia Walby (1989) has argued that contemporary society is still very much patriarchal, although the nature of patriarchy did change throughout the 20th century. Patriarchy, along with the gendered division of labour, was deemed the perfect way to make larger society function (Walby, 1989). This division of labour essentially laid down different labouring rules for men and women. In this regard, men were expected to leave the domestic sphere, and accumulate wealth for their families, whereas women were expected to cater to domestic requirements and provide their families with male children, who could represent the family. This expectation is an example of how patriarchy manifests itself within the private sphere, where the empowerment of women that feminism advocates for does not often translate into the home. Where it does, it is

not the same for all women – for example poor women and wealthier women who can afford childcare, and women from conservative religious backgrounds and women from more liberal backgrounds.

Women's experiences in society are determined by systems that first and foremost do not favour them, these systems bring forward issues around care, work and income, safety and so on. For the women of Gatesville, their identities expose them to a different kind of oppression to that of white South African women, and certainly to those in the US. Having the identity of being a Muslim woman, living in a working-class community means that they face issues that other women do not to the same extent or in the same ways, from protesting for basic services to dealing with the patriarchal attitudes that underpin their religious structures, beliefs and practices. For these women, there is no picking which issue to tackle first as they are all visible in one, they cannot choose to only fight for basic services and put aside gender-based violence, unemployment, etc.(Crenshaw, 1989). Radical feminism highlights that black women experience limited acceptance within the dominant society, that their issues often remain invisible to those who hold privileged statuses and that black women have to play by rules necessary for survival. That is why radical theory argues that gender equality cannot be fought only or mainly in the public sphere; it has to be fought in the private sphere and it must incorporate changes in how children are raised and educated and clothed and socialised, as well as in how men and women relate to one another and so on (Rosicki, 2012). This is where the lens of intersectionality comes in. Inasmuch as a large number of women face discrimination and injustices, they do not face them in the same way. Moreover, these discriminations exist in all structures of society.

3.3 Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a sociological theory describing multiple threats of discrimination when individual's identities overlap with a number of minority classes such as race, gender, age and other characteristics (Carastathis, 2014). This theory views women's experience of oppression in varying configurations and in varying degrees of intensity. In this research, intersectionality is useful in analysing the extent to which the women are aware of the different gendered issues they face as they move between the private and public spheres they inhabit.

Feminist intersectional theory claims that women's lives are constructed by multiple, intersecting systems of oppression. This insight – that oppression is not a singular process or binary political relation, but is better understood as being constituted by multiple, converging or interwoven facets – originates from anti-racist feminist critiques of the claim that women's oppression could be captured through an analysis of gender alone (Crenshaw, 1989). Essentially, this theory states that there are interlocking relations of dominance of multiple social, political, cultural and economic dynamics of power that are determined simultaneously by identity categories of race, gender, class, sexuality, disability and others (Crenshaw, 1989). Women's experience in society is determined by systems that first and foremost do not favour them and this experience differs in terms of the identities that they hold.

Theories of intersectionality emerged from the writings of women of colour during the 1960s and 1970s. As early as the 19th century in the United States, black feminists confronted the simultaneity of a 'woman question' and a 'race problem' (Samuels & Ross-Sheriff, 2008). When Crenshaw (1989) introduced the metaphor of intersectionality to critique dominant conceptions of discrimination in law and in social movements, the language of 'intersections' had already been circulating in the anti-racist feminist debates of that time (Samuels & Ross-Sheriff, 2008). Crenshaw (1989, 8) states that "cultural patterns of oppression are not only interrelated but are bound together and influenced by the intersectional systems of society such as race, gender, class, ability and ethnicity." This insight shows that oppression is not a singular process or a binary political relation but is better understood as constituted by multiple and interwoven systems.

Intersectionality rests on the argument that women need to be considered as whole beings; to recognise that not all women experience their womanhood in the same ways – many women face multiple forms of oppression, and not all women are rendered powerless. There are women who manage their multiple identities and challenges well and lead fulfilling lives. These women are usually white women, they are the ones who have support in the homes which means that they can hire childcare that enables them to pursue their careers. Crenshaw (1989) argued that black

women are frequently absent from analyses of gender oppression because it focuses primarily on the experiences of white women. Black women have traditionally worked outside the home in much larger numbers than their white counterparts, this shows that women don't just 'manage' multiple identities they have help and means and education and support. When they don't manage their multiple identities a lot of that is influenced by what happens in the private sphere and how being a good woman or girl is conceptualised and operationalised in those spaces.

Intersectionality goes further to recognise that for many women of colour, their feminist efforts are simultaneously embedded and woven into their efforts against racism, classism, and other threats to their access to equal opportunities and social justice. This recognition is what makes this theory useful to this study, it allows the research to explore beyond gender limitations that the women may face. To be able to recognise how religion may also play a role in how these women may be outspoken and strong leaders in community meetings but may not necessarily do the same elsewhere. These limitations may not be what the women in Gatesville face – they may be different – but what this theory allows is for the exploration of other dominant systems in society which do not benefit women. This theory recognises the different identities that all women hold and how each identity faces its own limitations in society.

Intersectionality also advocates on the importance of examining the intersection of multiple forms of discrimination. Crenshaw (1991) states that discrimination must be conceptualised in terms of the concrete experiences of black women. With this, she introduces a threefold positive definition of intersectionality namely: structural, political and representational. In this study, I will only be making use of the first aspect. Structural intersectionality refers to the “ways in which the location of women of colour at the intersection of race and gender makes our actual experience of domestic violence, rape and remedial reform qualitatively different than that of white women” (Crenshaw, 1991). It has been noted that a woman can be advantaged belonging to certain social categories as a source of social and political empowerment such as being a community leader while simultaneously being disadvantaged belonging to other social categories as a source of powerlessness and subordination (Boogaard & Roggeband, 2010). This is where their role of being a mother, or a wife can have a disadvantage because they live in a traditional

and patriarchal household where they are confined to particular gender roles. So, despite being vocal at a community meeting, for example in fighting for other women's safety, they may be unable to do that for themselves within their own homes.

This theory allows this study to explore the stories of lower middle to working-class women's movement in Gatesville whilst paying attention to all their different positions as women of society, such as being working women, stay at home mothers and pensioners. This theory helps the analysis to make meaning of the stories of a dynamic group of South African Muslim women in relation to understanding how they navigate their private and public sphere roles and may avoid previous exclusions while keeping true to the ideal of transforming social lives. This framework is used here to highlight that being a 'good' mother and wife are roles women play in society and in the home that can be restrictive; they are designed to serve the patriarchy, which means that women have to stay 'in their place' and this place is below men. If this is so, women will struggle for emancipation or full participation in the public sphere, as radical feminist theory points out that the private and public spheres are not disconnected; one of the questions this study asks is whether participation in the public sphere can create greater freedom in the private sphere and to what extent.

The next chapter provides information on the study's methodology; how the data was collected, methods that were used to answer the research questions and the justification for the methods used. Using the theory, I was able to look at how women's roles are similar or different when they are at home and when they are in community meetings, how the religion that they ascribe to influences the way they act, speak and think. Further how they and the community they live in define what it is to a good woman or a good wife. Intersectionality requires that all the roles' women occupy be looked at considering that they experience oppression in all of them as they intersect. Essentially in the heart of the framework the religion and community work as themes of analysis are linked to gender as they enforce the expected roles that women should play.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design, research setting, data collection techniques and the sampling procedures used. It will detail how data were analysed and provide justifications for the data analysis methods employed. The chapter also explores measures that were executed in the study to ensure participants' rights were not infringed on. Finally, the chapter concludes with the factors that placed limitations on the study, and ethical issues.

4.2 Research Design

4.2.1 Qualitative Research

This study used a qualitative approach to design the study and generate data. According to Creswell (2009) qualitative approaches are exploratory in nature and are mainly concerned with gaining insights into and understandings of underlying reasons and motivations for human behaviour. Qualitative research enables one to “stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, 14). In other words, within qualitative research, it can be assumed that reality is not something that is separate from the human experience. Instead, in qualitative research, reality is constructed through repeated social discourses (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). The research made use of an interpretive paradigm because it aims to understand what it is to be human and the meanings that people attach to the events that occur in their lives (Grant & Giddings, 2002). Human agency is at the core of this paradigm, and I aimed to put that forward by listening to the voices of the participants, rather than just gathering data.

