

GENDER, RACE, AND POLITICS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Towards Diverse, Inclusive, and Transformed Political Leadership



Editors:

Paul Kariuki and Norah Msuya



DDP

Democracy Development Program



Women in Politics & Leadership Compendium

Gender, Race and Politics in South Africa

Towards Diverse, Inclusive
and Transformed
Political Leadership

Paul Kariuki & Norah Msuya (Eds)



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Gender, Race and Politics in South Africa: Towards Diverse, Inclusive and Transformed Political Leadership

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Foreword

A book like none other, *Gender, race and politics in South Africa: towards diverse, inclusive, and transformed political leadership* is a must-read. Gender, race and politics are highly contested and debatable topics in South Africa; exploring this trio makes this book an explosive yet worthy initiative. The various authors have superseded themselves by not only exploring topics that contextualise and situate the concepts of gender, race and politics but have developed the theme further by looking at how political leadership in South Africa can be diverse, inclusive and transformative.

The intricacies of political representation, participation and democracy in South Africa for nearly three decades have been avidly captured in this book. Focus has also been given to women's experiences. The extent to which gender equality has been realised, in particular, women's participation in the political, civic and economic leadership process, as decision and policymakers, as well as leaders in public and private sectors, has been brought under the spotlight. This book serves as a pacesetter for a progressive conversation about the place of women in South African political life. It further provides an in-depth understanding of the gendered political landscape of South Africa. In a nutshell, this book is cutting edge, powerful, informative, educative, contemporary and a paragon of academic excellence.

Dr Claudine Hingston

MANCOSA, Honorus United Universities

Gender, race and politics in South Africa: Towards diverse, inclusive, and transformed political leadership

Contextual background

Gender equality in South Africa is still a contested ideal. Women are often perceived as incapable of assuming leadership positions in many sectors of our society. The reasons for this assumption are numerous and widely documented in research reports and other publications. However, given the social, political, and economic circumstances of the country, its racial history, and the current political challenges in our society, there is a need to review the extent to which gender equality has been realised; especially women's participation in political, civic and economic leadership processes, as decision and policymakers, as well as leaders in public and private sectors.

Many comprehensive, visionary agendas and policy frameworks exist as blueprints for gender equality and women's human rights at an international level. One of these international policy frameworks is the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995, which covers essential areas of concern: power and decision-making. After over 25 years since adopting this comprehensive policy and considering other progressive policies, significant inequalities exist between women and men. An area of concern, amongst many, is the representation, leadership, and participation of women in power and decision-making processes and roles. Although gender equality is a human right and these documents and policies make provisions for women to actively participate in the political life of their countries, it remains a challenge to transform this abstract idea into a reality.

Abundant academic literature and reports from political and civic organisations indicate that women's full and equal political participation is again for democratic societies and is beneficial to communities and countries. Political parties across the globe, and more significantly in Africa, have a history of being patriarchal and exclusionary, with women often excluded from joining political parties. In instances where they have been afforded leadership positions, they have usually been placed in supporting roles, generally underrepresented and at the bottom of party lists. In other instances,

leadership roles have not equated to having access to power. Women continue to face structural, informal, and formal barriers to political participation, representation, and leadership; these barriers prevent aspiring women leaders from participating in political life as equals to their male counterparts.

Political parties appear to be the gatekeepers for women's active political participation, yet they can be more inclusive, diverse, and custodians of transformation. Within a South African context, a current and recurring conversation is on how political parties can shift from hypermasculine cultures to being institutions that enable not only women but other marginalised genders and sexualities – the LGBTIQ+ community – to have authentic voices and be at the forefront of influencing decisions as these directly affect their futures and the futures of their families. This book, *Gender, race and politics in South Africa: towards diverse, inclusive, and transformed political leadership* – a first of its kind – explores the intricacies of political representation, participation and leadership almost three decades into a democratic South Africa. It hopes to centre women's experiences and ignite the flame for more progressive conversations about the place of women in South African political life.

Main objective of the book

The following objectives guide the book:

- To identify and document the challenges impeding effective participation of women in civic, economic, academic, and political leadership in South Africa and the various ways these challenges can be mitigated towards achieving gender equity in these sectors.
- To identify the policy and paradigm shifts required to facilitate meaningful and sustainable gender equity and equality in South Africa.

Selected guiding questions

1. What does gender equality in South Africa look like in civic, economic, and political leadership?
2. What are the structural barriers to achieving gender equality in political, civic, and economic leadership in South Africa?
3. How can women's political participation and leadership be supported to ensure that women are included as the direct representatives of their issues?

4. What role can men play in advancing the role of women in the political processes in South Africa, from local and provincial to national government?

A total of ten chapters corresponding to the objectives of the book and addressing the key questions noted above were submitted.

Authors' biographies

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Authors' biographies

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Editors' biographies

Paul KARIUKI is the executive director of the Democracy Development Program. He holds a PhD in administration from UKZN and has served in various leadership roles in the civil society sector for the last 22 years. He is also a research fellow at the School of Management, IT and Governance at UKZN. His research interests are public governance, public participation, citizenship, electronic governance, social cohesion, civil society, and monitoring and evaluation in the public sector. Kariuki has published widely in these interest areas and is a reviewer of several national and international academic journals. He is a regular commentator on various topical themes on politics, governance, elections, human rights, gender mainstreaming, development economics, development in Africa, migration and social cohesion, and public participation, among other themes, on various national radio and television stations.

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

AIDS	- Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	- African National Congress
ANCNYTT	- ANC National Youth Task Team
ANCWL	- ANC Women's League
ANCYL	- ANC Youth League
ASGISA	- Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
BEE	- Black Economic Empowerment
BPFA	- Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEO	- Chief Executive Officer
CGE	- Commission for Gender Equality
CONTRALESA	- Congress of Traditional Leaders in South Africa
COPE	- Congress of the People
COVID-19	- Coronavirus Disease of 2019
CSW	- Commission on the Status of Women
CWGS	- Centre for Women and Gender Studies
DA	- Democratic Alliance
DDP	- Democracy Development Programme
DEIT	- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Transformation
DLA	- Department of Land Affairs
DWYPD	- Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities
ECOSOC	- Economic and Social Council
GAC	- Google Arts and Culture
GAP	- Gender Advocacy Programme
GBV	- Gender-based violence

Gender, race and politics in South Africa

GGI	- Gender Gap Index
GCIS	- Government Communication and Information System
GL	- Gender Links
HIV	- Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HIV/AIDS	- Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus/Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
ID	- Independent Democrats
IDEA	- Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IEC	- Independent Electoral Commission
IPU	- Inter-Parliamentary Union
IPV	- Intimate Partner Violence
IRI	- International Republican Institute
JIPSA	- The Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition
JMC	- Parliamentary Joint Monitoring Committee
LGBTIQ+	- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, or questioning/queer
MP	- Member of Parliament
NCOP	- National Council of Provinces
NDP	- National Development Plan
NGOs	- Non-governmental organisations
NYDA	- National Youth Development Agency
NYP	- National Youth Policy
OECD	- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSW	- Office on the Status of Women
PCAS	- Policy Coordination and Advisory Services
PLAC	- Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre
PR	- Proportional representation
PRC	- Proportional representation councillor

List of abbreviations and acronyms

RSA	- Republic of South Africa
SABC	- South African Broadcasting Corporations
SADC	- Southern African Development Community
SAHO	- South African History Online
SAHRC	- South African Human Rights Commission
SAPS	- South African Police Service
SARDC	- Southern African Research and Documentation Centre
SDG	- Sustainable Development Goal
SGJ	- Sonke Gender Justice
SIDA	- Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency
SOGIE	- Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression
SRC	- Student Representative Council
StatsSA	- Statistics South Africa
STEM	- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths
UDHR	- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNW	- UN Women
UNICEF	- UN Children's Fund
UNIFEM	- UN Development Fund for Women's
UNSCR	- UN Security Council Resolution
WC	- Ward Councillor
WEF	- World Economic Forum
WEGE	- Women Empowerment and Gender Equality
WF	- Women Forward
WID	- Women in Development
WNC	- Woman's National Coalition

Introduction:

Women's political participation and leadership in South Africa

Gender equality, the concept that everyone should be treated equally irrespective of their gender or genetics, is a human dignity and respect concern. Many experts believe that gender equality across categories, including education, employment, health, politics, and economic participation, is not only a cultural responsibility but a necessary and crucial part of the healthiest, most optimised economies. Sustainable development goals and other economic targets are often unachievable if half of a country's population is hampered by restricted opportunities. Women's under-representation in political participation and leadership as voters, candidates, and elected representatives largely implies exclusion from most senior decision-making positions of executive government and political parties. The limited participation occurs despite their constitutional rights, proven abilities, and international human rights and women's rights principles to participate equally in democratic governance as leaders and/or change agents.

In 2021, the Global Gender Gap Index, which measures progress on gender equality in economic participation, education, political participation and health, ranked Rwanda as the highest African country at seventh position worldwide, with its Gender Equality Index (GEI) at 80.5% (WEF, 2022). South Africa ranked eighteenth out of 156 countries with a GEI of 78.10% in 2021, which is a slight improvement in closing the gender gap from a GEI of 76% in 2016. Despite the decrease in gender parity from 68.6% in 2019 to 68% in 2020 due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the largest current gender gap is noted in the political empowerment category, which has widened by 2.4% (WEF, 2022).

Women's engagement in political life is important as it positively impacts addressing societal inequalities. Women's full and effective political participation is not only a matter of human rights but also a matter of inclusive growth and sustainable development (OECD, 2018). Women's engagement fosters greater credibility and heightens democratic outcomes because concerns that women prioritise, advocate and invest in have broad societal implications on family life, health and education (Dittmar, 2020; Abdulmelik & Belay, 2019).

Consequently, to improve gender equality, many governments are implementing policies that provide talent development, diversification in the leadership pool, and support for families and caregivers of every gender. In Africa, such initiatives have made some notable strides in the political realm. According to the *Women Political Participation: Africa Barometer 2021*, women's political representation has increased since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing from 15% in 1995 to 25% in 2021 (IDEA, 2021; UN, 1996). Notably, while some African countries have surpassed the 50% threshold for women in politics at a parliament level, it is not the case at local government levels. Despite local government political participation proving to be an essential training ground for long-term political participation, women are highly under-represented at this level. Accordingly, the barometer notes that women's political representation in the lower house constitutes only 25% which is far lower than the 50% benchmark stated in international and continental gender equality instruments (IDEA, 2021). Consequently, there is a need to promote women's participation in politics by creating an enabling ground from local government to the national cabinet level. Member states should adopt a "leaving no one behind" principle by investing in capacity-building programmes, voter education and documentation systems that ensure women are equipped with the necessary skills to sustain their campaigns, office, and exit when their political tenure expires.

Notwithstanding that women's political participation and leadership are currently at the heart of the global agenda on gender equality and women's empowerment debates, the road ahead is still long and challenging. While the gender instruments, local and internationally, provide a valid framework for the protection of women and reducing inequalities, more efforts are needed. Gender equality in political participation and leadership in South Africa has thus, continued to be a contested ideal. The political arena has persistently proven to be elusive and the most challenging for women to enter, take up leadership positions and participate in political decision-making processes. Moreover, the women's political participation barometer affirms an indicative glaring information gap on local government, with available data showing that only 19 out of 54 African countries have data on women's political participation (IDEA, 2021).

Gendered political power negotiations in South Africa

In the realm of governance, there is increasing interest in the nature and significance of women's political participation and leadership and how this might enhance public decision-making and inform the widening of political spaces (Abdulmelik & Belay, 2019; Dittmar, 2020). This has resulted in some new patterns of inquiry focusing on the quality of participation rather than the numbers of women, the positing of participatory alternatives to expert-driven processes and the proliferation of actors and political spaces in which women's political participation and leadership take place (Dittmar, 2020; IDEA, 2021). Additionally, recent years have witnessed increasing developmental concerns on women's rights encompassed with the human rights movement, particularly around rights-based approaches to politics and development. In South Africa, the post-apartheid *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996*, a product of a multiparty negotiation process, laid the terms for the election of the National Assembly and the Senate in 1994, which formed the Constitutional Assembly charged with the responsibility to finalise the Constitution (RSA, 1996). However, Seidman (1999) notes a general tendency for discussions on democracy to overlook issues of gender during the construction of post-apartheid South Africa. Upon deliberations among women activists, an astute decision, informed by experiences from other African nations where women were side-lined after liberation, was taken to push gender issues at the forefront of the transition process rather than postponing it for after (Mohan, 2022). This process highlighted the power negotiations women in South Africa had to endure to overcome historical and racial divides and join hands across parties to prioritise the political inclusion agenda for women in post-apartheid South Africa (Albertyn, 2003). Women's interest groups recognised early on – from the birth of a democratic South Africa – that the political rhetoric of gender equality did not translate into an adequate representation of women in various power negotiation platforms. Subsequently, in 1992 the Women's National Coalition (WNC) was formed, a broad-based alliance of women in politics, academics and activists to facilitate power negotiation to participate in the drafting of the Constitution. WNC ensured that gender equality is enshrined in the Constitution as a fundamental principle for protecting the equality provisions of the Bill of Rights (Albertyn, 2003; Mohan, 2022). Moreover, Mohan (2022) notes that other significant factors ensure that gender remains a motif in the political arena, for instance, the presence of a favourable political opportunity

structure shaped by the drawn-out negotiation process of transition to inclusive politics. Therefore, South African women, having learned enough from the frustrations of women in other nations, pushed hard for the inclusion of their concerns during the struggle and transition for a democratic South Africa, resulting in a policy outcome and the situation in parliament since 1994.

Parliament is another terrain of struggle for women in politics and leadership where power is negotiated. In South Africa, there are more women in politics than in many developed democracies, an achievement owing to numerous explicit affirmative action interventions in political institutions and processes favouring women's participation. The active participation of women in parliament is essential to the achievement of equality, peace, democracy, sustainable development and inclusion of women's perspectives and experiences at the highest level of state decision-making processes. Women's participation in parliament is negotiated in two ways: parity, that is, the number of women against men in the parliament, and the quality of representation of women's issues, or women's voice in the parliament. There is a difference between a numerical increase in women representatives and the representation of women's voices in government decision-making organs, including the parliament. Generally, progress has been made, and the country is ranked as "one of the most gender-diverse parliaments" across the globe.

Nevertheless, South Africa is still far from achieving gender equality (Makgale & Chibwe, 2019). Despite progress, change is incremental, and women are far from attaining parity with men or being a 'critical mass' to impact votes or debates in the parliament. According to Statistics South Africa (StatsSA, 2021), 51.2 % of South Africa's population are women. Currently, at the National Assembly and National Council of Provinces, the composition of women representatives is 46% to 36%, respectively, of which a notable increase from 30% to 43% is noted after the 2019 elections (AU, 2020). Moreover, women in parliament who most resembles the majority of the South African population in terms of economic, educational, racial and occupational backgrounds are most likely to be alienated from policy-making processes and are the most likely to leave parliament and return to grassroots activism (Britton, 2001).

Conclusively, South Africa still has a long way to go in achieving gender equality in political participation and leadership. However, while the numbers of women's participation are promising, the government and other stakeholders need to focus on ensuring quality

representation and leadership of issues concerning women in various platforms for decision-making in the country. Structural and systemic hurdles inhibiting women's political participation and leadership should be identified, understood, and necessary initiatives, including policies and other affirmative actions, be put in place to ensure favourable conditions for women's voices to surface in decision-making processes. Therefore, this book, through ten chapters, examines the different aspects that affect women's participation and taking up leadership positions in the politics and governance of South Africa.

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Chapter 1: Women's political participation and leadership in South Africa: from 1994–2021

Pamela Munemo¹

Abstract

Post-apartheid South Africa did not automatically wave goodbye to its deeply rooted patriarchal system and the hegemonic, highly masculine culture within political, social, and economic spheres. Even with the new democratic system and a clearly stated equality clause in the Bill of Rights instituted after the end of apartheid, women continue to lack adequate representation in the political, social, and economic settings. Recent studies have proven that strides towards gender equality are not as progressive and momentous as women would want them to be. Gender inequality is a phenomenon affecting all women across the globe but is more catastrophic in South Africa, known as the “destination of femicide”. With this background, this chapter aims to map gender inequality from 1994–2021, which is imperative for extracting a new understanding and effective interpretation of the discrimination against women in relation to the inequitable distribution of power. The research methodology used is a systematic review of existing literature as it enables one to chronologically map gender inequality in relation to women's political leadership in South Africa from 1994–2021. Results confer that gender inequality in South Africa is deeply entrenched in the patriarchal masculinities and systems and constructed structural barriers, particularly to obstruct and obscure the long-perceived gender-equal society that allows for equal distribution of power and equal representation. The outcome of this chapter reiterates that gender inequality and equity remain the centre of every conversation, and it is not only a fundamental rights issue but also the foundation for ensuring a balanced approach to the political and economic dimensions for a sustainable nation. This chapter is relevant for establishing ways in which women can

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participate in politics and leadership and what roles men can play in advancing gender equality in South Africa.

Keywords: political participation, patriarchy, gender inequality, post-apartheid, power, leadership, representation

Introduction

Women are as hungry for power and leadership as men are. Since 1994, women's political participation in South Africa has considerably improved with the support of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996*, known as "one of the best constitutions in the world". The International Parliamentary Union rates South Africa as one of the top ten countries with women's representation at 41.8% in the National Assembly and 35.3% in the National Council of Provinces (Mothapo, 2017). Be that as it may, South Africa is far from reaching gender parity as far as women's leadership and political participation are concerned. Women are not equally represented, and issues affecting women may not be fully addressed, even with plausible evidence of women making waves and proving their prowess in public spaces. The socially constructed conditions of women in South Africa place them in a difficult position when tackling gender inequality. These structural barriers create a clear division and place women in the very last positions in all areas, making it challenging to reach or dream of leadership. Women empowerment and reaching gender parity is the only possible solution for South Africa to perform at its maximum potential; economically, politically, and socially (Gouws, 2008; Hingston, 2016).

Patriarchy in South Africa is at the centre of disadvantages women experience in the country as it hinders the implementation of policies. It is a social construct upheld by society and conditions women to accept a position as weak, powerless, soft, feminine individuals that accept leadership and power to be a man's place only. Patriarchy in South Africa stems from the culture of male preference syndrome and only accepting men as leaders in private spaces, which automatically grows into public spaces. The efforts made so far to eliminate patriarchy by civil society groups, policies, governmental machinery and several gender pieces of machinery, and several others have been failing, and with this system lingering as part of our culture, it is impossible to effectively see women in power (Burrell, 2004; Gouws & Kotze, 2007; Gouws, 2008).

With the introduction of a constitutional democratic South Africa and the Bill of Rights to accountably eliminate gendered discrimination against women and inequality, all the possible change hoped for seemed to be possible but not particularly for women. Up to this day, amongst other inequalities, the most worrying and most important inequality is women's leadership and political participation. Strides towards gender equality are not as progressive and momentous as promised. Women continue to struggle and carry on the burden of inequality while societal expectations of feminine femininity compromise their efforts. Gender inequality is frequently considered a women's issue, but it is as much a men's issue as it is a women's. Men in positions of authority have the ability to advance the dream of South Africa reaching its full political, social, and economic growth potential. Without long-term remedies to gender inequality, women will be unable to rise to positions of power and engage fully in public and private spaces.

This chapter focuses on women's participation and leadership in South Africa from 1994 to 2021, critically analysing the structures set up to support equality for all while acknowledging systemic weaknesses and barriers women have faced in a new democratic South Africa that promised equality for all. The first section illustrates that the departure of apartheid was not the end of inequality and discrimination, especially for women and women of colour. The first ten years after the end of apartheid seemed to be a promise to be fulfilled, yet one to be crushed in the faces of women who fought equally for the freedom of South Africa. Liberty and independence did not come with the demise of apartheid. Instead, it brought a coexistence between apartheid and a new liberal rights-based democratic South Africa. The second section describes the history of traditional authority, including how the colonial and apartheid eras inspired and altered them, the impact they had on the development of women's rights and their relevance to understanding the situation of rural women. An examination of the reasons why the African National Congress (ANC) made concessions to the chiefs during the transition period is provided. It is the ANC-led government's notion that they can simultaneously respect traditional leaders while adhering to the Constitution's values of gender equality and representative democracy that this chapter is concerned with (RSA, 1996). This is followed by the patriarchy of politics, including how it has disabled women in leadership and systemically excluded women from equal participation. Lastly, recommendations are provided to ensure the effective and practical realisation of gender equality in South Africa. In light of the preceding context and through the use of a systematic

review of existing literature on this phenomenon, this chapter aims to explain why, despite facing relatively minor legal barriers to political participation at various levels of political processes and leadership in all spheres of life, women's political roles and participation, in general, do not improve their livelihoods and social standing.

Research methodology

This chapter is located within qualitative research, with a partial element of quantitative research as it includes statistical research. The research methodology utilised is a systematic review, as is explained below.

Scoping literature review

According to Munn et al. (2018:1):

Systematic reviews can be broadly defined as a type of research synthesis that [is] conducted by review groups with specialized skills, who set out to identify and retrieve international evidence that is relevant to a particular question or questions and to appraise and synthesize the results of this search to inform practice, policy and in some cases, further research.

The focus of this chapter is the mapping of gender equality in South Africa from 1994 to 2021. The use of a systematic review is most suitable as the data sources consulted are those relevant to the focus of the chapter. In liberal constitutionalised South Africa:

Freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression the condition of the women in our country has radically changed for the better, and that they have been empowered to intervene in all spheres of life as equals with any other member of society (Mandela, 1994).

Above is an extract from a speech by the late former President Nelson Mandela in 1994, a time and period in South African history that was promising and full of hope. This speech created hope amongst all people, especially women, which the post-apartheid era had finally brought about the equality they had long advocated for. Post-apartheid was met with a transition period that affected and was tolerated by different groups differently. It was smooth and effortless

for men but not smooth sailing for women. Women's fight for freedom continued even after the above speech was presented. Gouws and Kotze (2007:166) claim that "while avenues to leadership are open to men, women have to get to leadership positions by following different 'paths' than men". This means that while men's career paths are often linear and uninterrupted, women's career paths are often interrupted, even post-apartheid (Gouws & Kotze, 2007). Liberal constitutionalised South Africa and post-apartheid South Africa gave rise to institutional political systems and structures built to serve women's needs. These national gender machinery included an Office on the Status of Women, which adopted *South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality*, popularly known as the "Gender Policy Framework" (Kornegay, 2000). This implementation was proposed by the presidency and outlines South Africa's vision for gender equality. A self-governing Commission for Gender Equality was also established to promote and advance gender equality and strengthen constitutional democracy (Shozi, 2011; Gouws, 2008; Mariz, 2014). In 1994, South Africa established national gender machinery sensitive to women's needs to advance and protect gender equality. The main issue observed during the transition and transformation of the political regime was the undoubtedly patriarchal nature of the South African culture promulgated by the new regime. The black-and-white difference between leadership and power showed that these new structures were just but formal arrangements of power with reiterated inequitable distribution of power. Women were "allowed" to be in leadership positions yet could not fully represent the grievances of the many disenfranchised and disproportioned women in the lower class (Beckwith, 2000; Burrell, 2004; Nowak & Ricci, 2005).

The lack of accountability by this machinery led to many questions: One of the vexing questions that gender researchers have been grappling with is whether women parliamentarians represent women's issues or whether the number of women parliamentarians correlates with gender issues (Gouws & Kotze, 2007). The presence of women in political positions did not affect policies and policy changes that advanced women's needs. Rural South Africa's traditional nature lingered in rural local councils, where the number of women was lower than in the national parliament. This gap between the number of women in the national parliament and local governance is attributed to the strong hegemonic and patriarchal nature of the political system, which had its stronghold and fortresses on the importance of culture, traditions and male dominance (Meth, 2006; Nowak & Ricci, 2005). A paper prepared for the presidency's ten-year cabinet review process in

1995 showed that the unemployment rate for women was 37.32%, while for men, it was 22.68% (Netshitenzhe, 2003). The same study showed unemployment statistics of 45.32% for women and 33.84% for men in 2002 (Netshitenzhe, 2003). This remains an astounding reflection of the economy's inability to engender sufficient employment (Bhorat, 2003). Women, however, have suffered the most as a result of their low backgrounds, high illiteracy rate, and disenfranchisement. Nonetheless, we witness a polity that is institutionalised in favour of women and policies designed to benefit women, yet they continue to experience challenges under the new system.

It is important to note that the South African government, in terms of women's representation, transcended from the 171st before the new government to an exhilarating seventh position post-apartheid (Beckwith, 2000; Burrell, 2004; De Hollanda, 2013). Democracy did not end apartheid for women. The introduction of the quota system by the ANC was undoubtedly a commitment to gender equality. Voters voted in favour of ANC by 252 seats which were 12 237 655 votes out of a total of 19 533 498 (Gouws & Kotze, 2007; Gouws, 2008). This was a resounding win, but also for women? Despite the promise of equal rights for women in the Constitution, the desire for gender equality in the post-apartheid era is irreconcilable with the retention of traditional authority.

Traditional leadership in South Africa

Women in South Africa have the most well-defined legal rights in all of Africa. The situation for women in South Africa appears to have taken a significant step forward in the Constitution, but this came with much opposition from traditional authorities who feared that the introduction of gender equality would ruin the country's cultural background and traditions that were valuable and beneficial to their identity (Will, 1984; Robins, 2008; Nowak & Ricci, 2005; Oldfield & Tucker, 2019). Traditional authorities are viewed as the most significant barrier women in rural South Africa face. Traditional chiefs held on to their power; they worked with local councillors and reported to councillors. This novel approach to governance placed executive and legislative authority in municipal councils even though chiefs remained important to traditional rulership. While women in parliament have supported reforming customary law and aligning it with equality and non-discrimination, several male political leaders' analysis of the importance of traditional culture and the construction of their masculinity within that culture may differ from that of

women parliamentarians; potentially jeopardizing women's efforts to embrace customs and human rights.

The national government has mostly failed rural women in terms of land and women's rights over its distribution and usage as a result of these statutes; in fact, the government has failed to defend the basic ideals in question. As a result, women urgently needed a robust women's movement to not only exert pressure on the government but mobilise South African women to defend their constitutional right to equality. Apartheid's long-term and more intractable ramifications plagued and continue to plague the new South African administration. The economic impacts created by the policy of enforced racial exclusivity might be attributed to some of these implications. Over time, the combination of restricted access to resources, land, employment and services such as water, electricity and housing based on race has produced the huge dilemma that society now faces.

With patriarchy and masculinity standing in the way of real democracy, the picture remains unclear. In post-apartheid South Africa, the term 'traditional authorities' refers to 'chiefs' of various grades who have jurisdiction over rural populations. However, over time, this image of traditional authority has been altered and fashioned to favour not only the white ruling governments that have dominated South Africa's history but also patriarchal systems. Chieftainship and customary law were the two fundamental institutions that were rebuilt. They were utilised as an inexpensive method of administration during the colonial era and afterwards to assure the successful utilization of the migrant labour system (Will, 1984; Butler, 1998; Nowak & Ricci, 2005; Meth, 2006). The chief's most important power was and still is the ability to assign land use. This power was useful to the apartheid state, but it has complicated the regeneration of rural communities under the new ANC-led government and has been extremely harmful to rural women's population and gender equality. An opportunity was provided for women by the Women's National Coalition to draft a women's charter, which was presented to parliament in 1994. Through the establishment of the national gender machinery (Geisler, Mokgope & Svanemyr, 2009), the opportunity structure provided a forum for women to express their demands. Even in the face of opposition from the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa, women could articulate the need to change some aspects of customary law that lead to women's oppression, resulting in the enactment of, for instance, the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act 120 of 1998, which stated that women married under customary law could not enter binding

agreements or make any key decisions without the approval of their husbands or male relations (Gouws, 2008; Gouws & Kotze, 2007).

The women's national coalition, the ANC Women's League, and all the other women's organisations failed women in this regard. The national government largely failed rural women in terms of land and women's rights over allocation and usage as a result of these acts; in effect, the government failed to uphold the very principles of equality enshrined in the Constitution; all they did was to further entrench the concept of male dominance in both men and women's minds and institutions in rural South Africa. One of the key causes for the traditional authorities' increasing control in rural areas is the lack of a substantial civil society movement, particularly a powerful women's movement, to advocate for equality after 1994 (Beckwith, 2000; Gouws, 2008; Butler, 2010). The broad women's movement in South Africa was significantly stronger before the country's first democratic elections. It successfully opposed traditional authorities' plans to exempt customary law from the gender equality clause and later thwarted their attempt to entrench customary law. Post-apartheid South Africa required a strong women's movement and political leaders who could shake the entire system into equality. Despite the efforts of female lawmakers, the quota system and other pieces of national gender machinery did not adequately serve the interests of women between 1994 and 2004, despite the fact that it was not easy considering the male-dominated institutional culture of the house. As described by Beckwith (2000), what was needed was "double militancy", which meant the location of activist women in two political venues, with participatory, collective identity and ideological commitments to both. When the ANC was brought to power, several women who had been at the forefront of women's movements were elected to parliament on ANC tickets, which dealt a severe blow to the cause. The bulk of women's organisations has been left without essential players and leaders. The situation for these organisations was worse in rural regions because they were primarily urban-based and not nearly as well-organised as traditional authorities. As a result, rural women found it far more difficult to band together against the restrictive nature of traditional authorities since they lacked an organisation or a figurehead to rally behind (Burrell, 2004; Gouws, 2008; Robins, 2008).

The ANC's alliance made the Equality Clause and the new system incompatible. The ANC wanted to maintain a relationship with the Congress of Traditional Leaders in South Africa to avoid losing the

support of traditional leaders and their supporters, whom the ANC considered crucial voter blocs. Since a large majority of people still believe in and respect traditional authority and what they stand for, the ANC could dismantle people's beliefs and ways of life. The concept of gender equality was unusual, and it took some time to get used to. Traditional leaders were unable to renounce their influence in rural areas, in general, without provoking political unrest among indigenous peoples, particularly in rural areas. Finally, the ANC had to choose between confronting the traditional authorities and ensuring that women's rights are not only written in the Constitution but also practiced and experienced by women throughout South Africa. Or appeasing the traditional authorities by allowing gender inequality to persist despite claiming to uphold the Constitution. Unfortunately for women's rights, the ANC appeared to prefer the second alternative. Considering that the ANC needed to choose between the two shows that traditional authorities and the concept of gender equality are incompatible.

The new democracy: a formal arrangement of power

The majority of analyses of political change in South Africa focus on the formal components of the political order: the governance structures, the set of legal laws, political norms, and established institutions that make up the regime. The formal political order's foundation can be viewed as all-encompassing and founded on equality, but it is also concerned with the formal organisation of power. However, a closer examination of aspects of the political process, particularly the quotas system, indicates that it was more of a formality than its actual intended purpose, which was to realise women's full participation in the decision-making process and, most importantly, fight gender inequality. This system was put in place prior to the first general election in a democratic South Africa, which took place in 1994 but was not legislated. A conclusion to be drawn from this is that this matter was treated lightly. The ANC was the only political party with a 30% representation of women (Gouws, 2008). Women in parliament accounted for less than 4% before 1994, implying that the quotas system placed women in a stronger position to alter the world. However, party leaders have the authority to compile the list and can include or exclude individuals as they see fit. As a result, members of parliament are accountable to their party leaders rather than the voters.

Ten years post-apartheid

In June of 2005, we witnessed the appointment of Phumzile Mlambo-NGcuka as the first female deputy president of South Africa under the Thabo Mbeki administration. This was such a huge stride for women all over South Africa as she was the first woman to ever hold this position. South Africa undoubtedly experienced low inflation, which decreased to around 3% during this time, and the financial system remained stable and healthy throughout, weathering many instances of currency devaluation without obvious difficulty. More jobs for women, more education for young girls and women, and more political roles for women resulted from this. In 2006, the ANC held a local government election with a 50% quota. In 2005, the average representation of women in the national parliament was 32.75%, while the average participation at the provincial level was 32.3%, with seven out of nine provinces meeting the minimum 30% quota for women. In municipal government, women made up about 28% of councillors in 2003, a significant increase from the previous year. The cabinet of President Mbeki included 16 male and 12 female ministers and 27 male and 10 female deputy ministers (Gouws & Kotze, 2007; Gouws, 2008; O'Brien, 2011; Oldfield & Tucker, 2019).

These were respectable figures but not the best. The author of this chapter believes that women in leadership were not as trusted or considered legitimate. Despite a demonstrated history of corruption among male leaders and the looming threats of judicial trials, they were elected presidents. Mbeki was entangled in the Arms Deal that wreaked havoc on the system from 1996 to 1999 while serving as vice president, which cost taxpayers large amounts of money.

This refers to the author of this chapter's earlier remarks about how women are not taken seriously. From April 2004 to August 2007, the Deputy Minister of Health, Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, was publicly humiliated and stripped of her post as deputy minister of health. In the fight for better healthcare in South Africa, Madlala-Routledge has shown unrivalled political leadership and expertise. When she handled the health portfolio during the minister of health's leave due to sickness, she presented a strong argument for a comprehensive HIV/AIDS policy as well as the necessity for antiretroviral medications. These policies and implementations were necessary because, by the year 2000, South Africa had become the global epicentre of HIV/AIDS, and the disease had become the leading cause of death worldwide. When she was the minister of defence forces, she publicly endorsed antiretroviral therapy and even implemented it in the army. She chastised the administration

multiple times for downplaying the gravity of the HIV/AIDS problem. While Mbeki, the then-president of South Africa, refused to believe that HIV caused AIDS, telling the *Washington Post* that he personally knew no one who had died of the disease and refusing to participate in scientific investigations on the disease. The president fired Madlala-Routledge as deputy minister of health for taking an illegal trip to Spain to speak at an AIDS conference and for insubordination and not being a team player, causing widespread concern among organisations and posing a potential public health threat. Her dismissal was a clear indicator that her ability posed a threat to male dominance. The issue of formal power arrangements arises once more. Women were supposed to be in positions of authority to warm seats, not to demonstrate competence and intellect. Simultaneously, Jacob Zuma made the now-famous remark that he took a brief shower after having sex with his rape accuser to reduce his risk of catching AIDS. These claims surfaced when he was fired as deputy president due to a corruption and fraud scandal. The man's actions, motives, and leadership abilities had already been called into doubt, yet he was acquitted and campaigned to become the president of South Africa. According to Gouws and Kotze (2007), the rape trial shattered the feminist agenda and rhetoric in government, and women leaders were implicated in the tragedy as a result of their silence.