This paradigm allows for a relationship between the researcher and the researched where the researcher is not just standing on the sidelines, but they are inside the lives of the day-to-day basis of the researched (Grant & Giddings, 2002). Having volunteered in Gatesville before the

start of my research, I was familiar with the community and some of the women who got to be part of my study – and this paradigm allowed for this relationship or familiarity with the participants in a way that did not lead me to be biased but to be able to bring forward their story in an authentic way. I used this paradigm because my interpretation was at the forefront, and I was able to make particular kinds of judgments into subjective judgments about what the women of Gatesville shared. Because of this role, I as the researcher had to be reflexive: I had to be aware of my own bias. Somekh and Lewin (2011) noted that reflexivity focuses on positioning the researcher within relationships to move towards more egalitarian research practices and towards creating knowledge that incorporates an understanding of the power relations that are constitutive of, and reproduced through, research. Additionally, qualitative research along with the interpretive paradigm that this study made use of involves a close relationship between the researcher and the researched and considers the role of the context that the two are in. This context helped the researcher to understand the reality of the research.

4.2.2 Case Study

This is a case study of Muslim women living in Gatesville, Athlone who are engaged in public participation within this community. My aim is to understand to what extent their public roles help them in challenging injustices and inequalities that may exist within both their public and private spheres. The choice to pursue this research as a case study was an attempt to better understand and explain how the women of Gatesville were leading their community; they are influential leaders in the public space whilst being women living in a religious community. Case study research strategy is ideal for when the researcher has little control over events, and when the focus is on the contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context, and this was the case for this study (Yin, 2003). The study examined the roles that women occupied in their daily lives – those they held in the public sphere as well as those held in their private spheres – as mothers, wives and community leaders. (For more information about Gatesville please refer to Chapter 1, section 1.3).

My first point of contact with the potential participants was through a master's module which included community work in 2019. I had to pick a community where I would assist with

whatever issues they had by working with Development Action Group (DAG). Having completed the module, I decided to work with the women from the community for my study. From the case studies that were presented to us by DAG, this community stood out for me, a group of mostly senior Muslim women and those in their late 40s and 50s were community leaders leading Housing issues with government. Further forming other clubs that provide assistance and support to the local residents, I found this to be quite unique and I wanted to get to know them. After my first meeting with one of the leaders I knew that I wanted to work with the community. At this point I was familiar with the community and had attended their meetings and given them a presentation to assist with the housing issue that the community faces. I had not identified the participants that I would be interviewing when doing that.

I originally chose six women from the study: three I had met from attending community meetings and had conversations with afterwards, and the other three referred to me by the community leader, Badyah. The interviews were meant to be face-to-face, however, with the outbreak of the Covid19 pandemic in March 2020, the interviews needed to move online. As a result, not all the women were available anymore and I was only able to speak with four women. As a result of my established relationship with the community leader, I was able to obtain these women's cell phone numbers; she also gave me a tour of the community and spoke to the women on my behalf, sharing information with them about my study. Having her as a lead really helped in getting other women interested in talking to me as she had already worked with me and was familiar with the purpose of my research.

4.3 Sampling and Field Research Procedure

Participants were handpicked because they possessed the required characteristics which was the promotion of gender issues in their mobilisation. In this case, the researcher used her experience with the community and judgment to choose key informants to be interviewed. This research made use of two non-probability sampling techniques: purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Snowball sampling then allows for the few identified participants to name and help locate others that they know have the required characteristics until the researcher gets the number

of cases required for the study. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) with snowball sampling, the initial subjects with the desired characteristics are identified using purposeful sampling techniques. The few identified subjects name others that they know have the required characteristics until the researcher gets the number of cases he or she requires. In this study, the leader, who was also my gatekeeper, identified one woman leader and shared her mobile number and when I made contact with her, she recommended the last participant.

Mugenda & Mugenda (1999) observed that purposive sampling is a technique that allows researchers to use cases that have the required information with respect to the objectives of their study. In this study, the sample size of participants consisted of four women, three women who were part of the community leadership structure and one woman who assisted in the community and at the local school. Two women were identified through purposive sampling. These two sampling methods resulted in six interviews with the four women, two interviews with two participants and one interview with each of the other two participants. I had one face to face and five virtual interviews.

4.4 Methods of Data Collection

I collected data through three different methods: interviews, research diary and observations. This was a way of ensuring that my findings are credible, and that the data would not only be coming from the participants and from the observations that I made. Through these observations I was able to see the women in action, talking about the community work and doing it as well: this method also allowed me to check the data. In terms of interviews, the study made use of virtual interview methods, because of South Africa's Covid-19 lockdown regulations. These methods allowed me to have access to the participants despite the regulations. I made use of WhatsApp messages, video calls and phone calls. Participants reaffirmed their consent verbally prior to the beginning of the interviews. In the interviews I explained to the participants that the study focused on how women of Gatesville dealt with the issues that they faced within their home as well as those they faced outside whether they challenged them or lived with them.

My observation and research diary came in handy when it came to observing women's activism, how their grassroots movement came about and how active they are in their public spheres. In total I had 5 observations from the community meetings I attended. I had my first meeting on 9th of August 2019, and this was the first time I met my gatekeeper. I was able to observe how the women in their homes, when they were alone in their local office, how they planned for their meetings with the housing officials as well as how that plan was executed in those meetings. This allowed me to understand how they were seen by the community, the officials as well as their fellow committee leaders.

In the diary I documented my observations and recorded the dynamics of the different encounters. I kept my research diaries in my file of research documents which included research information, consent forms and research questions. I made seven entries in the diary which started after completing my community project where I had to present the benefits of having a body corporate. After this I attended the community's meetings where they were in discussions with the Department of Human Settlement and City of Cape Town about the repairs of the flats and when will the residents be able to buy them. In these meetings I was just listening, watching and making notes in my research diary and I went to five meetings over the course of 2019. I used these observations in my interviews as well where I asked the progress of some of the issues that I picked up whilst the women were doing their community work. I also used the diary to reflect on my positionality and to record my thoughts about the meetings, the conversations I would have with them and how it would influence the research process. My research diary also enabled me to reflect on similarities and differences between conversation and observations and interview encounters which helped in identifying key topics which required further follow up.

As mentioned, having prior interactions with the participants and having worked with them before helped in conducting the virtual interviews, the participants were comfortable and patient. I started by asking about their involvement in the community. The goal of these questions was to get a sense of who they were and what they did in their public sphere. The next section of questions focused on who they were at home by asking if they were able to speak out on matters concerning their children or how their houses are run. Following with how they defined women

and why they thought that women in their community and in society faced the issues that they did. In conducting the interviews, a tape recorder was used to generate authentic and accurate data. This instrument enabled me to listen actively to what the participants were saying to avoid misrepresentation or overly paraphrasing participants' authentic stories. To situate the study theoretically and generate the conceptual framework with which to work on the primary sources, secondary data in the form of articles, books and research paper was consulted and analysed to provide literature for the study. I selected literature that focused on women's movements, feminism, intersectionality, gender equality. I used the University of the Western Cape's online library, Google Scholar and JSTOR, and was guided to explore the literature further by my supervisors.

4.5 Narrative Inquiry

The study was grounded in narrative inquiry and data was presented in a narrative format and analysed through thematic content analysis. I built the narratives from the interviews conducted, the research diary that I kept which I used to write about my own observations of the community, community meetings that I went to, conversations that I had with the leaders and the general members of Gatesville. This enabled me to form a picture of the women, who they are, their age, their role in the community leadership structure, whether they are married or not and whether they are mothers or not. I then put all the stories together and using intersectional theory constructed from my theoretical framework. This paper is a collection of personal experience narratives, which includes life stories from both past and present experiences of the participants. The method of narrative interview is the basic idea of reconstructing both private and social events from the perspective of the participant as direct as possible (Bauer, 1996) and gain insight to their own ideas of reality and self as they emerged through the stories of their lives. I aimed to allow personal theories of gender and women's positions to emerge from direct questions such as "Do you find it easier to talk about issues facing women in public meetings or at home?"

In obtaining the data for these narratives, I got permission from one of the leaders who became my gatekeeper in the community. She introduced me to other community leaders and walked me around the community, and I attended community meetings with her. Over several weeks in 2019

spent doing this, I made my notes in my diary about the conversations I had, the state of the flats of Gatesville, some of the comments that stood out for me in the community meetings that I attended. I made observations of the women whom I had spoken to prior to the meetings and how they were in the meetings, some of them were different, they spoke less and whispered. This is what influenced the questions of whether the women were able to speak out in public spaces. I wanted to produce narratives that went beyond women's roles as mothers and leaders, ones that reflected on whether the women felt empowered enough to voice out their opinion on matters that impacted their lives. Moreover, the interview questions aimed to understand: (a) the women's involvement in the community and the roles they had taken as community leaders; (b) how they saw women in their community living and being treated; (c) how they defined a woman and what role they played in their private sphere and how that was similar or different to their public spheres; and (d) the changes that they wanted for women not only in the community but in society as a whole and why this was the case. The questions I asked were not limited, because with the open interview method the hope was that particular questions or answers would lead to explorative narratives.

Thorne (2016) argued that the research purpose and questions should be the driving force for selecting methodology and if narrative inquiry is chosen, it is done because such an analytic framework fits best to inform what one is trying to inquire. Narrative inquiry is an umbrella term that captures personal and human dimensions of experience over time and takes account of the relationship between individual experience and the cultural context (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990). The story of Gatesville is unique, as are the women living in it, thus this method allowed the study to tell their stories from their perspectives. I was interested in the women as social actors in their own right and in the subjective meanings that women assigned to events and conditions in their lives (Reinharz & Chase, 2002). Intersectionality lens allowed for narratives of Coloured people who are women and women who are Coloured people, for the more in-depth view of the narratives of women. This lens allowed for the narratives of social problems impact all the members of the targeted group in this study instead of grouping all women with the societal ills that they face. Using intersectionality to frame qualitative research has enabled researchers to address the issues of oppression and subordination; and to acknowledge the matrix

of power in society. When conducting and analysing the interviews, it was important for me to be aware of the power dynamics between me and the participant and most importantly to be reflexive, meaning being aware of my own bias. This acknowledgment of my own perspective was the foundation of an ethical study and reflexivity focuses on positioning the researcher within relationships. This assists the study in moving towards more egalitarian research practices and towards creating knowledge that incorporates an understanding of the power relations that are constitutive of, and reproduced through, research (Hoebel et al., 2014).

4.6 Data analysis

The study made use of thematic content analysis because it uses primary and secondary data, its primary data is in the form of interviews, a thematic content analysis is usually applied to a set of texts, such as interview transcripts. The researcher examines the data to identify common themes – topics, ideas and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly. Thematic analysis can be understood to be an interpretative application of content analysis in which the focus of analysis is on thematic content that is identified, categorised and elaborated on the basis of systematic scrutiny (Banister et al., 1994). This analysis technique also has flexibility in interpreting data, even with large sets of data, such as easily sorting them into broad themes. However, thematic analysis also bears the risk of missing nuances in the data, as this approach is often subjective and relies on the judgment of the researcher. For that reason, it is essential to control one's own interpretations while dealing with the raw data (Braun & Clarke, 2014).

The goal of this study was to find out how these women were able to occupy roles that challenge the inequalities in their public spheres as well as in their private sphere, and/or whether they stay confined to public sector challenges, their private roles unchanged. By examining the presence or repetition of certain words and phrases in the narrative texts created out of the interviews, I was able to make inferences about how the women made sense of living with and/or challenging the lived injustices and discrimination that women faced in society in their private and public spheres. Initially what I did was transcribe all the interviews and the interviews together with my observations and my research diary and I read the material several times. I already had an idea about the themes I was looking for based on the research problem and the theory that I used so

the interviews essentially verified them. I highlighted the repetition of particular concepts and ideas such as the role of religion in the women's lives, the kind of community roles the women have, the ways in which they occupy their gender roles, how they define themselves as wives and mothers. I then grouped the quotes underneath my broader themes. I went back to my theoretical framework which gave me the language with which to talk about the extent to which the women's public and private sphere intersected. The extent to which their socialised gender roles women were occupied, how they found themselves in relation and how this connected to their community-based activism and empowerment. The notion of empowerment: how they defined empowerment.

In the beginning, I grappled with how I would present my interpretations throughout my data collection and analysis process. The women shared the importance of doing community work, fighting for the safety and security of women and children, their views on the importance of being Muslim women and mothers, the reinforcement of religion in their lives, how this impacted them and the women they knew and those that they had to protect. With these diverse views I was worried about whether I would do their stories justice in the way that I set up the narrative. Therefore, I chose to present the findings as a collection of narratives through thematic analysis and I chose this representation based on my interpretations of the data and how best to represent the data in order to keep the voice of the participants present.

To maintain participant anonymity, I employed a strategy of summarising the data, and used pseudonyms and tried to keep the summaries reflective of the participants by employing direct quotes. All the participants wished to not be recognised in the research hence it was important to use pseudonyms for the names. I checked very carefully through the entire data for any evidence that could lead to identifying a participant, this precaution allowed me to use direct quotes without putting the participants in jeopardy.

4.7 Coding

I used Atlas TI to code data from my transcribed interviews, as well as my typed research diary. My theory focuses on efforts to tackle inequalities towards women, it recognises that although

women are up against a constantly perpetuating system of patriarchy which reproduces inequalities through its structures. The structures of patriarchy are committed to the maintenance and reinforcement of male hegemony in all aspects of life. To this end, institutions such as the law, religion, and the family perpetuate the construct of an inferior position for women. The use of theory as an iterative process between data collection and analysis has been applied in this research study. Yin (2003) emphasises that the theoretical propositions before the case study should be formulated very carefully because they contribute to the design of the case. In using the intersectional theory, I did not have a set of concepts but I knew from the theory that what I was looking for in the women's stories was definitions of womanhood, motherhood, their role in the home and in society. Whether there were any challenges to these roles and where those challenges came from for example, religion, economy, racism or whether it was all because I am using an intersectional lens.

Code development is an integration process, because codes can be collected in advance from theory concepts (theory-powered) or emerge from the data (data-powered) (Costa et al, 2016). I used deductive coding, which meant that I organised my data according to predetermined themes which reflected the everyday, ordinary experiences of my participants' lives that came from my observations. These themes were community work, religion, definitions of a woman and private/public. According to Charmaz (2014), "coding distills data, sorts them, and gives us an analytic handle for making comparisons with other segments of data" (4). Coding means categorising segments of data with a short name that summarises each piece of data (Charmaz, 2014, 111). It was through coding that I was able to highlight religion and womanhood, definitions of women in the community, community work and private/public perspective on oppressive challenges. I then turned these codes into conceptual themes. The goal of these themes was to get an understanding of how the participants viewed the work they did for the community, how they defined a good woman and how a woman is defined in the community and how religion played a role in who they are and how they acted. I also looked at whether that role stayed the same or whether it changed; and if it did, whether it was based on them being women; how they saw women; what duties they had to fulfill; and what issues women faced in society. These codes are discussed more in Chapter Five.

4.8 Limitations and Ethics

Upholding ethical values can assist in dealing with any surprises that might come about within the context of the research that can have any implications on the participants' mental state. I made use of informed consent and emphasised the participants' consent at the beginning and during their interview. I used the principle of confidentiality to protect their names and information; this worked very well because most of the participants wanted to be kept anonymous.

The participants were given full disclosure concerning the purpose of the study and afforded the right to withdraw their participation at any time. There was consideration to involve them in analysing and interpreting data to verify accuracy was done paying respect to the timeframe for the study. This allowed me to share the narrative transcripts and check accuracy with the participants through member checking, which is a common form of enhancing the validity and reliability of your data and findings. The use of observations, research diary and interview assisted a lot in enhancing the reliability and validity of my data findings.

Another important preparation that was taken was informing the participants that they could withdraw from the study at any time or decline to participate in a particular portion of the study that might have an adverse effect without any penalty or any jeopardised relationships. Six women were meant to be interviewed from the community however only four women ended up being interviewed. The limitation with the snowball sampling method was that when applied, the participants did not feel comfortable in talking to someone that they have never met. It was also shared that generally the community of Gatesville tend to not do interviews because of religion and cultural reasons and having the interview done online also became a problem for some. This was especially difficult due to the nature of my study and its interest in who women were in their homes. I could not avoid asking my questions, so in the event where some participants did not feel comfortable with answering questions about their roles at home or the role of religion I moved on to another question. I introduced questions that were more about the general opinion of women, and thus did not get data on the role that participants had in the home. This limits the

finding I can make whether there is a connection or division in the private and public sphere of the women's lives.