Women under Mbeki's administration were outdoing themselves and demonstrating their leadership capabilities. Madlala-Routledge worked on ideas and changes to improve the country's ailing health care system before her dismissal. Mlambo-Ngcuka established the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa and the Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition a month later to address scarce and important skills required to accomplish the Initiative's goals. Of course, women made up roughly one-third of the National Assembly at the turn of the century, and by 2010, that number had risen to more than two-fifths (Schafer, 2004; Nowak & Ricci, 2005; Gouws, 2008; Oldfield & Tucker, 2019). With his reign, gender equality looked attainable, and Mbeki's notion of the African Renaissance urged traditional leaders to democratise in order to be relevant in the twenty-first century. Traditional elders were outraged, but it was part of Mbeki's ideas, and he advocated for a woman president to succeed him. Our political rhetoric of struggle as women has also been seized by the system and is ideologically homogeneous at this time. Other analysts' politics and critics agree that more than the previous efforts post-apartheid, Mbeki advanced the liberal feminism cause further than anyone else. Within the limits of existing power systems, the Mbeki effort was motivated

by a desire to offer women equal representation. It provided women with legal recourse and equal representation through the use of quotas and gender parity, and it allowed women to participate in the objective of transforming South Africa into a competitive capitalist democracy.

Be that as it may, the situation in which women found themselves was regrettable. In 2006/2007, the South African Police Service (SAPS) reported 25 428 cases of sexual assaults across the country and 22 124 cases in 2007/2008 (SAPS, 2009). This may be due to how women were implicated because of their silence in Zuma's rape case and because many men and women backed him during his trial (Gouws, 2008). Madlala-Routledge's departure disillusioned women who looked up to her for leadership and change, particularly those affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Mbeki and his administration were unconcerned about the rise in sexual assaults and domestic violence; he did not exhibit any empathy or concern for the situation. Within political parties, there was evidence of gender insensitivity and a lack of gender transition, as well as insufficient internal policies and programs to promote and assist women and handle issues such as sexual harassment. Mbeki's denial of AIDS and complicated policies made it difficult for women to carry out their work because the huge number of infections impeded progress on issues like poverty, employment, and even education. As a result, a large number of women were implicated and further disadvantaged.

According to Shozi (2011), the South African Commission on Gender Equality survey conducted in 2007 noted that more than 30% of respondents believed women to be too emotional to undertake high-level leadership roles. Stereotypical notions regarding women's ability to perform effectively in leadership positions are frequent. In this regard, while women legislators do a good job, for the most part, many respondents believe that women are incapable of handling high-level leadership positions. It is difficult for female leaders to deal with stereotypical perceptions of their male counterparts. These stereotypes encourage and perpetuate the deeply rooted patriarchal system and the hegemonic, highly masculine culture in political, social, and economic spheres. Due to this, women are relegated to the background in leadership and decision-making processes. However, while gender should not be a determining factor in a person's aptitude to lead, the widely held assumption that women are born to be followers rather than leaders has created systems that discriminate against women.

In 2008, South Africa signed the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Gender and Development Protocol, and Article 12

committed all signatories to ensure that by 2015, women hold 50% of decision-making positions in public and private sectors (SADC, 2008). After the 2011 elections, it became clear that a law on 50/50 was needed, as policy guidelines and voluntary quota schemes resulted in the desired outcomes.

During a national party-political dialogue, Advocate Pansy Tlakula of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) said:

With women constituting the majority of South Africa's population, as well as the majority of registered voters, it was disturbing to note that this has not translated into women's equal representation as party candidates and public representatives (South African Government, 2011).

Women made up only 37% of the proportional representatives in the 2011 elections, indicating that political parties were not adhering to gender equality obligations. South Africa is falling behind on the problem of gender equality as a result of this. South Africa was ranked eighteenth in the World Economic Forum's *Gender Global Gap Report 2014* (WEF, 2014). A total of 39.50% were women in parliament in 2014, 22% were women premiers and women in local government were 38%. The percentage of female premiers decreased from 55% in 2009 to 22% in 2014. Women's representation in local elections fell from 40% to 38% in 2011 (WEF, 2014). This has a negative impact on the progress and efforts made toward gender equality and 50/50 political participation. This has a negative impact on the progress and efforts made toward gender equality and 50/50 political participation. The reason for the reduction, according to Gender Links Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Colleen Lowe Morna, is that "South Africa has persistently refused to implement a statutory quota, leaving it to the whims of political parties" (Gender Links, 2014). As the ANC's popularity waned, so did the number of women in parliament and other female political figures. Other political parties who do not freely choose to use the system have a significant challenge as a result of the government's and legislatures' unwillingness to legislate. In order to achieve sustainable development and transformative change, gender parity is not a choice but a need. This raises the question of whether the quota system was put in place to set women up for failure. The number of men in parliament determined the rise of the number of women in parliament. The ANC's loss of majority had the same effect on women. Women in high-ranking positions were the only ones who

could hold seats in parliament, creating a divide between the privileged and the poorest of the poor. The men in authority also appointed and dismissed the cabinet. The expulsion of Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge is a good example of how the system was designed to fit and serve the requirements of men at the expense of women. In 2016, women held 3.6% of CEO roles, 5.5% of chairperson posts, 17.1% of directorships, and 21.4% of executive management jobs in the South African economy, indicating that gaps still exist (Hingston, 2016). This shows that the gender gap in leadership roles in South Africa is still considerably high, and women are largely under-represented at all levels, exacerbated in traditional settings, where traditional African women's opinions and concerns are frequently repressed.

Historically, men have benefited more from liberal democracy than women. Poor women who do not have children, do not care for disabled relatives, or are not old enough to be eligible for an old-age pension have no social safety net (Gouws, 2008; Gouws & Kotze, 2007). This implies they are not eligible for social grants and living below the poverty level of R 561 per month in 2019, according to Statistics South Africa (StatsSA, 2021). Without strong civil society groups and female political leaders to represent rural women and women in general, South Africa will be unable to accomplish its full development potential, eradicate poverty, or achieve sustainable development.

Conceptually, the gender difference is a lengthy list of power between men and women. In practice, gender differences are a major issue on local and national levels. Not only does it impact the lives of various men and females, but the difference between genders also stunts economic growth and hinders overall growth.

The *Global Gender Gap Report 2017* indicated that South Africa ranks 89 globally regarding economic participation (WEF, 2017). In educational attainment, South Africa ranks in the top 20 at number 19. However, the salary and wage disparity between men and women for equivalent labour and anticipated earned income is rising (WEF, 2017). When it comes to the actual betterment of South African women's livelihoods, there is not much to commend or credit for. Nonetheless, South Africa boasts one of the best voting systems in the world, with a proportional representation system that ensures that everyone, including women from all cultures, religious identities, and ethnic languages, is represented. Due to the proportional representation system, South Africa is listed as at the top in terms of political engagement and representation, with 46% female members of parliament in 2019 and 50% women in the cabinet for the first

time in 2019. This leads to an argument that the quotas system is just but a formality and nothing more than that.² Hence, women find themselves in situations which are brutal and dangerous. In the recent statistics, 46 548 sexual offences were reported by SAPS 2020/2021, and 10 006 people were raped between April and June 2021, which was a 72,4 % increase compared with the previous reporting period (SAPS, 2021). South Africa has gained the moniker “destination of femicide” because at least one woman is murdered every three hours in this country. These figures are increasing yearly, prompting questions and ridiculing the entire system and what good it serves women. Women who work in government are accountable to their political leaders, not to the voters. Voters do not have the capacity to elect the leaders they choose, and leaders do not have the power to explore, advocate, and implement alternatives to the inhumane situations that women face in South Africa.

Politics of no accountability

There is a significant difference between leadership and power: In South Africa, especially when it comes to female leaders, it is evident that power is not given to them immediately but rather to leadership positions only. The increase in the number of women in political positions did not alleviate the stressful conditions women face. The quota system is one framework that has proven to work better for men than women in multiple ways, as South Africa remains a warzone where women continue to be victims. Proportional representation allows political party leaders to select members of the parliament, and it usually also depends on how high the names are on the list. In this regard, we find only one woman in the Top 5 in the ANC, yet one of the basic pillars of power-sharing in proportional representation ensures the participation of representatives from all significant communal groups in political decision-making, particularly at the executive level (Gouws & Kotze, 2007; Gouws, 2008; Shozi, 2011; Mariz, 2014). The critique of proportional representation is that it fails to hold politicians accountable to their constituents. However, it establishes a boss-worker relationship in which the listed and selected candidates are held accountable to their leaders rather than the voters. Voters choose a political party but do not vote for specific members of that party. This takes precedence over efficiency and service delivery, effectively leaving women in the same situation as when they had no vote. This does not appear to be a true democracy. This arrangement widens

2 See the next section on accountability.

the divide between the women of the upper crust and the women of the lower crust because the women at the top are already qualified to be Members of Parliament and are answerable to the leaders who put them there. Researchers from the Paris School of Economics' World Inequality Lab and the University of the Witwatersrand's Southern Centre for Inequality Studies released a report in the *World Bank Economic Review* on July 31, 2021. It uses household survey data, tax microdata, and macroeconomic balance sheets to estimate the distribution of household wealth in South Africa from 1993 to 2017 (World Inequality Lab, 2021). According to this analysis, the wealthiest 1% of South Africans control a larger share of the country's wealth than the remaining 99%, exactly as they did before apartheid. The disparity continues to expand, and women living in poverty continue to be poorer, and because the proportional system separates the legislature from the people, women remain in the same position. Women will most likely be let down by the lack of a constituency-based system that allows them to vote for their own representatives who can represent them at a local, regional, or even national level and run for public office. A constituency-based structure may allow for greater accountability and rapid progress toward gender equality in all forms. Unfortunately, considering the rate at which the government fails women, South Africa may appear near to be achieving the goal but has yet to begin. When 51.2% of the people are inadequately represented, or when the representation is seated somewhere on highchairs but not given the power that comes with the chair, democracy becomes a farce. A closer examination reveals patriarchy in all of its forms. Democracy is neither viable nor effective, especially when it is conducted in a manner that respects tradition and culture.

Patriarchy of politics

The leadership system in South Africa is built proudly on the foundations of a deeply rooted patriarchal system and the hegemonic, highly masculine culture in political, social, and economic spheres. With the arrival of COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021, the magnitude of abuse was reached with women murdered by their spouses and sexually and physically abused by their males who profess to be their "protectors". President Cyril Ramaphosa declared a pandemic within a pandemic. Women have long been thought to be weak and feminine, less deserving of respect, obedient and only with the ability to sit and listen. The first blunder made when apartheid ended was allowing the government to coexist with traditional leadership. This was an opportunity for a

smooth transition that was squandered. Of course, this may have been accomplished by carefully considering essential and sentimental traditions that do not damage women while ensuring gender equality.

However, the system was founded on male superiority, passed down to all structures and systems, old and new, resulting in structural imbalances. Because of the way women are seen by their male counterparts, the quality of leadership from women differs from that of males. Women have always been instructed to stay at home and care for their children, and their ascent to leadership has always been hindered by their obligations. Education is one of the most crucial pillars for patriarchy to maintain its dominion over societal institutions. The education system in patriarchal societies promotes male members of the society over female ones. According to studies, at least 120 000 female learners drop out of school each year, with just one-third returning. Girls are affected by these numbers from the age of ten, whereas boys continue to attend school (SABC News, 2021). The male preference culture also significantly impacts how low girls' school attendance is and how continuing university education ends. Boys have traditionally been valued above girls, and as a result, they are given priority in their homes when it comes to education, allowing for the political divide between male and female leaders. This male preference culture pervades the system, making it more socially acceptable for men to lead than for women. Despite the numerous laws that support and reinforce the battle for gender equality, men's education on patriarchy, sexism, and misogyny has to be strengthened.

Recommendations

Women in positions of power will always be victims of political patriarchy, and gender equality will never be a reality. Below, measures and recommendations are provided that can be put in place to ensure that gender equality in South Africa translates from policy to practice.

- It is necessary to abandon notions, prejudices, conventions, and assumptions that women are incapable of leading because history has proven otherwise.
- A thorough examination of the institutional government and its policies is required to restructure, legislate, and create a system accountable to its population.
- The education system has historically discriminated against girls, with a higher rate of school dropout, teenage pregnancy, and HIV diagnoses affecting girls than boys.

- The issue of policy execution is one of the most important aspects of running a successful administration. This issue is related to the dismantling of a government preoccupied with the formal organisation of structures and policies or patriarchal politics. The sooner it is recognised that sustainable development in South Africa cannot be achieved without the equitable involvement of women and actual and literal accountability and policy execution, the better. The men in power are in a position to list women as candidates and allow them to take positions in offices that need women to work on issues that impact women daily in society.

Success is measured not by how far women can climb but by the state in which the majority of women remain, and it is apparent that women are still suffering, despite the fact that South Africa has the greatest legislation. In terms of laws and policies that benefit women, this is not the posture South Africa should take in Africa or globally. The number of women freed from poverty, empowered in economic participation, a decrease in dropout rates, the success of a functional cabinet and ministries, and literal representation of women by women on issues that affect them, as well as better accountability, are all important factors.

Conclusion

Existing literature indicates that the South African system was designed with men in mind and only a few fleeting thoughts spared for women for good measure. Due to the system's discriminatory nature, women can participate in day-to-day operations but not fully in policy implementation. Although there are policies and laws in place that are in favour of gender equality, the inequitable distribution of power can be attributed to structural imbalances, apartheid residues carried over into the post-1994 era, a strong patriarchal system that prevents women from climbing the corporate ladders, and the government's focus on creating systems for the sake of formality without implementation. The principles espoused by these systems can never meet. Hence there can never be a permanent marriage between democracy and tradition unless the recommendations mentioned above are taken into consideration. Currently, in South Africa, the people do not yet experience democracy adequately and sufficiently, especially the marginalised. Structural inequalities were created to take advantage of the country's constitutional privilege. Gender equality is an issue that equally affects men and women. Men can undoubtedly play an important role in promoting women's full involvement in politics and policy execution.

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Chapter 2: Mapping gender inequality 1994–2021 in South Africa

Zamantshali Dlamini¹

Abstract

South Africa carries a legacy with a long history of discrimination and segregation in terms of colour and gender. Through its policy framework, this separation was normalised and endorsed to perpetuate gender stereotypes in society. This has counteracted the country's incapability to develop and grow its citizenry. Upon surveying this socio-economic and political state of affairs, poverty and gender inequality have worsened the status quo, distressing the social and economic conditions. What remains evident in communities are intergenerational links breeding social ills, unemployment and violence against women. The dawn of democracy recognises efforts geared towards achieving sustainable development goals where gender justice is primary. South Africa, post-apartheid, boasts of a non-racial and constitutionally mandated multi-party government that has reconfigured various structural changes to pursue the gender agenda, shifting the narratives of gender equality and equity. This move has been renowned in various public spheres, yet institutional placements and hierarchical promotions remain highly convoluted with deployments and connections. In critically surveying this landscape, books and academic publications will be reviewed. This chapter aims to emphasise that women continue to be underrepresented and still marginalised in politics, government roles and many sectors 28 years later. Women continue to face obstacles when they ascend leadership roles and climb the career ladder. The entrapment in systematic and patriarchal structures indicative of male domination exists, crippling progress – a concern when South Africa is battling a gender-based violence (GBV) pandemic. It is critical that policies, frameworks and business opportunities present an enabling environment where women's participation sharpens transformation and inclusion. For everyone to thrive, a window of hope warrants that gender equality

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becomes a priority so that women can become agents of change in their personal and private lives.

Keywords: patriarchy, citizenry, democracy, gender agenda, transformation, equality

Introduction

South Africa bears the scars of colonialism and the unhealing wounds of the apartheid era. The struggles thereof are still discernible due to issues of gender and race at the forefront of South African politics. By and large patriarchal precepts continue to oppress and subjugate women's economic, political and social lives, gendered politics that have enmeshed the lived experiences of many women in South Africa. The slogan "the personal is political" was popular in the 1960s and 1970s to excite the struggles of politics and gender inequality. In today's society, it explicates how power dynamics, male domination and oppression have defined the destiny of women. Women's experiences under a cloud of exploitation and male supremacy have been the marker of abuse that women have endured. The devastating effects of such gross human rights violations are still a challenge. To date, gender politics continue to challenge society as the country hosts a trail of problems such as poverty, unemployment and social ills.

More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the lived experiences of women whose lives are overshadowed by a dark cloud of gender-based violence and femicide. Gender constructions only have a way of looking at gender roles by simply categorising them according to feminine and masculine notions. These constructions are culturally and socially filtered by restrictive norms in society that society has created and enforced. Hence, gender inequality has, for the longest time, emerged from masculine and feminine characterisation. In South Africa, the triple strife is central to race, sexuality and class as bases that bolster more societal divisions. These determinants have societal implications as they further perpetuate "the prevailing political, social, and economic inequalities" (Kehler, 2001:41). Furthermore, in South Africa, they define past and present exclusion and marginalisation women face. It is impossible not to view cultural and social norms, attitudes and values upheld in society, defining and regarding women as less "valuable" members of society. According to Kehler (2001), this has been reinforced in the attitudes and behaviours women experience daily, and it is reinforced "within policy-making and legislative structures" (Kehler, 2001:41). The narrative prevails in

society, determining who has the power and who is privileged. By all means, every part of society resides according to the organisational model where men have the power with women beneath that male supremacy. It also alludes to what are traditionally male and female roles. For example, men are groomed to be caregivers, breadwinners and providers, while on the other hand, women are socialised to perform the “reproductive function” (Kehler, 2001). However, the transition to democracy appealed for redress and transformation. In 1994 the new political order arose to affirm and recognise the injustices that had alienated its people. Hence, in recognising that women’s rights are human rights, gender equality is one of the United Nations’ sustainable goals envisioned as a means to empower women. This is a critical conversation in this chapter as it intentionally aims to shine a spotlight on gender gaps and gender blindness that exist in policies, practice and distribution of resources and opportunities, disempowering women. It maps out the realities of women, whether they have equal opportunities to ascend to leading and managerial roles, and their influence thereof.

Scholars contend that amongst remnants of colonialism and the tragic apartheid era, patriarchy remains the footprint that has overshadowed how life oppresses and grants power to males at the expense of “insubordinate” female counterparts. For example, Gumede (2021:184) argues that “colonialism and apartheid entrenched a system that ensured that the African/black population group remained in the trenches”. For various gender activists and feminists, patriarchy relates to uncontested male privilege, which speaks to the formation of social systems in society that embeds its rulership and authority through the eldest male child (Mudau & Obadire, 2017).

South African history is marked by diverse realities, hinging on the inferior status and the visibility of certain persons in different spaces. Upon reflecting on the new terrain after 1994, the ‘rainbow nation’ has demonstrated and proved that there are underlying realities that require attention. Transitioning from apartheid to democracy has been a convoluted journey where issues of race and gender are controversial subjects. For example, prior to 1994, “white males wielded political, economic, management and social power” (Booyesen, 2007:132). Women, by default, were considered second in charge. Consequentially, the new dispensation warranted that a shift is made so that legislation and laws be amended to enhance and mould an inclusive society where both women and men have a piece of the pie. Gender inequality remains a topical discourse in South

Africa as it hinders development and transformation. In examining the gender inequality landscape, this chapter asks three critical research questions:

1. How has gender politics in South Africa evolved and advanced between 1994 and 2021?
2. In what ways has gender inequality resurfaced across various government and corporate sector structures in the new democratic dispensation?
3. What are the current challenges hampering South Africa's development due to poor redress when it comes to gender politics, policies and structural infrastructure?

Methodology

Literature reviews are foundational in grounding and situating an academic enquiry. In searching for knowledge frontiers, the author of this chapter surveyed various sources. A systematic review of the empirical literature on gender inequality in South Africa is critically presented to raise awareness in this chapter. This systematic review is drawn from desktop research methodology, primarily secondary data and analysis. By so doing, the author was able to read, summarise, analyse, and synthesise aspects of the literature in sync with the discussion.

Literature search and evaluation

Inclusion criterion

In search of the relevant literature, the author included publications from diverse disciplines on gender and gender inequality in South Africa.

Literature identification

The search was done using the following key phrases: “gender discrimination”, “gender and democracy”, and “gender roles after 1994”. The author was guided by the content, abstract and discussions from the publication titles. Publications prior to 1994 were isolated in the search. The author primarily searched in Google Scholar for relevant publications aligned with the main title. Because technological advancement changes methods for archiving and retrieving, this is primarily explored by surveying the gender gaps in various spaces

between 1994 to 2021. Through the lens of intersectional feminism, this chapter intends to unmask not just gender as an interlocking system of oppression but to showcase how race and class have additionally created pressure for women to flourish. It argues mostly that gender inequality links with vulnerable exploitation and exclusion of women, which manifests poorly economically, politically and psychologically as one observes limitations in terms of women's participation and representation. The bone of contention in this chapter is that the socio-cultural constructions hinder women leaders' competitiveness, potential and vibrancy to radically bring lasting changes.

Gender politics through the intersectional lens

Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, an American civil rights advocate and a leading scholar of critical race theory, developed the intersectional analytical approach to understanding women's domination and oppression. Crenshaw (1989) coined the term "intersectional feminism". This term as an analytical approach is an explication of how oppression unfolds and how it enables researchers and practitioners to understand the lives of black women in particular to appropriate suitable solutions to complex situations. Intersectionality describes an analytical approach where categories define how each person is subject to vulnerability, oppression and discrimination, and to understand this concept, categories to be mindful of include gender, race, class, sexual orientation, religion and physical ability. Theorising in intersectionality allows one to understand why women have different experiences in the workplace and men will have unique encounters. Shields (2008) argues that forms of intersectionality create unique situations of disadvantage and marginalisation. This theoretical framework is central to this chapter as it illuminates why gender inequality remains prevalent 28 years into democracy in South Africa. It possibly provides resources and develops tools that may absolve the social, economic and political struggles women face due to gender discrimination.

Gendered terrain: political frameworks marking significant shifts in gender equality in South Africa

South Africa has always been built around governance structures and systems that are patriarchal and exclusionary. Hence, one of the major goals of the current government was to eradicate all inequalities

that have marginalised certain communities and persons. The status quo has continued to prevail, highlighting that gender inequality is still endangered as women struggle to manoeuvre into leadership portfolios and how they experience challenges in their quest for visibility and for their voices to be heard in male-dominated spaces. It has been argued that diverse identity formulations have sought a shift so that an enabling environment is presented for women to be heard and not only seen, which continues to be contentious attribution when South Africa presents its traces of a patriarchal legacy, by placing on the pedestal the agenda that pursues males predominantly. In tracking the growth patterns of political economy, it is critical when we engage the subject of gender, which has seen the least concern of political reincarnation. In the South African context, gender conversations bring light to women's positions across various government sectors and contributions made by businesses where women are given the platform to reform the previous organisational hierarchies. Since August 9, 1958, black African women's activism has shaped the revised narrative of women's rights and human rights. A terrain was levelled for women to contest for recognition and equal pay and the political context to ensure equal participation. According to the gender policy framework, the developments to be noted are traced from January 1996, whereby the South African Government ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (UN Women, 1979). This step legally bound Parliament and the Executive to work actively towards the abolition of gender discrimination in the governance of the country.

Power and privilege: a glimpse into gender policies

By virtue of being women, the hierarchical composition of organisations, policies and systems by design favour men and thereby determine women's realities. Systems and processes are gendered. This means women's experiences are carved traditionally using masculine and feminine constructions without factoring in competencies. Gender inequality has implications on various levels. It speaks to the poor distribution of resources and opportunities. The author argues that its heritage is the unfortunate replication of systems where women remain subalterns. Amongst many areas of contention are patriarchy and the regime of human rights whereby gender relations remain violated. Hence, the activation of women's movements set the tone for the "campaign to include women as a distinct group of citizens [in] the new institutions of democracy" (Hassim, 2003:505).

Scholars postulate that in South Africa, gender equality reverberates as an epiphenomenon (Cock & Bernstein, 2001). This means it has longstanding traces of patriarchal roots from the damaging apartheid aftermath. This has been sustained and reproduced by different players, partners and stakeholders where women are inferiorised without power, position and resources to affirm women suitably. Therefore, one intentional work trajectory in the democratic era was to “examine policies’ impact on gender relations” (Seidman, 2003:501). In channelling efforts and resources towards redressing gender inequalities, it is critical to make mention of the Women’s Charter spearheaded by the Women’s National Coalition. This collective intentionally creates space for feminist activists and movements to upraise gender equality. More crucial is to change the male-dominated culture that prevailed in the elective assembly. However, while this space is pivotal in terms of selected women, it needs to be noted that only change agents can make a change, giving direction where women can tap the needs that emanate from the grassroots levels and have them tabled in parliaments. Gender issues under different presidents have evolved differently. For example, Thabo Mbeki’s and Jacob Zuma’s tenures as president were marked by the dismantling of the national gender machinery, later replaced by the Ministry of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities. Amanda Gouws, who is a gender activist, levels critique on this move, and she argues that “it eliminates the notion of agency and women’s empowerment, and, instead, makes them seem dependent on protection by men” (Gouws, 2019:6). A question to be asked is whether this ministry is effective and makes a difference for every woman, young person, child and those living with disability from diverse contexts? Ramaphosa’s term of office presents an era with traumatic incidents of gender-based violence and femicide. It demonstrates the struggles that emanate from gender inequality, a pandemic of note that continues to be the elephant in the room as women are violated and sexually objectified. This period has invited a lot of movement and activism as women, in particular, youth women at institutions of higher learning, reclaim their power using #hashtags, their bodies and clothing apparel as modes of resistance. In 1996 the government launched the Commission for Gender Equality, which has been fundamental in examining the implementation of policies and legislation on gender equality that addressed past imbalances. Other legislation implemented includes affirmative action and white papers seeking to elevate the gender agenda in different sectors.

In September 1997, the Heads of State or Governments of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), including South

Africa, signed a declaration (SADC, 2008). According to this gender and development declaration, commitments were made by governments and countries, inter alia, to:

- Embed gender firmly into the agenda of the SADC Programme of Action and Community Building Initiative.
- Ensure the equal representation of women and men at all levels of the decision-making structures of member states as well as in SADC structures.
- Promote women's full access to and control over productive resources, repealing and reforming all laws and changing social practices which subject women to discrimination.
- Enhance access to quality education for women and men and remove gender stereotypes from the curriculum, career choices and professions.
- Make quality reproductive and other health services more accessible to women and men.
- Protect and promote the human rights of women and children; recognise, protect and promote the reproductive and sexual rights of women and the girl child.
- Take urgent measures to prevent and deal with the increasing levels of violence against women.
- Encourage mass media to disseminate information and materials in respect of women's human rights.

Hence, gender and development agendas are embedded in these declarations.

In revising the national machinery, so that gender equality is transformative in policy and practice, various adaptations have been made in various structural components of administration (Hassim, 1999:7). Hassim argues that "gender, age, race, class, literacy, property ownership, amongst other factors, have been used as mechanisms for exclusion". Therefore, to bring about change, the South African democratic laws aimed to reconfigure gender politics so that women could have access to resources.

Tilted gender scale: women in sports and women business entrepreneurs navigating gender inequality

The state of women's participation and representation in the business sector has taken a minimal shift. For example, women's ascend to executive jobs has always been attended to through gender profiling

and gender stereotyping apparatus. Manager attributions have been used to invalidate, and hence Schubert, Brown, Gysler and Brachinger (1999:381) argue that “women are less trusted than men to make the risky decisions that may be necessary for a firm’s success”. It remains a contentious fact whether such preconceived ideas have shaped women’s success economically or not.

More sporting opportunities became available. However, due to gender stereotyping, fewer women advanced in this sector. Scholars have studied the gender dynamics in sports, and the argument is that there is a perception that women lack the intuitive managerial instinct and intellect that empowers them to have a competitive edge and make them successful managers (Naidoo, 2012). When examining salaries and career mentoring, this reality manifests differently for men in the same sector. In other research projects, it is evident that sports have been feminized, which means women are perhaps not expected to be aggressive. The general socialisation script suggests societal expectations so that women play their feminine role as nurturers and home keepers; hence they are not expected to be sporty. Women who navigate this terrain of conflicting roles smoothly manage to do so with the support of family members. This allows them to have both worlds as mothers and career sportswomen.

After 1994, policies enabled women to ascend to positions of influence. This amplified support for women to venture into business opportunities. The business sector is built on a similar script of power and privilege where women have experienced being inferiorised. The opening of the markets created space for women entrepreneurs. As such, the informal economy has seen the eruption of spaza shops, tuck shops and shebeens being run primarily by women. However, the author argues that these microeconomic spaces encounter patriarchal policies and thereby continue to eliminate and exploit women. Black female entrepreneurs face specific challenges; for example, Witbooi and Ukpere (2011) argue that only two commercial banks have target strategies that intentionally target women’s markets. In another study conducted in Gauteng, it emerged that finance is a problem for female entrepreneurs, and it has been noted that lack of education and training is a challenge (Chinomona & Maziriri, 2015). This invites a host of other undesirable challenges leading to more vulnerability manifesting as sexual harassment and bullying. It is further argued that at the core of these behavioural challenges are institutional cultures that dismally fail to affirm and celebrate the brilliance of female counterparts as effective leaders.

Gender inequality and the agricultural sector

The agricultural sector is still a male-dominated space, and men sit at the top, accessing resources and support. There is an over-representation of males, in particular white males, in various sectors of the economy. For example, in the agricultural sector, at the top management level, there is an 83.1% male representation. The gender lens enables us to review the poor development and growth where there can be no overall economic growth if women are left behind. This is a critical conversation post-democracy as one notes that the process of transformation is a work in progress. It is also at higher poverty levels where women are historically centred at the lowest income brackets, a situation that for years has been influenced and perpetuated by the laws of the country, the political sphere, the customs and the people's culture and continues to disempower women. Moreover, this continues to compromise the equal distribution of economic and political powers that situate women better to be fully positioned to live dignified lives.

The new political dispensation set itself a newer perspective in its political reimagination, and this was intentionally geared towards creating a country that values human rights where rights embodied a just society. One critical objective was to ensure that the marginalised were included in the transformation agenda. According to Morrell, Jewkes and Lindegger (2012:14), the socio-political landscape in South Africa "is a clear product of its colonial and apartheid past". This legacy has waged serious divisions and inequality, where women, particularly those of black African origin, are excluded from political participation. Hassim (2003:506) argues that the apartheid system left a "legacy of poverty that is not only racialized but also gendered". Since then, it has been a long and winding journey of eradicating hierarchies in leadership and creating space for gender equality and equity. This has been a provocative conversation about tampering with the cultural belief systems and traditional beliefs endorsing hierarchical structures that seek to nullify and overlook gender equality. In different populist theories, gender was rendered not important nor critical during racial oppression. Hence, since 1994 issues of class, race and gender have become pertinent in the new political terrain to revise and reverse ideologies and political frameworks to eradicate skewed societal margins. In shifting a different narrative, women's participation remains a contentious issue, and it is a political terrain that requires investigation.

As fondly referred to in the new democratic era, the 'rainbow nation' re-emerged to bring forth equality, economic empowerment

and transformation to those who were previously marginalised and stigmatised. Until recently, it has become critical to use the intersectional lens not only in looking at race and class but gender as well, as it creates a layer of invulnerability, which must continually be reconfigured to effect economic and social change in society. Although enshrined in the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996* – equality for all persons and non-sexism and non-racism – gender inequality is alive in society and replicated in homes, public spaces and workplaces. This is a call to reconfigure and augment policies and translate them into life-giving opportunities for gender equality. This is about amplifying the voices of many who may have been marginalised because of age, race, sex, disability, class and sexuality. This chapter maps out the gender landscape in South Africa as it transitioned into the democratic era. It surveys how the landscape has encountered frills of counternarrative as women’s rights rise are recognised and yet challenged in South Africa. Lastly, the chapter will explore realities that remain contentious issues due to gender inequality. In reference to that, issues of unemployment and social ills such as HIV/AIDS and GBV continue to be perpetuated due to women being marginalised and oppressed in society.

Gender inequality in education

Gender stereotyping has nurtured male dominance and fostered injustices, stereotypes and prejudices against women in the education sector. In the apartheid government, due to Bantu education laws, a girl child would not advance educationally due to “socio-cultural norms, stereotypes and ideologies and economic consideration” (Slater, 2014:334). However, after 1994 every department had to fulfil a mandate of ensuring significant changes in redressing the imbalances. Within the education fraternity, fundamental changes meant making education compulsory for a girl child until grade 9. This significant declaration has created room for dealing with early marriages and other social ills.

Furthermore, this has greatly expedited poverty alleviation. There is a notable unequal distribution of opportunities and resources for female teachers in education settings. Gender bias and gender blindness go beyond the classroom spaces and the education fraternity. Gender struggles have a historical history; female leaders in school-based settings and principals continue to struggle and face triple oppression, namely race, class, and gender (Schmidt & Mestry, 2014). Schmidt and Mestry posit that women have always been the majority

in the education field. In fact, Unterhalter (2005) argues that while there are women parliamentarians, women in senior positions and provincial offices are not so many. She further argues that there are generally fewer women head teachers because many women teachers are clustered at lower grades. This is a typical narrative that continues to justify an ethos embroiled in male domination, wiring and exclusion from senior positions that women have been denied for the longest time. Fewer women are invited to the table to take decisions and influence directions to consider the girl child and women in the field. Even more worrying are gender ideologies pervasively perpetuated and poorly reflected in the school learning material and curricula. Hence, in her research, Ulicki (1997) postulates that for any changes to be effected, the teaching sphere must institute an oppositional gender consciousness that challenges gender stereotypes by exposing male children to feminine roles.