In summary, this chapter covers the research approach and methodology adopted in this research study. Further explanations of the data collection, and sampling method and report of the groups and themes analysed through the theoretical framework, are also provided. Finally, the limitations of the research methodologies chosen, as well as ethical issues, data analysis, and quality criteria are discussed in depth. The following chapter presents the collective narrative of the women participating in this study organised around the themes that reveal how the women make sense of living with and/or challenging the oppressions that they face as they move between the private and public spheres they inhabit.



CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this narrative study was to capture stories told by the women of Gatesville about their lives as they move between the roles of being mothers, wives and community leaders. In this chapter I will be using their stories to make the argument that women's empowerment within the public spheres does not always necessarily translate into greater voice and agency in their private spheres.

The chapter is organised around four themes – community work, religion, definitions of a woman, and private/public roles – and they are connected through the notion of intersectionality and the intersectional challenges that these women face. Some of the key challenges that the women of Gatesville face come from religion, family politics, socioeconomic status, and marital status as some of these women are single mothers, widows, and divorced women. I first investigate the background of the community and the women in the study I then move on to discussing the findings in depth providing my interpretations of them.

5.2 Facts About Gatesville

The Gatesville flats have 136 units with 18 blocks of flats in total; the 18 blocks are divided in three phases namely, one, two and three. Phase one is called Bishop's Court with six blocks, in which residents, unlike the other phases, are not as united; they do not discuss block housing matters or attend the community meetings. Right next to Rylands High School is phase two. It has 8 blocks, and its residents are the most active as they often attend community meetings and debrief together. Phase three has four blocks which are also quite like phase one. At the time of the study one of the community leaders, Badyah, lived there and would try to get neighbours to participate in events.

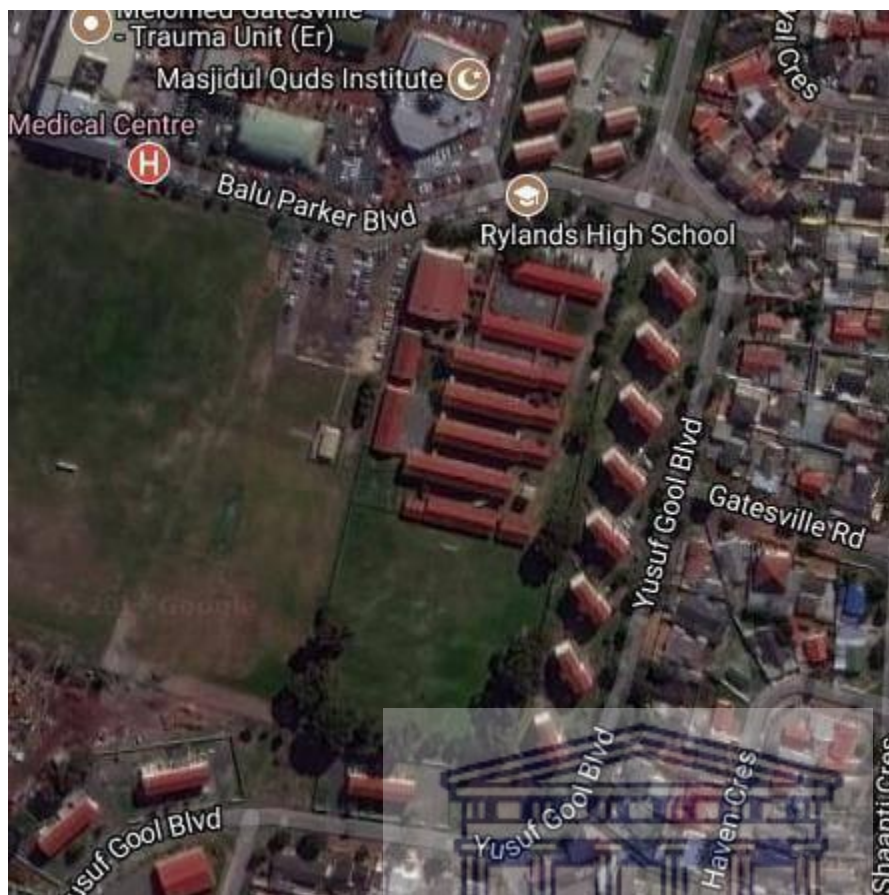


Figure 6: Map of Gatesville (Community Leader, 2022)

Badyah shared that the community has a 90% senior rental ownership; the remaining 10% are either unemployed, self-employed or have low-income jobs. The rental is calculated according to one's income and most of the seniors are either single or widowed so it is often hard for them to pay rent. This results in them getting threats of evictions, their municipality issues not being fixed. The flats are part of the Apartheid structure where community members were displaced from various areas that were considered to belong to white people or any other racial group. Gatesville is a community where one will find many similar surnames, inter-marriage links, and a diversity of religions which include Hinduism, Christianity and Islam.

5.3 The women in the case study

The four women whose stories I am drawing on in my analysis are part of Gatesville Committee, a committee that plays an important role in the community from helping members deal with their everyday issues and demands, to negotiating with the local and provincial governments for basic services. In many cases in similar communities and organisations, these roles and positions are occupied by men who can access resources through the structures that they deal with (Michau, 2007). In this case study, it is the complete opposite. Women are at the forefront: they are the ones who are trying to access resources such as basic services, plan or to attempt to ensure the government lives up to its promises and sit at the negotiating table for certain policies to be implemented or stopped.

These women are:

Khadija, a 47-year-old full time housewife and mother to two boys. She used to work for a local car dealership where she was an administrator. In her spare time, she volunteers at the local school where she stands in for absent teachers and assists with the children and helps with the local neighbourhood watch. Khadija is one of the few women in Gatesville that describes herself as being modern: she got married when she was in her 30s, and prior to this was living on her own. When she got married and could not conceive, she went through IVF, and when that did not work, she and her husband adopted. She is not permanently part of any committee but is involved in the general work of the community; she volunteers at her children's schools, attends meetings, and assists in the local clubs. For her, life in Gatesville is what you make it because of its culture and religion that pressures women to get married young, specifically her Indian culture. She shared that her uncle tried to get her to marry someone when she had passed the age of 20 as it was not normal for a woman that age to remain unmarried. She chose to stick to her singledom until she felt that she had found the right person to marry. She describes her life as having been two journeys; one as a single woman who enjoyed her youth and did what she wanted; and another as a married woman with her own family.

Areefa, a 43-year-old single mother of two, an employed chef and a patrol coordinator in the local neighbourhood watch. The patroller makes sure that everyone in the community is safe at night from criminal activity, such as gangs coming into the community, robberies, or house break-ins. This means she sometimes must be confrontational with suspected criminals, checking for potential weapons. She also cooks for the community members on a weekly basis. Areefa is an active member of her community, one that focuses on developing her community and keeping it safe. She also has a full-time job as a Chef in the area and introduces new recipes at the store. Her her activism goes beyond her community and can even be seen in her workplace, where she speaks out for the workers who feel that they are being unfairly treated as she is in a position of power. Being a control coordinator in the local neighborhood watch group allows her to take on matters that are deemed dangerous for the community.

Aisha, a 74-year-old widow and a mother of two; she lost her husband 35 years ago. She is part of the neighbourhood watch but mainly her duties are to the seniors' club. This club gives voice to the elderly about the issues that they face as the community mainly consists of them, in this club they seek and offer help and advice. She became a widow when she was still young and decided to raise her two sons on her own. She had been living in Gatesville for 33 years before getting involved in community work because she is generally a shy person. However, having been exposed to the issues that the seniors face in the community go through she decided to assist, most of the seniors she works with are single mothers who are widows they mostly face issues with their children who are addicted to drugs. She also assists in the committee that deals with the housing issues of the community but hardly speaks out in meetings but will voice out her opinions with a smaller group.

Badyah, a 45-year-old Coloured and Indian woman, single mother of two, community leader and a participant in all the groups of the community, which includes a police forum, neighbourhood watch, walking bus security supervisor, sports and recreation facilitator, reading group organiser, and a religious person to convey messages between the people and others. She is the person that community members call when there is an issue, and she speaks on behalf of

the community to the government. Badyah was raised in a home with both parents and her five siblings, they were victims of the Group Areas Act, an apartheid law which evicted people from communities that they did not “belong in” based on their races. They got evicted because they were using their Indian father’s surname and had to move to the community of Gatesville, Athlone. A few years ago, she became interested in community work as a result of the frustrations she had regarding housing issues in the community. She went on to attend leadership classes, and she started speaking out in the community and leading as an example. From these classes she also learned about the importance of women standing up for themselves as leaders and speaking their minds, thus she went on to educate the women who attended meetings. However, she eventually realised that she was not doing this with the women in her home and decided to change this.

5.4 Community work

Gatesville flats are government-owned; they were built 30 years ago and there has been little maintenance done since. As a result, the physical structure of many flats has deteriorated, and the community has had political clashes with the government because of this issue, amongst others. The issues that the community face have helped them formulate a mobilisation that has allowed them to get the changes they want and to better their lives. The condition of the flats is a concern for everyone in the community moreover as it poses a danger to their lives because of the asbestos materials that were used to build them. For some it has caused health issues, and as a result they were very interested in new solutions brought forward by the leaders. These solutions included the community buying back the flats, holding government officials as well as the Mayor to account with the promises made through protesting, talking to the media and demanding that they come to speak in front of the whole community instead of just meeting with a few members of the community. In late 2019 to 2020 the community and the government continued to have conversations about the solutions they presented which got accepted in this process and this is when they then put in the efforts to tackle housing issues and others that members of their community were facing. Besides the pressing issues of housing, the community leaders are also very concerned about safety – both in the public and shared spaces and inside people’s homes

and the way in which people live in the community. Gatesville is dominated by women in their senior years who live either alone or with their grandchildren. They often face abuse from those children, especially if they are abusing drugs and alcohol, as well as intimidation from municipality officials about their accounts being in arrears. These are the driving forces behind the community work in Gatesville.

Talking about the community work they do, Areefa said,

We are just four ladies. Badyah is a chairperson and the one who will be on the phone with SAPS. The men are the first to put us down because we are women, we got our youth programme, we got kids' programme, we got seniors programme, we got a women programme. So, it's for the whole community.

Aisha shared that “[we] have a senior here who has problems in her house, where the children are on drugs and then she had a sickly husband and one of the daughters was sickly. And it was too much for her to handle and even she had problems with the neighbours”.

Areefa is amongst the women that cook for the community. She starts cooking at four o'clock in the morning and then leaves for work and the other ladies take over. In the senior clubs, youth and women's programmes, the women are very much at the forefront: they are the ones who meet up with the residents and listen to their challenges and do their very best to help solve problems. Some of these residents are widows and single mothers who need the company and support that the local clubs offer.

Areefa went on to say:

I think it benefits a lot now in our community because we are also women, and we can see what women suffer inside, sometimes they do not want to talk. But now they can reach out and they can talk. So, in our community it makes a big difference.

This difference that Areefa mentions speaks to the boundaries that they experienced as women in their particular religious and cultural community. Some of their experiences, which may include physical abuse from their partners or men in the community, are often talked off as something that the family can deal with themselves – external people should not be involved. Talking about one's domestic abuse issues goes against the culture, and getting external people involved in those domestic issues also goes against their religion. However, these four women consider this sort of involvement as community work. Areefa further shared that when someone does confide in them it is important for them to assure them that it will stay private, as many of the women are scared to speak up.

Badyah spoke about when a group of women got in trouble with the community when they entered the mosque alone with no men,

The community was in uproar when a women's program was held at the mosque, I remember the mosque had to give an apology and it was a whole thing and people would not go to the mosque. After this they never had a programme like that again.

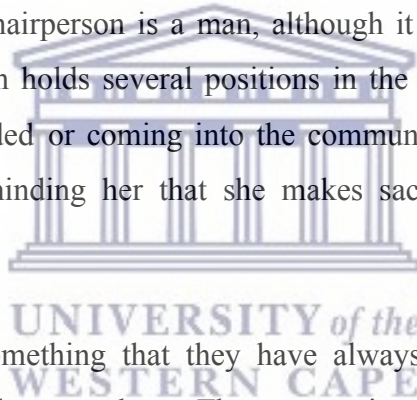
As mentioned, there are various other community challenges that the women lead and take charge of but there is always an emphasis on what they can and cannot do. The women spoke about the threats that they get from men in the community, threats to try and get them to stop patrolling at night, raising issues that deal with domestic abuse, and enabling women to speak their minds.

Leading a community tends to take a strain on anyone and it is no different for the women of Gatesville. Badyah shared,

The community looks at me as the person that they can go to unload and even here at the office I hear stories such as fathers beating their wives for many generations.

Areefa's family rarely sees her and she admits that she has a lot on her plate; other leaders admit that this is their reality as well, and often when things get too much there is not much support that they get from their family. This is the case with Badyah, where community work drove her and her children apart, and when she had a mental breakdown, her family expressed their disappointment in her choosing the community over her children and did not offer the support that she needed at the time.

What makes this strain even more difficult are the gender imbalances in the recognised leadership positions by the community and the government officials that they interact with. Badyah shared that her activism in the community is recognised by many people and the local government structures in her community also reach out to her whenever there is an issue; she is the first person to get a call when something has happened. However, she is not a chairperson, not a recognised leader by certain people in the community because she is a woman, especially a Coloured-Indian woman. The chairperson is a man, although it is the women who seem to be doing most of the work. Badyah holds several positions in the community, and she is the first contact when assistance is needed or coming into the community. When her children left the house, her family kept on reminding her that she makes sacrifices for people that do not recognise or appreciate her.



For Gatesville, unity is not something that they have always had and through the current committee it is something that they now have. The community was not united because in 2019 there were two tenant committees and when it was time for the new community elections the old committee did not want to step down. The government got involved and chose to recognise the old committee instead of the new one, which caused a big rift in the community. The women that this study focuses on were part of the new tenant committee they got to work with organisations where they learnt more about community work and took up leadership courses. This experience helped them to win the community's support in their tenant committee as well as their community clubs.

Khadija noted that for many years the people were not together but now everyone has come to the realisation that if they do not unite, they will not accomplish anything, so they need to show the Department of Housing that they have had enough.

In general meetings it is mostly the women who stand up and say we have had enough; we want this or that. Most of them are single women that work alone for their children. If they don't stand up, what will happen to their children? My husband does not even go to the meetings, I go to the meetings.

As mentioned before, the work that the community leaders do is strenuous and may have a negative impact on not only the leaders but on their families as well. As mentioned, for Badyah, community work went beyond housing issues, people saw her as a person they could talk to about everything. She felt this pressure for about three years where she was not getting any days off, and as a result she and her children drifted apart. She confided:

The day my daughter moved out I cried, it was the week before my birthday and I cried like I have never cried before. I think I had a mental breakdown and my family blamed me. I did not have a support structure at the time and my mom told me that I should have been there.

Other leaders also shared the same sentiments, but whenever things get hard at home they are able to come together. “Sometimes you also need a break from everything, then you need your moment when you just need an hour or two to yourself” (Areefa). Also talking to community leaders connects them together and this helps remind them that they are not alone, they have a space where they can break down and they will not be judged.

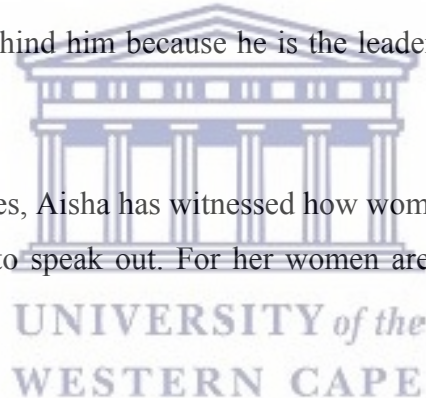
5.5 Religion and womanhood

The theme of Islam and Indian culture in this study is important because it both religion and the culture associated with it have an influence on women’s private and public lives. The women are raised within Islam and live in a community that is Muslim dominant, so this sociocultural

system is one that has a strong hold on who they are and how they act. This theme makes use of socialised gender roles, the roles that women are assigned by systems like religion often are quite rigid when it comes to women wanting or needing change.