Gender inequality and church

Churches have long maintained male domination, thereby creating patriarchal hierarchies and a perception that females are subordinate to males. This patriarchal discourse continues to spill over, silencing and subjecting women to submission and invisibility (Froschauer, 2014). At the core of this narrative are patriarchal ideologies fostering the gender stereotypes and prejudices that discriminate against women. In the South African context, one may argue that this scenario has been tragic in perpetuating toxic theologies that subject women to being exploited and discriminated against. The prevailing gender inequality in the church may lead to misuse and misinterpretation of biblical/sacred texts and perpetuate gender inequality. This continues to play out in terms of women struggling to be in leadership portfolios. It is also evident how women's programmes are seen and understood by the marginalising eyes. The church has played a bigger role in terms of prescribing how women behave, and often these prescripts emanate from men as the authorities who continue to design how women are perceived in society. Much of what is upheld in society about the position of women subjugates and inferiorises them. The argument that these values of perceiving women as second-class citizens continue to evade all structures of society should be scrutinised by women. To shift mindsets, the church has to engage in teachings and dialogues that restore dignity and humanity; so that the younger generation grasps refreshed ideas about equality. There is a greater challenge for the church and society to have a different take on how to

reconfigure religio-cultural views that alienate women and, instead, more opportunities must empower women.

Feminisation of poverty

Poverty is the reality for many families in South Africa. Past policies of segregation have created a big wedge in society between the haves and the have-nots. In the apartheid era, evidence suggests that there were restrictions on jobs. Access was determined by racial policies where jobs were reserved for men and white workers (Mariotti, 2012). The dull picture of black families demonstrates a huge struggle in making ends meet. Most families cannot afford basic needs affirming the definition of poverty as “an inability to attain a minimum standard of living” (Kehler, 2001:41). This touches on opportunities at disposal, the well-being of people and the realities around accessing resources that can improve people’s lives. The *World Development Report 2000/2001* further alludes to people’s vulnerability, voicelessness and powerlessness (World Bank, 2000). Research contends that women are at the receiving end of lower-income jobs and are in worse poverty-stricken conditions than men (Thaba-Nkadimene, Molotja & Mafumo, 2019). This plight of women is a cause for concern if defining poverty as measured solely in income and formal employment. Then, black women fare the worst (Albertyn, 2011:591).

A scenario like this one is the narrative of many women who are depended on men for survival. It is the scenarios that perpetuate patriarchy and further expand gender inequalities where institutional cultures create vulnerability for women. Women who perform home-based tasks, are considered non-market and nonmonetized activities and as such these women who uphold such traditional tasks are termed ‘economically inactive’ (Taylor, 1997:18).

This scenario continues to be replicated, particularly when there is unemployment, meaning illiterate black women are not making any significant economic revenues since they are considered inactive. Yet, they partake in various key roles. The argument to be levelled against these attitudes and flawed expectations is their impact on gender justice. However, those suffering the most are women, which replicates the feminisation of poverty as women remain excluded and poorly recognised in the economic circles. This is a challenge when reflecting on women being heads of households. The challenges around poverty

reveal serious consequences in South Africa because it poses “a threat to the realisation of their equal human rights in practice” (Bentley, 2004:247). When alluding to poverty, one must mention the poor economic distribution of resources and opportunities and add to the equation the impossible agenda that women enjoy lives and livelihood as per human rights.

Women continue to be trapped and restrained in the triple continuum of race, class and gender instead of leveraging transformation. The social and cultural norms in society continue to define and aggravate how women serve traditional roles and conservative portfolios, thus fulfilling a traditional script of reproductive roles whilst men are expected to be breadwinners (Kehler, 2001). Women in rural settings rely on informal activities to support their families, and those in township settings also engage in informal labour activities, less skilled jobs such as sex work and domestic work. Most women survive on the basic income grant. However, that does not make women immune to intergenerational struggles of poverty as it gets replicated and recycled, bolstering women’s vulnerabilities. Leibbrandt and Pabón (2021:187) argue that “the economic insecurity associated with being vulnerable and unemployed reduces people’s wellbeing”.

Citizenry, gender inequality and women’s participation

The democracy in South Africa revised and redefined what it means to be a citizen. For many, it meant power, recognition, access and participation. Citizenship may allude to a broad framework that also defines identity and belonging. From a feminist perspective, citizenship is about inclusion and exclusion, about who is included as the “real” citizens and who is excluded. It is also an objection against second-class citizenship to which women are often confined through their care work in the private sphere and their exclusion from political participation or as political actors in the public sphere (Gouws & Galgut, 2016:4). The democratic principles have over the years introduced political participation which exemplifies a level of accountability. In government spheres, it has become critical to create space for women to ascend leadership. Scholars have postulated that the emancipation of a new democratic era has not only ushered changes in the political sphere but elongated the power struggles against the gender continuum. This has further been exacerbated by “the (im)possibilities of translating de jure equality into de facto equality, and of translating state level commitment to gender equality into tangible outcomes at

local and individual levels” (McEwan, 2005:972). Women’s equality and women’s participation in local government has been understood as an element of transformation in governance which is to “rectify the social, economic and political marginalisation of women” (McEwan, 2003:470). Bentley (2004:257) surveys women’s political participation and postulates that over the years, it has expanded so that women comprise 30% of parliamentary representatives, and women occupy 38% of posts at the ministerial level. What remains a misdemeanour is the reality that women’s presence in all structures does not equate to power. While one may observe the number of women leaders in the political sphere, this should not obscure our understanding and the lived realities of women who live in poverty and are trapped in a legacy of indignity.

Gender and politics: women’s participation and representation in parliament and local government

Parliament has always been a male-dominated space. Women ascending to parliamentary positions have done so by understanding the struggles of asserting themselves in such settings. Hence, Geisler’s (2000:605) article: *The parliament is another terrain of struggle*. One of the fundamental building blocks of an inclusive and collective parliamentary structure in the new dispensation, women – female activists who played significant roles in effecting political change – were employed in national parliamentary positions. Over the years, one has witnessed a steady rise in terms of women’s representation. Traditionally, parliament portfolios were reserved for male counterparts. However, in 1999, a new trend emerged as women ascended into leadership positions, such as ministers and deputy ministers. Whilst such reviews celebrate the significant strides in elevating women’s representation, the biggest challenge, the patriarchal inclination to affirm male leadership, remains; to the point of failing to elect women as president in South Africa. More work remains critical as far as mobilising women’s political participation where women can have a stake in improving their lives. It must be noted that while quotas have been growing in terms of women’s representation in the South African parliament, not much has changed or influenced women’s issues. The attitudes on women’s struggle remain unchanged and poorly articulated. The argument that is tabled is that “quotas have important symbolic effects, but that effect is mitigated over time if there is no substantive representation

and societal attitudes towards women have not changed” (Vetten, Makhunga & Leisegang, 2012:8).

Engendering spaces: diversity and inclusion

The new dispensation has revised numerous discussions on gender and discourse on human rights without endorsing the stereotypical construct of men and women. The new shift is a “configuration of androcentric (male-centred), heteronormative, gendered power” (Cock & Bernstein, 2001:76). Whilst enshrined in its policy frameworks and clearly advocating for the inclusion for all, bodies of queer persons continue to be a threat. In the past, all of these have been understood within the prism of binaries, and LGBTIQ+ has seen the light in the democratic sphere where non-gender expressive identities begin to gain visibility and be recognised. This gendered discourse has created another gender struggle where there has been another characterisation of violence manifesting as the exclusion of the various circles of those who have been marginalised (Floro & Komatsu, 2011). However, the precarious risks as a result of homophobic hate crimes make queer persons vulnerable to abuse. It is evident that the gender climate continues to be riddled with inequality and discrimination. The so-called “rainbowism” is an imaginary concept far from practice but very present on paper. Prof Pumla Gqola uses the concept of rainbowism as central to shaping identities in post-apartheid South Africa (Gqola, 2001). The name is drawn from the popular assertion of the “rainbow nation”.

Gender pay-gap, discrimination and inequality

In the apartheid era, women received lower pay than men. However, after 1995, various reports indicate that the gender wage gap in the country increased. The dynamics of power prevail in decision-making when it comes to labour relations issues. Even though women are participants in the labour unions, it is unfortunate that very few labour unions have put the demand of equal pay for equal work as their top priority or focused on that in theory and practice. It is also important to note that some labour unions are not immune to the patriarchal system and male chauvinism. They are predominantly male-led, not due to an act of nature but the entrenched patriarchal and male chauvinism system.

Scholars of gender disparities and the labour markets reveal challenges women have faced in advancing economic growth over the

years. In the 'old dispensation, South Africa faced racial and gender hierarchy as impediments that stereotyped women for positions. They determined job placement, promotion and many other opportunities for growth and expansion. These constraints illuminated discrimination based on gender and have been a reality in the Constitution, whereby the wage gap has been reconfigured to endeavour equality, and gender policies have been put in place to redress and enforce gender equality. According to Floro and Komatsu (2011:34), "for women, finding labour market work is closely linked to gender roles and the amount of unpaid household maintenance". When surveying the presence and participation of women, research has revealed that "women are encountering barriers to networking in organisations" (April, Dreyer & Blass, 2007:52). One can make different assertions as to why women have been less aggressive. The author of this chapter contends that this may be a result of socio-cultural scripts that prevent women and social expectations that disempowers women from climbing up the career ladder. It may have been the reality of poor educational background that does not match the correct skills and attitude that enables women to advance. Likewise, it can be asserted that this failure to be aggressive and reach heights may be attributed to the lack of competitiveness, which may not necessarily define the adrenalin rush women display when they accomplish or win in the workspace. Women continue to face these limiting realities as primary givers, being expected to nurture families, which according to April, Dreyer and Blass (2007), requires a high degree of work-home balance, which is a high price to pay. Historically, fewer women than men joined the workforce, but the number of women joining the workforce has, over the years, increased aggressively. What has been imminent is the underrepresentation of females in the workplace.

On the other hand, attention has also been focused on the underrepresentation of female leaders in senior positions. Generally speaking, other documents cite the inability to navigate positions of seniority where promotions are considered for women in the job market; for example, "women tend to congregate in areas considered traditional outlets for female employment" (Haupt & Madikizela, 2009). Hence, women are inherently drawn to caring and nurturing work spaces such as the humanities, education and social sciences.

Gendered vulnerabilities: HIV/AIDS and GBV

In South Africa, it is almost impossible to understand the subject of gender inequality without recognising the social and economic fallout

as women become more vulnerable to oppression and abuse. This conversation expands on the lack of access to health facilities and health services that have in the past alienated women from accessing optimum health and from gaining bodily autonomy. A lot more needs to be done to improve health care services. Several social ills have been studied, and the results suggest that these are due to gender inequality. Women's vulnerability became more apparent when tracking and tracing its dire consequence in the health sector. The vulnerability of women is evident in how HIV infections affect more women than men. Various scholars contend that women encounter struggles in negotiating their choices when it comes to sexuality. The difficult conditions emanate from patriarchal ideologies where women are socialised to be passive and innocent (Bhana, 2007). Over the years, gender socialisation and gender roles have perpetuated women's oppression and human rights violation; hence GBV is noted as a marker of gender inequity (Jewkes, Levin & Penn-Kekana, 2003:126). The COVID-19 pandemic revealed how South Africa still holds huge economic demarcations and margins of poverty in society, highlighting gender inequality. Patriarchy, oppression and control have demonstrated how power and privilege, when misused, breed violence in society. The general culture of violence has always been studied, and in recent times, intimate partner violence continues to be designed by "high levels of unemployment and resultant poverty and deprivation" (Boonzaier, 2005:100). Recently, the high statistics of intimate partner cases that erupted during the pandemic testifies to this reality.

Conclusion

The engagement in this chapter surveys the gender landscape. Primarily, it takes stock of the challenges and hindrances in the implementation of the gender agenda. Lastly, it also acknowledges the positives achieved in the last 28 years of democracy. Noticeable efforts are made to change the trajectory of women in South Africa, bearing in mind the deeply entrenched discriminatory laws and legislations prior to 1994. The chapter surveyed gender inequalities in various fields, showing how women navigate discrimination. However, based on the discussions in this chapter, it emerges that a plan of action needs to intensify to close these enduring gender gaps so that South Africa becomes a gender-just space where women have just opportunities and equitable resources. The author argues that,

importantly, there needs to be support rendered for women as the previously marginalised gender.

The reality in South Africa is that women are single parents, and it, therefore, is critical that women become economically empowered so that they can support themselves and sustain their families. Building an inclusive South Africa for all remains contentious rhetoric as the nation grapples with policy, legalities and decisions that favour feminist voices and aspirations so that every South African has an equal chance to reach their potential. The time has come for representation and participation to go hand in hand sustainably to foster change economically. The observable trend is the pedestal placement of women where they continue to be (dis)empowered by structural systems and systemic policies, which, in retrospect, cripples progress and, of course, remains a human rights violation. In ensuring the transformative measures stay in place, there is homework to be done that warrants serious attention as women reclaim their space, gain opportunities in the labour market and reap economically and enjoy the rewards that give them dignity while altering the gender justice discourse, leaving a legacy that honours every human being. The agenda of women and development remains a work in progress across government structures and cooperative spaces. It is critical that more investment focuses on monitoring legislation and intervention strategies are in place to ensure that South Africa measures against the global standard of development. It rests upon every structure and system to challenge gender bias and stereotypes so that opportunities elevate a different consciousness about women and women empowerment. The greatest challenge is how girl children are socialised into younger women. This speaks to the pervasive cultural and religious norms that inhibit women and foster inequalities. Each South African needs to be mindful of how all sectors seek to alter systematic legislation and create cultures that support and affirm women so that they flourish.

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Chapter 3:

The gender gap in South Africa: A closer look at youth leadership initiatives

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Abstract

In November 2021, President Cyril Ramaphosa appointed seven new board members of the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), consisting of five females and two males. For the first time since the inception of NYDA in 2008, a female chairperson was appointed as a commitment and measure to drive women's leadership in different key decision-making platforms. However, the role of women in leadership across public and private institutions still needs more exploration. There has been very little focus on the involvement of young women in leadership initiatives. The exclusion of the youth in key development and decision-making platforms remains a critical challenge, with young women facing the double jeopardy of being young and a woman in a highly patriarchal society. With the commitment of the South African government to empower and advance the position of women, interests in promoting the role of the youth in key leadership platforms in government and the industry should materialise. This study utilises secondary data analysis to explore the gender gaps in advancing youth leadership initiatives in the South African context. A plethora of individual, societal, political, and institutional factors influence the gender balance in youth involvement in key leadership initiatives. From this perspective, the findings of this chapter reveal that women involved in different youth leadership platforms are often restricted to administrative roles instead of strategic roles. More so, the dominance of negative perceptions about the ability of women to perform in leadership platforms remains a critical stigma that needs to be addressed. Finally, the study outlines how the tenets of patriarchy mainly interfere in undermining the voices and realisation of women in the echelons of youth leadership initiatives. The insights of this study advance an important debate towards eliminating gender gaps

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and empowering the role of women in youth leadership initiatives in South Africa.

Keywords: gender gap, youth leadership, young women, gender equality, women empowerment

Introduction

Young people, particularly girls and young women across the globe, remain highly exposed to different grievous challenges and life-threatening risks. UN Women (2022a) posits that these experiences by young people are mainly due to “interlocked forms of discrimination, limited political inclusion, high levels of poverty, and limited access to health, educational opportunities, entrepreneurship and decent jobs”. In other words, the exclusion and discrimination of young women in key decision-making platforms in countries such as South Africa remain a critical threat to the future of gender equality in leadership in both public and private spaces (Jali, Suknunan & Bhana, 2021). Scholars agree that the marginalisation posed by patriarchy remains the major contributing factor to the scarcity of women’s involvement in leadership and receiving relevant support and recognition for their distinct initiatives and contributions to society (Jali, Suknunan & Bhana, 2021; Moyo & Dhliwayo, 2019; UN Women, 2022a). While the South African government seems committed to empowering women and ensuring gender equality, the efforts to promote the positioning and interests of women in key leadership platforms in government and the industry are yet to materialise fully.

The perception of women as “incapable” and “weak” in handling senior management or political leadership roles remains the key psychology of crippling patriarchal society (Gipson, Pfaff, Mendelsohn, Catenacci & Warner Burke, 2017; Jali, Suknunan & Bhana, 2021; Hoyt, 2010; Shepherd, 2017). Muzzled with the reality that leadership roles remain gendered in political, business, and social fraternities, with men dominating key strategic positions, this chapter engages a detailed textual analysis of the gender gap in the positioning of youth leadership in broader South African initiatives. First, it traces the interests of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996* (RSA, 1996) and different policies towards solidifying women’s empowerment and gender equality in leadership. It reflects on the current challenges and limitations to closing the gender gap in leadership. Finally, it outlines and discusses policies and practical steps that can be put in place to nip these challenges in the bud.

According to Gipson, Pfaff, Mendelsohn, Catenacci and Warner Burke (2017), just 5% of the 165 000 papers on leadership on the Web of Science platform address gender and leadership issues. Henceforth, research on women's leadership experiences and participation, much alone women in youth leadership, is still lacking. Guided by the idea that gender gaps in youth leadership can be decreased, the chapter is significantly interested in different gender disparities that hinder effective youth leadership initiatives in South Africa. It reflects on cases, including the recent 2021 board appointments of NYDA with female-dominated leaders. It reiterates the positive implications this might have towards addressing the gender inequality crisis, particularly in the practical steps toward the realisation of women's leadership in youth initiatives. Therefore, the discussion of this chapter will first explore literature conceptualising youth leadership, then reflect on the gender gap and youth in South Africa and outline the gender framework guiding the policing of gender inequality and women empowerment in youth leadership.

Furthermore, the discussion will outline the gendered effects and understand the impending challenges to realising gender equality and women empowerment in various youth leadership spaces. Finally, the chapter reflects on the potential and future implications of engaging gender lenses in addressing youth challenges in South Africa. The study harnesses the need to embrace and advance the public and private leadership fraternity toward redressing women's exclusion in key leadership and decision-making platforms.

Conceptualising youth leadership

Advancing youth leadership from the perspective of young women and young men has increasingly become a priority globally. For instance, the UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on youth, peace and security passed in December 2015 called for "meaningful pathways for youth participation and leadership in decision-making around peace and security issues" (UN, 2016). Efforts to advance the role of young women and young men in leadership spaces have been made to support policies that facilitate innovative engagements of young people in addressing identified challenges. Understanding how leadership is conceptualised is essential to position the definitions and debates on youth leadership.

Silva (2018) traces the idea of leadership over 2 500 years ago to philosophers such as Confucius (circa 475 BC/1998), Plato and Machiavelli (1513/1992), who considered a leader to be someone with

virtue, wisdom, and intelligence to support the people. However, the conceptualisation of leadership only emerged in the 1900s (Northouse, 2021). In the twenty-first century, the definitions of leadership include various categories such as organisational, ethical, strategic, transformational, and sustainable leadership, reflecting it more as a personal quality (Altman & Tushman, 2017; Kanyangale, 2017; Silva, 2018). Hence some scholars have increasingly associated leadership with organisations and institutions. For instance, Samimi, Cortes, Anderson and Herrmann (2019) define leadership as a demonstration of communication and charismatic habits well-guided by certain behaviours, traits, authority and a sense of value in guiding others to achieve organisational goals. In addition, Altman and Tushman (2017), and Kanyangale (2017), consider leadership to be a social process in which one expresses their ability to lead through motivation, empowerment, inspiration, and guidance to achieve the desired goals. While these definitions reflect on the important competencies of leadership in reflecting on a person's ability, they restrict leadership to organisational and institutional setup. Northouse (2021) outlines that leadership is not a linear or one-way event but involves four important components: (1) process, (2) influence, (3) occurrence in groups, and (4) common goals. It exists in society with a transactional activity of influencing and being influenced. Hence, this chapter conceptualises leadership as a "process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Northouse, 2021:4). This definition helps to zero in on youth leadership with a broader perspective of the different communities of society within which young people exist and operate.

Scholars refer to youth leadership as a development practice that creates contexts and relationships where young people are capacitated to action, practice, and demonstrate leadership authentically and meaningfully (MacNeil & McClean, 2006; Redmond & Dolan, 2016). These development lenses of defining youth leadership present the exceptional potential young people have in addressing problems within their communities if they are tapped into and harnessed through programs to meaningfully contribute to different community endeavours (Redmon & Dolan, 2016). While the development practice of defining youth leadership is critical, its shortfall assumes that youth's potential can only be refined if tapped into. A presentation by Mortensen et al. (2014) provides an exegesis that denounces defining youth leadership from the perspectives of adult theories which seek to shape and authenticate what entails development in youth leadership. The simple idea being while youth leaders need to be developed, their

perspectives on what needs to be done in communities are often more insightful, “3 years ahead than that of adults ... and are often more creative and willing to take risks in tackling problems than adults” (Mortensen et al., 2014:447). It is important to note that the development or leadership initiatives by young people often lack the much-needed adult support and are kept separate from community development efforts (London et al., 2003 & Frank, 2006; Mortensen et al., 2014).

Gouws’s (2016) study on young women and young men campaigns such as #FeesMustFall revealed how the youth rose to the occasion with a collective action to create change toward their perceived cause against socio-economic injustice and inequalities. This resonates with Mortensen et al.’s (2014) findings which reflect how the perceptions of youth on leadership were associated more with collective action, creating change and the capability of any youth to lead by simply taking up a stand for change. Their sentiments place less emphasis on hierarchy and power but demonstrate the zeal towards giving a voice to marginalised groups and effecting desired social changes to identified problems. In South Africa, while the youth might be associated with organisations in their respective communities, they have proven that they can set aside their organisational differences to champion common goals affecting their livelihoods and future. Different student movements and campaigns have demonstrated how youth leadership initiatives in South Africa are more driven by the collective action of youth rather than political orientations. The essence of youth leadership revealed through #EndRapeCulture, and #FeesMustFall campaigns illuminate the preparedness and collective vision of many young South African women and men when it comes to leading and challenging injustice, inequalities, and masculinities to shape the desired societal change.

Gender advocacy programme and youth in South Africa

The gender gap refers to the disparities between women and men regarding the accessibility of opportunities, resources and influence on decision-making platforms (Adegbite & Machethe, 2020; Fraile & Gomez, 2017). For example, UN Women (2021a) reported that while success is noted with the number of women in parliament increasing from 11% in 1995 to 25% in 2021, including through the use of special quotas, there are still various countries where women make up less than of parliamentarians. The underrepresentation of women in

various leadership platforms, in business and national political spaces, is evident globally. For instance, the Gender Gap Index (GCI, 2021) outlines that while women make up over half of the world's population, their representation globally in leadership, the workplace and political empowerment remain low, occupying only 27% of global managerial positions, 26.1% of 35 500 parliamentary seats and 22.6% of over 3 400 ministers. The realisation of gender equality is essential to peaceful, affluent and sustainable societies across the globe (GCI, 2021).

South Africa is ranked third after Namibia and Rwanda in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) to be having a better gender balance of 0.781 on a scale of 0–1 (0=inequality 1=equality) when it comes to women involved in politics (GCI, 2021). While the involvement of women in political leadership spaces seems to be gaining attention in South Africa, key influencing roles in key decision-making and senior management in both public and private spaces are still dominated and ringfenced by males (Jali, Suknunan & Bhana, 2021). The explanations for women's underrepresentation in key political, business, and societal decision-making platforms apply to youth leadership across the African continent, including South Africa.

Over the years, South Africa has increasingly witnessed an increase in unemployment, consequentially relegating most young people to poverty. In South Africa, high proportions of young women are unemployed, with almost 10% having a child before 18 years, making them vulnerable as some can no longer finish their education or attain any skills (Fox & Gandhi, 2021). For example, in “2013, 99,000 female school pupils got pregnant and less than a third reentered school” (Gouws, 2016). Circumstances such as these will always put young women at a disadvantage until the role of young women is prioritised in facilitating decision-making that inspires them to address the plight of the girl child, particularly several challenges that sustain their vulnerability to socio-economic challenges. The labour market in South Africa is still more favourable to men than women, with the rate of unemployment in the second quarter of 2021 being 36,8% for women as compared to 32,4% for men (Stats SA, 2021). While these rates are higher for the general population, for youth between 15 and 24 years of age, the unemployment rate is recorded at 54% for young women and 45% for young men (OECD, 2018). Without realising that young people, particularly young women, are the key catalysts and active change agents towards addressing the underlying complex challenges in society through prioritising policy leadership

on key issues that expose them to vulnerabilities (Department of Labour, 2021).

Youth in South Africa aged 18–34 comprise over 17 million people, making up a third of the country's population (StatsSA, 2019). Young people are considered to carry the potential for the betterment and solutions to address societal ills in the future; hence, it is crucial to engage them in facilitating development (Department of Labour, 2021). However, the practice of youth leadership and opportunities in various platforms ranging from student leadership, business opportunities, political youth structures, and even social structures favour more young men than young women due to socio-cultural reasons of patriarchy (Jali, Suknunan & Bhana, 2021). While access to education for both girls and boys is almost the same at the primary education level, the disparity emerges in the socialisation of young girls to work at home and be mothers, which often discourages them from pursuing quality education (Jali, Suknunan & Bhana, 2021). For example, most unemployment for young women involves caring responsibilities, farming and household work, thus working twice as many hours as men for less pay or offering free labour services (Heymann et al., 2019; Mishra, Aneja & Evans, 2017). The National Youth Policy (Nkoana-Mashabane, 2019) of South Africa highlights the essentiality of involving young people in development. It regurgitates the important role youth play in building the country's future if they are awarded relevant opportunities to actively participate in the economy and leadership platforms that help them address critical challenges by engaging in society's socio-cultural, economic, and political life. Thus, allowing them to be at the forefront in addressing unemployment, health issues and other household problems affecting people across the country every day. Bridging the gender inequality gap remains a crucial goal in South Africa, and various policies and legal frameworks have been implemented. Hence, the next section discusses the gender equality framework used in South Africa.

Gender equality frameworks in South Africa

Though gender inequality remains a critical challenge in South Africa, various policy and legal frameworks have helped create relevant platforms for engaging women to participate in different matters about their welfare and livelihoods (Jali, Suknunan & Bhana, 2021). Scholars such as Evans (2016) and Keen and Cracknell (2016) argue that the implementation of legal reforms-initiated processes increased

women's realisation and participation in leadership platforms. These can be traced to Section 9 of the Constitution, which stipulates that:

- (1) Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law.
- (2) Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms.

A deeper reflection on the Constitution helped in shaping further legal frameworks in shaping equality which include the *Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998* (RSA, 1998), the *Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000* (RSA, 2000), and the *Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill of 2013* (RSA, 2013).

Global policies such as Sustainable Development Goal 5 advance the interest to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” by 2030 (UN, 2015). Research and relevant action must be engaged to promote and enhance the participation of women in leadership and key decision-making platforms. Goal 5 calls for countries to engage in empowering women in public and private spheres, household, community, businesses, and government levels, to ensure gender equality. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly 1–5, 6, 8, 10, 13 and 16–17, consist of gender equality and women empowerment components with the realisation of women as key change drivers that can spearhead policy and strategic interventions in the political, economic, social, and cultural interests of the various goals (Warren & Antoniadis, 2016). Moyo and Dhliwayo (2019) opine that the prevalence of gender-based violence, sexual violence, and other abuses results from unequal power relations in society. They further clarify that lack of participation by women in key societal platforms makes them vulnerable to early marriages, sexual exploitation, and human trafficking.

UN Women (2022a) has been increasingly emphasising the need to strengthen women's role in leadership through funding and increasing resources toward education, skills enhancement, and mentorship for young women to take their position in leadership platforms. In addition, international initiatives and engagements have been geared to reduce the victimisation, exclusion, and discrimination of women through facilitating their leadership in global HIV responses, climate change solutions, and the building of peaceful and inclusive societies (Bennett, Boswell, Hinds, Metcalfe & Nganga, 2016; Heymann

et al., 2019; UN Women, 2022b). It is evident in most countries, such as South Africa, that there is an intentional drive to reduce the gender disparities hindering women's empowerment and gender equality.

South Africa's National Youth Policy (Nkoana-Mashabane, 2019) has a positively committed to advancing gender equality through gender-responsiveness, non-discriminatory and inclusive participatory engagements. They indicate three important lessons: Firstly, it reflects the interest in promoting actions and gender equality decisions that facilitate the promotion of young women as able leaders and equal partners to young men in politico, social and cultural settings. Secondly, the advancement of young people initiatives should not be based on discriminatory measures of age, gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, or any other form of discrimination, if the empowerment of youth initiatives is to be realised. Lastly, programs and strategies should be implemented to facilitate inclusiveness of young women and young men through information sharing, creating opportunities and involvement in decision-making processes. These measures should ensure access to resources and services for young women and young men to address and facilitate development in a more holistic manner (Nkoana-Mashabane, 2019).

Research methodology

The data for this study were retrieved using qualitative desktop research using secondary documents, newspapers, journal articles and credible website sources. Rahman, Tuckerman, Vorley and Gherhes (2021) describe qualitative desktop research as a textual description to generate rich, detailed data that leaves the participants' perspectives intact and provides multiple contexts for understanding the phenomenon under study. The researcher used specific key phrases to retrieve relevant information: "gender gap in South Africa", "gender gap and youth leadership in South Africa", "women leadership in South Africa", and "young women in leadership" from Google, Google Scholar, Sabinet and other search engines. In addition, information was read and re-read from news articles, journal articles, books, and websites such as UN Women and South African governmental websites. Key themes and ideas relating to the gender gap and youth leadership in South Africa were explored and organised to provide a detailed discussion and analysis. The data analysis produced five broad themes that are discussed.

Gendered effects on youth leadership initiatives

This study identified that various gendered effects affect youth leadership initiatives in South Africa. Various literature debates vacillate around youth leadership as a development practice by adults (governments) or an intentional cause of giving a voice to the voiceless by the youth themselves, which often overshadows the gender disparities in the youth leadership debate. While the former issues might be interesting to explore, what matters is the realisation and advancement of young women and young men's voices and prioritisation in key decision-making platforms without any disparities or discrimination. The study identified how patriarchy, exclusion, lack of education, poor policy implementation and the gender digital divide remain key issues exacerbating the gender gap in youth leadership initiatives across South Africa.

Patriarchy

Different challenges threaten gender equality and affect the participation of young women in leadership. Patriarchy remains the major challenge hounding the realisation of young women in different leadership platforms. Women remain underrepresented in political spaces due to a careful and systematic design of the social attitudes of patriarchy (Jali, Suknunan & Bhana, 2021; Moyo & Dhliwayo, 2019). In most parts of sub-Saharan Africa, the prevalence of patriarchy has since permitted the promotion of "harmful cultural practices that dehumanise and perpetuate women's subordinate position in the household and in wider society" (Moyo & Dhliwayo, 2019:258). Therefore, males enjoy disproportionate political representation, private and public leadership opportunities, and socio-economic advantages more than women, often to the detriment of policy and strategic interventions that promote gender equality and empowerment of women and girls.

The psychology of patriarchy remains highly dominant in leadership practices in South Africa. There are backlashes or attitudes of disrespect associated with the ascendancy of women in leadership positions hindering progress toward equality (Gilligan & Snider, 2018). A study by Oxlund (2008) at the Turfloop campus in the University of Limpopo revealed how masculinities are highly dominant in student leadership structures, and male student leaders would derogatorily mock female student leaders, calling them "comrade quota", inferring that their voting into office is not based on merit but rather because of

the gender quota policy. It is critical to note that gender quotas are essential to advancing equality and driving democratic development (Hills, 2015). However, the persistence of masculine behaviours and practices within leadership positions disturb the well-meaning intentions of equality policies. For instance, a study by Jali, Suknunan and Bhana (2021) reveals how the attitudes of male student leaders when it comes to selecting key student leadership positions would express misogynistic behaviours and intentionally interfere with the electing of their female counterparts in key decision-making positions. Addressing this thinking and practices is essential in ensuring the impact of young women in leadership initiatives since the meaning of gender equality is not only about men and women equally working in the same political, business, or social spaces, but also the expression of respect to “human rights, equality before the law, equality of opportunities, and responsibilities” (Moyo & Dhliwayo, 2019:261).

Exclusion

Gender is a social construct where family and society expect young women to conduct themselves in a certain way, referred to as respectable, and demonstrate silenced sexuality (Bennett et al., 2016; Smith, 2007). These assertions have long misrepresented the quality of women as leaders in society. In most cases, it has become taboo for women to aspire to be in critical political, business, public or management positions that are often deemed by society to be for males. These stereotypical beliefs are dominant in South Africa’s political leadership spectrum, and women demonstrate it themselves, hence the continued underrepresentation of women in key decision-making and political leadership spaces. Muringa and McCracken’s (2022) study reflects how Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma’s presidential aspirations were highly vilified with gender stereotypes and bias in the media and the ANC Women’s League towards the African National Congress’s (ANC) 54th National Conference. For instance, ANC Women’s League presidents and leaders such as Angie Motshekga in 2013, Bathabile Dhlamini in 2019, and Baleka Mbete (Speaker of Parliament) in 2019 indicated several times the unreadiness of South Africa to have a female president. Therefore, one might pose a question, when is the right time? The persistence of such mistrust and underestimating the female leadership qualities often shaped by gender constructs limit even the realisation and ascension of young women’s participation in crucial decision-making platforms because they are led to believe that they are – or that society is – not ready.

Social role expectancy still tremendously undermines young women's promotion or rise in professional leadership spaces because of masculine behaviours and derogatory constructs around femininity in power. Henceforth, the lack of representation of women in politics is attributed to several causes, including gender stereotypes, a lack of empowerment, and a lack of information and effective counselling for women. A study by Jali, Suknunan and Bhana (2021) on student leadership revealed how most young women leaders elected to the Student Representative Council (SRC) are mostly relegated to administrative posts if they do not stand their ground for equality in the top six positions. Scholars have argued that though the male-dominated workplace or leadership culture creates many problems for women (Morley, Moore, Heraty, Linehan & MacCurtain, 2015); women's poor assessment of their position in political leadership exacerbates their lack of representation (Chizema, Kamuriwo & Shinozawa, 2015).