Aisha shared that, “We were always told that we must adhere to what men say. We have to listen to our husbands”. She noted that things have changed now that women are more vocal, and this is a result of education: “If you look today it's different because education gives women something and sometimes they can assist their husbands in whatever they are doing.” Badyah has also noticed this shift in gender roles. She commented that whenever she goes to the local Rylands High School she has noticed that the boys tend to be gentle and polite and the girls are often the rough ones. However, both women agree that with the older generation, things are still quite rigid, especially considering the influence of religion. With the older generations, the wife, mother or sister may at times not walk with the man next to the man as in his household it is a norm for the women to walk behind him because he is the leader, and he wants to show this in society.

Through her community activities, Aisha has witnessed how women are put down in their homes and as a result find it difficult to speak out. For her women are the most important people on earth:



The mother is the one that carried you for nine months, so you should have respect for your mother. For husbands, even if they are the ones working in the home that does not mean that they can dominate their wives.

This does not only happen with husbands – other men in the community believe that it is important to show women can do along with other women who believe that a woman's place is behind a man.

For example, there are certain spaces, such as the mosque, that are expected to uphold the social norms of the community. Badyah shared that at the mosque men are always at the front, and

when there was a women's programme the women who attended the programme occupied spaces in the mosque which they were not usually permitted to. Women's participation is thus conditioned upon the availability of a gender-segregated physical space, with a separate room for women distinct from the main prayer room, and with a separate mosque entrance too. Moreover, the interviews confirm that there are cultural expectations that many women must follow and those that do not are often excluded in certain spaces and from conversations.

“We have different factions in our religion, so you have the one group who is deep in the religion, we call them the Daxis - they are so strong in this religion and strictly believe in living according to it” (Badyah). This faction believes that women should not go to the mosque if men are not at the mosque; all mosques make provision for women, but women are not allowed to stand in front. Men, then young boys, then women have the order of preference in the mosque. Badyah explained that, “[Our] sons are in a higher rank than their mothers. But if you look at the scriptures, a mother is higher than the father but because of society and wanting to dictate, that is why I am saying that society can and is misleading us.” Further, these expectations are also enforced within the homes, “I had an argument with my elder brother over religion and my role as female and where is my place. He was adamant that my role was behind the stove and raising children and not walking the street at night doing God knows what. Eventually things became violent, and he got upset because my argument was on par according to the scripture, he then gave me a smack.”

Women who are exposed to violence in their homes often feel scared and embarrassed to speak and religious and cultural expectations forced upon them to keep quiet and not speak out it makes things even worse. Areefa shared,

Our religion says wrap the scarf around your head to hide all the bruises. We once helped a woman who was beaten by her husband and his brother. We took her off and took her in but two weeks later she was back at her husband. She believed that because of her marriage, her religion and family she needed to stay in the position she was in.

That position also ensures that women protect their abusers because their husbands are role models in the community and if people find out they will look at them differently and because women are often blamed for their own abuse: what were you wearing, what did you say to him, how did you anger him? There is a lot of shame attached to being abused – they are likely protecting themselves, too, from further community censure and public shame. “I think I met quite a few incidents where males in my community especially with the Muslim religion, they are not happy with me or the leaders speaking about stuff like this” (Badyah). She has spoken about gender-based violence on social media and on TV, “I got threatening things like ‘we are going to take you off, you must watch your back we are going to kill you, who gave you the right to talk about our community?’”

Badyah’s case shows that women are made to carry the blame and shame for the abuse they suffer in private, it is not enough that laws in the public sphere are meant to protect women and stop the abuse. It is the family, the home, and the church that has to change for the public sphere laws and condemnation of GBV to actually mean that women no longer have to live in fear or under a cloud of shame.

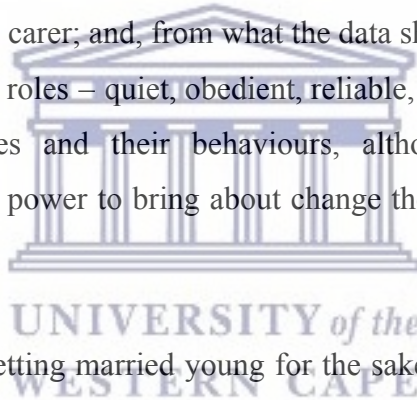
The emphasis on how women should and should not behave results in them constructing what and what does not constitute a good woman within the home.

5.6 Definitions of women in the community

This theme focuses on how women are defined in relation to their socialised gender roles. For example, women are not expected to be walking at night in the name of keeping a community safe, as this is seen as a job for men. This theme highlights the way in which women are expected to behave and be in the public sphere as well as in the home. For example, Aisha defines a woman as someone who does everything; she does the cooking; she must see to the husband when he comes home; the children, washing and cleaning the house; and she does not get paid. She admits that it is a big responsibility, and that is why women are strong and they are the backbone of a household, that they are stronger than men because of what they have to deal

with in the home as well as in society. Khadija agrees with this sentiment, that at home, “I would be the only ones to take care of the refuse bin and I mean we live in a complex with 32 flats and everyone uses the bins and not just us so when you don't take care of it, it becomes neglected and it becomes dirty. This ends up causing rats and is not safe for kids to play outside - not that my kids are allowed to play outside but the other kids that do”. So instead of waiting for her husband or other people she calls for a meeting with all her neighbours.

Badyah shared the negative response that she got from the community as a result of speaking to the media and doing interviews about the housing conditions of the community: “I have been told that I am too vocal for them and then inside I have also started to portray that vocal side of me when it comes to such things.” For her these kinds of responses inspired her to speak out in her home as well, “as I can't preach outside if I am not preaching inside my home and I have been doing this for about 2 to 5 years now”. This shows that there are several roles that women in Gatesville play: wife; mother; carer; and, from what the data shows, there are ideas about how to be a ‘proper’ woman in these roles – quiet, obedient, reliable, caring and present. These ideas shape the women’s experiences and their behaviours, although they are leaders in the community, and they have some power to bring about change the way they are seen matters just as the same.



Khadija rejected the notion of getting married young for the sake of just being a woman despite her family members pushing her to do so:

I did not want to be like my other friends who got married at 18 and 19 and then when they got to 25 and 26 they would complain that they did not do this or that.

Even Khadija’s journey of adopting her first son and going through IVF to conceive was openly shared with her friends and family, who did show support. She acknowledges that this is not something of a norm in the community. Her experience shows that there are those who are able to reject the norm that they live under and that is why individual change is often restricted to people who either have little to lose or are secure and protected enough to choose. For example,

women like Areefa who had a lot to lose when they got married at the age of 24 and when her marriage did not work was told to go back and make it work.

Areefa shared,

I stood up for myself after years of abuse. I did not care what my family said, but enough was enough for me because it was going to turn to physical abuse if I was not going to stand up.

She made this decision after 16 years of marriage and has never looked back; one of the lessons she learnt was that it was important to give people the benefit of the doubt and if they did not change to not put that on herself.

Badyah shared,

When we moved here the roles reversed and my mother stepped back as females were looked at very badly if they were seen as being higher than the man. When we lived in the Coloured suburb my mom made the rules and gave hidings, but now in order to fit into the new area my mom kind of changed herself.

Gatesville is an Indian community and for Badyah it is a community that encourages women to know their place; this being in the home and with her husband and children, compared to the Coloured community which she was born in that for her, stated that a Coloured woman should be loud and proud, and they should stand their ground. The way that her mother was before she changed herself to fit into the existing culture of Gatesville. This culture is enforced even in community spaces, Badyah recalled a meeting that the leaders had with an official from the City of Cape Town, where Aisha in a split of the moment spoke 'out of tune'. This was according to the chairperson of the Housing committee, and he told her to not go over his head. "She was taken aback and kept quiet and she never went to meetings again. Even getting her here yesterday was a mission." Further this type of behaviour is embodied by other men in the

community where they ensure that their voices are the ones heard, especially by those coming from outside of the community.

The themes of womanhood, whether defined in the home or by the public, matter a lot to women although some may reject some aspects of these definitions but the ideas of being a good mother and wife matter a lot. These ideas tend to make women feel as though they are subordinate that even when they do good and lifechanging things they may see that as one aspect of who they are.