Lack of education

The lack of adequate participation of young women in education opportunities remains one of the hindering phenomena to women's great leadership future (Adeola & Olufunke, 2010). Dominant social-cultural practices across communities in sub-Saharan Africa still restrict the roles of young women and girls to domestic chores and caregiving roles. While sex reflects the biological aspect of being male or female, gender indicates the socialisation of male and female roles in society. Young men are encouraged and positioned to be educated and become future leaders, while young women are often oriented toward motherhood, household skills, and caregiving roles (Moyo & Dhliwayo, 2019). A study by Mashiya, Kok, Luthuli, Xulu and Mtshali (2015) reveals how males are often reluctant to pursue careers in early childhood development because of the African beliefs which delegate the primary roles of child-rearing practices to women, and society has negative attitudes over male teachers in the field.

Policy implementation

Mishra, Aneja and Evans (2017) argue that true empowerment of women can only emerge in South Africa through implementing policies to tackle socio-cultural attitudes, address negative perceptions, eliminate inequality in access to health services, condemn violence against women and ensure political representation of women in all platforms. A report by the Department of Labour (2021) on the dialogue

discussion by Activate! Change Makers, a civil society organisation, reveals that “the youth are in fact disproportionately affected by a lack of representation in policy-making and decision-making regarding gender injustice, socio-economic injustice and gender-based violence”. Therefore, prioritising young people, particularly young women’s policies, through active dialogue to build capacity among youth is essential. It helps to promote gender justice and equality to facilitate innovative ways and materialisation of equal participation and involvement of young women and young men in leadership and decision-making structures.

Young women are exposed to different health risks, which often lack serious representation in leading policy discussions and implementations. The health risks of young women range from vulnerability to HIV exposure, sexual abuse or violence, early child marriages, gender-based violence and increased complications risks due to pregnancies before 18 years of age (Gouws, 2016; Fox & Gandhi, 2021). The disproportionate exposure of young women to these different challenges is primarily due to the second-class citizen status that young South African women are subjected to (Gouws, 2016). Civil societies across South Africa have increasingly suggested the need to facilitate advocacy campaigns to position young women in decision-making leadership platforms. The prioritisation of policy structures can help end gender-based violence and reduce the risk for young women between 15 to 24 to contract HIV as they are at more risk than boys their age (Gouws, 2016; Department of Labour, 2021).

Gender digital divide

Bridging the gender digital divide is important in promoting youth leadership initiatives in the twenty-first century. With the emergence of COVID-19, digital spaces became vocal outlets for communication and engaging society on different issues. The twenty-first-century digital divide has increasingly become a space for advancing societal leadership and development (Krönke, 2020). For instance, social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter witnessed the sporadic spread of student and youth campaigns and protests such as #FeesMustFall. South Africa has great youth development policies that can effectively address gender disparities through advancing dialogues and advocacy for young women’s leadership in digital spaces. This might help to engage peer-to-peer engagements towards conscientising society to curtail high-income inequalities, high youth unemployment disparity between young women and men, and restrictive access to young

women's leadership roles (Jali, Suknunan & Bhana, 2021; Mishra, Aneja & Evans, 2017). South Africa is considered the most integrated society regarding information and communication technologies due to higher access to mobile phones by males and females (Bornman, 2016). While there is still a challenge of the digital divide between rural and urban communities, the less privileged and the wealthy communities, there is also a gender digital divide in these groups, which mostly affects young women. For instance, Mishra, Aneja and Evans (2017) paint a picture of how despite the increase of new digital opportunities for women in South Africa, most women of colour seem to be left behind in higher education and advanced skill indicators. Most science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) industry skills are considered masculine and very few women participate, often facing 'implicit' and 'explicit' discrimination (Alozie & Akpan-Obong, 2017; Mishra, Aneja & Evans, 2017).

Potential and implications of youth leadership initiatives

The previous section discussed key issues that enhance the gender gap in youth participation in leadership. This section illuminates the need to understand the potential of youth leadership initiatives through gendered lenses that seek to facilitate decisive action, promote practical engagements, appeal to the active nature of youth, and visionary goals towards conscientising society against gender ills that hinder harmonisation in youth leadership. Therefore, the importance of addressing the identified problems and shaping critical positive implications for the future is actualised.

The appointment of the NYDA board, consisting of five females and two males, in November 2021 by President Cyril Ramaphosa was the first time since its inception in 2008 that a female-dominated board with a female chairperson was appointed to the highest youth development platform in South Africa. The president demonstrated that taking decisive actions in ending gender equality can go a long way in addressing the gender gap in youth leadership. Significantly, the NYDA organisation is the face of institutionalised youth development in South Africa with the mandate to facilitate organs of the state, private sector and non-governmental organisations to engage in a uniform approach to support the youth through empowerment interventions in business, skills development, employment, work experience, education and other opportunities. President Ramaphosa highlighted that NYDA is a key and vital partner in implementing the Presidential

Youth Employment Intervention, mainly prioritising youth in the Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme (National Treasury, 2012). The appointment of the first female chairperson of the board has been hailed as the “President’s commitment to advance women leadership at all levels” (National Treasury, 2012)”. NYDA has made many significant strides and achievements, impacting the lives of young people and championing their course in different business and leadership platforms. It is applaudable to note the significant strides made toward youth leadership development practices, particularly in advancing the role of women in key decision-making platforms. However, while such commendable advancements have been made, the government needs widening platforms to embrace young people’s resourcefulness, energy, ideals, and vision in advancing social change, innovation, economic expansion, and development. According to UN Women (2021b):

The youth is legitimate in holding previous generations accountable and asking them to stand by their side. However, it will finally take all present generations to finally make the ‘generation of equality’ a reality. Not tomorrow, but today.

The history of South Africa shows that young people have always been at the forefront as catalysts for change toward the desired development outcomes. Tracing the steps back to the 1976 Soweto uprising demonstrates the capabilities and potential of youth in pursuing justice and ending suffering. Fast forward almost four decades later, movements such as the #EndRapeCulture, #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall were spearheaded by young people to address critical issues of justice affecting their societies and lives. The campaigns’ planning, organisation, and implementation were grounded in critical concepts such as decolonisation and feminism while interested in ensuring sustainable changes grounded on well-thought intentions. The reflections from the discussions at Active! Change Makers’ civil society revealed that:

South African society has not taken young people seriously enough when they have already demonstrated their strong potential to act as a catalyst toward a collective future not characterised by rampant violence, conservatism, and an unequal sharing of power (Department of Labour, 2021).

In the same discussion forum, the Deputy Minister in the Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (2019–2021), Prof. Hlengiwe Mkhize, emphasised the importance of young people to engage different stakeholders and share their lived realities of issues occurring in their communities as a way of facilitating decisions and actions to addressing them. Actively setting up dialogue forums on gender issues across communities and institutions of learning can go a long way in advancing discussions addressing critical challenges plighting young women, such as gender-based violence.

Traditional social prejudice remains one of the major challenges exacerbating exclusion in leadership among young women in South Africa (Mishra, Aneja & Evans, 2017). The role of young people, particularly young women, remains highly undermined, yet they were at the forefront in starting the #EndRapeCulture campaigns across university campuses all over South Africa. Gouws (2016) clarifies how black female students have utilised “the feminist concepts of intersectionality to argue that oppression refers not only to race but also to gender, sexuality, sexual orientation and able-bodiedness”. Helping them hone their leadership initiatives in fighting for justice even in male-dominated spaces. For instance, during the #FeesMustFall campaign, young women’s leadership made some men with entrenched patriarchal attitudes uncomfortable with some male students at Stellenbosch University leaving the #OpenStellenbosch movement (Gouws, 2016). Though some instances had such incidences, overall, youth in these campaigns demonstrated their capacity to work together with strong potential to build a collective future that is built on an organised, practical, non-violent, and equal power-sharing platform for both males, females and the LGBTIQ+ community (Gouws, 2016; Department of Labour, 2021; UN Women, 2021b). These reflections show how young women’s leadership initiatives have demonstrated resilience to develop and build communities, inspire critical political views and change, shape the future through innovative ideas, and drive social progress (UN Women, 2021b). Their role in feminist, social and political activism continues to help shape measures toward addressing gender-based violence, gender equality and making women’s empowerment possible in South African communities. Conscientising society through intentional daily programs on national radio, television, and other alternative platforms can debunk traditional social prejudices that have sustained patriarchy for centuries.

Conclusion and recommendations

The chapter outlines how the goal of realising youth leadership in key decision-making platforms remains highly crucial in South Africa. It mainly reflected the need to employ gendered lenses to ensure that young women and young men are equally supported towards advancing vital social changes that impact their lives. The conceptualisation of youth leadership initiatives in South Africa can be understood from a twofold perspective: youth leadership development practice and youth-oriented campaigns that seek to give voices to their perceived injustices. The chapter established that youth leadership development practice has been materialised through the gender quota system in political spaces and has also been fanned by promoting young women in public institutions such as NYDA. Youth leadership initiatives in South Africa have also been realised through collection action by young women and young men to address injustice, inequalities, and masculinities affecting their communities and livelihoods. It is important to note that closing the gender gap in youth leadership requires upfront and collective initiatives from the government, public and private institutions, civil societies, and youth. Creating spaces for dialogue, campaigns, and intentional everyday programs should be prioritised to conscientise the nation on the importance of gender parity, eliminate traditional social prejudices that fan patriarchy and exclude women in key decision-making practices. The contents of the chapter trigger insight towards further research, particularly in understanding the perspectives of young people on gender issues in leadership spaces. This might go a long way in establishing the extent to which patriarchal views and influences still affect the behaviour of youth in advancing leadership initiatives in the twenty-first century.

Bridging the gender gap in youth leadership initiatives requires critical and thorough engagement by both public and private stakeholders. Therefore, the following recommendations should be prioritised:

Improving young women's participation through a national action plan

Improving the participation of young women in youth leadership initiatives across South Africa requires an action plan by the government and stakeholders. An intentional plan with clear milestones will go a long way in promoting the participation of young women in different

levels of leadership in local, national and international spaces of governance.

Promote organisations that support youth and women leadership

There is a need for initiatives that promote young people in leadership and programs that facilitate opportunities for youth. While many organisations, including non-profit, government and private institutions, that focus on youth, young people and particularly young women are still excluded as organisers and leaders in these different platforms. Facilitating the development of young women leaders and providing them with the platforms and funding to lead initiatives towards national and development interest issues can help shape effective organisations to have their voices heard. Non-profit institutions in South Africa have been credited for effective participation in promoting social justice. Thus, engaging them in bridging the gender gap in youth leadership can go a long way in facilitating policy implementation in addressing the problem.

Conducting workshops and forums for youth leadership

There is a need for workshops and forums that serve as pipelines toward engaging mentorship to strengthen the voices and participation of young women in youth leadership initiatives, creating platforms for discussing and confronting women's leadership issues, and facilitating long-term leadership planning. These initiatives create relevant spaces for shaping the equal participation of young men and women in leadership spaces without prejudice. They can also serve as a platform for capacitating young women in leadership and open up opportunities for civic engagement in addressing problems that hinder female voices in leadership.

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Chapter 4: Gender and race in political leadership at National and Local Government levels

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Abstract

Gender and race equality in South Africa is still elusive and a highly challenging ideal. Leadership in politics still proves to be discriminant and non-inclusive or at least a difficult arena for females compared to their male counterparts. Women are perceived to be incapable of assuming leadership positions. To this supposition, numerous reasons have been accounted to explain it, including the nation's racial history, culture and beliefs. Likewise, several measures have been put in place to counter the effects of the causes and thus improve the gender and race equality equation in the nation. Apart from the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996* (RSA, 1996), gender and race are also protected by various legislations which target to promote equality and employment equity and prevent unfair discrimination, domestic violence and sexual offences. Despite progressive laws, gender and racial equality barriers persist in South Africa. Against this backdrop, this study examines the phenomenon of gender and race equality in political leadership to ascertain the persistence of any inequalities and identify barriers that act as root causes for any persistence. Therefore, this chapter, by using a desktop documentary analysis approach, review various documents to establish the patterns of the extent to which gender and racial equality are achieved in South Africa; along the lines of women's participation in political leadership processes, as decision and policymakers at national and local government levels. Moreover, the chapter examines the various obstacles to women's participation in politics and provides recommendations for consideration by policymakers and practitioners.

Keywords: leadership, race, gender, politics, South Africa

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Introduction

Globally, while there is some progress in inclusive gender participation in politics, this progress has been slow. Globally, by 2015, only 11 women served as heads of state, 13 as heads of government, and 17% as government ministers, mostly overseeing social sectors (IPU, 2019; Israel, Rusimbi & Meena, 2018). It has recently become widely accepted, even in liberal democracies, that citizenship practices are not nearly as 'universal' as classic political theorists often assumed. Access to state resources and participation in policy-making processes have often been implicitly ascribed to the average citizen as a male worker. Accordingly, feminist theorists argue that states tend to ignore life experiences in shaping citizens' relationships with the state, which is predominantly problematic for women: from the way gendered differences affect access to public resources and participation in public opportunities. This assumption leaves women facing a myriad of formal as well as deeply ingrained informal barriers – systemic, cultural, traditional and religious barriers – to women's participation in political leadership (IDEA, 2021). Subsequently, gender and race-sensitive structural and cultural changes in the ruling institutions are needed in order to bring more women and the under-represented races into political leadership. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU, 2019), sub-Saharan Africa witnessed a significant advancement in the number of women taking the top political leadership positions, with the number of female speakers in parliaments totalling an encouraging 16 women out of 75 legislative bodies (IPU, 2020).

However, inclusive political leadership moves beyond just 'ticking the boxes' for gender and race parity into substantive gender and race leadership to advocate for gender and race equality policies and development plans. Therefore, the numerical increment is just the first toward inclusive political leadership. A numerical expansion of gender and race in political leadership may not necessarily translate into an effective representation of either women's or racial-specific interests in development policy and decision-making. There is a significant difference between an increase in the number of women representatives and the representation of women's interests in government decision-making. It cannot be assumed that women politicians are necessarily committed to representing women's interests; indeed, few will have succeeded in politics by promoting a feminist platform (Goetz, 1998). Much more critical to the promotion of gender equity in politics than the number of women in political leadership is the character and capacity of the state. Critical is whether

the state promotes class and gender equity in social and economic policy and has the capacity to implement such policies even against the resistance of dominant patriarchal interest both in society and in the political institutions of the state itself. The institutionalised resistance to gender and race equity within the apparatus of the government acts as a constraint to flourishing gender and race equity in political leadership.

In South Africa, gender and race equity in political leadership is elusive and extremely challenged. Leadership in politics still proves to be discriminant and non-inclusive or at least a difficult arena for females compared to their male counterparts (Dryding, 2019). Women are perceived to be incapable of assuming leadership positions. To this supposition, numerous reasons have been accounted for in explaining it, including the nation's racial history, culture and beliefs (Dryding, 2019; DWYPD, 2019). Prior to democracy, South Africa was under the apartheid (i.e., separateness) regime characterised by repressive race-based policies favouring a white minority grouping. In apartheid South Africa, the majority of posts, including senior and powerful positions, were held by white people, predominantly men. In the political arena, South Africa had a bias toward male politicians as the *de facto* leaders. This duality of social identities, based on gender and race, resulted in white, often Afrikaans-speaking male politicians occupying the majority of high-level political positions at local and national levels. In general, the numbers of women and black political leaders lagged. For women, particularly black, farming, child and family care were their designated roles. Post-democracy South Africa involved several large-scale cross-sectoral transformations, including policies to redress gender and race-linked imbalances to actively affirm black people, women and those with disabilities (Department of Labour of South Africa, 1998; Gumede, 2016).

Despite progressive laws, barriers to gender and racial equality persist in South Africa. Consequently, how well has post-1994 South Africa performed in achieving its inclusive and transformative political representation targets, especially regarding the protection and promotion of gender and racial equality? Answers to this question lie beyond what data and literature reveal: black women are faring well in post-1994 politics. While acknowledging that the post-1994 reform agenda intended to streamline the previously fragmented and segregate gender and racial, and political practices, women, especially those of black origin, continue to suffer triple marginalisation – race, social class and sexism – in the political arena (Akala, 2018; Dryding,

2019). Akala (2018) contends that the post-1994 legislation has not achieved the aim of equalising gender in society in general and politics in particular. Akala (2018) further contends that, despite overcoming some gender inequalities, largely, some policies bear the blame for embedding gender discrimination tensions in defined structures.

Consequently, phrases such as “equal opportunities” and “equal access” in policies and other affirmative actions should not be taken for granted. Instead, the meaning and achievement of the phrases, among other things, to the targeted group should be explicitly identified. Against this backdrop, this chapter examines the phenomenon of gender and race equality in political leadership at local and national levels in South Africa to ascertain the existence of any persisting inequalities and identify barriers that act as root causes for this persistence. Therefore, this chapter addresses the guiding questions:

- 1) What is the state of affairs on gender and race equity at the local and national government levels in South Africa?
- 2) What initiatives have been taken to balance the gender and race equality equation at the local and national government levels in South Africa?
- 3) What are the barriers to gender and race equity at local and national government levels in South Africa?

Literature review

The literature review focused on locating the current situation regarding women’s participation and access to political leadership positions within some gendered theories, specifically the feminist viewpoint on inclusion and exclusion from power, assisting in unpacking the understanding of gender and racial dynamics. Among other things, the gendered dynamics of interest include sexuality, patriarchal dominations and gender stereotypes. This review broadly explores the South African gender transformation agenda at local and national levels, with specific attention to the legislative framework and its implementation. It critically examines what Lovenduski (2005) queries: if subsequent inclusion and presence provide a means for articulating women’s perspective in politics and development policies. It also reflects on issues of history and economic and socio-cultural backgrounds that pre-determine the roles and responsibilities of

men, women and different races in South African society. It further taps into the historical background of government as a traditionally male-dominated environment (Lovenduski, 2005). It further explores the evolving roles of culture, political power and participation in shaping the nature and extent of women and under-represented races' participation in political leadership positions in local and national government.

National and international legislative provisions on gender and race equality in South Africa

The post-democracy South African government has adapted to the worldwide heralding of race and gender equity efforts as a beacon of good practice. The nation has consented to and ratified several regional and international conventions and declarations on gender and race equity. Among others, they include the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995 (UN, 1996) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Declaration on Gender and Development, ratified in 1997 and amended in 2008 and referred to as the SADC Addendum 1997 and 2008 (as amended) (SADC, 2008). The SADC declaration commits member states to ensure equal representation of men and women in decision-making at all levels, local and national at member states as well as in the SADC structures. Furthermore, the protocol binds member states to attain the 50/50 gender parity principle by having each member state, including South Africa, commit to implementing a 50% representation of women in management and decision-making. South Africa also subscribes to international conventions on gender and race, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (UN Women, 1979) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which amongst others, advocates for necessary legislative reforms to address gender equality (Shu-Acquaye, 2008).

Nationally, gender and race equality form a significant part of the reformation from apartheid to the democratic regime. Consequently, gender and race equality were introduced in government programs and legislation and gender and race equality are enshrined in the Constitution as a legal and basic human right (Hills, 2015). According to Cook (2012), anyone of whatever race, black, white or Asian and of whichever gender, male or female, has an equal right as their counterpart. The post-democratic *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996* dedicates itself to realising equality in both gender and race among its habitats by prohibiting and condemning all types

of discrimination (Albertyn, 1994; Vyas-Doorgapersad & Bangani, 2020). Likewise, a strong political will in South Africa is demonstrated through the establishment of various institutional structures and policies, including the Office on the Status of Women within the presidential institution, the Commission on Gender Equality and the national gender machinery, among others, to address the advancement of women's empowerment and gender and race equity in the country. In the early transitional period, efforts to empower women focused strongly on political representation at national levels. However, it was realised that local-level politics are of strategic importance in advancing gender and race equality, thus the establishment of the Commission on Gender Equality, the Gender Advocacy Programme (GAP) and Gender Links (Geisler, Mokgope & Svanemyr, 2009).

In ensuring gender and race equality in South Africa, other efforts by the government included the enactment of various policy and legislative instruments. As Gouws and Galgut (2016) posit, legislative and policy reforms are instrumental in guaranteeing that those formerly excluded are included in positions of power. They are, among others:

- Gender policy framework for local government, 2006 (Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2011);
- *South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality*, 2000 (Kornegay, 2000);
- *Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000* (RSA, 2000);
- *Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998* (RSA, 1998a);
- *Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill* (RSA, 2013);
- *Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998* (RSA, 1998b);
- *Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32 of 2007* (RSA, 2007).

These policies contain affirmative action mandating strategies to achieve gender equality at organisational, local and national government levels. For instance, the Gender Equality Bill 2013 allowed for the implementation of measures to increase equality, such as designing programs to ensure women hold fifty% representation in decision-making structures (RSA, 2013).

Also, it provides for both economic and social challenges associated with running for office and makes enforcement provisions. They also contain detailed punitive sanctions for private and public bodies failing to comply with gender and racial discrimination

prohibitions. Evidently, post-democratic South Africa is committed to ensuring gender and race equality. As a nation, it has made significant efforts at local and national levels by encoding its legislative and policy frameworks (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2019; Vyas-Doorgapersad & Bangani, 2020). While the nation is progressive in its legislative and policy frameworks, it is important to examine the translation of these efforts into the progress of the agenda of gender and race equality in South Africa.

Intersectional feminism: gender and race perspectives

This chapter examines gender and race in political leadership through the lens of intersectional feminist theory. While feminism has many uses and meanings, this study aligns with Bennett's (2006) definition and Banu's (2017) extrapolation of the definitions of feminism. Bennett (2006) defines *feminism* as a political theory and practice to free all women irrespective of race, colour, education, status or class. Banu (2017) contends that feminists do not solely centre on the mere discourse of gender but also relate to structural inequalities faced by different groups of women in a given society, which thus affects their opportunity to better their lives. Therefore, highlighting the multifaceted notion of feminism relevant to this study. The feminist intersectionality approach emerged in the late 1990s in the field of black feminist activism in the USA in the 1990s. It emerged as a critique of one-dimensional analyses of social inequalities. Crenshaw (2017) describes intersectional feminism as a lens for viewing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other.

Additionally, Crenshaw (2017) acknowledges that all inequalities are not equal. An intersectional feminist approach provides a way to view how people's social identities overlap, resulting in compounding and complex experiences of discrimination (Cho, Crenshaw & McCall, 2013). Race inequality has been commonly viewed as separate from inequality based on gender, sexuality, class or immigrant status. In viewing gender inequality separate from race, there is a tendency to often miss how some people are subject to all of these, and the experience is not just the sum of its parts (UN Women, 2020).

According to McDonald (2017), to discuss gender is to acknowledge that gender is embedded within 'race'. This axiom has been persistently theorised by feminists as a concept that provides one way to discuss and capture the multidimensionality phenomenon

around gender and race inequality (Crenshaw, 1989; Cho, Crenshaw & McCall, 2013; Crenshaw, 2017). Moreover, Crenshaw (1989:140) urged that “the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism” and particularly that “any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which black women are subordinated”. The intersectionality, therefore, clarifies that gendered racism uniquely shapes the intersection between race and gender-based systems of oppression to create multiple burdens for women of colour, such that viewing through the lens of only structural racism or only structural sexism does not comprehend (Laster Pirtle and Wright, 2021). Adopting an intersectional feminist approach to the crises of today’s gender and race inequalities helps in seizing the opportunity to understand and therefore build better, resilient, stronger and equal societies. Therefore, by applying the intersectional feminist approach, this study looks at gender and race as a multifaceted and embedded phenomenon that deserves a holistic examination rather than examining the topic in its two separate components. Gendered racism is considered a total interconnectedness of racism and sexism in shaping race and gender inequalities.

Consequently, the study and the literature review are grounded within feminists’ viewpoint with regard to gender and race inclusion and exclusion in institutions and positions of power. Additionally, it critically reflects whether the subsequent inclusion and presence in positions of power provide a means to articulate women’s perspectives (Lovenduski, 2005). Therefore, this study aligns with Bennet’s definition presented above and Morna’s suggestions on the dichotomy of gender and race:

Gender equality is about providing a voice to the poor and marginalised, who often are women. We need leaders who are responsive and accountable to the needs of women (International IDEA, 2011).

Research methodology

This chapter applies a desktop documentary analysis by reviewing relevant academic literature, policy documents and reports on gender and race in political leadership in South Africa. According to Eichler and Schwarz (2019), a desktop documentary analysis involves a guided scanning of literature, data collection from existing sources,

synthesis, interpretation and presentation of findings. The study used an unobtrusive research approach to identify the pattern of the extent to which gender and racial equality are achieved in South Africa, along the lines of women's participation in political leadership processes, as decision- and policymakers at national and local government levels. It included a documentary review of peer-reviewed journal articles, policy and legislation, reports and other authoritative documents. A desktop review is preferred since it allows the researcher to scan, collect, and summarise publicly available data to elucidate the current status and collect evidence of initiatives taken and barriers in enforcing gender and race equality in political leadership in South Africa. Publicly available data were accessed from various search engines such as Scopus, Google Scholar, PubMed and reliable governmental websites for relevant policy documents related to gender and race equality in political leadership.

Results and discussion

This section discusses the findings extracted from the desktop review of articles and relevant documents. It synthesises the sourced literature by identifying different situational contexts highlighting the trends in gender and race inequalities propagated in South Africa alongside the various initiatives undertaken. The discussion highlights the patterns of the extent to which gender and race equality is achieved in South Africa, along with women's participation in political leadership processes, as decision and policymakers at national and local government levels. It discusses the situations for the continual propagation of gender and race inequalities. Furthermore, it identifies and discusses the barriers hindering gender racial equality in political leadership in South Africa.

Gendered racial equality trends in political leadership in South Africa

South Africa has made tremendous strides in implementing gender and race equality in political leadership at local and national levels. South Africa has been distinct in introducing proactive measures in favour of fast-tracking gender and race equality in the parliament. A number of policy instruments have been ratified and adopted to ensure mainstream gender and race equality in politics. To date, similar to other African nations, South Africa has at least implemented the one gender quota by holding reserved seats for women in parliament as opposed to political party quotas or the legislated candidate

seats. These reserved seats have allowed South Africa to hold a high percentage of women members in parliament. In the 2009 election, two of the four major political parties – the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the Independent Democrats (ID) – had posted women contestants for the presidential seat. Also, the Africa National Congress (ANC) and the Congress of the People (COPE) had about a 50/50 split between the total number of men and women listed among the top 50 party candidates.

Consequently, the April 2009 election had an 11% increase in women's representation in the national assembly from 34% to 45%, raising the nation's ranking from seventeenth to fourth in the global ranking for women in parliament (International IDEA, 2011). Additionally, in 2019, women constituted 46.35% of the members of parliament in South Africa, which included a gendered and diverse perspective in legislative decision-making (Bathily, 2020). International IDEA (2011) notes: "In South Africa, there is now a culture of 'zero tolerance for not having women at the table. Someone will always ask the question, 'Where are the women?'"

Slowly a cultural change is taking place in South Africa. The archetype of the strong African woman standing as an unmoving pillar of her community transcends the nation. In 2007, South Africa witnessed the establishment of the Women Forward (WF) Party, which aim was to uplift women and advocate for women's rights. WF focused its efforts solely on increasing women's participation in political leadership positions. WF was created by Nana Ngobese-Nxumalo, the granddaughter of Africa's first Nobel Peace Prize winner, Chief Albert Luthuli, equally a longtime gender equality advocate. WF was initially created to contest the 2009 South African general elections; however, the party grew and also participated in subsequent elections. WF's membership spans women, men, and other marginalised groups, such as LGBTIQ+ people. The WF's mission is to strive toward a more inclusive world for women and other marginalised groups, which includes eradicating gender-based violence, improving sex education and increasing the number of women in positions of power within the government (Wikipedia, 2022). Currently, the party has about 30 000 members and is focusing on increasing the number of women candidates for South Africa's next local government elections. The party's vote share in elections has been rising since its establishment; in the 2009 election, it had 0.03%, while in the 2019 election, it had 0.04% (IEC, 2019).

Statistics indicate that apart from only participating, women candidates have been winning increasingly larger vote shares ever since the country legally ended apartheid and embraced fully democratic elections (International IDEA, 2011). Prior to the 2009 landmark election, women constituted only 2.7% of elected members of Parliament. For instance, in the 1994 election, 27% of the candidates on successful national party lists were women, while in the 1999 national elections, women composed 30% of the winners (International IDEA, 2011; IEC, 1999). In the 2004 elections, national party lists with women candidates won 32% of the races. Statistics show that provincial contests during the same periods showed similar results (IEC, 2004). At local government levels, women have also gained large vote shares. In the 1995 local government elections, 19% of the local elected officials were women (Hartmann, 2004; International IDEA, 2011). The number increased to 26.6% in the 2000 local elections (IEC, 2000) and 40% in the 2006 municipal elections (IEC, 2006).

However, these percentages or increases in the number of women in the parliament and local government levels do not reflect gender and race equity issues in these organs. The goal is not simply to raise the numbers of women in political leadership positions, but it is to ensure that women and other marginalised groups' voices are heard on important issues prompting people to mix laws with their ancestral customs, which is detrimental to these groups such as property ownership, domestic violence, HIV/AIDS (International IDEA, 2011; Medie & Kang, 2018; Dryding, 2019). Despite a handful of new laws and regulations promoting gender and race equality, Dryding (2019) notes that fewer people believe that the treatment of women and equal opportunities have improved compared to the past. Subsequently, others believe that the situation has worsened or has not changed (Dryding, 2019; Dryding & Mpako, 2021). Dryding and Mpako (2021) cite the worsening of gender-based violence, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, as an example. South Africa's continual suffering from exceptionally high levels of gender-based violence (GBV) indirectly reflects the quality of gender and race representation in positions of power and decision-making in the nation. One in every four South African women experiences intimate partner violence in their lifetimes, with one woman in every three hours being murdered in the country (Dryding & Mpako, 2021). During the first three weeks of the lockdown in April 2020, the government's GBV Command Centre received more than 120 000 calls from victims of violence (Minisini, 2021), with news on GBV cases frequently flooding both social and traditional media outlets. A total of 53 293 sexual offences

were reported by the South African Police Services between April 2019 and March 2020, with the majority being rape cases, with an average of 146 per day and a 2% increase from the previous year (SAPS, 2020).

Moreover, since sexual violence often goes unreported, the number of actual cases is presumed to be higher than that reported (Dryding & Mpako, 2021). In addition, the persistence of xenophobic attacks, which were also observed in 2020, provides evidence of the continual racial discriminating actions in South Africa. Near-daily headlines and crime statistics confirm this assessment regarding GBV.

Moreover, regarding the perception of the government's performance towards promoting equal opportunities and better treatment for women, South Africans have mixed views. The performance is gauged from a "fairly bad" score to a "very bad" one. Dryding (2019) notes that disapproval is more common among people vulnerable to discrimination, including poor people that are either moderate or high lived poverty levels, women or mixed-race or people of colour. However, the citizen's support for the commitment to gender and race equality in political leadership, among other things, is high among South Africans, in general, but men were found to be less likely to endorse equality when it comes to political office than women (Dryding & Mpako, 2021). Therefore, despite the noted progress, South Africa still has to achieve other miles stones to ensure gendered racial equality prevails.

Barriers to gendered racial equality in South Africa

Despite the increase in the number of women in political leadership, the quality of representation on gender and racial-sensitive issues, which have largely remained unresolved, is questionable. However, achieving gender and race equality in South Africa is associated with the misalignment of various initiatives undertaken to achieve the overall goal. For instance, the South African Human Right Commission Report (SAHRC) shows a misalignment between the special measures implemented to the constitutional objectives (2018). The report argues that measures taken are not instituted on needs and socio-economic considerations, rendering the initiatives incapable of achieving substantive equality. Furthermore, there is a lack of coordination of special measures across various government departments and organs of state and a fragmented legislative and policy framework (SAHRC, 2018; Dryding, 2019). Finally, the SAHRC report articulates that certain potential rights to equity, such as access to education and land

ownership, cannot be realised unless there is coherent coordination of special measures across government departments and agencies. However, to comprehend well aligning these initiatives, it is crucial to understand the obstacle confronting women in attempting to participate in political leadership. Below is a discussion on various barriers hindering gendered racial equality in political leadership in South Africa:

- Structural barriers continue to prevent women from entering as well as advancing into positions of power and prestigious roles within politics. Even on the inside, women tend to be delegated to committees perceived as ‘soft’, such as social affairs, family and education, in comparison to committees regarded as ‘hard’, which are more powerful and impactful in developmental decision-making, such as finance and defence (Dryding & Mpako, 2021).
- Culture has a spillover effect on the local government institutions shaping and informing deep-rooted, communally-held patriarchal gender stereotypes, norms and values (Griffin, 2010). Consequently, it influences the perceptions of women as they can assume only insubordinate positions while men take up superior positions in society. Local government, as a sphere of government closest to the people, is inclined, by its locality, to filter and entrench these patriarchal values and norms in the core components of the institutions, which are, as indicated in Sadler (1996), the structure, procedures, systems, and processes. This makes commonly-held gender beliefs, attitudes and related stereotypes intrinsically entrenched within political life and ethos. Consequently, despite widespread support for gender and race equality, popular attitudes point to persistent barriers to full equality (Dryding, 2019). Most cultures and traditions are patriarchally created by and for men. The overall practices tend to reflect and support men’s life situations and experiences, consequently constituting “close-off areas” for women’s leadership (Ely & Meyerson, 2000). As Griffin (2010) puts it, culture breeds and is closely intertwined with organisational behaviours; therefore, organisations, in this case, political parties’ influence and are influenced by individuals within the society it exists.
- Systemic barriers in South Africa, as is elsewhere in Africa, are often discussed along the lines of access to social, political and economic opportunities for black women, which include access of women to land rights, finance, and other empowering resources such as education (Segalo, 2015; Vyas-Doorgapersad & Bangani, 2020). The complexities and challenges faced by South African women

cannot be divorced from gender politics. Despite progressive legal and regulatory frameworks, the interweaving of individual, family and societal understanding of how women and men construct their roles daily influences the implementation of such frameworks (Segalo, 2015). The compounding effect of limiting women's access to finance, land rights and education culminates in a lack of income. Due to the lack of avenues for income, the majority of black women in South Africa depend on social grants. Consequently, the prospects of black women accessing opportunities such as education, basic services and eventually positions of power and leadership within politics remain slim (Akala, 2018; Segalo, 2015; Vyas-Doorgapersad & Bangani, 2020). Likewise, the lack of women in rooms where it happens – where decisions are made – makes critical decisions for and on behalf of women to have very limited women's voice as input. Unless such systemic barriers are eradicated, gender and race equality in political leaders and the quality of representation on matters pertaining to gender equality, remains elusive in South Africa.