5.7 Public/Private Perspective on gender roles

The women understand the challenges that exist in their public spheres, such as the pressures of getting married, conforming to their cultures and religion, the taboo in questioning or speaking against them publicly. It seems that they have no problem with doing this outside, whether it would be in meetings or amongst each other; however, there seems to be an issue when having to do the same at home.

The women of Gatesville are very much capable of speaking their minds; they have a vision for the outcomes that they want for their community and they communicate directly with local and provincial governments. However, in the local meetings which comprises of; the government fixing the state of the flats, the scrapping of past historical debts and the offer settlement of buying the flats. Not a lot of the community members spoke out even when the government was not taking accountability for the promises made to scrape historical debt, some of the leaders from the new tenant committee who do most of the work in the community were denied by the City of Cape Town officials from talking and no one stood up for them in the meetings. The leaders shared that prior to the new MEC appointment, the former MEC made promises to scrape historical debt for all community members, but this was not something the new MEC was willing to own up resulting in a further delay in the negotiations of the community owning their flats.

Although these meetings are for every community member, and they can and should be able to share whatever thoughts and feelings they have, this is not done especially the women. Badyah shared that because of the intimidation that some government officials have done to the senior

women living alone or with their grandchildren they fear speaking out. For other women, they feel discouraged to speak out because they feel intimidated speaking out in a room full of not government officials who are men but men from their local community. Badyah described that publicly a woman needs to walk behind a man otherwise they will be reprimanded at home, that it is a norm for their culture and religion whether that would be Hinduism or Islam. This is something that she is against and is not afraid to voice out. However, Badyah has been censured multiple times both verbally and physically from voicing things out by her family members; as a result, she even stopped for the sake of peace at home.

She shared that,

When my partner passed away my brother thought that he would take the role of my partner, so it came to a point where he became overbearing. We started arguing and he kind of pulled me aside and gave me this slap, I could not speak and while the blood was coming out of my mouth, my mother came in and said, 'I told you to keep quiet and don't have these kids but you don't want to listen and be so vocal'.

As a result, Badyah's private sphere experiences have fueled her desire to teach other women about standing up for themselves and not allowing gender-based violence to happen. She has also inspired the women in her home about being more vocal, though she has decided to let her brothers be. For Aisha, her ideas of women are significantly influenced by how she grew up and her experiences as a young woman, a wife and mother. She has well-defined ideas about how women should be at home with their children and at times with their husband, though she also seems to be aware about how restrictive these can be. Hence her emphasis on education and women being independent, keeping their jobs and not tolerating abuse. Gatesville is mostly populated by women who are in their 70s and 80s who grew up in a society where gender roles were not negotiable. Aisha for example her gender roles are mainly influenced by how she grew up.

Areefa seemed to have been restricted in both her spheres when she was younger, first by her ex-husband, who was controlling and abusive. She stayed with him for the sake of her children and her family kept on telling her to go back to him and stay in her marriage despite what was happening. Her views on marriage:

God make us stronger than a man because we can take a lot on our plate, and we can still deal with it the whole day. We know how to deal with each and every thing that comes to us because he made women stronger than a man because man will leave it to you all of this.

Areefa and Badyah share an experience where they have both noticed that when called to assist a gender-based violence situation, women who do not want to speak out about what is happening. It is right here we see the tension of private/public perspectives of the challenges that women face: violence and oppression happen so often to women that they may divorce their personal experience from other people. The women were able to present a solution for the women that they have had to help, however when it came to their own experiences although knowing that they were wrong, they did not share what could be the solution.

Khadija has always had control of her private sphere having lived by herself throughout her 20s and worked for herself, and even as a married woman she seems to still be as liberated as she was. To her, why should a woman be dependent on a man? Before she got married, she painted her lounge rooms, drilled holes and put-up things herself. “I did not wait for a man. Why should you?” She further shared that even today she does not wait for her husband if she wants to go somewhere – she will not wait for him to come and take her and instead will take the car and drive herself.

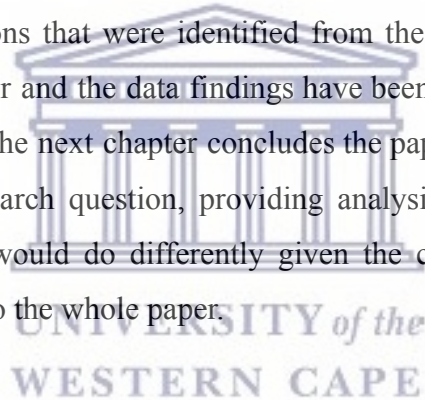
As a result of the way gender roles have been normalised in society, those that are able to reject or act outside of gender boundaries often see this as a victory. However, considering the bigger picture – which is a problematic system – these gender roles should not even be something to avoid or reject: they simply should not exist, and women should be able to simply choose what

they want and who they want to be. If someone wants to work, they should work, if they would like for their male partners to look after them that should be something that they do and for this to not be frowned upon. For example, Khadija is aware that publicly her religion and culture want her to behave a certain way and do certain things, and though this is her reality it seems that she has not let those restrictions be at the center of her life or her perspectives. For her, women in her community are vocal, active and help each other and everyone else in the community.

Even in our general meetings it will mostly be the women who stand up because most of them are single mothers, that work alone for their children – so if they do not stand up, what will happen to their children?

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the presentation of findings and its interpretation. The findings are presented in four themed sections that were identified from the data collected. Data has been presented in a qualitative manner and the data findings have been enriched with narratives taken directly from the respondents. The next chapter concludes the paper by providing answers to the sub-questions of the main research question, providing analysis to the data findings. It also includes reflections of what I would do differently given the chance to redo this paper. The chapter ends with a conclusion to the whole paper.



CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters have argued that women are ascribed particular gendered roles within society and within the home, and they are gendered in a range of different ways in relation to their economic and social functions. Specifically, they are gendered through their family roles and their religious roles. The women in the community that formed the case study for this research occupy roles as wives, mothers, daughters and carers. The theoretical understanding of these roles, such as notions of a ‘good’ mother and wife, were outlined in chapters 2 and 3. Based on feminist theory more generally, and radical feminist theory in particular, we can see that the roles women play in society and in the home can be restrictive; they are designed to serve the patriarchy, which means that women have to stay ‘in their place’ and this place is below men.

This study set out to answer the following research question: To what extent do women’s public sphere roles in Gatesville enable them to challenge injustices and inequalities that may exist within both the public and the private spheres?

The data gathering and analysis process was also guided by two sub-questions:

- How can we usefully define and distinguish between the public and private sphere roles occupied by women?
- How can we understand the nature of gendered injustices in both the private and public spheres, and how women make sense of these in their daily lives?

6.1.1 Defining and distinguishing between public and private sphere roles

Women’s experiences in society are determined by systems that first and foremost do not favour them, these systems bring forward issues around care, work and income, safety and so on. For the women of Gatesville, their identities expose them to different kinds of oppression. The women in this study are community leaders, they are mothers, wives, widows and single mothers; they are also sisters and daughters. As leaders they are recognised by some members of

their community and are not recognised by others because of their roles in the home as well as the type of community work they do. In the past decades, community development, including within African nations, has intensified the progress of women's empowerment and gender equality through gender mainstreaming projects, campaigns and strategies to promote women's participation in development (Zanza, 2015). The findings of this study show that this empowerment that women create in their local community clubs is frowned upon in their community, for example, patrolling at night with the hopes of keeping people safe is taken as seeking the wrong attention.

The public roles for the women in this study include being leaders, organisers, lead speakers, debaters, and activists; their private sphere roles include being mothers, sisters, and daughters. In the community the women organise protests with other community members, they engage and debate with male government officials, they can speak in public meetings, run local clubs and fight for what they believe is right through their activism. We see this in the way they tackle gender-based violence issues in other women's homes and issues that occur at the local schools as they can bring media into the community and talk about the challenges Gatesville faces. Yet despite this apparent empowerment in public, the findings show a shift when they are in their homes, where the roles ascribed to them by their religion and culture, and by the men in their lives, mean that they do not feel able to speak out, debate and push their agenda in the same ways. Despite this feeling there is still a strong desire for the women to succeed at both their public and private roles because they do not want to be considered as not good enough even though they understand that there are religious, cultural, and social restrictions placed on them. The need to be good at their private sphere role outweighs the importance of the public role; they need to be good mothers by being there for their children, they need to be 'good women'. When these needs are not fulfilled, they blame themselves for taking on too much community work.