Conclusion and recommendations

Arguably, gender and race inequality in South Africa remains endemic. Notwithstanding all the gains, black women and minority races still grapple with a myriad of situations to their disadvantage. Substantive gender and race inequality are demonstrated at both broad structural societal leadership levels and in instances of direct discrimination regularly encountered in the political leadership arena. Prominent signs include the continued not only existence but an escalation of GBV attacks, Women of colour, especially black women and gender minorities, have continued to be prejudiced by cultural, structural and systemic inequalities relating to sexual divisions of labour and power within the society and the inaccessibility of streams of income, land and other resources social services such as education. The normality and pervasiveness of existing gender and race relations in the political arena make it difficult to see how biases, norms and structural inequalities pervade the political institutions and distort leadership-citizenship interactions. In addition, government and other stakeholders often avoid implementing interventions perceived to question culture, leading to limited achievement in imparting a gender and race equality political leadership environment in South Africa. However, barriers to achieving gender and race equality in

political leadership have remained within the social, political and economic. The lack of adequate progress suggests wilful indifference entertained by the government and other actors. It is, therefore, time for the government and other stakeholders to shift the burden of proof and focus on implementing, among other things, the following recommendations:

- The government should promptly rationalise and align fragmented policies, legislation and implementation practices to promote radical transformation and achieve substantive gender and race equality.
- Stronger political will and doubled efforts are required from the government and across the civil society, private sector, and communities to preserve the achievement obtained in gender and race equality and eliminate attitudes that facilitate legal and structural barriers to women's political leadership participation. The initiatives must emulate a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approach to allow holistic interventions in culture, systems and structures of political power and leadership.
- Moreover, the private sector must urgently be mobilised to contribute towards empowering women and minority races in taking positions of leadership and decision-making as this provides grounds for grooming such qualities. The suggested interventions may manifest themselves as full operationalisation of key pieces of legislation to facilitate the crucial involvement of the private sector.
- It is similarly imperative for lawmakers to proclaim the recognition of the duty to promote equality as inclusive of all those who inhabit South Africa, that is, people of all races and gender as well as migrant communities, to effect structural change in an effort to achieve substantive gender and race equality.
- In addition, tackling the pathway to addressing systemic barriers, the introduction of all-inclusive social protection mechanisms is one of such systemic changes capable of lifting black women from poverty and encouraging access to basic services and, eventually, positions of power and leadership within politics and society at large.
- Furthermore, government and political parties need to institute forums and platforms that facilitate women-led conversations to map out their needs and economic interests. This shall contribute to improving the quality of representation of gender and race matters in the formulation and implementation of policies and regulations. The focus on gender political representation needs

to move beyond numbers into the quality of the relevant issues pertaining to gender and race-inclusive South African community. Precedent has shown that where such women's groups exist, women have leveraged them to advocate for increased power.

- Gender equality projects, while undoubtedly useful and legitimate in closing the gender inequality gap, they often fall short in addressing the deep-rooted systematic issue. Therefore, the government and its stakeholders need to take cognisance of women as the untapped powerhouse and implement a mixture of policy and political willingness to devise effective gender-sensitive policies. This can tremendously shift prevalent perceptions and norms associated with women's economic and political empowerment.
- African parliamentarians could also share best practices amongst themselves to spur progress.
- In line with the World Bank's (Bathily, 2020) suggestions, one way to increase the likelihood of women filling political leadership positions is through education from an early age. This shall empower women leaders to take up leadership positions in committees regarded as "hard" committees that may require technical expertise.
- One practical step towards combatting gender and race inequality is for government to start capturing disaggregated data relating to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression-based violence and GBV. Such data can become useful in planning and creating awareness within the communities. Awareness and sensitisation on the importance of gender and racial inclusive political leadership are paramount to achieving equality. Engaging men and boys as advocates of gender and race equality is key to tackling social norms and enhancing women's voice and agency.

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Chapter 5: Critical challenges impeding women's ascendancy to positions of leadership in South Africa

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Abstract

South Africa has implemented several policies for reaching gender equality. Despite this, women remain underrepresented in leadership positions, especially top leadership. Women face several barriers to ascending to leadership positions. This chapter will investigate why these barriers remain pertinent, despite the gender policies that are being implemented. The removal of these barriers in the policy space remains understudied, and a gap exists within the policies to address these barriers. Comparing the main gender policies in South Africa to the data and statistics on women in leadership positions, it becomes clear that the policies do not address the low representation of women in leadership. The chapter takes stock of the barriers on social, individual and organisational levels and, through the use of grounded theory, codes and categorises these barriers into structural, formal and informal barriers. This illuminates the relationship between these barriers in that they reinforce one another, creating a vicious cycle of exclusion. Several recommendations will be made to address these barriers. Stereotypical beliefs about women and their leadership abilities are widespread in South Africa's largely patriarchal society.

Keywords: stereotypes, glass ceiling, inferiority complex, tokenism, agency, Gender Policy Framework, queen bee syndrome, marginalisation, gender mainstreaming, discrimination, gender pay gap, microaggression

Introduction

Since its democratisation in 1994, South Africa has adopted and implemented policies and laws to eliminate racism and sexism in

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its society. South Africa's approach to achieving gender equality has been largely through mainstreaming, adopting a gender perspective to all its structures, policies, and frameworks. South Africa has committed nationally, regionally and internationally to the goal of gender equality through (amongst others) the establishment of the Commission for Gender Equality in Chapter 9 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996* (RSA, 1996a; 1996b), supporting the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Declaration on Gender and Development (SADC, 2008), and ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (UN Women, 1979). Despite this, women's representation in leadership positions remains comparatively low. This chapter will investigate the root causes behind women's low participation in leadership structures (especially top leadership) in South Africa and will lay the basis for potential areas of improvement.

The research methodology will include the use of primary sources, examining the most prominent South African policies on gender: South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill, the national gender machinery, and the Strategic Plan for the Department of Women (Shabangu, 2021); and comparing their principles and goals to the data and statistics on gender participation; and secondary sources: identifying causes and examining concepts in the literature and applying it to the South African context. Barriers on social, organisational and individual levels will be identified in the literature in private and public spheres. Grounded theory will be applied to these levels to code and categorise the barriers, and axial coding will be used to identify the relationship between them. Grounded theory collects data and analyses the data simultaneously; this will be done through qualitative data collection. An inductive approach will be implemented, where theory will be derived from the data. The categorisations identified are structural, informal and formal barriers. They are coded as follows: Structural barriers keep women as a group out of decision-making structures; informal barriers are discrimination on an individual level, including internalised misogyny; and formal barriers are policies and structures that exclude women. The research will find that structural, formal and informal barriers re-enforce one another on different levels, creating a vicious cycle of exclusion.

The chapter will attempt to answer the following question: Why are women underrepresented in leadership structures despite South

Africa's commitment to gender equality and the gender policies it has implemented? It is important to investigate whether South African policies successfully address the issue of women being kept out of leadership positions and, if not, why they are failing. The barriers women face in the workplace, and the consequences this has for women and the economy of South Africa, remain understudied and are not well understood. This is indicated in South Africa's gender policies, where a gap exists: South African policies on gender empowerment identify that women in leadership are important but do not adequately address the obstacles women face to acquiring leadership roles, nor does it tackle these obstacles head-on.

It becomes clear from the research that the policies have not been successful in transforming the deep-rooted and historical patriarchal societal, individual, and organisational attitudes that act as barriers to meaningful involvement in leadership structures for women. It further does not lend enough support to women to pursue their ambitions and feel empowered while staying true to themselves and occupying several roles, including worker, mother, and partner. It is more likely for women of colour to be kept out of decision-making processes than white women.

South Africa's gender policies

This section of the research will identify the gaps in South African gender policies by using primary sources.

At South Africa's liberation in 1994, women in the African National Congress (ANC) implemented a gender quota which was principally responsible for women achieving 27,7% of the seats in the newly established Parliament. This allowed women to move from a marginalised position in the apartheid era to the centre of decision-making spaces. As a result, the government supported the highest standards of global women's rights, improved women's rights locally, platformed women's economic equality, and founded new institutions to guarantee accountability over gender rights (Walsh, 2006:85).

Nevertheless, South Africa's history of marginalisation of women, especially black women, fostered a society entrenched in sexism and closed several spaces for women due to an uninviting infrastructure and a lack of skills development and resources (Walsh, 2006:93; Geisler, Mokgope & Svanemyr, 2009). Several policies and commitments to women's rights were made to overcome these obstacles.

South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality

The National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality was adopted by the cabinet in 2000 (RSA, 2013). The main aim of the Framework was to integrate gender policies into the policy sphere to ensure that:

Women's rights are perceived as human rights; they have equality as active citizens; their economic empowerment is promoted; their social uplift is given priority; they are included in decision making; they are beneficiaries in political, economic, social, and cultural areas; and affirmative action programmes targeting women are implemented (Mathur-Helm, 2004:57).

The basis of the Framework is that gender equality is impossible if women cannot participate in all spheres of life – political, economic, and social – and that women's decision-making capacities should be improved. According to the Framework, gender mainstreaming recognises that most institutions consciously and unconsciously serve the interests of men and encourages institutions to adopt a gender perspective in transforming themselves. It promotes the full participation of women in decision-making so that women's needs move from the margins to the centre of development planning and resource allocation (RSA, 2000).

Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill

The Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill (RSA, 2013) was approved by the cabinet in 2012. The Bill provides and compels for the implementation of gender mainstreaming. This includes, amongst others, implementing strategies to achieve a 50% representation and meaningful involvement of women in decision-making bodies in several private and public organisations (RSA, 2013).

Following pushback from several actors in the South African workspace, this Bill has since lapsed in parliament (Hartley, 2015). Then in 2015, the minister in the presidency responsible for women's affairs announced that the Bill would not be resurrected in any shape or form in future (Maphisa, 2017). The Bill lapsed for several reasons, highlighting a reluctance to change in South Africa that would challenge male domination and patriarchy in the workplace.

The Framework gave rise to the national gender machinery: a system of synchronised structures within and outside of government that operates in sync to enable political, social, economic and other methods of transformation to dismantle systemic gender inequality and encourage equality (RSA, 2013). This includes an Office on the Status of Women, the Multi-Party Women's Caucus in parliament, the Joint Monitoring Committee on the Quality of Life and the Status of Women, gender desks in every national and provincial state department and a Commission on Gender Equality (Gouws, 2008:25).

Furthermore, the 2015–2020 Strategic Plan for the Department of Women recognises that without meaningful participation from women in decision-making structures, participation can often become a token exercise or even a means of preserving certain power relations (Shabangu, 2021).

The above policies recognise the need for and benefits of having women fully integrated into society and be involved in decision-making. However, there exists a gap in that they do not fully identify and address the barriers that women face in ascending to leadership positions.

Participation of women in meaningful decision-making roles in South Africa

The policies, frameworks and strategies above set the tone for South Africa's commitment to ensuring the participation of women in meaningful decision-making and leadership positions. The research methodology used in this chapter is grounded theory:

'Rooted' in the reality observed and it is the researcher's task to discover it. According to the advocates of this point of view, theory should be generated by empirical observation (they use the term 'generate' as opposed to 'verify') (Corbetta, 2003).

To gain a better understanding of how these translate into society, especially concerning women leaders: data and statistics of workplaces in South Africa will be studied to gain a better understanding of the reality in the South African society, to identify whether the above policies and the way they are implemented, are effective for reaching the goal of gender equity at the top and removing the obstacles that keep women out of decision-making spaces.

According to Statistics South Africa: “Women remain relatively unrepresented in positions of authority and power”; 44 out of 100 participating people in the workforce in 2017 were women (StatsSA, 2017). It is then expected that the representation of women in leadership positions be representative of their participation in the labour force. This is not the case, however. The *Quarterly Labour Force Survey* of the second quarter of 2021 stipulates that 66,9% of those in management positions were men compared to 33,1% of women (StatsSA, 2021a). [It is worth noting weakness in data on gender representation in South Africa: it stipulates gender in a binary, in terms of male and female, which excludes those who identify as non-binary or other.]

A breakdown of the statistics for management holders in South Africa can be found in the Commission for Employment Equity Annual Report 2020–2021 (Department of Labour, 2021). In top management in 2020, 75,1% were men and 24,9% women. In senior management, 64,3% were men and 35,7% women. This is in contrast to a relatively equal percentage of professionally qualified people, where men made up 52% and women 47,7%.

In South Africa’s top 40 companies in 2018, only one had a woman as a chief executive officer (CEO), while only 22% of executives within these companies were women (Mwagiru, 2020). At Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) enlisted companies, only 19,1% of those in directorship positions are women (Maphisa, 2017:35).

Women in leadership positions in the education sector do not represent an equal divide between men and women. There are 26 public higher education institutions in South Africa, of which four had women as vice-chancellors in 2015 (Coetzee & Moosa, 2020:1). More women are chancellors than men in South Africa, although this is largely seen as a more ceremonious role, with the power of decision-making sitting with the vice-chancellor (Maphisa, 2017:1).

Government structures in South Africa rank comparatively better, with parliament ranking tenth in the world, in 2017, with the number of women; and four out of every ten benches held by women (StatsSA, 2017). In terms of ministerial positions, in 2017, South Africa ranked ninth in the world, with 41% of ministers being women (IPU, 2017).

Taking into account that the data on women in leadership positions is somewhat patchy and outdated, it can be inferred that the trends of women in leadership positions remain low, despite the policies put in place to empower women. The policies do not address the barriers that women face, indicating a gap in the research that

should inform gender policies in South Africa. These barriers will be explored more below.

Barriers to women ascending to leadership positions

This section of the chapter will identify barriers to women ascending to leadership positions by using secondary sources and grounded theory. This theory generates theory from the data by coding and analysing the data simultaneously. Usually, this type of research starts with several already known and widely accepted concepts, and the researcher will then insert what other detail they deem important (Noble & Mitchell, 2016). Initial concepts from the literature include barriers on social, organisational, and individual levels.

These barriers will thereafter be coded into the categories of structural, formal, and informal barriers. These are coded as follows: Structural barriers are those entrenched in society by patriarchal systems and beliefs and impede women as a social group from ascending to leadership roles; informal barriers are discrimination that women face from individuals in their work environments, including internalised discrimination against other women and themselves; and formal barriers are policies and structures that exclude women and entrench patriarchal values. This section will take stock of the barriers that exist. In grounded theory, identifying the relationship between categories is called "axial coding" (Noble & Mitchell, 2016). Analyses of the data infer that the barriers reinforce one another, creating a vicious cycle of exclusion.

Social level

Social norms and attitudes greatly impact women's ascendancy to leadership positions. South Africa's patriarchal society entrenches gender stereotypes and has permeated workplaces, creating structural and informal barriers.

Stereotypes around gender are pervasive in South African society. Research suggests that stereotypes have an impact on the perceptions that people hold when it comes to expectations around leaders. These stereotypes categorise and delineate 'masculine' and 'feminine' as opposites. 'Masculinity' is expected to be firm, tough and concerned with material success, whereas 'femininity' is supposed to be humble, soft and focused on the quality of life (Littrell & Nkomo, 2005:563). The traits that are stereotypically associated with 'masculinity' or

men are stereotypically associated with leaders (Rarieya, 2022). This creates an immediate informal barrier for women with more stereotypically 'feminine' personalities. On the opposite end, women who are assertive and tough appear to be abrasive to many who hold stereotypical views and are judged as being difficult instead of strong and capable leaders (Ramaite, 2013:62).

This structural barrier means that women in the workplace often need to trade off likeability and competence. This mismatch often results in women taking lower posts, reinforcing the idea that women are not good leaders. This also dissuades women lower in the ranks of the organisation from aspiring to leadership positions, creating an informal barrier (Rarieya, 2022).

These stereotypical attitudes in South Africa gatekeep women from attaining top decision-making positions and entrench the idea of male behaviour being the norm and women being seen as 'in relation to' and 'comparable with' men (Mestry & Schmidt, 2011:536). Women often feel they need to work harder than men to receive the same level of recognition as their male counterparts (Walsh, 2006:92). Working harder than male counterparts means that there is extra pressure on women to perform, creating an informal barrier to reaching leadership positions.

Another structural barrier exists in the double marginalisation experienced by black women and women of colour. Their intersecting identities mean that they experience dual discrimination based on these characteristics. Given South Africa's racist and patriarchal history, women of colour enter the workforce with different expectations and experiences and often do not have the type of connections or linkages to power that white and male privileges give people access to (Mathur-Helm, 2005:66).

There remains a gap between white women in top management positions and women of colour in South Africa. In 2020, 13,1% of top managers in South Africa were white women, while African females made up 5,7%, coloured females made up 2,2%, and Indian females made up 3,4%. The percentage of non-white women in top management roles combined is less than that of white women. Furthermore, white women make up 18,1% of senior management positions, African women 9,5%, coloured women 3,3%, and Indian women 4,1% (Department of Labour, 2021:26, 30).

This structural barrier exists for many in the LGBTIQ+ community in South Africa, who experience intersecting identities and

deal with discrimination in the workplace, creating informal barriers to ascension (International Labour Office, 2016:25).

Furthermore, due to the same stereotypes and structural issues, it is expected that women are more suited to homemaker roles and are often overlooked as potential leaders in the workplace. It is often expected of them to stay at home and look after children or the elderly (Ramaite, 2013:66). Often, women who do work and/or are in leadership positions experience a lack of support from the home (Mestry & Schmidt, 2011:537). Despite the trend toward men taking on more responsibilities in the home environment, women continue to bear the greatest burden. Thus, women leaders often do not have a spouse as a full-time homemaker, placing pressure on them to focus less on work and more on home life, creating an informal barrier. This also often means that married straight men are more likely to have the luxury of spending less time at home in a caretaker role and more time focusing on work (Rarieya, 2022:1).

The COVID-19 pandemic, lockdowns and subsequent digital work affected industries where women are predominantly employed the most (Gernetzky, 2021). Women in South Africa are over-represented in so-called "pink collar" jobs as opposed to technical and professional jobs (Chiloane-Tsoka, 2012:4955). Most women in the workforce are employed in social and community services (Statista, 2020). This limits women's access to industries and spaces where they can move upwards and become part of meaningful decision-making bodies.

The pandemic also exacerbated the gender pay gap in South Africa. According to the International Labour Organisation, South Africa's median pay gap is stagnant at between 23% and 35%, affecting women in the middle and upper wage bands the most (ILO, 2016). This means women who do the same work as their male colleagues or work of the same value earn less (Bosch & Barit, 2020). This structural barrier entrenches informal barriers. As mentioned above, women are less recognised for their work and are likely to place more pressure on themselves to perform. In 2021, the gender pay gap increased to 49,1% (Gernetzky, 2021). This pressure of needing to work harder to outperform male colleagues, stress about lower pay, as well as the abovementioned social norms, hampers women from performing at their best.

The national gender machinery (Geisler, Mokgope & Svanemyr, 2009:3) identifies a structural barrier to gender equality and women in leadership, specifically in rural areas in South Africa. Traditional

authorities and customary laws in these areas often mean that gender equality goals are not prioritised. In many areas, chiefs actively oppose gender equality; in others, they are slow to implement regulations that would further this goal. Women's representation and influence in these areas are often suppressed as a result. A study by Walsh (2006:100) about women's participation in South Africa highlighted the following issue, as quoted by a woman in a rural area, about the changes to local government after democratisation:

If I stand for a position in my area's local government, I'll be seen as opposing the structures that are in existence at the moment and thus the entire society. There is just no culture of women participating in the political life in our societies.

The structural, formal and informal barriers at a social level impact women on an individual level, as will be explored more below.

Organisational level

Several barriers exist within South African organisations that impede women's successful integration into leadership structures. These include policies that are made with men in mind, organisational cultures, and/or stereotypes in the workplace. Ramaite (2013:31) identifies three reasons equality legislation is often not filtered into organisations and their management structures: First, top management is not dedicated to reaching gender equality; second, the culture of the organisation resists transformation; and third, there is an insufficient observation of the implementation of legislation.

A study by Evelyn G. Chiloane-Tsoka (2012:4969) found that organisations in South Africa are male-biased. Her data indicated that most organisations' management positions in the Gauteng province were dominated by white Afrikaner men. Many of the respondents in her study indicated positive attitudes towards women in management positions. However, the majority remained prejudiced against women. The domination of men excludes women deliberately or devalues their input within these organisations. This creates a structural and informal barrier for women to rise to leadership positions as their performance is not recognised.

The patriarchal values these organisations are based on reinforce negative stereotypes around women in the workplace. A study by Ramaite (2013) found that prejudice also exists in recruiting

processes. Often when a man and a woman with similar qualifications and experience apply for the same position, and those who make the decision are mainly men, they tend to gravitate more towards the male candidate, implying that there are also informal barriers at play. A participant in the study stated thus:

I was involved in recruitment for one of our senior positions ... we were looking for a female by the way ... and then if not, obviously a male, so we had to choose from two equally competent candidates. One woman, one male and our CEO who is obviously male, chose then to appoint the male (Ramaite, 2013:63).

This individual barrier is situated within a larger structural barrier impeding leadership in the form of the so-called "old-boys club". A study by Walsh (2006:91) on the transformation of South Africa's political space after its liberation movement garnered the following quote from an ANC Member of Parliament: "The reality is that a lot of decisions affecting society as a whole get made over whiskies in the pub by members of the old boys' club ... Women lack the same networks and don't operate like that." The networks and groupings that men formed while women were unable to fully integrate into the workforce remain exclusive to some degree and women struggle to break into these networks (Johnson & Mathur-Helm, 2011:51).

Women in South Africa face informal barriers in the form of subtle discrimination and microaggressions experienced in the workplace daily, including the need to demonstrate more proof of their capabilities than their male colleagues, being questioned over their input even in their areas of expertise, being interrupted when speaking, being perceived as 'bossy' or aggressive, and being confused with someone in a less senior position (Vermaak, 2019). There also exists a false belief that when women succeed, it is largely due to luck or hard work, whereas men's success is due to innate ability (Mestry & Schmidt, 2011:548).

Another burden placed on women is the so-called "motherhood penalty". This manifests structurally in a pay gap between women who are mothers and women who are not and, informally, in prejudice against pregnant women and mothers. They are often judged as being less productive or less committed to their jobs and more emotional and unstable than non-pregnant women and those who are not mothers. Long absences from work due to maternity leave also count against women who are aiming for top leadership roles (Correll, Benard &

Paik, 2007). This also manifests on an individual level with women's commitments to their families, which will be described more below.

This is coupled with a glass ceiling that keeps women out of decision-making processes. Since South Africa's liberation, more women in government and private spaces have been appointed to senior management positions. However, this often is where they remain. Often, top management positions such as CEO or board member remain out of reach for women (Ramaite, 2013:32), indicating the existence of a formal barrier. A study at Amathole municipality indicated that men dominated the decision-making spaces regardless of their qualifications or education; it was found that the women in the office were more educated than the men, and if the women were not politically connected, they did not stand a chance of being in top leadership posts (Nyangiwe-Ndika, 2015).

Another barrier to meaningful decision-making even when the glass ceiling is cracked is the concept of the 'glass cliff'. This formal barrier is when women are appointed to precarious leadership positions in which they are destined to fail. Women then need to work incredibly hard (more so than their male counterparts) to prove that they are competent or succumb to the pressure (Coetzee & Moosa, 2020). It is believed that this is what happened to Nhlamu Dlomo, who in 2017 took on the role of CEO of KPMG, inheriting a company rife with scandal and controversy (Young, 2020). The company was embroiled in questionable audits of Gupta-owned companies, indications of state capture, and a report on the so-called "rogue SARS spy unit" that was used to discredit Pravin Gordhan and other former SARS employees. The scandal saw a mass departure of clients and senior managers and resulted in massive layoffs of staff. She was replaced a year later after failing to rebuild trust in the company (Staff Writer, 2018).

A formal barrier that exists within the organisational framework in South Africa is the idea of 'tokenism.' This is when organisations appoint a small number of women and ethnic minorities in their leadership structures as a tick box exercise instead of genuinely seeking out their views and ideas when making decisions (Elmagrhi, Ntim, Elamer & Zhang, 2019). Thus, even when women manage to crack the glass ceiling to reach leadership positions, they often do not have meaningful agency. This tends to happen in South Africa when companies aim to comply with the government's stipulations of equal employment and affirmative action without investing much into women's true empowerment as decision-makers. This is determined by the organisational culture. When this happens, it reinforces the idea

that women in leadership positions cannot make decisions, hold little responsibility and are unlikely to be considered for top jobs (Shongwe, 2019:15).

This is complemented by the 'golden skirts syndrome', a formal barrier that happens when a small number of elite women are hired on various boards or in leadership positions (Coetzee & Moosa, 2020). A report published by the 30% Club Southern Africa (2018:17) found that of the 267 companies included in the study, only 10% had equal board representation for women. Fifty of these companies did not report on gender diversity on their boards. Further, there were no opportunities for women to be appointed to boards at 105 JSE-listed companies.

This, as well as other factors, result in the low retention of women leaders in the workplace. Push and pull factors are structural, informal and formal barriers that disincentivise women to remain in leadership roles. Push factors are those that drive women to leave the workplace, such as unsupportive colleagues and organisational cultures. Pull factors distract women from their position, such as being able to spend more time with their families (Coetzee & Moosa, 2020).

Sexual and other harassment in the workplace holds many women back from attaining leadership positions. A conservative estimate finds that one in four women will experience some form of sexual harassment in the workplace during their careers. This potentially points to a formal barrier if policies are not strong enough or implemented well enough. This is coupled with psychological impacts that affect not only the survivors but many around them as well. The aftermath of experiencing sexual harassment at work can derail women's careers and upward trajectories. More often than not, survivors tend to take time off work to deal with the trauma. This, as well as the structural barriers in the form of the so-called "stigma" that women bear when they come forward about harassment, further pushes women out of male-dominant and decision-making spaces in the workplace (Botes, 2021).

In 2022, South Africa implemented a new Code of Good Practice on the Prevention and Elimination of Harassment in the Workplace (Nxesi, 2022). This new code is in line with the International Labour Organisation's Convention 190 and replaces the 2005 code (Mahlakoana, 2022). This new code is an attempt to break down some of the formal barriers and is a positive step toward curtailing sexual and other harassment that women face in the workplace daily, which detracts from their leadership potential.

Individual level

On an individual level, women often feel incompetent for a specific job or position, especially when they share the space with men. The structural, informal and formal barriers on social and organisational levels mentioned above often create barriers on an individual level.

On the individual level, informal barriers negatively affect women's self-esteem and can encourage the so-called "inferiority complex"; when women lack self-confidence, underestimate their abilities, and feel inferior to their colleagues. Another informal barrier is the so-called "imposter syndrome" experienced by women in the workplace. This is described as "high-achieving individuals who are unable to internalise their accomplishments and are filled with an irrational fear of not being able to live up to expectations" (Coetzee & Moosa, 2020). An example of this is found in an interview with a female ANC Member of the Provincial Legislature from the North West province: "I feel disempowered. I am no longer as good an administrator as I was before I came to Parliament" (Walsh, 2006:92).

This can create a psychological glass ceiling, which further prohibits women from acting assertively and chasing or asking for promotions and will only apply for these if they have all the required skillsets, experience, and documentation. Studies also show that when payment is being negotiated, women are less often willing to appear aggressive, which can result in them losing out on higher salaries. When women reach leadership positions, they tend to be more hesitant to use their power (Chiloane-Tsoka, 2012:4951).

Structurally, expectations around a woman's role in society often limit them with an informal barrier also existing here in that many women prefer to stay in middle-management or more junior positions to keep flexible work situations that allow them to spend time with their families (Ramaite, 2013:69). Furthermore, the technological advances that have been made in recent years are blurring the line between the workplace and the home which can exacerbate the burden placed on women (Rarieya, 2022).

On the other hand, technological advancement and the increased 'work from home' culture brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns have made it possible for women to work and act as homemakers simultaneously. Many women could more easily fulfil their work and home responsibilities (Khwela-Mdluli & Beharry-Ramraj, 2021). This highlights the fact that the informal and structural barriers around the expectations of motherhood and

caretakers that keep women from the workplace or higher-level roles are easily overcome by flexible work and a structural shift in what is considered valid work.

As mentioned above in the concept of the 'boys club', men largely support one another in a work environment and are less supportive of women. In contrast, an informal barrier women engage in is the 'pull her down syndrome': when women tear each other down in a competitive work environment instead of supporting one another (Ramaite, 2013:71).

This is reinforced by the so-called "queen bee syndrome": when women in senior positions do not help other women in the company to ascend in rank. The competitive corporate environment and the fact that women are, to a large degree, reliant on the support of male colleagues for their career advancement leads to women alienating one another (Kriel, 2016). 'Queen bees' act militant and aggressive in an attempt to be taken seriously by their male counterparts (Johnson & Mathur-Helm, 2011:48), showcasing the harmful ways that societal stereotypes infiltrate individual women's attitudes and behaviours and become an informal barrier to other women.

This further means that women role models in the workplace remain scarce, as 'queen bees' are unlikely to act as role models and mentors for women their junior, many claiming that they had to get to their positions without any help from other women and that others should do the same (Johnson & Mathur-Helm, 2011:50).

Positively, during the 1990s, scholars identified the second wave of female leaders moving into leadership positions in South Africa, challenging some of these trends by not only incorporating traditionally feminine traits in their style of work and leadership but also supporting their fellow women colleagues (Booyesen, 1999:21). Despite this, a study by Johnson and Mathur-Helm (2011:52) indicates that in South Africa, women in top leadership spots are competitive regardless of who they are up against but that this becomes more intense towards other women and that they are more critical of other women than men, indicating the longevity of informal barriers.

Barriers that reinforce one another

From the identification and categorisation of the above barriers, it becomes clear that these do not work in isolation and relate to one another. On the social, organisational, and individual levels, the

barriers that prevent women from leadership roles are permeated by negative stereotypes. Unfortunately, people are more likely to remember instances where stereotypes are confirmed than when they are challenged (Mestry & Schmidt, 2011:547), which results in a vicious cycle. Stereotypes affect women individually, who can often fall into the trap of confirming those stereotypes due to a lack of self-confidence or being unsupportive of other women to maintain their uniqueness, reinforcing a more social issue. At an organisational level, due to the fear of being judged, women can be reluctant to speak openly about discrimination in the workplace (Johnson & Mathur-Helm, 2011:50).

Informal, formal and structural barriers are found on social, individual and organisational levels, feed into one another, and re-enforce one another. Breaking through these barriers is difficult for any woman to achieve and for policies to successfully address these barriers. This is not fully understood in policymaking spaces. This chapter identifies a gap in the research in that these barriers and the way they interact with one another are not well understood and fully taken into account by policymakers.

Potential areas for improvement

The obstacles to women's equal representation in leadership structures are identified, explored, and categorised in the section above. South Africa's gender policies do not adequately address the issue and do not create the space for women to be fully represented in leadership structures. The research on the barriers should be taken into account when gender policies are being made to accurately address the obstacles women face. Underlying stereotypes, assumptions, and attitudes about women in the workplace have not been addressed. There is a paucity of research on how to tackle these barriers and underlying societal norms.

It remains unclear whether a mere increase in women's participation leads to their voices being heard and taken seriously (Geisler, Mokgope & Svanemyr, 2009). In some cases, more women in leadership will create more role models, and it is inferred that women will then support one another to ascend in their respective organisations. However, as we have seen from the concepts of 'tokenism', the 'pull her down' and 'queen bee' syndromes, this is not necessarily the case. These barriers should be addressed head-on to ensure that women in the workplace are supported.

On an individual level, women leaders should be supported by their organisations to embrace the transformational type of leadership and challenge the rules (Chiloane-Tsoka, 2012:4969). Women should also be encouraged to support one another. Other ways to ensure women are supported in the workplace include implementing strategies for women to manage their work-life balance; creating stronger policies for childcare support to allow women more time to work; having policies around remote and flexible work for both men and women; and implementing monitoring and evaluation processes to investigate whether women have agency in their respective positions.

The same question can be posed regarding whether more women in Parliament will lead to more progressive gender equality policies, which was the case during South Africa's liberation moment (Geisler, Mokgope & Svanemyr, 2009). Despite this, these progressive policies have not institutionalised women's equal representation at the leadership level in many spheres of South African society. Thus, it is recommended that women in leadership positions in government should not only be involved in the state but should focus on the constituencies of women or groups that represent women to empower those at the grassroots level (Gouws, 2008:25).

Conclusion

This chapter adds to the research by taking stock of the current and developing barriers to inform policymakers and relevant stakeholders and recommends that the research be incorporated into South Africa's gender policies to help remove these obstacles for women. By using qualitative research and grounded theory, the relevant obstacles women face in ascending to leadership positions are identified and described on the social, individual and organisational levels and are categorised as formal, informal and structural. This helps to identify a major problem: these barriers reinforce one another, making it increasingly difficult for women to escape these barriers and complicated to address in policies. The South African work environment remains reluctant to change to ensure that women are equally represented in leadership roles and that there are clear paths for them to attain meaningful participation in leadership structures. Women of colour in South Africa are more likely than white women to be kept out of decision-making spaces. Clearly, policies have changed in South Africa, yet the patterns of patriarchy and exclusion remain largely the same. The representation of women in leadership positions,

especially top leadership, remains low. These patterns and barriers are not explicitly addressed in South Africa's gender policies, and the research on the consequences of this remains low, as well as how to structure policies in such a way as to break down the barriers women face in the workplace. Further research is needed on how to best structure and implement policies that will effectively reach this goal.

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Chapter 6: 'Grammar of patriarchy': gender parity in political participation and representation in South Africa

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Abstract

The call for women's political participation has grown in importance in the worldwide gender parity and women's empowerment agenda. Almost 22 years after the beginning of the twenty-first century, women are still not given a prominent position in politics and governance, especially in Africa. Over the last few decades, Africa has made remarkable progress in establishing a normative framework for human rights and has witnessed the rapid expansion of women's political representatives. African women show a great tendency to participate in politics, but there remains a big gap. This chapter states that South Africa has made remarkable progress and is arguably one of the most parliamentary parliaments in the world: second in Africa and tenth in the world. However, it still falls short of achieving gender parity. This can be attributed to the fact that South African society remains a pluralist one with huge cultural diversities, and the dominance of territorial and partisan interests remains the major impediment to greater participation by women in political processes. This chapter illustrates the emerging trends noted in women's political participation in South Africa. Without a doubt, South Africa has followed in the footsteps of other developing democracies that have shown a commitment to boosting representation. This helped to increase the political representation of women. To weave the argument articulated: this chapter leaned heavily on existing pieces of literature such as the journal, textbook, archival material, and international framework deployed for deeper content analysis. The chapter concludes that there has been undoubted progress in increasing women's political participation in Africa. New trends in women's participation show improvement. This chapter also concludes that

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there has been undoubted progress in increasing women's political participation in Africa. New trends in women's participation show improvement. This chapter recommends, among other things, that because women's representation in legislative and executive bodies is strongly dependent on their involvement and representation in political parties, South African political parties should take the appropriate steps to improve party representation, while female political participation should be encouraged by political parties. This could be through changes in attitude and perceptions over women's participation in politics. During election campaigns, political parties should provide training and mentorship to female candidates to help them improve their campaigning skills.

Keywords: gender, political participation, representation, perceptions, training, political parties, women's participation

Introduction

Half of the world's population comprises women, who play a significant role in social transformation. Mother, producer, home manager, community organiser, sociocultural and political activist are all important roles women play in most societies. Women's movements, as observed by Oloyede (2015), have ushered in the final role of the many roles mentioned: women's participation in parliament increased to 24.1% at the end of 2018, a 13% increase from two decades ago. Only about one in every four members of the world's lower or single houses of parliament is a woman. Several factors contribute to women's underrepresentation in African politics, including political, socioeconomic, ideological, and psychological barriers (PLAC, 2019). One of the world's most divisive policies in recent times is women's political representation and participation. According to the United Nations Development Programme, women's political participation is a necessary component of a peaceful and resilient society, but large gender gaps persist in many countries around the world (Ballington, 2012). In Africa, the pursuit of greater female political participation in governance at the district level is of utmost importance. This is because giving women an equal opportunity to run for political office is their fundamental right (Arthur, Alhassan & Pantah, 2016). The involvement of women in governance promotes political equity, democracy, and justice which translate to development (Kurebwa, 2014).

Women's participation in governmental issues is a positive financial and political improvement all by itself. However, promoting

democracy requires collective political participation, and failure to adhere to the principal collectivity for social and political norms further deepens inequality in power distribution between men and women. It is critical for orientation correspondence and a majority rules system. The majority rule process requires that everything be equal. Any deviation from this outcome in endeavouring to advance the majority rules system is just one more approach to cultivating the social and political standards that have brought about inconsistent power dissemination among people.

As Hassim (2006) points out, the haltering of women's political participation through the political structures that preserve gender inequality in public and private spheres should be challenged. Hence, global equity in political participation and representation has been formalised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 (UN, 1948) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (UN, 1966). Furthermore, the United Nations (UN) "General Assembly's 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDWA) included women's political participation" (UN General Assembly, 1979; UN Women, 1979). However, Article 7 of the UN Charter urged appropriate steps to eradicate gender inequality in governance to guarantee equality in voting, political office and participation in policy formulation, implementation, and governmental organisation (UN, 1945).

Earlier in the twenty-first century, men dominated governance. "Those artificial barriers based on an attitudinal or organisational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing in their organisation to management-level positions" (Vetten, 2016:3). The man-made barriers include stereotypes, media depiction, and unspoken boundaries. The state and politics had flaws that harmed gender equality in favour of men (Masinde, 2016). Women's participation in parliament is vital to ensuring that women are fairly represented in society. Politics has long been regarded as one of the most difficult areas of public life for women to enter.

The call for women's political representation has gained traction in the global gender equality and women's empowerment agenda. The advancement of measures for attaining gender equality in the power structure and its equivalent, as opined by Vetten (2016), was one of the thirteen objectives expressed by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995 (UN, 1996). Women's political participation is a significant issue in South Africa, as it is in other countries around the world. The South African government implemented several reforms

to increase gender equality in politics and new democratic spaces as a signatory to several UN conventions to remove barriers, abuse and discrimination against women. The Bill of Rights, which requires the State to guarantee women's involvement in decision-making, reflects South Africa's commitment to gender equality.

The South African government has implemented reforms to increase women's political participation as well as promote the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996* (RSA, 1996), which establishes gender equality as a basic human right. South Africa has made significant progress and now has arguably one of the world's most gender-diverse legislatures, ranking second in Africa and tenth globally (Makgale & Chibwe, 2010). However, in terms of gender parity, it still falls short. This is because South African society is still pluralistic, with a wide range of cultural identities and the supremacy of partisan interests hindering the involvement of women in the political process. As a result, this chapter evaluates women's political empowerment and participation in political parties.

Methodological discourse

The study relies on the critical review of existing relevant kinds of literature. It assumed the form of peer-reviewed articles, books, and periodicals of international organisations indicating statistics of women in political office globally, in Africa and South Africa. The method is not an attempt at triangulation (i.e., the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods) considering the multiple sources itemised and the statistical data, but rather an expression and justification of the reliability of the information presented. The study adopts the descriptive research approach within a qualitative research design context. The approach gives an in-depth understanding of the thematisation and trends within the discourse of gender imbalance in political participation and representation in South Africa. However, the presence of quantitative data in this study does not qualify the quantitative research approach but rather personifies numbers, as indicated in the chapter. The justification further depicts the paradox that there is no absolute qualitative and quantitative research.

An overview of the African state and patriarchy

Women comprise most of the total populace and continue to outnumber men within their respective countries, but only 22.1% are represented

in parliament (World Bank, 2016). However, in 2021 the “percentage of women parliamentarians increased to 25% while 26 women were filling in as Head of State/or Government in 24 nations globally in 2021” (UN Women, 2021:23). Despite their large population, women continue to be underrepresented in numerous cultural designs, including national parliaments and provincial legislatures (Mamogale & Masehela, 2014). To coerce, control and silence women, patriarchal society has looked down on them politically, and traditional methods of education have additionally strengthened and preserved male dominance. Unrealistic patriarchal stereotypes of women were formed as a result of these traditional teaching methods.

The African woman had largely gone unnoticed in the modern political landscape until recently. Women continue to be marginalised in active politics, though the trend is changing. As a result, patriarchal structures that seek to confine women to economic production and reproduction continue to obstruct women’s advancement in African politics. Gender roles, according to Onyioha and Nwagbara (2009), are specific roles and obligations placed on either gender because of respective societies’ social conceptions in Africa, like in other countries. As a result, women continue to lag behind their male counterparts in numerous African social orders, from an agrarian society to pastoral steppes to present-day metropolitan settings.

According to Chowdhury (2009), patriarchy is a system in which men manage decision-making and financial power. Hamah (2015) discovered that males in institutions are a contributing factor to women’s political participation. According to Tagoe and Abakah (2015), the values and norms that govern the behaviour of men and women prevent women from running for public office. When women cross over from the private world to claim their rightful place in the public realm, men have a ready tool to remind them of their proper place (Tamale, 2000).

Africa’s socio-cultural contexts and entrenched patriarchal institutions complicate the problem more than in Western countries. Contrary to popular belief, at least in a few countries, African women appear to be relatively politically empowered (Tamale, 2000). Women in most African societies cannot exercise their freedom of expression because of the tradition that women are prohibited from speaking in certain places. Cultural norms define what women can and cannot do in social, political, religious, and economic contexts, thus becoming a barrier to women’s participation in decision-making (Munemo, 2017). Many African societies tend to believe that women should be seen but

not heard, despite their historical role in national development. This sums up how gender inequality manifests in women's participation in decision-making. Women are hindered from engaging in decision-making in Africa and other developing nations due to a range of causes such as a lack of education, culture, structural impediments, a lack of resources, the aggressive character of politics, and ascribed responsibilities allocated to women as carers (Tagoe & Abakah, 2015; Agbalajobi, 2010).

Effective political and decision-making participation is a fundamental human right guaranteed by global, continental, and national legal instruments. It is an important opportunity for young women to contribute to and oversee the development of their communities, countries, and continent. Available data shows that the continent is still far from gender equality in political life and decision-making. However, recent research indicates that opportunities for young women to participate more actively in politics and decision-making at the national and sub-national levels are expanding (UN Women, 2021).

Women interacted with the political structure of African society and mobilised and organised to influence the nations, societies and legal systems of different political cultures. Thus, African women's challenges and struggles for political participation, rights, and their impact on laws and policies have a long history. Women's political participation varies around the world, but women's involvement in political and democratic processes has become an integral part of modern development and governance discourse. Despite the dissonance of international organisations for women's political empowerment, research has consistently been around the political arena in many parts of the world, with women having little participation in government structures and democratic processes (Ogbogu, 2012).

Domestic patriarchy, which had separated African women from feminist philosophy in the 1980s, had become a real cause for concern in Africa. This has resulted in agitations and calls for urgent solutions, especially through effective legislation on gender parity. Until the late 1980s, many women in Africa were willing to defer their aspirations to the overall objectives of nationalist political movements, and specific types of women in early post-colonial states were willing to participate in patriarchal bargaining, putting their wider interests ahead of their own, nevertheless limited, desire for power and influence. Women were thought to have dropped out of politics throughout the 1980s, and patriarchal power structures were thought to be hostile to women's

political participation. Nonetheless, they managed to force themselves into the almost entirely male domain with remarkable speed and determination. In 1987, women made up only 7% of representatives in sub-Saharan African parliaments on average, and no country had more than four ministers, with 60% of all countries having no female ministers (Pandey, 2021). Women's parliamentary representation in sub-Saharan African countries has increased to 11.5% on average by 1999 (IPU, 1999). Molokomme (2000) observed that four of the 23 countries in the world with a 20% or higher female presence were African, all in Southern Africa.

In sub-Saharan Africa, progress has been even more dramatic, "with women's representation increasing from 9.8% to 22% over the same period. By 2015, 12 of the region's countries had elected 30% or more women to their houses of parliament" (IPU, 2015:12). Rwanda led "the continent and the world in the proportion of female parliamentarians, with 63%" (IPU, 2015:13). Seychelles came in "second with 44%, Senegal with 43%, and South Africa with 42%" (IPU, 2015:23).

Women in Africa are the world leaders in women's representatives in parliament in the early twenty-first century and are ranked as one of the world averages for women's representatives in cabinets and courts. These trends have emerged because of political transitions that have swept the African continent. Increasing the number of women in African and global parliaments is important, but unfortunately, gender equality in parliaments remains idealistic. According to Johnsson (2008), female Members of Parliament continue to experience obstacles in their job, arguably none more so than acting in male-dominated political systems and political organisations.

South Africa and the adoption of gender quotas

Over the last two decades, there has been a wave of women entering politics at various levels of governance. Most scholars attribute this increase to the introduction of gender quotas in many countries, especially in Africa. Many countries around the world, including "Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, France, the Netherlands, South Africa, Rwanda, Egypt, Jordan, Argentina, Belgium, Eritrea, Korea, and Taiwan", advocated advocacy measures and introduced voting slots to increase women's participation and representation in public and political positions (Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2005).

Gender quotas are a powerful tool for changing the way things look, not necessarily changing the way things are. Gender assignments require women to make up a certain percentage of the members of any organisation, including candidate slate, parliament, and government (Dahlerup, 2005). A quota is a powerful tool for increasing the number of women in the political arena. Not only do quotas 'speed up' the inclusion of women in formal politics, but they have also been shown to signal a broader societal shift in attitudes (Franceschet, Krook & Piscopo, 2012).

Gender quotas are a method of removing barriers to women's political representation caused by political party and political institution exclusion practices. Gender ratios can also limit the representation of both males and females so that both genders are more strongly represented in the decision-making body. Gender-neutral quotas are another term for this. Gender-neutral quotas, for example, prohibit either gender from occupying more than 60% or less than 40% of the seats (Dahlerup, 2005). The emergence of a global political movement advocating for the implementation of gender quotas – what Dahlerup (2005) refers to as “quota fever” – has re-energised the feminist representation theory.

Krook (2007), Dahlerup (2007) and Davidson (2006) have written about how a growing number of countries are implementing various types of gender quotas in public elections. They have also stated that to achieve parliamentary equity, half of the world's countries now use some form of an electoral quota for parliament. Without a doubt, there is a clear consensus among comparative studies of women's representation in cabinet conducted by Squires (2003) and Dahlerup (2002) that quotas have a positive effect on the number of women represented. International recommendations and cross-country inspiration are increasingly influencing the use of quotas.

Quotas are a public indication of society's commitment to equality. They put women in power, make other women feel like role models, are not excluded from governance, and thereby consider the political process legal (Vincent, 2004). In many sub-Saharan African countries, quotas are a powerful tool for increasing the number of women in congress. To date, the African National Congress (ANC) is the only South African political party to have implemented quotas to ensure gender equity in politics and decision-making. Quotas have been introduced as a solution to the problem of women's representation, considering the socio-cultural and political barriers women face in gaining access to political offices.

Pursuing a feminist agenda, on the other hand, is more challenging since political structures and procedures have remained fundamentally antagonistic to major gender equality (Ramtohul, 2020). Women Forward (WF) was founded on June 25, 2008, to give women in South Africa a voice. The organisation's mission was to empower women and campaign for their rights. The party promised to "promote women's rights at all levels of leadership". WF pledged to make a major difference in gender parity by 2025 (Kahla, 2019) and correctly implied that the current national gender machinery is unproductive because it falls short of "influencing, formulating, or analyzing gender policy" and assured voters that when gender policy is enacted, these institutions will be examined and reassessed (Kahla, 2019). WF advocated for the implementation of constitutional principles as well as special answers for diverse groups of women, such as disabled women, widowed women, elderly women, and single mothers. Recognising women's lack of land ownership, the party vowed to work to offer lease security, stabilise rent control, remove informal settlements, and abolish discriminatory bank lending practices (Women and Democracy Initiative, 2020).

WF successfully addressed the bulk of women's lived experiences and provided a gendered viewpoint on all themes. They talked about gender equality and women's leadership at all levels, and while no quotas are mentioned in WF, they are for women. Therefore, the women's movement has played an important role in promoting and advocating women's rights and rights on the continent, including advocating legislative and constitutional changes and promoting gender mainstreaming.

Women's political participation and representation in South Africa

Over the last decade, a group of South African women has emerged and taken office. The broader wave of political reforms – democratisation, decentralisation of government, and restructuring of the system – contributed to the presence and increase of women politicians in national and local parliaments and local parliaments. Women continue to be under-represented in politics; women make up only 18% of parliaments worldwide.

South Africa, with a 3% female representation after the 1999 elections, was ranked eighth on a global scale in 1999, trailing the Nordic countries, the Netherlands and Germany (IPU, 2015). South

Africa has been hailed as a success story for women’s representation in government since the late 2000s. The country leads on gender parity globally in terms of the percentages of women in the cabinet (44.5%) and a slew of progressive women-friendly laws that have passed through parliament. On the surface, it portrays South Africa as an African country that values gender equality.

Table 6.1: Global ranking and percentage of women parliamentarians in national parliaments

Global Ranking (2019)	Country	Percentage
1	Rwanda	56.3%
2	Andorra	53.6%
3	Sweden	45.0%
4	South Africa	44.5%
5	Cuba	43.2%

Source: Adapted from IPU, 2019.

Table 6.2: Women in politics in South Africa, 2004–2019 (in percentage)

	2004	2009	2014	2019
Women Members of Parliament	33	43	40	46
Women in the National Council of Provinces	41	30	28	36
Women Members of the Provincial Legislature	30	41	37	46
Women in cabinet	42	41	41	50
Women deputy ministers	60	39	44	46
Women premiers	44	55	22	22
Women voters	55	55	56	55

Source: Gender Links, 2019.

An insight into Table 6.1 indicated that South Africa is an excellent example, as one of the five countries in the world with the highest number of women in parliament. High female representatives are maintained across multiple elections, thanks to the quotas introduced

at the ANC as early as 1993 when a 30% female quota on the party list was approved. This contributed to women receiving 36% of seats after the 1994 elections. Following the 2009 national elections, the number of women increased to 44.5% due to the continuation of this quota.

According to the Table 6.2, South Africa made history in the 2019 elections by electing 46% of women to the House of Assembly and provincial legislatures, as well as 50% of women to the cabinet. In both the national and provincial legislatures, all the speakers are women. Women remained most voters.

Table 6.3: Representation of ANC women in Parliament, 1994–2019

Year	Total seats in National Assembly	Number of seats won	Number of women	% women
1994	400	252	90	35.7%
1999	400	266	95	35.7%
2004	400	279	104	37%
2009	400	264	130	49.2%
2014	400	249	123	49%
2019	400	230	115	50%

Source: Shoji & Maema, 2013; Gender Links, 2019).

Table 6.4: Women's representative in decision-making, 1994–2019

Year	Total women in government departments/ ministries	Number of women ministers	Number of women deputy ministers	Percentage of women in cabinet seats
1994	27	4	8/14	15%
1999	29	8	8/13	28%
2004	28	12	8/13	43%
2009	34	13	9	41%
2014	35	15	15	42%
2019	28	14	16	50%

Source: Myeni, 2014; Gender Links, 2019.

Overall, the ANC has done a great job of increasing the number of women in the National Assembly. Regardless of the complexities of post-apartheid politics, attempts to ensure women's representation in South Africa's parliamentary structures have taken three forms: quotas adopted by the ANC, the formation of women's political parties, and the drafting of laws demanding gender parity in political parties (Vetten, 2016).

The table above compares the participation of women in the cabinet in South Africa's last five consecutive elections. This shows that women's participation as ministers is increasing over time, suggesting a link between the upward movement of women within the hierarchy and the allocation mechanism in the South African Parliament and the upward movement of women. In South African politics, women became more visible. There has been tremendous growth in terms of female cabinet representation since 1999. Women make up nine of the twenty-seven ministers and eight of the fourteen deputy ministers. In addition to the usual women-related portfolios, women in the cabinet work in almost every area of foreign affairs, housing, finance, housing, defence, science and technology, agriculture, and more. Women make up three of the four presiding officers in the national parliament. Women are also increasingly prominent in the civil service, serving as directors-general, deputy director-general, and chief directors (Myakayaka-Manzini, 2003).

South Africa has been welcomed as a world leader not only in politics but in general by prioritising gender equality and women's empowerment, but according to a survey, women took 56% of parliamentary seats after the Rwandan genocide (Powley, 2003). The empowerment of this proportion of women in politics supports the findings of the literature showing that South Africa is a global leader in promoting women's role in gender equality and public life. South Africa has steadily increased women's engagement and representation in politics, national legislatures, and local councils.

Conclusion

Regardless of whether the discussion or narrative that greater female political participation leads to more successful democratic governments is genuine or not, most people would agree that women must be an integral component of any country's political structure, particularly in Africa (Enaifoghe, 2018). Improving governance requires empowering African women as leaders and advocates and

removing legal, administrative, and cultural barriers to their success. As a policymaker, women can bring their perspectives to decision-making. Women have an interest in ensuring that resources for areas such as health and education are spent wisely because of their role as caregivers in their families.

The increasing political participation of African women in South African political issues is due to political socialisation rather than increased education. With the end goal of ensuring expanded representation of women in legislative issues of African politics, it is still unclear what the ideal arrangement is. While set rules and purposeful gathering portions have successfully elected women to political leadership posts in Rwanda and South Africa, a more fundamental shift may be required.

The future participation of African women depends not only on the removal of social, economic and political barriers but also on the political effectiveness of African women's pioneers in politics. In other words, the influence of women in parliament on improving the living conditions of poor women will determine the future of women's political inclusion. Gender assignments have a major impact on Africa's symbolic and substantive representation. In most African countries, regardless of the political system, gender assignments increase the proportion of women in parliament. Women's Members of Parliament have influenced gender prejudice in the law and empowered women in the private and public spheres.

Women's representation in South African politics is steadily increasing at both national and state levels. Although the provinces of South Africa have made great strides in promoting gender equality and empowering women in politics, findings show that there is still a large disparity in parliamentary and parliamentary representatives between male and female parliamentarians. South Africa states that the percentage of women in the legislatures of all countries must be at least 30%, although it exceeds the percentage standard set by the United Nations in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995 (UN, 1996). The ANC, as the ruling party, adopted a 50/50 gender equality at the 2007 ANC National Congress in Polokwane to promote, protect and achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. These are part of a policy initiative to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in South Africa, where the proportion of women parliamentarians is increasing. South Africa has followed in the footsteps of other emerging democracies, where governments

have demonstrated a commitment to increased representation. This helped promote women's political representation.

However, gender inequality continues in South African society. In addition to structural flaws, sociocultural barriers and control of territorial and partisan interests continue to be major obstacles to the participation of larger women in the political process. The ANC's implementation of women's quotas boosted the percentage of women in Parliament, but local governments have failed to secure their true participation in decision-making.

Without a doubt, the proportion of women parliamentarians in South Africa has gradually multiplied over the past decade and now ranks third globally in terms of women's representation in parliament. This implies that women play an equal role in national and sub-national politics. Because women's involvement and representation in legislative and executive bodies heavily rely on their participation and representation in political parties, political parties in South Africa must take necessary steps to increase party representation.

Without question, one of the central objectives of the feminist movement has been and continues to be women's full and active citizenship through political involvement. In terms of jobs, land, and education, however, gender equality has been attained (Dryding & Mpako, 2019). South African policymakers and political parties must do more to ensure equality and safety in the lives of all women. Political parties in South Africa are required to submit an annual gender mainstreaming report to examine shortcomings in the political system's implementation of gender equality. Political parties need to promote women's true political participation in politics. This can happen through changes in women's attitudes and perceptions of political participation. In addition to this, during election campaign periods, political parties should provide training and mentorships for female candidates, thereby strengthening their campaigning skills.

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Chapter 7: Structural and gendered power inequalities: Reforms and advocacy in a democratic South Africa

Lizzy Ofusori¹

Abstract

Structural and gendered power inequalities are the lopsided distribution of power and resources between different genders in society. These inequalities exist in nearly every society due to the complexities involved in maintaining the balance. There are various factors that affect the implementation of structural gendered equality in Africa and, especially, South Africa, including economic empowerment, the digital divide, and gender-based violence. However, this chapter explores gendered power inequalities in democratic South Africa and adopts a systematic review of relevant academic literature and books on gender inequalities in South Africa. First, this chapter discusses the general outlook of the structural and gendered power inequalities as it concerns South Africa in the democratic dispensation. Secondly, the various gendered power inequalities reforms in South Africa are critically considered and analysed. Thirdly, the effects of the reforms on gendered power inequalities are discussed in detail. Fourthly, the advocacy and promotion carried out in the area of gendered power inequalities are elucidated. The result of the advocacy and promotion are also not left out in the discussion, as well as the answer to the question of sustainability of gendered power equalities. The chapter concludes that even though balancing gendered power inequalities could be a complex task, a proper look at areas where it has not been appropriately addressed could be of tremendous help in maintaining reasonable balance considering various factors involved.

Keywords: gender, inequalities, advocacy, power, reforms, sustainability, South Africa

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Introduction

There is an asymmetrical allotment of power and resources between different genders in many countries worldwide (Vyas-Doorgapersad & Bangani, 2020). This automatically gives rise to gendered power inequalities among the citizens, primarily based on the intricacies involved in sustaining equilibrium among the genders. Gender inequality normally occurs among people; however, it is an outcome of power dealings that constitute the way the general public is put in order, decrees are put in place, financial systems operate, and philosophies are formed (George, Amin, De Abreu Lopes & Ravindran, 2020). The stratification of societies based on class, professional standing, academic qualification, and gender, among others, make up the structural power relations (George, Amin, De Abreu Lopes & Ravindran, 2020). Societal norms tend to determine what is esteemed and regarded as acceptable for men and women in terms of outward look, outfit, means of transportation, and access to information, among others (Mmari et al., 2018). Access to information, for instance, sets the pace for proper orientation as to what is legally acceptable as opposed to what is socially acceptable (societal norms). The latter seems to promote gendered power inequalities as it tends to be in favour of men while women have various levels of restrictions (Seguino, 2007). The employment rate of women as compared to men tends to be low, giving rise to gender inequality due to several reasons such as early marriage and pregnancy. Also, job restrictions for the female gender, as well as discrepancies in job roles and remunerations, are other factors responsible for gender inequality (Campos-Serna, Ronda-Pérez, Artazcoz, Moen & Benavides, 2013). The complexities involved in maintaining the balance in gender equality require legal reforms and advocacy to be put in place to empower and give women legal backing. Hence, this study aims to explore gendered power inequalities in South Africa.

Justification of the study

Gender inequality has continued to be one of the most notable human rights violations within all societies (Hills, 2015). Structural gender inequalities are still embedded in society, despite the government policy and legislation that have been viewed as gender-neutral (EIGE, 2016). Scholars have shown that even if the laws treat women and men as equals, women still do not have equal access to and control over material and non-material resources and assets (EIGE, 2016; Kabeer, 2005). “That is why addressing people suffering inequalities in an

equal way causes, in practice, the perpetuation of these inequalities” (EIGE, 2016:9). Furthermore, policies that focus on target groups in broad terms without distinguishing between women and men are usually not neutral, but gender blind. However, eradicating gender inequalities means a world where all men and women, boys and girls, enjoy equal rights, opportunities, resources, and protections (Meyer, 2014). Hence, this study explores gendered power inequalities in South Africa with the aim of promoting gender equality and making recommendations for the government.

Gendered power inequalities reforms in South Africa

Gender equality is considered a legal human right in South Africa (Hills, 2015). This means the female gender has equal rights to her male counterpart (Cook, 2012). South Africa is a democratic system of government that is dedicated to accomplishing equality between men and women and all inhabitants of all races by providing for the prohibition of all types of discrimination (Albertyn, 1994). Gender equality was a crucial part of the reforms introduced in legislation and government programmes in the democratic Republic of South Africa (Seidman, 1999; Vyas-Doorgapersad & Bangani, 2020).

Legislative reform is a major technique used by tolerant democracies to guarantee that those formerly left out as citizens are now incorporated (Fishkin, 1991; Gouws & Galgut, 2016). Legislation has the capability of having an impact on its citizens and is, therefore, an essential mechanism in causing transformation in their lives. Internationally, conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, amongst others, have acknowledged the necessity for legislative reform to deal with gender equality (Shu-Acquaye, 2008). Article 15 of CEDAW tackles issues of equality as it pertains to the law. Article 15 comprises requirements that state:

Accord women equality with men before the law; accord to women, in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of men and the same opportunities to exercise that capacity; agree that all contracts and all other private instruments of any kind with a legal effect which is directed at restricting the legal capacity of women shall be deemed null and void; accord to men and women the same rights with regard to the law relating to the

movement of persons and the freedom to choose their residence and domicile (UN General Assembly, 1979:6).

Legislative reform concerning women's empowerment has been connected with enhanced financially viable results for women (World Bank Group, 2018). Women can be disallowed from partaking as peers because of financial viability. In this situation, women and others experience unfair distribution (Young, Wallace & Polachek, 2015). Women can also experience status inequality when they are not permitted to participate as peers because of non-acknowledgement due to cultural values. South Africa is duty-bound to deal with racist and sexist legislation in order to guarantee a more unbiased society in which all people are acknowledged and incorporated (Vyas-Doorgapersad & Bangani, 2020).

Similarly, possessions, either material or assets, are another means that can promote gender inequality. This is because women generally tend to have less access to assets like land and official financial capital to carry out a number of activities (Wanjala, 2014). In a bid to guarantee that they were properly stood for and their rights well captured in the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996*, the women, through their movement, played vital roles in confronting racial and gender inequality (Lorber, 2001). Democracy brought about the legislation of the Constitution, which is the highest portion of the law that assures human rights and equality. This lays the bedrock for a non-racist, non-sexist South Africa (Nesbitt, 1996). The Bill of Rights in the Constitution is unambiguous in declaring the rights associated with equality. Section 9 states that "everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law" (Udombana, 2005:52). With these provisions, the country is able to invoke legislative and other actions to defend women who have been unjustly treated. The Bill of Rights is explicit in Section 9(3) in dealing with discrimination of any type.

The Constitution offers the necessary support for the endorsement of legislation that would ensure that the standard of equality is not compromised but rather encourages women's empowerment. Right from the time the democratic rule began in South Africa, different legislations have been passed which give effect to the equality requirements of the Constitution (RSA, 1996). Among these are the endorsements of the *Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000* (RSA, 2000), the *Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998* (RSA, 1998), and the *Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related*

Matters) Amendment Act 32 of 2007 (RSA, 2007). Also, many institutions were established to back up the Constitution and sustain democracy and the Commission on Gender Equality. Most certainly, the South African government has built up a variety of procedures at policy, legal and institutional levels to deal with specific issues of gender inequality (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2019). This has also strengthened many international instruments which have been endorsed. South Africa has undoubtedly taken important decisions to ensure gender equality is encoded in its legislative and policy frameworks (Vyas-Doorgapersad & Bangani, 2020).

Effects of gendered power inequalities reforms in South Africa

The effects of gendered power inequalities reforms in South Africa, like in other parts of the world, can be felt through the rewards and benefits that accrue from it. Gender inequality is the main reason for violence against women, while gender equality assists in avoiding aggression against women and girls to make our societies safer (Domingo, 2022; Yodanis, 2004). The connection involving gender and violence is multifaceted. Studies have shown that gender inequalities increase the possibility of violence by men against women (Buvinic, Das Gupta, Casabonne & Verwimp, 2013; Caprioli, 2005). However, some benefits result from gender equality, which is enumerated below.

Better prospects of living

Education is an essential factor in promoting equality (Zajda, 2020). Education can deal with gender norms and outlook in good time to prevent new generations from imbibing the status quo created by culture, among other factors. This is done by tackling gender norms, dating aggression, and sexual maltreatment in the midst of upcoming children and teenagers (Pacheco-Montoya, Murphy-Graham, López & Cohen, 2022). When gender equality starts with education, everyone has the opportunity to improve their lives (Brighouse, 2012).

Better care for children

Reproductive privileges are a vital component of gender equality (Kabeer, 2005). The more women are able to make their own reproductive options, the more improvement it brings to their lives. In this way, they become more capable of taking care of the offspring they decide to have (Ruxton & Oxfam, 2004). When there is gender

equality in terms of the same salaries as men, women tend to give their children better and improved care, provisions, and other necessities of life (Dollar & Gatti, 1999). Gender equality, like equal wages and education, serves as a security for the woman even if she makes up her mind to stay with her children at home (Ponthieux & Meurs, 2015). An increase in the woman's level of education also reduces child mortality rate since the woman is well informed and available for the children.

Better ethnic tolerance

Gender-based inequality is closely related to ethnic intolerance due to certain gender norms (Janmaat & Mons, 2011). Most of the time, women from discriminated ethnic groups are treated unfairly at times in terms of wages and at other times in terms of the healthcare they can receive from the same source (Sidanius & Veniegas, 2013). Gender reforms most certainly can correct these anomalies. Society's involvement can deal with gender norms and mindsets through a blend of economic plans for women and other techniques to empower them (Brody et al., 2015). Public sensitisation through mass media, newspapers, radio and television can be efficient in changing mindsets as regards gender norms as well (Medie & Kang, 2018).

Better self-esteem

Gender equality certainly improves women's self-esteem who have been hitherto discriminated against (Kabeer, 2005). But it not only benefits women; it also raises the self-esteem of men who are alleged to be "feminine" in nature. In the absence of gender equality, such men are tagged as "not a real man", but when gender equality exists, men have better self-determination in how they articulate themselves (Fenstermaker, Fenstermaker, West & Zimmerman, 2002).

Better economy

A society or community where there is gender equity have a better economy due to the number of employees available to be employed by the government and other private organisation. This is simply because women now get the same education and occupation as men (Klasen, 2018). An establishment with a dynamic mode of operation, such as harnessing the benefits of both men's and women's benefits, will most certainly be a more productive environment (Morrison, Radju & Sinha, 2007).

Better co-existence

Gender inequality is the foundation of many aggressions like rape, gender-based violence, and human trafficking (De Lange, Mitchell & Bhana, 2012). A legislative reform that improves equality for women defends these maltreated women by reducing the nature and extent of violence. When there is gender equality in a country, it automatically translates to better co-existence between the citizens of such a country and less conflict because the effects on women cannot be underestimated (Busmann, 2007).

Gendered power inequalities advocacy and promotion in South Africa

Gendered power inequalities advocacy is a crucial vehicle for realising a societal transformation that prioritises social justice and respects human rights (Antonites, 2021). The promotion of gender equality is an essential part of any democratic society as it helps prevent any forms of violence (Michau, Horn, Bank, Dutt & Zimmerman, 2015). In South Africa, gender stereotypes that give men more power and control over women are being addressed in a range of school, community, and media interventions to promote gender equality and non-violent relationships (Antonites, 2021). According to Pavlic, Ruprecht & Sam-Vargas (2000:5):

Gender equality, equality between men and women, entails the concept that all human beings, both men and women, are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles, and prejudices
....

This implies that women also enjoy the same benefits as men based on equality. In South Africa, gender equality is a constitutional human right whereby women are afforded the same status as men:

The Constitution provides for the establishment of one sovereign state, a democratic system of government committed to achieve equality between men and women, as well as all people of all races by providing for the prohibition of racial, gender and all other forms of discrimination (Vyas-Doorgapersad & Bangani, 2020:1; RSA, 1996).

According to Fontes Marx, London and Müller (2018), South Africa has a rich custom of civil society advocacy for human rights that promotes

gender equality without distinction of any kind, such as gender, race, colour, religion, language, or politics. Fontes Marx, London and Müller (2018) affirm that strong civil society pressure was part of the political transition to democracy, including helping to shape the Constitution. It should be noted that South Africa created a commission on gender equality to construct its new democracy. This Commission for Gender Equality is a horizontal independent body that monitors and stimulates efforts to create gender equality (Fontes Marx, London & Müller, 2018; Jones & Stokke, 2005). Furthermore, it helps to promote, protect, and evaluate gender equality through policy development, public education, research, and legislative initiatives. Similarly, the National Development Plan (NDP) and the Constitution have established a policy to address gender inequalities. This policy encourages women to actively participate in their community to realise their full human potential (World Bank Group, 2018).