So, we can define public roles in communities like Gatesville as those set up to protect and advance the interests of the community; private roles are those of mother, wife, daughter, and sister, tied to caring for the family first. This is echoed in the literature on the gendered nature of private and public sphere roles (Rabinovitch, 2001). Egge (2009) argues that whilst analysing women's community-based activism, women sought power over resources and the ability to

bring about change in their lives by relating their activism to everyday experiences as mothers. That is why radical theory argues that gender equality cannot be fought only or mainly in the public sphere; it must be fought in the private sphere and it must incorporate changes in how children are raised and educated and clothed and socialised, as well as in how men and women relate to one another and so on (Rosicki, 2012). The findings of this study show that women understand the differences between these roles, as well as the limitations put by their roles at home on how much they can do, where and how in the community.

6.1.2 Understanding the nature of gendered injustices in both the private and public spheres

The injustices that the women in this study faced were first and foremost on the basis that they are women, Muslim women. The sociocultural systems they ascribe to have a strong hold over who they are and how they act. Badyah being physically struck by her brother as a result of debating with him, Aisha getting a verbal threat from the chairperson for simply wanting to share her opinion in a meeting speaks to the gendered injustices that occur in both spheres of these women. The community being in uproar because women held a women's only program at the mosque speaks to the consequences of crossing the lines of constructed beliefs. Most importantly illustrate an example of how the mosque is used to oppress and exclude women. This is similar to Areefa's family forcing her to stay with a husband who was physically abusing her. These injustices intersect in both spheres and at times the women recognise this intersection. We see this in the case of Badyah who shared that she got struck by her brother because she was arguing with him, something which her mother repeated. Aisha also recognises how different her life was growing up compared to the youth from the new generation who have been exposed to education hence get to live a different life to hers. That for her when she was a young woman, she was told to put her husband first and to not question him. These findings show that the women in this study are aware of their gendered roles, not only that their negative experiences are a result of being women in society. Their injustices play out in a range of different ways from their economic and social experiences to their quiet lives within their homes.

For radical feminists, many of the barriers women face are a result of their assigned roles which revolve around their presence in the family and home, as dictated by society. Relating this to my study, it is then not unexpected that women like Badyah would be threatened to stop patrolling or

talking about the gender-based violence that occurs in the community as this goes against what it is to be a ‘good Muslim woman’. To challenge these restrictions, it is important to integrate women into decision-making processes in the public spheres, in this case it would be through offering them influential roles within community work such as a chairperson. Their role in the community already exceeds their ‘natural’ role and that is why other structures are imposed on them as a reminder of that role. This would be the theme of religion, which invokes the interpretations of the Holy Bible and the Quran to reinforce their gendered notions of women’s ‘natural’ roles (Kajawo, 2012).

However, there are variations within religions in the way the teachings about men and women’s roles are interpreted. The variations of these interpretations are problematic because men want to control women’s identities and their roles. We can see this with the incident that occurred at the mosque where the women’s programme that was held ended in uproar. Further this can also be seen in the violent incident between Badyah and her brother as a result of disagreeing about a scripture’s interpretation. Religion in society and in this community is constructed to protect the patriarchy and the dominance of men’s interests and needs; to provide endless amounts of inexpensive domestic labour and to ensure that society reproduces this order over and over. If women no longer have to give up their lives to serve others or have babies, then they can do all the things men can do and the social order will be overturned. Badyah’s experience when her brother insisted on acting like the father of her children and undermining her teachings indicates that what she was doing was a challenge to patriarchy. Areefa’s domestic abuse experience with her ex-husband and being told to stay in the name of religion and culture shows how the interests and needs of men are more important than those of women including their safety.

6.1.3 Intersectional understandings of women’s roles in the public and private spheres

Intersectional radical theory essentially argues that women are not a homogenous marginalised group. Crenshaw (1989) argued that one cannot understand Black women’s struggles if you only see them as Black or women. You have to see them as Black women because race and class intersect and lead to a particular set of oppressions that white women and Black people do not necessarily experience. The use of radical feminism is important as hooks (1984) argued one cannot liberate women if you only liberate them into the public sphere because that they are still

going to go home and are still going to be mothers and wives within particular rigid religious and cultural sets of expectations or roles. Therefore, to change what is happening in the public sphere it is important to change what is happening in the private sphere. The restrictions of the private sphere are constantly reinforced with what we are exposed to such as education, circles of friends/ colleagues, what we read and our exposure to a range of media, such as television and social media. If boys and girls are still being raised to see women's 'natural' place is in the home, making women CEOs or leaders in community work will have a limited effect on liberating women in both the private and public spheres because at home they would still be met with gendered roles and patriarchal systems such as religion would continue to oppress them.

My findings show that education can have a powerful impact on the relationship between the two spheres and how greater liberation and empowerment can be enabled as a result of education. Education as hooks (1984) and Collins (2002) argue is vitally important: societies need to educate men and women and show them that there are different ways of doing things, that women are more than just what they are to their families, they are individuals, they have interests and needs outside of those of their loved ones. In this study we find these women leaders who grew up in a more conservative culture where in their homes and more broadly they are told what to do by their husbands, brothers and mothers. But, despite this they see that education has played a role in shifting the way women and men act, especially at home. With the younger generation of women able to be more than wives and mothers, they see the emergence of equality through the way they live their lives. This is evidence of radical feminism's argument which is that education plays an important for men and women in terms of changing how the private and public sphere intersect.

Education happens in the public sphere and even though some people may not get it at home where it is a norm for both girls and boys to do housework, they are both given the freedom to be and dreams and aspiration they receive it from society, the circles that they are part of from people who are different from them and society. Theorists argue that one can never change things in the public sphere if you do not help women redefine their roles in the private spheres, education is one of the first steps in helping with this redefinition.

6.2 Reflections

If I could do this research study again, I would do more interviews and spend more time with women from the community. I believe that I would hear more and different kinds of perspectives that I did not get at the time. I also think that without the module I did in my first year of Masters, Work-Integrated Learning, I would have never met Development Action Group and through DAG I would have never worked with the community. Exposure to the work of the community is what helped me choose it as my case study and it was their work that made me want to work with them. I thought and still think that a community led by women aged between 40 and 90 is truly something unique. Spending time in this community and learning from these women helped me to have insights on how their community works and how important their public roles are to this community. Although I have offered a theorised understanding of these women's stories, I think this project is also about how we as researchers do research with complex people; they may be research subjects, but they are incredibly complicated and whole people live full lives and it is important that as researchers we recognise this. This is what I was trying to do here and going forward I think it is important to think about how we as researchers treat research similar to this, doing research with communities instead of on communities.

6.3 Conclusions

Although this is a modest study, my findings indicate that the link between the private and public sphere roles of the women in question is complicated, the liberation or voice offered to them in their public roles is not necessarily reflected within their private sphere and this is complicated through the intersecting lenses of religion, culture, race and class. These women are good leaders who want the best for themselves and the people in their community, they want to be safe, and they want to have healthy homes for their families and neighbours. However, it is important to note that in participating in community work, these women encounter barriers and challenges because of the strict structures imposed in their homes and by extension in the community by their socioeconomic class, their culture, and their religion. In particular, they are restricted by the ways in which religious leaders interpret religious texts to entrench limited, domestic roles for women and limit their ability to step outside of these easily.

However, the relationship between the private and public spheres in this community and communities like these where patriarchal structures have been historically rigid is changing because of education as the findings reflect. The more men and women are educated, the more likely it is that they will be able to go home and challenge gendered roles. These challenges from women, and maybe even more from men, could mean that even though women may still choose to be mothers and wives, they can redefine the ways in which they do this and participate in the public sphere, whether in paid or volunteer roles. It is not possible or desirable for the women in Gatesville to reject Islam or Hinduism; their religious beliefs matter to them. But it is possible to create shifts in the way they are seen and empowered both at home and in the community if we open up and change the ways in which we define what a ‘good’ woman is in the private sphere.



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