Methodology

The researcher conducted a desktop literature review of relevant academic literature and books related to structural and gendered power inequalities: reforms and advocacy in a democratic South Africa. A desktop literature review is a literature review that collects data from existing resources, synthesises the findings, and interprets them accordingly (Eichler & Schwarz, 2019). This process was preferred because it allowed the researchers to collect and create a summary of current evidence as far as structural and gendered power inequalities are concerned. Moreover, the researcher used several search engines such as PubMed, Google Scholar and Scopus to identify relevant articles, including government communication information portals relating to structural and gendered power inequalities: reforms and advocacy in a democratic South Africa.

Findings

This section discusses the data extracted from the reviewed research articles in detail. It synthesises the literature by putting forward different situation contexts and discussing the outcome of gendered power inequalities advocacy and promotion in South Africa. Furthermore, the sustainability of gendered power equalities in South Africa is discussed.

Outcome of gendered power inequalities advocacy and promotion in South Africa

In South Africa, the government has put in place different measures to address gender equality. This includes establishing a national gender policy framework, research and educational institutes, the private sector, the media, non-governmental organisations, and all other sectors of civil society. This section briefly discusses some of the measures that have been put in place.

National Gender Policy Framework

This Framework was developed to promote a cooperative approach among sectors toward achieving gender equality within and across sectors (Hills, 2015). According to Kornegay (2000:5), the guidelines and principles proposed and enunciated in the Framework aimed at advancing the integration of gender considerations into the transformation of the country by ensuring that:

- There is equality for all persons, and that non-sexism and non-racism be enshrined in the Constitution (RSA, 1996);
- There is an understanding that women are not a homogenous group. This principle must inform all policies and programs that will lead to the implementation of gender equality in the country.

Centre for women's studies

The Centre for Women and Gender Studies was established at the Nelson Mandela University in October 2019 to promote social transformation through gender equality, women empowerment, and equity (Mail & Guardian, 2020). The mandate and objectives of the Centre are to mainstream gender in teaching and promote scholarly engagements that can transform attitudes towards gender transformation. This mandate has the following goals:

- To facilitate the integration of socially relevant interdisciplinary women and gender studies in teaching, curriculum design, research and engagement activities at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.
- To critically analyse and interpret gender differentiation and inequality from a complex contextual perspective and their intersections with ethnicity, culture, religion, class, sexual orientation, age, and other critical dimensions.

- To build Institutional, regional, and national capacity and support women empowerment and gender advocacy through teaching, training, consultancy, and networking.
- To foster cooperation, collaboration, and networking within the University as well as with government and non-government organisations to influence policy and support to advance the constitutional values of human dignity, equality, freedom, and social justice (CWGS, 2019:1).

National Development Plan (NDP)

Policy promoting gender equality is encompassed in the country's NDP (Cumming et al., 2017). This policy aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. According to the National Planning Commission (NPC, 2013:14):

South Africa can realise these goals by drawing on the energies of its people, growing an inclusive economy, building capabilities, enhancing the capacity of the state, and promoting leadership and partnerships throughout society.

It should be noted that South Africa has made amazing progress in transitioning from apartheid to democracy. Despite the country's history of dispossession and violent conflict, the transition has been peaceful (Cumming et al., 2017). At every stage in the transition, advances are being made to build an inclusive society, roll back the shadow of history, and broaden opportunities for all (NPC, 2013).

Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD)

The priority of DWYPD is to ensure that the rights of youth, women, and people with disabilities, as well as socio-economic empowerment, are respected (Chauke, 2021). It should be noted that under normal circumstances, it is less likely that people living with disabilities have access to education, health care, employment, and participation in the community. "They are more likely to live in poverty, experience higher rates of violence, neglect and abuse, and are among the most marginalised in any crisis-affected community" (UN Women, 2022). Hence, the DWYPD advocate and monitor their socio-economic empowerment and gender equality with the aim of building an inclusive society. In addition, DWYPD facilitates skills development

for women, youth, and persons living with disabilities and encourages them to participate in all areas of the economy (Chauke, 2021).

Sustainability of gendered power equalities in South Africa

According to Leach, Mehta & Prabhakaran (2016), pursuing sustainable development for everyone entails upholding human rights principles, promoting peace, and widening freedoms. It requires putting an end to all forms of discrimination at global, regional, national, and local levels. This, in turn, requires re-directing interconnected political, economic, environmental, and social processes challenging current unsustainable pathways of production, consumption, and distribution and finding new ones (Leach, 2016; Nilsson et al., 2018)2016; Nilsson et al., 2018. Furthermore, accountability is required from every individual, community, private sector, civil society, and state in building alliances to democratise knowledge and transform institutions and power relations. Nilsson et al. (2018) maintain that promoting gender equality and empowering women is crucial to accelerating sustainable development. Ending all forms of discrimination, particularly towards women, and providing equal access to education and opportunities for employment has a multiplier effect across all other development areas (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2019). According to Domingo (2022:1), “gender equality has been conclusively shown to stimulate economic growth, which is important, especially in countries with higher unemployment rates and less economic opportunity.” UN Women (2014) affirms that the realisation of women empowerment which includes human rights requires paying specific attention to the provision of care through the household, the public sector, non-profit sector, markets and state.

Discussion and recommendations

The Constitution (RSA, 1996) establishes a three-tiered system of governance, namely local, provincial and national government spheres that are decentralised in approach (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2019).

Their responsibilities provide for the establishment of one sovereign state, a democratic system of government committed to achieve equality between men and women, as well as all people of all races by providing for the prohibition of racial, gender

and all other forms of discrimination (Vyas-Doorgapersad & Bangani, 2020:1).

Likewise, gender equality is supported by an institutional framework of policies and mechanisms, including the National Gender Policy Framework and the Ministry for Women, Youth, and Persons With Disabilities, achieving gender equality (Nhlapo, 2020). Hence, the government must enforce strict laws to ensure compliance in the private and public sectors for gender transformation. Also, it is recommended that the government organise short courses on gender equality awareness and capacity-building intervention. In addition, the government should review a number of policies aimed at building an inclusive society and gender considerations.

According to Vyas-Doorgapersad and Bangani (2020:8), “all public service departments must ensure that capacity-building interventions are in place for gender equality and women’s empowerment”. Human resource and line managers must identify the training needs of female employees and offer them opportunities to improve their competence for better career options (Meyer, 2014). The capacity-building interventions must include mentorship, learnerships and bursary opportunities for female employees in the public service. This intervention also demands that the leadership in public service departments must set aside a portion of their budget for gender-based training (Vyas-Doorgapersad & Bangani, 2020). Gender-based training must also be provided to officials and staff members involved in programme planning, procurement and budgeting processes.

Vyas-Doorgapersad and Bangani (2020) affirm that public service departments must ensure that gender mainstreaming and equality processes and structures. For example, gender forums, gender desks and gender focal points are established, integrated and function efficiently.

Conclusion

Gendered power inequality is experienced in nearly every society (Boonzaier, 2018). However, due to the complexities involved in maintaining the balance, it is challenging to handle without proper and formal reforms and advocacy to empower and give women legal backing. Although, there are various factors that affect the implementation of structural gendered equality in South Africa (Akala,

2018). The determination of the government to enshrine a number of these reforms in the Constitution has really been of tremendous advantage since the beginning of democratic rule. Empowering women and promoting gender equality, including providing equal access to education and opportunities for employment, is essential to accelerate sustainable development.

This chapter concludes that gender equality can be improved in leadership portfolios, public service structures, and programmes. However, the realisation of gender equality also demands political and administrative will to ensure that gender equality is streamlined and aligned with all organisational and departmental processes, structures, strategies and policy frameworks and driven at the highest level in each public service department (Vyas-Doorgapersad & Bangani, 2020). Further studies can be carried out in selected public service departments to compare gender equality among these departments.

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Chapter 8:

The politics of gender, race and land ownership in South Africa

Benedict Abiola Falana¹

Abstract

During the precolonial era, diverse cultural and traditional beliefs defined gender, race and land ownership in South Africa. In Africa, there still exist racial and gender inequalities in landholding, not minding if land reform exercises have been undertaken or not. The customary law in Southern Africa favours the acquisition of land by the male head of a family and determines the availability of land to females. Studies have shown gradual increases in the number of women in politics in South Africa. This milestone is due to the intervention of political institutions and legislative interference, favouring women's participation. More encouragement is necessary for the political space to encourage women and girls in politics. Policies that favour women are expected to be formulated to make it a matter of responsibility and necessity to bring more women on board in good governance without racial restriction.

This chapter involved an extensive literature search using Google. Journal articles also explored the politics of gender, race and land ownership in South Africa. Thus, this chapter analysed the political intrusion in gender, race and land ownership in South Africa. It also explored the effects of racial interference in resource distribution and political appointments in a leadership capacity. Also, the impracticable cultural beliefs that existed made it difficult for the female gender to be rated like a male counterpart at home, workplace, and school were surveyed. Furthermore, this chapter captured the influence of cultural beliefs and traditional African practices on land ownership and use. Special attention was paid to gender inequalities as it pertains to the acquisition and use of land, with a special interest in women's land rights.

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Keywords: politics, land ownership, South Africa, gender equality, democracy

Introduction

The effects of racial interference in resource distribution and political appointments into leadership capacity capture the influence of cultural beliefs and traditional African practices on land ownership and use. Lack of equality denies all equal rights, privileges and opportunities. Women and children constitute a vulnerable group in the community. Women are exposed to many forms of injustice: Are men more efficient than women in risk-taking and decision-making? Will the female gender be able to significantly impact good governance and the well-being of all? Is the war for recognition by the people undergoing gender transition or bisexual people close to being a dream come true for them because they constitute members of the sexual league? Are the policy formulation bodies going in the direction of gender equity? Are women ready for future perspectives on gender equity? These and many more questions will be answered, and probable solutions proffered in this chapter. The South African legal and policy framework needs extensive review and reforms. In fact, inequality between the sexes must be conceptualised. In the area of land ownership and reforms statistics, the South African living conditions survey indicates that men earn more income from imputed rent on an owned dwelling than women (Joshi et al., 2022). There are documented policies that unjustly limit the access of women to land rights. However, care and caution must be taken when comparing gender equity to women's emancipation.

South African and African women, in general, had faced discrimination and oppression from time immemorial. The full and advantageous political participation of women is tremendously important to the overall well-being of any community and an inclusive aspect of sustainable development (Albertyn, 2011; OECD, 2018). As a matter of fact, half of the world's population are women, but presently women occupy only 23% of all seats in parliaments and senates globally (Amjad, 2017; Amjad & Rasul, 2017). About 51% of the South African population are females, but only 20.7% of directors of joint stock enterprise listed companies are females. The gender imbalance observed here needs to be equalised, especially as it concerns the top tier of business management (Parry & Segalo, 2017; Nwosu & Ndinda, 2018).

There is plausible evidence available to prove that all or most of all the problems, impediments, troubles, political unrests, hardships, ignorance, poverty, mismanagements, corruption and other evil in the World today are caused by the selfish interests of men (Jewkes, 2022). Men have successfully subdued women in all ramifications in the past. The history of women as leaders in the past has been poorly reported. The abuse of women at workplaces, sexual abuse and exploitation through self-centred potential have resulted in the country ignoring female concerns (Jewkes, 2022; Tolmay, 2022). Moreover, the political environment and conditions are often unfriendly or even antagonistic to Women (Xu, 2015; Shvedova, 2005), mainly when it comes to political participation and women's involvement in politics.

In cases of conflicts where people are internally displaced, mostly women and children are affected. We need gender equality urgently in South Africa because it affects people of all backgrounds, prevents violence against women, and everyone benefits. All sexes should have equal access to power in politics, opportunities and the state's resources. However, this would not be achieved overnight. Specific targets must be made by the women's movement for women's leadership by having interrelations with the communities, businesses, workplaces and organisations to build a culture of fairness, justice and respect. This chapter examined gender inequalities as they relate to politics, good governance, land acquisition and use.

Methodology

This research presents an outlook on the political intrusion in gender, race and land ownership in South Africa utilising extensive literature search using Google, PubMed, Google Scholar, and Scopus search engines. Journal articles and books also explored the politics of gender equity, race and land ownership in South Africa, adopting a desktop literature search which involves a thorough review of existing data and making inferences accordingly. This method allows for extensive search literature collection and collation on the politics of gender, race and land ownership in South Africa.

Gender equality globally

Grounded theories applicable to concepts of gender parity include the theory of distributive justice, which, according to a 2013 report by

Greenberg and Colquitt, is clearly defined as the equitable distribution of resources (Greenberg & Colquit, 2013). How are these resources distributed? How are these decisions arrived at? What is the composition of the boards making decisions, and what percentage of the board members are females? It is tremendously unfair. The distribution of resources had been defaulting (Fraser, 1998). It favoured mostly men. Women, in fact, are underrepresented in the management of affairs of nations, conglomerates, universities, corporations and multinational companies. Moreso, decision-making bodies are largely composed of men in the South African parliament (Albertyn, 2011). Gender equality means that women, men, girls and boys have equal rights, resources, opportunities and protection. Everyone is affected by gender inequality, men and women – transgender and gender diverse – families and children. Historically, in the history of leadership in South Africa, politics was only for men, and women had no right to access politics. Today, after a long struggle, women's political position has improved (Bimpong, 2022).

The *United Nations Millennium Development Goals* lists gender equality as one of its eight goals, and achieving this goal requires empowering the female gender (UNDP, 2006). Despite a general decline in gender inequality in virtually all modern nations, gender discrimination and imbalances persist in many areas, particularly politics. Women are still not as involved in politics as men. In many countries, especially in Asian countries, the proportion of women parliamentarians is low, and most people believe that men make better political leaders. Under the above circumstances, it can be illustrative to determine whether women's political participation impacts economic growth (Xu, 2015; Orisadare, 2019). Leadership, cultural change and empowerment of women are the key.

Gender equality would be of great benefit to every community. Female South Africans, whether black, white or coloured, high class and elite, must come together as an alliance politically. They should strive to have a firm grip at the grassroots across regions in South Africa. This may take a few years to achieve, but it is imperative that now is the time to re-awaken women's consciousness and concerns with a mission to take the mantle of leadership from men in government.

Leadership roles on boards of government institutions, parastatals, industry, institutions, and in the private sector should be championed by women. Nancy Fraser's theoretical model is a classic example (Fraser, 1998). Although women have benefited from redistributive policies and laws, black women are placed at the bottom

of the social hierarchy. The exclusion of the poor and less privileged women reflects a political failure of the women's movement. The law has become an important locus of gender struggles for power, interests, meaning and resources (Orisadare, 2019). These struggles occur in the courts, the legislature and the everyday lives of black people of South Africa. South Africa was and, as a matter of fact, today is a deeply patriarchal society in which women are subordinate to men in public and private life.

The role of women is essential in the production of food as caretakers of household food security. However, their role is not well recognised, especially in policy-making, resource allocation and leadership (Ghouse, Durrah & McElwee, 2021; Bimpong, 2022).

Organisations are expected to initiate successful leadership. This depends on the ability to motivate subordinates through promotions and other mechanisms. Essentially, there should be a periodic review by the management in order to make informed decisions about promotions and firings. Therefore, women should focus on building relevant qualities that are considered for promotion and advancement to top management and even political positions. Research shows that gender equality and leadership have been linked to determination, intelligence and honesty (Orisadare, 2019; Anditi, Musango, Smit & Ceschin, 2022).

A major backlash was the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 that aggravated many issues relating to equality. In their gender equality study, Jacques-Aviñó et al. (2020) report how the lockdown affected mental health, especially among women in Spain. It was a major disturbance to governance as the whole world was at a standstill for almost a year. The effect of the pandemic has been replicated in most countries. However, the world has a new order not only of maintaining good hygiene but an order that would witness female leadership around the world (Clark et al., 2021; Mutambara, Crankshaw & Freedman, 2022). So, we earnestly await a change in equity, inequality and leadership, particularly in South Africa and globally. The ongoing war in Ukraine is a classic experiment to show the failure of the male gender with respect to leadership, abuse and misuse of power.

In Sweden, for example, 45% of parliamentary seats are occupied by women; this is commendable. According to United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF) data, India ranks 115 out of 162 countries in matters of gender development, while South Africa is far better in the ranking. Consequently, the LGBTIQ+ community's war for political

recognition is far from over in South Africa, another area to be looked into (Currier, 2010; Currier, 2011).

The President of Chile in 2018, Bachelet Michelle, is an example of leadership bringing about significant change. The scorecard of the central government in Chile is applaudable as the economy has been transformed significantly by female leadership; however, Michelle was jailed in 2022 by a male regime for misconduct (Thomas, 2016).

The role of men in South Africa in relation to how they take care of their children also needs to be critically evaluated as it affects so many issues around gender equity. Most female children in colleges and universities prefer to report that they do not have caring fathers or come from divorce homes so that they can access scholarships and bursaries (Magqamfana & Bazana, 2020). The divorce rates skyrocketed between 2014 and 2018 (Odimegwu & Mkwanzani, 2018). Even now, the rate of divorce in South Africa has doubled (Jennings, Chinogurei & Adams, 2022). This trend is the same in many African countries like Nigeria, Tanzania, Kenya and Ghana (World Population Review, 2022). Recent statistics reveal that mostly females enrol annually in South African medical schools. It was observed that about 70% of annual enrollments in the medical, dental and nursing schools were females, a situation that should be replicated in politics.

Gender equity also needs to be addressed in relation to the existence of the LGBTIQ+ community in all the countries in the World at Large because the LGBTIQ+ community has been seriously crying for attention and recognition lately. The recent Freedom Day celebration in April 2022 had programs dominated by the activities of the LGBTIQ+ community in South Africa (Currier, 2010; Currier, 2011).

The sole aim of this chapter is to outline meaningful ways that women can take to achieve power in South Africa. Women are resourceful and resilient and should thus be allowed to use these energies judiciously, especially when it comes to leadership and good governance in politics (Herath, 2015). Women in every community must secure both their economic and political power as it all lies in 'our' hands. Men should join this course, have confidence in women and support them. Studies have shown that the proportion of women is larger than men in every community and population. Cameron, Hemingway, Cunningham and Jacquin (2021) further state that the relationship between poverty and education in South Africa requires a thorough reexamination because poverty and ignorance

breed diseases, an epidemiological triad that measures how sane an environment looks or is.

Poverty and joblessness have been linked to high crime rates experienced in the cities and suburbs of South Africa. Gender-based violence and promiscuity among youths have also been linked to low school enrollment of girls, abortions, unwanted pregnancies and high rates of school dropouts among girls (Ngarava, Zhou, Ningi, Chari & Mdiya, 2022).

Land reforms and gender equality in South Africa

The challenges regarding gender equality in land ownership have been global (Boyce, Rosset & Stanton, 2005; Akinola, 2020). African countries most affected were those previously colonised by Western nations. Likewise, in South America, Brazil is one of the countries with unequal forms of land ownership that necessitated the land reform agenda that was initiated (Boyce, Rosset & Stanton, 2005; Akinola, 2020).

In Africa, land is a valuable possession for developmental and sustenance purposes (Doss, Kovarik, Peterman, Quisumbing & Van Den Bold, 2015). This is because land is a fundamental resource which forms the basis of agricultural practices (Smit & Nasr, 1992; DeFries et al., 2015). Land serves as socio-economic prosperity for the land owners. Many rural dwellers make a living through land-related activities such as fishing, farming and mining. According to Kimani-Murage et al. (2014), land is a valuable possession that serves as collateral against unforeseen circumstances. It is not very easy for women to gain access to land in South Africa due to varying issues that encourage gender inequality (Odeny, 2013). Apartheid was marked by struggles culminating in different shades of land inequality (Akinola, 2018a). During 1948–1994, the Nationalist Party, consisting of mostly white Afrikaner men, enacted laws that promoted segregation, restricted movements, and racism (Findley & Ogbu, 2011). The apartheid regime appropriated 87% of the land to the minority, the white population, who constituted only 13%, compared to black people, who constituted 87% of the population (Findley & Ogbu, 2011). Due to the enacted laws, many black people suffered eviction at the hands of the apartheid government. The colonial settlers in most African countries, through historical injustices, dispossessed the masses of their properties (Akinola, 2018a; Findley & Ogbu, 2011). Redistribution and historical injustices have been addressed by successive post-apartheid

governments in South Africa (Akinola, 2018a). Some of the approaches adopted by the government include land reform, land redistribution, ensuring land is put to good use and eradicating impediments against land rights by women (Akinola, 2020).

One of the benefits of land reform is to amend the discrimination in the *Native Land Act of 1913* (RSA, 1913), which prevented the black majority from possessing land (Hall, 2004; Cousins & Walker, 2015). Studies have shown that despite this reform, racial and gender inequalities continue in some parts of the country (Hall, 2004; Cousins & Walker, 2015; Doss, Meinzen-Dick, Quisumbing & Theis, 2018). Women have been continuously involved in the use of land for agricultural-related activities (Doss, Kovarik, Peterman, Quisumbing & Van Den Bold, 2015; Doss, Meinzen-Dick, Quisumbing & Theis, 2018), but gender discrimination has often worked against them. Societies also have unbalanced perspectives based on gender. Most often, there is a preponderance of male dominance over the female counterpart, thus leading to the exclusion of women from important matters. Even with the eradication of laws that have to do with racial land policy and gender discrimination, women have continuously experienced restrictions against land rights due to cultural inclination (Akinola, 2018b). This uneven treatment has resulted in incessant denial of women's access to basic resources such as land, education and political participation. A white paper on land reform was released in 1991 with the anticipation that the minority rule would be brought to an end (Zimmerman, 2000). The National Party's model of land policy was implemented by the government on March 12, 1991, with the acknowledgement of access to land as a right that should not be infringed upon (Zimmerman, 2000).

Land reform has been seen by many as the best way of correcting injustices because land reform is able to enhance socio-economic well-being and also serves as a tool for promoting developmental programs among the less privileged in society (Hall, 2004; Akinola, 2020). The major challenge of the country is land conflict, and it has constituted the country's political discourse by successive post-apartheid governments. There are still so many challenges that relate to the enforcement of the rights of women as espoused by the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996* (RSA, 1996) despite the reforms and laws on land acquisition. More effort is still needed to establish a linkage between women's rights and land reforms in countries like South Africa, where land is seen as an important economic asset (Moosa, 2018). For instance, in the rural areas where

women predominate, the land is a fortune and defines the livelihood of an individual. There have been so many calls for the world to respect the rights of women as it pertains to land ownership in South Africa. Julius Malema, in 2019, during one of his campaigns in the KwaZulu-Natal province, canvassed women's rights in land ownership. In his words:

When we give women land, we're guaranteed that the children will be fed. Let's give South African women the land, the most oppressed people. We must make sure that women benefit from this land. This land must not be allowed to be to the benefit of politicians (Akinola, 2020).

Despite the observed respite in land ownership in the rural areas, the distribution is still unequal due to environmental interference, which favours male dominance over their female counterparts.

Women and South African politics

In the fight for women to gain more recognition in the global world, remarkable success has been achieved in the area of politics. This has further laid credence to gender equality being canvassed all over the world. Though slow in Africa, this progress has been widely seen as a step in the right direction. Globally, women's representation in decision-making has been gradually increasing. For instance, reports show that the political representation of women increased in 2018 when compared to the previous year (UN Women, 2022). A similar feat was demonstrated in sub-Saharan Africa in 2018, where the number of women seated in parliament grew, constituting 23.7% (Adams, 2011). Vichit-Vadakan (2008) noted that in most cases, women may be the backbone of successful organisations but are rarely found at the helm of affairs in such organisations. It is disheartening to note that despite the fact that Southern African women constitute half the electorate, they are still under-represented in the political space, except in South Africa, where there was a stronger will to have the highest numbers of female members of parliament (Geisler, 1995). Women should know that the days are gone when men were allowed to hold sway in political settings. They must be ready to come out against all odds to vie for elective positions and also contribute meaningfully to matters pertaining to economic and political discussions. All these are expected to spring up from the rural and urban councils. Some of the reasons for the low level of women in politics include:

- Lack or inadequate institutional mechanism: Institutional mechanisms that promote the inclusion of women in political decision-making bodies should be encouraged. Laws that enable such mechanisms to work should also be enacted. There must also be a positive mindset towards ensuring gender equality in the political space. This should involve abolishing all sociocultural mechanisms that work against women. There must be a gradual change from a male-dominated or male-based organisation where women are seen as mere appendages of the system to a more holistic institution that recognises the capability and prowess of women as being part of the decision-making body, as corroborated by Vichit-Vadakan (2008).
- Lack of political commitment: Commitment is one of the virtues needed to spring a surprise in the political space. There are so many factors that need to be surmounted, such as the perspective of the populace on women's leadership. Women should spend more time on campaigning and responsive politics that can change the current narrative about the facelift of the socioeconomic status of an average South African woman. The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979 (UN Women, 1979), and by November 2008, 185 countries had ratified it. Article 7 clearly gives women equal rights to their male counterparts to participate in political activities without any form of intimidation (Sawer, 2010).
- Financial problem: One of the major reasons for the low-level participation of women in politics is the lack of financial capability to pursue their ambition. Many women with the zeal to participate in politics are sometimes obstructed by their financial status. This has to be addressed, and policies should be put in place to ensure that political parties reduce financial impediments to women's participation in politics. Political parties can also make some positions easy for women to fill and vie for without any financial impediments.
- Inadequate political structure: Some women do not have political structures to win elections. Building a political structure involves consistently marshalling ideology in the minds of followers. Women get so busy with other important aspects of life that they may not have enough time to do it all. Society needs to accommodate the peculiarity of women, and the party should rally around women to support their ambition and election campaigns.

- Socio-cultural perceptions: Some cultural practices forbid women from taking up leadership roles as such roles are believed to be for men. It is always seen as taboo for women to participate in active politics. Such societal influence can negatively affect women's participation in any political activity. Such cultural beliefs should be abolished, and stringent measures should be taken against any group or race, depriving women of their fundamental human rights.
- A balanced life: Women have to multi-task at home and on the work front, and they will have to struggle to live a balanced life by trying to accommodate politics in the best way without failing in other areas of commitment. This may be a little bit herculean, especially if the family members are not supportive of her political life. To satisfy all the important platforms, women may have to put in more effort to achieve their political goals.

South African women and the task ahead

It is a well-known fact that women often face gender biases in legal and societal frameworks. Gerds et al.'s (2017) report suggests that women constitute a larger percentage of workers in the informal sector and only a small percentage participate in politics and formal economic activities (Agbalajobi, 2010).

There are so many tasks ahead of an average South African woman. This is because of the cultural perspective regarding the place of women in society (Isike & Uzodike, 2011). Some are of the opinion that women are supposed to remain housewives and take care of the family, while some feel women are equally capable of holding political offices and performing even better than their male counterparts. In South Africa, for women to achieve their desired goals, these are some of the tasks that must be overcome:

Integrity

South African women need to live above board in all their undertakings. This should include every endeavour of life, such as in the workplace, religious settings and societal engagements. Women must prove that they have more at stake in terms of making society better for an average South African than their male counterparts. Integrity and a sense of responsibility are good assets that will make the journey easier for women in the political space.

Capability

The capability to lead involves both mental alertness and a wealth of experience, all working together to project the greater being in women. Women must learn from past mistakes and ensure objectivity in governance principles. They must learn to imbibe the spirit of determination in their character, as affirmed by the South African-born Collette Dinnigan, who said:

Most of my life, I've had dreams and have followed them, so 'yes' means, 'Let's try!' – even if you fail, you will have learned something. Whereas, if you say 'no', it's an iron doorstep – it's not progress (Blackwell & Hobday, 2022).

Positive orientation

Women must have the “I can” spirit. Because the political space is highly saturated with a lot of hiccups, it will take a positive-minded individual to get going even when the going is rough and gloomy. According to Nicky Asher-Pedro, a journalist and activist who took part in the anti-apartheid struggle:

I think being a woman in this city, Cape Town – particularly if you're outspoken and you say what's on your mind – is so tough. Men find it a challenge. They don't expect you to be 'difficult'. Being a woman in a man's world can feel like the lowest depth of misery. In this world, women are told to keep the peace and not stand up for themselves. They're told that they need a man and that they need to change to accommodate men. They're told to love men and respect men before they love and respect themselves. And as a result, women become defined by men (Blackwell & Hobday, 2022).

A bold and positive mindset is needed from women to overcome any form of oppression in society. Visionary women with impeccable character can match up with any male contenders.

Grass root political initiative

For South African women to gain support and build a formidable structure, they need to start from the grassroots by building confidence in the rural settlers where the majority of the votes come from. This will give any woman an edge over their male counterparts. Youths and

women constitute a larger percentage of voters, and anyone coming from these constituencies is expected to attract massive votes in any election.

Future perspectives of women in South Africa

It is good to know that some women had previously contested for the position of president in countries such as Nigeria, Liberia and Kenya in the 1990s, while other African countries such as Tanzania and Guinea-Bissau also had women nominated by their parties for the presidency (Trip, 2001). All these bids did not go through as anticipated, but they were an encouragement and precedence for other women to follow (Trip, 2001).

All women and African women, in particular, have been regarded as “a powerful untapped economic force” which can be harnessed to help in solving some of the developmental problems confronting society (Idowu & Owoeye, 2019). For holistic systemic and structural changes in key components of the economy, gender inclusiveness, especially in private sector development, is germane. The Southern African Development Community, a regional body since 1997, committed all its member governments to ensure 30% involvement of women in every sector that involved decision-making by 2005 (Sawer, 2010). Most countries have since leveraged this commitment to accommodate women’s participation in politics. It is expected that henceforth, women will be actively involved in political activities as a way of contributing their quota to the socio-economic well-being of the state. This involves aggressive participation in all sectors of society. It is high time society understands that women can no longer be considered as vulnerable members of society that need sympathy but should be seen as a very important force to reckon with in terms of performance in governance. They need to be empowered in order to actualise their dreams. There is no way a woman will be empowered that will not extend to the family members and, by extension, their immediate community (Hunter, Jason & Keys, 2013; Xu, 2015). Women need an environment that allows them to contribute to public discussions related to economic, cultural, social and political affairs. South African women want to be seen as capable of leading important sectors of the economy, such as societal welfare, technology, industry and agriculture (Luckham, 2003; Akinola, 2020). They want a society that sees their empowerment as an important agenda.

More women are to be encouraged by different government policies and legislation to hold top political offices such as in the parliament, as president and ministers. We have had more than enough men ruling the country; having a feminine power directing the affairs of the country is timely. Studies have shown that having women in power makes the population of the countries happier, wealthier and safer (Sarsons & Xu, 2015; Salami, 2015). There are so many pending policies that are yet to be implemented. It is believed that if women are allowed on the corridor of power, they will do better in terms of the implementation of essential policies. Part of their agenda will be to find solutions to gender-based discrimination and see that it is truly eliminated.

Part of the future perspective of South African women is to have an economic space that will enable an average woman to transform her local engagements into lucrative businesses that can generate income and also serve as a means of creating wealth and employment for the youth and the society at large.

Conclusion

Gender equality will do more good than harm. Policies encouraging women's participation in politics at the grassroots are key to achieving female dominance in governance. This empowers them, thus giving them a place of pride globally. Women must be ready to overcome political challenges and be nominated for elective positions at the grassroots and national levels. Their role will significantly contribute meaningfully to matters pertaining to economic prosperity and political stability. For holistic systemic and structural changes in key components of the economy, gender inclusiveness, especially in private sector development, is essential. South African women have a bright future and should maximise the current momentum on the global call for women's inclusiveness in politics and other social endeavours. Women in South Africa must stand out for competence, integrity, and grassroots politics. Policies that promote gender equality must be formulated, while those that discourage the involvement of women must be abolished. Finally, the financial capabilities of women should be improved, and the political space made to favour them so that women attain full political potential in a bid to change South Africa into better governance and prosperity.

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Chapter 9: Diversity, equity, inclusivity, and transformation in the context of political leadership in South Africa

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Abstract

South Africa, as a country, is almost 30 years into democracy. Many strides and achievements have been made, particularly with regard to political leadership over the years. However, as a result of apartheid which excluded people based on their race and a generally patriarchal society that has excluded women and other marginalised genders, there continue to be contestations about exclusion and the lack of diversity and transformation, especially with regard to women's leadership in politics. The current conversation in many workplaces globally focuses on making workplaces more diverse, equal, inclusive and transformed. This conversation is dominant in South Africa and is one of the tools that seek to redress imbalances of the past in terms of leadership roles. The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996* (RSA, 1996) positions South African society as not only non-racial but also non-sexist. These are concepts that embrace inclusivity, diversity and transformation in general. However, it is particularly important that these do not merely remain concepts used for window dressing but are realised practically. Extensive research indicates that it is in politics where women continue to have minority representation, which persists even in countries with policies and quotas for gendered minorities. This chapter seeks to examine to what extent South African political parties and government leadership are diverse, equitable, inclusive and transformed, as well as explore how transformed political parties and government environments can be created in order to bridge the gender and diversity gaps in politics. This examination is particularly important within South African political parties and government leadership as these institutions are at the forefront of designing and implementing policies, especially policies that address issues of diversity, transformation and gender equality. It is essential

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to explore if their words are aligned with their actions. This chapter will achieve this by conducting a systematic review of data focusing specifically on the gendered allocation of leadership positions in political parties and, subsequently, the government in recent years.

Introduction

The Inter-Parliamentary Union's Tenth Women Speakers Conference was held in New York in August 2015. The conference theme was *Democracy: Innovating for more gender-inclusive decision-making processes and bodies*. The then South African Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Thandi Modise, delivered a speech in which she stated the following:

We want to recap that around the world, men make up 78% of parliamentarians, 93% of elected heads of state, 82% of government and 95% of corporate executives. It is time to look closer at gender representation (PCS, 2015:5).

Her statement reflected the existing inequalities in relation to women's political representation and leadership across the world. It was also a call for world leaders to not only make gender equality a priority but to ensure this through the election of more women leaders into political leadership positions.

The democratic era saw the inclusion of previously racially marginalised leaders of various anti-apartheid political parties taking up political leadership roles in the local, provincial and national government, including parliament. As the years have progressed, many women leaders and activists have fought for their right to lead within the political sphere, although with much reluctance from their male counterparts. Women have been able to encourage the adoption of a gender quota, and the benefits have been a rapid increase in women leading within various structures of government. This chapter demonstrates the extent to which the South African political leadership is diverse equitable, inclusive and transformed. This will be conducted through a systematic review of existing literature on gender equality, gender quotas, women's political leadership and decision-making within a South African context. The overarching theory in which this chapter is located is African feminism, and intersectionality theory will also be employed as this theory describes the multiple ways that women are marginalised; by gender, race, and class, among others. The

significant contribution is a provision of recommendations not only about how to ensure an increase in women's representation in political leadership but to ensure that women's representation translates to their ability to contribute to the decision-making process, especially on decisions that affect the lives of women constituents.

Conceptual clarifications

It is important to provide definitions of certain terminology and concepts that will emerge in this chapter. They will be defined and explained in relation to the question posed in this chapter, as well as how these terms and concepts should be understood. The terms that will be defined and described are diversity, equity, inclusion and transformation.

Diversity

This refers to 'difference': the ways in which people differ from each other (Joplin & Daus, 1997). Diversity can also be defined as "the range of human differences and variation, whether they are inherent (by birth) or acquired (by experience)" (WEF, 2020:4). Characteristics such as age, level of health, socio-economic class, sexual orientation, gender and gender expression, amongst others can either promote inclusion or exclusion.

Equity

Equity refers to ideas about fairness; it is about treating all persons fairly, irrespective of their identities. Within workplaces and specifically with regards to women's political leadership, equity is about enabling women with healthy working conditions as well as access to opportunities at the same scale as their male counterparts (HBR Analytic Services, 2021).

Inclusion

Inclusion can be broadly defined as the extent to which organisations and the members of the organisation are able to fully engage and connect across all differences (O'Donovan, 2017). Inclusion is essentially concerned with ensuring that, within the workplace, staff members who previously felt excluded are enabled to feel a sense of belonging. Inclusion is about social justice and equity for all (WEF, 2020).

Transformation

Transformation encompasses all three concepts of diversity, equity and inclusion (Hallinger, 2003). Transformation is the act of redressing past inequalities in ways that acknowledge diversity and are equitable and inclusive.

Theoretical framework

This chapter employs African feminism and intersectionality as theoretical frameworks. Both these theories are important as they are liberation theories; their purpose is to challenge dominant narratives of marginalisation. They also aim to privilege the knowledge and experiences of the oppressed, particularly women (Hooks, 1984). According to Thozama April, “critical feminist scholarship begins to question the exclusionary power which made it possible for women to organise as women in the first place” (April, 2012:99). From the perspective of feminist activist and scholar Simamkele Dlakavu, African feminism initially began with the experiences of the marginalised; black women who had actively challenged racism and patriarchy in their activist work (Dlakavu, 2017). However, it fell short as it only recognised marginalisation in relation to race and did not consider other intersecting oppressions that women experienced together with racial oppression (Gqola, 2011). As a result of this unacknowledged shortcoming, black women often felt excluded even as they were members of black liberation movements, simply because the movements were led by black men who were patriarchal and did not relate to black women’s experiences.

This is why Kimberlé Crenshaw’s (1989) theory of intersectionality became significant as it could encompass the multiple ways in which people, particularly black women, were marginalised. From Crenshaw’s perspective, at any given moment, black women can experience gender and racial marginalisation at the same time (Crenshaw, 1989). The significance of this theory was to highlight the ways in which black women were historically excluded “and erased from traditional antiracist policy discourse and feminist theory” (Beukes, 2020:27). Furthermore, intersectionality can be applied in understanding the various ways in which race, class, gender and sexuality can converge to produce experiences of marginalisation for black women (Collins & Chepp, 2013). In relation to this chapter on the gendered quota systems and political representation, the overarching theory is African feminism. The intersectionality theory will be adopted

to analyse the effectiveness of the implementation of quotas as well as the multidimensional categories that shape women's experiences of political leadership within the context of South Africa (Hancock, 2007; Kuperberg & Norris, 2017).

Methodology

This chapter is located within a qualitative research design and is descriptive. The data is coded through the use of thematic analysis, and the themes are generated from existing research on women's political representation, gender equality and quotas. Some of the themes that emerge are "history of women's leadership", "women's political leadership: a contested site of struggle", "gender quotas in South Africa", and "women's political and parliamentary leadership: leadership or power".

Descriptive research

Descriptive research concerns itself with understanding and exploring specific phenomena and is often considered an approach that precedes explanatory research (De Vaus, 2001). It seeks to describe experiences and realities in significant ways. Accurate and good research not only enables us to gain accurate interpretations and descriptions that shift from common methods of analysis but also assists in gaining in-depth knowledge about social issues and experiences (Halperin & Heath, 2012; De Vaus, 2001).

Limitations

Descriptive research is often not considered the most suitable for explaining certain phenomena (Halperin & Heath, 2012). However, since this chapter describes women's inclusion in political leadership and the impact of quota systems in ensuring efficient gender policies that transform women's lives, descriptive research is the best approach for the focus of this chapter.

History of women's leadership

South Africa has a long history of not recognising women's rights and gender equality, particularly in relation to women's participation in the political leadership of the country. In as much as women had marched to the Union Buildings on August 9, 1956, demanding an

end to the use of the *dompas*, before 1994, women had minimal opportunities to influence decision-making in government. As a result of socialisation in an overly patriarchal world in which leaders had generally been conceptualised as a sphere for men only, the apartheid government was male-dominated and excluded women from political and parliamentary leadership (Hassim, 2006; Myeni, 2014).

However, when South Africa transitioned to become a democratic country in 1994, women's inclusion in political leadership and decision-making gradually increased. It has been recorded that after the first democratic elections in 1994, women constituted "27.7% of Members of Parliament, placing SA seventh highest in the world on this indicator" (Myeni, 2014:59). Women who were Members of Parliament increased even more after the 1999 elections to 30% representation, and after the 2009 elections, women's representation had reached 43% (Hassim, 2006; Myeni, 2014). The increase in South African women's political and parliamentary representation was said to be attributed to the adoption of the gender quota system by the African National Congress (ANC), which ensured that "at least 30% of candidates (in the 1994–2004 elections) on their lists were women" (Myeni, 2014:60). The quota later increased in the April 2009 and May 2014 elections to 50% women's representation; this symbolised progress for not only the ANC but South Africa in its entirety.

Over the years, the South African government has set up organised networks and institutions for advancing women's rights and women's political leadership and representation; one of them being the Commission for Gender Equality which was established to ensure the balance of "the 1996 Constitution and the transition to democracy" (Myeni, 2014:67) by protecting, developing and attaining gender equality. Another of these institutions was the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Disability, which was formed in 2009 under the leadership of former president Jacob Zuma to coordinate programmes geared towards addressing gender equality (Morna et al., 2010; Myeni, 2014). Later in 2014, the Ministry of Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities in the office of the presidency was formed. However, although formed with progressive intentions, these institutions have received much critique due to the lack of consultation with women on how these institutions can better represent their interests. They have also been critiqued for functioning under what is considered "representation without power" (Myeni, 2014), indicating that political representation does not necessarily equate to having power. It is therefore important to critically examine the effectiveness

and implementation of gendered quota systems in South Africa and the extent to which the political participation of women has not simply been about window dressing but has translated to the inclusion of women in decision-making.

Women's political leadership: a contested site of struggle

Women's participation in political life, whether as the voting electorate or as candidates for political leadership, has always been in a deficit. This deficit in women's active political participation has received criticism for a number of reasons. From the perspective of democracy, fair representation of all races and genders is held in high regard; it is considered a necessary feature symbolic of democracy. Fairness, from a political perspective, is aligned to ideas of equity and inclusivity as it promotes the "idea that representatives should mirror the communities they serve" (M'Cormack-Hale, 2018:9). Essentially, this means that if women make up the majority of the general population or society, this should be reflected even when electing political leadership.

Another critique has been the claim that women's representation is descriptive. This implies that the interests and priorities of women are different to those of their male counterparts, and they should be enabled to take up political leadership roles as it is in their interest to create and implement policies that address issues that affect women and society in general. This perspective suggests that gender equality and the elements of the feminist agenda will only come to fruition when women achieve political leadership and political power (IRI, 2016; Manqele, 2018). It is generally believed that women leaders are more equipped to represent the perspectives of women in policy creation and implementation (M'Cormack-Hale, 2018). In light of this belief, various international and national bodies, through various international conventions and declarations, have made efforts to encourage and motivate gender equality broadly and women's political participation specifically. For instance, one of the declarations is the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995 (UN, 1996), which highlighted and made a commitment for all countries to work towards affirming women's political leadership and rights (M'Cormack-Hale, 2018). However, in recent years and particularly in South Africa, there have been continuous debates about whether women's political representation is substantive or descriptive; whether placing women in positions of political leadership translates to the creation and

implementation of women-friendly policies, or it is done only to meet the gender quota system.

Gender quotas in South Africa

Before the 1994 elections, the ANC was the only political party that accepted gender quotas for the inclusion of women in political leadership (Gouws, 2011). As already stated above, in the speech delivered by Modise in 2015, she further stated:

South Africa is resolute in promoting gender equality. In 1991, at its reestablishment conference, the African National Conference (ANC) agreed to a 30% quota for representation of women in all its decision-making structures. In 2007 it increased the quota to 50% (PCS, 2015:5)

This statement reiterated the strides made towards the transformation of the political climate of the country through the inclusion of women leaders with diverse skills and knowledge, not only within leadership positions of the ANC but in government and parliament. Other political parties have not been recorded to have accepted quotas, which makes the ANC lead in this regard. The percentage of women's representation has grown steadily and reached 50% (Myakayaka-Manzini, 2003; Gouws, 2011; PCS, 2015). However, a critique of the quota system and its implementation has largely been the debate between the substantive versus the descriptive representation of women. This debate emphasises the idea that the focus has been placed more on ensuring there are more women included in political leadership structures than on the impact of their inclusion; particularly in relation to decision-making, advancing gender equality, and ensuring a fair representation of the interests of women constituents (Bauer, 2010; Vetten, Makhunga & Leisegang, 2012).

Descriptive or substantive representation?

Quotas have been commended for their ability to promote more women into political leadership (Bauer, 2010; IRI, 2016). The proportional representation electoral system has been applauded as it has enabled more women to be added to political party lists, particularly in relation to local and national government elections (Jali, Suknunan & Bhana, 2021; Kanjere, 2019; Vetten, 2016). As already stated, due to the ANC's adoption of the quota system, "one-third of the public representatives elected by the ANC to the national and provincial legislatures were

women” (Myakayaka–Manzini, 2003:3) in the 1994 elections. This meant that South Africa was placed as one of the ten countries in the world that promoted women’s political leadership, particularly because “prior to 1994, South Africa had never had more than 4% representation of women in parliament” (Myakayaka–Manzini, 2003:3). However, while this is all well and good, quota systems have equally been critiqued for not investing in the transformation of existing systems of governance, but simply operating within them. Consequently, this has meant that transformation has been more descriptive than substantive.

There have been questions posed about the processes followed when electing and promoting women to political leadership, whether they are elected because they are women or because they are women committed to gender equality and advocating for gender-sensitive policies (Gouws, 2011). However, it has also been debated that such questions are irrelevant if the purpose of gender quotas is intended to only be descriptive; if they are focused only on increasing women’s inclusion in politics without substantive transformation (Celis, 2008; Gouws, 2011). On the other hand, if the purpose of gender quotas is to contribute to substantive equality and the ways to ensure affirmative action for the historically marginalised women, “there needs to be a relationship between formal and substantive equality – that an increase in the number of women leads to better outcomes regarding equality for all women” (Gouws, 2011:82). Such questions are also posed for South African women parliamentarians with regards to their contributions to substantive equality. It is debatable whether or not they have been able to effectively place women’s social, economic and political issues on the agenda, especially in the designing and implementation of policies. The question of the effectiveness and impact of policies in the lives of women constituents is an ongoing conversation.

There are certain assumptions and expectations regarding the adoption of quotas. One of them is that “quotas are a public demonstration of a society’s commitment to equality, they place women in positions of power, and this makes other women feel that they have role models, that they are not excluded, that the political process is legitimate” (Vincent, 2004:74). However, in many instances the expectations are not true as some women are not convinced that an increase in women’s political representation will necessarily mean that the women’s interests are also represented. There have also been academic studies that argue that such assumptions are not always true, as women leaders in South Africa are often expected to “contend

with strong one-party dominance and accountability to political leaders due to the PR [proportional representation] closed list party system” (Gouws, 2011:83). While the numbers of women in political leadership in all spheres of government and parliament have been steadily growing, the shortfalls are that this “does not necessarily advance women’s issues” (Vetten, Makhunga & Leisegang, 2012:8). While quotas hold symbolic significance, they do not sufficiently materialise as substantive representation.

One of the reasons for this is that women experience political, social and cultural challenges, and their leadership abilities are often disregarded by their male counterparts. However, another reason is that upon assuming political leadership, many women develop political self-interests, and as a result of their loyalty to their political parties and their political career aspirations, they choose not to compromise their political careers and their political standing within their parties. Unfortunately, these decisions result in them opting out of advocating for gender interests (Gouws, 2011; Myeni, 2014). In South Africa, women who are ANC members have been criticised for entering parliament and not being “effective in defending a feminist platform for gender issues and their accountability is towards party leaders rather than a constituency of women” (Gouws, 2011:86). As a result, they are either unable or consciously decide to abandon the feminist agenda in favour of gaining acceptance from their male colleagues. For this reason, scholars emphasise the importance of distinguishing between ‘feminist quotas’ and ‘women’s quotas’ (Gouws, 2011; Hassim, 2009) as these are not identical; it appears that it is the latter that women politicians opt for. This is indicative of the results of the descriptive representation of women. With substantive representation, on the other hand, Hassim (2009:476) argues that “the results are mixed” and further motivates this claim by stating that in the history of colonialism, coupled with the history of apartheid, “women’s struggles were merged with other struggles such as struggles against colonialism and class oppression (or racial oppression as was the case in South Africa)” (Hassim, 2009:476). Such a position failed to acknowledge the multiple and intersecting ways in which women experience oppression, not only because of ‘race’ but also because of their gender and class identities (Crenshaw, 1989).

A typical example where women political leader’s self-interests have taken precedence over advocacy for gender justice was the silence of the ANC Women’s League when former president Zuma was accused of rape (Gouws, 2011; Vetten, Makhunga & Leisegang, 2012); as well as

the former ANC Youth League president, Julius Malema, despite being known as pro-women rights, he made a contradicting hate speech that implied that the woman who had been allegedly raped, enjoyed herself since she asked for money and stayed for breakfast the next day. For an organisation with a history of leading the call for gender equality and women's inclusion in political leadership and decision-making, their silence on the issue of rape was loud. Unfortunately, their silence was to the detriment of women. On the contrary, as Gouws (2011:96) states, "it was an organisation of men who fight for women's rights, called 'Sonke Gender Justice' that took the ANC Youth League president to court on a case of hate speech against women". This clearly reflected the powers women promoted to political leadership and women's organisations like the ANC Women's League have in abandoning pertinent issues that affect women's lives. Considering that the ANC Women's League did not publicly speak out in support of the rape victim, this casts doubt on their abilities to advocate adequately and efficiently for gender equality and enforce gender-sensitive policies at a government level. This example demonstrates the deception of quotas and their inability to affect tangible political transformation (Hassim, 2009; Gouws, 2011).

Women's political and parliamentary leadership: leadership or power?

Of the thirteen strategic objectives in the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action of 1995 was "the development of measures to ensure women's equal access to, and full participation in, power structures and decision-making" (Vetten, 2016:1; UN, 1996). Countries across the world have responded and addressed these objectives, and women's election into national parliaments increased from 11.3% to 22.1%. Within the context of sub-Saharan Africa, women's parliamentary representation grew to 22.3% from 9.8% between 1995 and 2015 (Vetten, 2016; IPU, 2015). Rwanda was the sub-Saharan country with the highest number of women parliamentarians, with 63.8% of the Rwandan parliament comprising women (Vetten, 2016; IPU, 2015). South Africa has been commended for being a leading proponent of gender equality through its integration of women into political leadership and decision-making. This is particularly significant as the arena of politics in Africa has been largely male-dominated (Geisler, 2004). However, even with this progress of women parliamentarians, within the context of South Africa, it is continuously questionable whether women's leadership equates to women's power. It has been stated that "women politicians have to deal with a myriad of

constraints, within political parties, in governments and in their relationships to their constituents” (Geisler, 2000:173). Below is a case study that troubles this current debate, reflecting on the experiences of two young South African female political party leaders.

In August 2021, the Democracy Development Programme hosted its annual Women’s Month conference, which sought to unpack ideas about women’s political leadership within the context of South Africa; a dialogue to enhance women’s understanding of effective and progressive leadership in the current democracy and to gain knowledge of existing policies that speak to political, legal and societal frameworks in relation to women. Of the guest speakers, two affiliated with South African political parties were Nicole Graham (a councillor in the Democratic Alliance) and Sizophila Mkhize (spokesperson of the ANC National Youth Task Team). They both reflected on the current political climate and its impact on the leadership of women in local, provincial and national government.

Graham reflected on ideas about the representation of women in political leadership and commented on South Africa’s legislative capacity as being progressive. From her perspective, current international and regional frameworks enable the full and holistic equality of women. This ultimately results in relatively equal and fair representation of women in political leadership. She accredited this to the ANC’s quota system, which advocates for 50/50 representation. However, she also shared some concerns, particularly with regard to political powers. She shared that political power is essentially about being included in decision-making processes and influencing the outputs of those decisions.

Consequently, women’s political leadership and taking up ministerial roles did not necessarily translate to their ability to influence the decision-making process. Another concern she shared is the disparity in the voting for ward councillors and proportional representation councillors, stating that only 25% of ward councillors are women, and the allocation of proportional representation councillors positions is given to women. She cautioned, however, that as a result of being socialised in a patriarchal society, there has not been sufficient grooming and mentoring of young girls and women; many of them have not been prepared to participate in leadership debates and public speaking. Overall, her sentiments were that political representation and political power are not synonymous with the enabling of women to hold leadership positions in government or parliament and do not mean that they also contribute to decision-

making. She also alluded to the debate about women's substantive or descriptive representation, emphasising that achieving gender equality should be a priority, but the election of women into political leadership should be worthy candidates who will serve the interests of women.

Although both women are leaders in opposition political parties, Mkhize shared the same sentiments with regard to women's political participation. She emphasised that it is insufficient to elect women to political positions. She made reference to the fact that as much as she may be the national spokesperson and occupies what appears to be a powerful leadership position, she does not hold as much power on a larger scale; it is her male counterparts who hold power in the leadership positions they occupy. From her perspective, the ANC has progressive policies for addressing gender inequality, but it falls short in the implementation of those policies.

As can be seen, beyond theorising about women's political leadership and representation as abstract concepts, this case study of two female political party leaders indicates the disparities that continue to exist in women accessing leadership roles. These are two real and current experiences which indicate that in as much as progress has been made with regards to gender quotas and women's representation in government and parliamentary leadership, there are many shortcomings yet to be addressed; particularly with respect to ensuring that women's political leadership also equates to women being at the forefront of decision-making processes.

The above narratives also highlight existing contradictions between women's representation and representation of female constituents' needs and interests. The inaccessibility to power for women political leaders can be seen in the ways that many have remained silent in the face of issues that directly affect women, such as HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence (IRI, 2016), especially when the perpetrators are their comrades. This contradicts the dominant perception that as more women are elected to a position of leadership, they will also be at the forefront of advancing the interests of women in the country. Women, particularly poor women, have not been adequately represented. This lack of adequate representation has further emphasised the shortcomings of the quota system; as much as it seeks to address gender inequalities, the power to determine which women are elected for specific positions and offices is decided by men (Kanjere, 2019). When women leaders fail to contribute towards advancing the interests of women constituents, it is because

the stipulations of the quota system largely state that they account to their political parties as opposed to the citizens who vote for them (Khwela, Derera & Kubheka, 2020). Such conditions cast doubt on the effectiveness of quota systems and their usefulness in ensuring that more women leaders are in political positions, indicating not only the promotion of women's political participation but also translating to tangible progressive women-centred policies; this transformation is not descriptive but substantive. From this position, it is important to make recommendations about the ways in which this can be achieved.

Recommendations

In 2015, as the then Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Modise reaffirmed the position of the ANC with regard to gender equality by saying:

We think that promoting gender balance in all fields and expanding the role of women in decision-making is not merely a moral imperative. It is a pre-requisite for effective poverty reduction and sustainable economic growth (PCS, 2015:5).

She further said that “the responsibility to see women at the decision-making tables is important to parliaments because we have the responsibility. We are obliged to ensure that all citizens are treated equally” (PCS, 2015:5). Considering the existing critiques on the lack of poverty reduction and the lack of implementation of policies, it appears that these statements were an indication of a window dressing.

Well-designed and efficiently implemented quotas are said to have the potential to increase political participation. However, as has been indicated throughout this chapter, there are identified shortfalls in quotas and their implementation, especially with regard to descriptive and substantive representation. Hence, it is important to make recommendations to improve the system to ensure that women not only occupy political leadership roles but that increased representation results in designing and implementing gender-sensitive policies.

Structural changes

The limitations to women's inclusion in positions of political leadership vary, one of them being structural deficiencies. Historically women

were denied opportunities to access political leadership due to a lack of resources, and although women in political leadership gradually increased over time, they were still denied political influence. The patriarchal system that favoured male-headship created a hierarchy on which women fell at the bottom; this hierarchy was also implemented within the sphere of political representation (Vetten, Makhunga & Leisegang, 2012). This meant that although women were promoted into political office, they were elected as public representative councillors as opposed to ward councillors because ward councillor positions were given predominantly to men. This is primarily because ward councillors are enabled with “fully-fledged powers to carry out development activities” (Myeni, 2014:71). Consequently, although women occupy political office, they “do not have any direct say on the official development activities or distribution of resources and benefits to constituents” (Myeni, 2014:71). This has subsequently delegitimised women’s capacity to lead and influence policies (Beall, 2005; Goetz, 2003). Women are subsequently coerced into what is understood as “participatory exclusion” (Myeni, 2014); it creates an illusion of women’s political participation yet denies them power.

South Africa is a traditionally patriarchal society with a history of gender, race and class divisions. Historical apartheid laws, particularly Section 27(2) of the Code of Bantu Law (Walker, 1990), legitimised patriarchy as it considered native (black) women as minors who had no independent powers; this meant that “African women in KwaZulu-Natal were under the guidance of their natural guardian for life, if not emancipated” (Myeni, 2014:72). This natural guardian was the male, either the father or husband if married. Despite the shift to democracy in 1994, the remnants of the past prevailed with respect to behavioural norms between women and men (Myeni, 2014; Vetten, 2016). Ensuring sufficient women’s political representation would call for a dismantling of patriarchy and the ways in which people have been socialised, particularly the limiting beliefs that women have about their fear of leadership due to minimal exposure. There would also need to be areas that are addressed, such as women’s legal capacity (Myeni, 2014; Vetten, 2016; Vetten, Makhunga & Leisegang, 2012).

Women’s lives and rights continue to be hindered by culture and tradition. According to Myeni (2014:72), “these cultural norms are perpetuated and sustained by the powerful institutions of the family, traditional authorities and religion, and have significant impacts on gendered-related issues”. These norms also influence the patriarchal perception, understanding and stereotypes of women’s inclusion

and empowerment in political participation and decision-making. Existing stereotypes are that women are considered nurturers and child-bearers who are better suited to primarily take care of the well-being of their families; that “the private household domain is for women” (Myeni, 2014:72). Women are considered to lack political experience and therefore incapable of assuming political leadership. Hence, a recommendation would be to deconstruct these stereotypes and cultural norms that assume women’s incapacity, assisting both men and women in unlearning their socialised perceptions that uphold patriarchy.

Through investment in education, women can be equipped with skills, self-confidence and knowledge that will enable them to participate actively and effectively in political development within the country. However, the context of South Africa reflects high numbers of illiteracy amongst women as well as a lack of political knowledge, particularly with regard to mobilising “for policies that respond to women’s interests” (Myeni, 2014:2). Most women are reluctant to engage in politics or voting in elections due to unfulfilled promises and increased rates of corruption. Subsequently, due to lingering pervasive patriarchal ideals about women’s education, women continue to be “members of the low-skilled or unskilled labour force” (Myeni, 2014:73), largely due to insufficient investment in women’s education and capacitation. Geisler (2000:627) states, “only the empowerment of ordinary women will guarantee that all women’s voices and priorities, truly representative of South African society, are heard at the national level.” This should be one of the priorities of the South African government.

Capacity building initiatives

Women have, through socialisation from a young age, believed that they are incapable of leading or speaking. These are the outcomes of being raised in patriarchal societies. As a result, when elected to high office, they fall short compared to their male counterparts as they do not have equal levels of experience and skills within government and parliament structures. Therefore, it would be essential for political parties as well as parliamentary committees to invest in the capacity building of all women leadership, irrespective of the offices and positions they occupy. Women who are leaders within the executive branch committee of political parties should receive regular training as much as those who are ministers or are deployed in parliament. It should be ensured that the training is holistic and addresses multiple

areas essential in equipping women leaders with the necessary skills and knowledge to execute their jobs. All women should receive the same training, even if they currently lead within local government. This will serve as preparation for the future in case they are elected to parliament or parliamentary offices. However, the training will advance their knowledge even if they are not elected to these positions. This will also prevent women leaders from receiving training only once they are elected because, in those cases, they are expected to carry out their duties whilst also trying to understand the system. Budgets should ideally be set aside to actively commit to the capacity-building efforts; it should not be once-off but should be offered once a month. The training should be theoretical and practical and include governance and law, democracy, gender mainstreaming, writing, leadership, and public speaking, among others. There should be an investment in soft and hard skills as these make good and effective leaders. This would contribute to their effectiveness in their specific roles.

Accountability and fairness

According to Vetten (2016), “gender quotas are an effective way to change the way things look without necessarily changing the way things are.” Political leadership, particularly in relation to quotas, should ensure that women leaders are held accountable to their women constituents as opposed to their political parties. By so doing, this fair representation of poor and marginalised groups of society will also be encouraged. One of the ways to encourage fair representation is to ensure that an increase in women’s political leadership within government and parliament is not only descriptive but also substantive; that their promotion into political leadership positions should also enable adequate representation of the needs and interests of the marginalised in policy-making and implementation.

With regards to the debate on descriptive and substantive representation, the focus should shift from increased numbers of women in political office to a focus on the effects and impacts of those increased numbers in relation to advocating for gender equality (Vetten, 2016). There should be adequate measures in place to ensure that both women and men as parliamentarians are held accountable for their lack of reform with regard to their contributions to gender justice. If the main aim is to ensure adequate representation of women constituents through designing gender-friendly policies, this will call for a transformation in how women leaders are appointed into positions of leadership. It will mean that women are not promoted

into political leadership by virtue of being women but because of their capacity and commitment to be at the forefront of creating inclusive and transformed societies through gender-sensitive policy outcomes (Vetten, Makhunga & Leisegang, 2012; Vetten, 2016). Spaces should be created for women's voices to be heard and for women to account for their leadership or lack thereof. Lastly, the proportional representation system would have to be reassessed and readjusted to ensure that women's political presence is increased and that these women leaders are loyal to the poor and marginalised women, those who vote for them.

Revival of women's political parties

Another suggestion could be the revival of women's political parties, as there is historical evidence that shows their effectiveness in advocating for women's involvement in political leadership. Some scholars and activists suggest that women's political parties have offered the potential of gender accountability because "they both represent women as a constituency and have been elected on a policy platform reflective of women's interests" (Vetten, 2016:4). This ultimately means that if they fail to carry out the duties that they have been voted to fulfil, it is the women constituents who will hold them accountable. This differs from the quota system, which holds representatives more accountable to their political parties than their constituents. However, there is a concern that women's parties in South Africa have served an interim role rather than a long-term one: they have been utilised to advocate for women's gender representation, and once this has been achieved, they have been rendered as no longer having significance.

Conclusion

There has been substantial progress made with respect to the representation of women in parliaments across the world, although in some countries in Africa, women continue to be excluded from occupying leadership positions (UN Women, 2021; Khwela, Derera & Kubheka, 2020; Vetten, Makhunga & Leisegang, 2012). From a global perspective, women's representation in parliaments reached 25% in 2021 (Laubach & Guessoum, 2021). Within the context of South Africa, gender quotas have increased to 50% in women's political leadership, which is indicative of progress, considering that historically women had no place within political structures. This has changed gradually over the years, and it has been realised that "without active

participation and incorporation of women's perspectives at all levels, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved" (Myeni, 2014:57). This is an important perspective as it indicates an acknowledge of the importance of women's inclusion and participation in parliamentary and political decision-making bodies; in ways that are representative and sustainable. However, there are various hindrances that prevent the sufficient distribution of leadership opportunities to women. There has been ongoing critique about the inadequacy of the political representation of women to translate to women's ability to influence decisions and policy-making, particularly policies that address women's lived marginalised experiences.

This chapter attempted to describe the extent to which transformation has been realised within women's political leadership and women's access to decision-making processes. This was done through a systematic analysis of data and research conducted on women's political representation, particularly in relation to the promotion of gender equality and quotas. The intersectionality theory was adopted because of its usefulness in describing the multiple oppressions experienced by women simultaneously, especially as they navigate the political terrain. From the recommendations provided, it can be established that shortfalls exist while substantial progress has been made over the years to ensure that women occupy political and parliamentary leadership roles. Addressing these shortfalls will, through consistent efforts, ensure that women are not elected to political leadership simply by virtue of being women but because they possess the capabilities to advocate for the interests of women constituents.

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Chapter 10: Gender-sensitive policy-making processes and recommendations for political participation, political leadership and representation

Nneka Akwu¹

Abstract

The active participation of women in civic, economic, academic, and political leadership in South Africa is a fundamental right; therefore, males and females are supposed to be on equal terms at all decision-making and political representation levels. The changes in policy and organisations set up to enable South African women's rights have brought about changes in their political participation since the end of apartheid. However, most women in politics often face discrimination from men because they believe women are not competent in decision-making and should not be allowed to take up key positions and leadership posts. Poverty, illiteracy, and lack of access to opportunities are some of the factors that impede women's effectiveness in political participation, political leadership and representation. Women are under-represented in parliament and exempted from decision-making at every socio-political level. South Africa has made remarkable progress, being one of the most gender-diverse parliaments globally, ranking second in Africa and tenth globally; however, more work is needed to achieve gender equality and guarantee women's equal participation in politics and decision-making in all sectors. This chapter addresses and identifies challenges hindering women's effective participation in civic, economic, academic, and political leadership positions in South Africa and alleviates these challenges to achieve gender equity in these sectors. Also, the chapter identifies policy and standard measures required to facilitate meaningful and sustainable gender equity and equality in South Africa. The methodology involves a literature search through Google, and relevant books and journal articles were also explored. In conclusion, gender-sensitive policy-

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making processes and recommendations must be made at all levels to encourage and ensure the active participation of women in leadership positions and decision-making in South Africa.

Keywords: gender equality, political participation, policy recommendation, leadership, policy-making, women, South Africa

Introduction

Gender equality has been considered in several formal and informal deliberations before and after the 1994 elections. Studies from cognitive psychology have shown that both women and men have the same intellectual capacity (Stove, 1990; Reilly, Neumann & Andrews, 2022). A comparison survey in the developed world on the number of female graduates to males revealed a higher percentage of females (Hills, 2015:153). However, does this ratio reflect in the private and governmental bodies? If not, what is the way forward? The proposals have been that gender affairs should be a significant focus and that organisations should be tagged “women only”. However, there are some repercussions, such as eventual side-lining by other organisations (Budlender, 1997). There are fewer women than men in political leadership because of the quest for female aspirants by the grassroots and political elites; and the availability of qualified and unqualified females who are willing to take up political posts (Krook, 2010; Fulton & Dhima, 2021; McArthur & Smith, 2021). Globally women are under-represented in the political scene (Krook, 2010; Kasomo, 2012; Morley, 2014).

The pioneers of Women’s political involvement could be traced to South Africa and Uganda. In South Africa, former presidents Nelson Mandela (1918–2013) and Thabo Mbeki played vital roles in women’s empowerment (Hills, 2015:156); there was a significant increase in women’s parliamentary participation (Luckham, 2003). Globally, putting forth a feminine aspirant in politics is usually not a regular practice (Lovenduski & Norris, 1993; Krook, 2010). Different approaches to policy-making and the candidate selection system need to be revised to improve the political involvement of women; in addition, novel structures must be created, and existing internal structures changed (Lovenduski & Norris, 1993). In South Africa, an example is the proportional representation system in which number allocations are given to women (Luckham, 2003), and this system has resulted in 30% of women in parliament after the 2006 election (Sadie, 2005).

Several programmes, legislations, projects and public policies have given rise to conventions and agreements that encourage active participation of women in private and governmental sectors, among which include the South African Development Community (SADC) Gender and Development Protocol (SADC, 2008), the United Nations Economic and Social Councils, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (UN Women, 1979), the Commission on the Status of Women (UN Women, 2022), the UN Millennium Development Goals (UN, 2022), the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (AU, 2003), and the Beijing Declaration Platform for Action of 1995 (Manjoo, 2005; Hills, 2015; UN, 1996).

In South Africa, the National Policy Framework for Women Empowerment and Gender Equality and the black economic empowerment programmes significantly contributed to issues that pertain to gender equality and quotas (Hills, 2015). The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5: Gender Equality was implemented in 2015 to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” (UN, 2015:14). However, the achievement progress is considered to be slow (Eden & Wagstaff, 2021). The Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency's (SIDA) action plan for gender equality states that:

Women and men shall enjoy equal rights, obligations and opportunities in all sectors of society. For equality to be attained, sharing of both power and responsibility between men and women is required (SIDA, 1997).

However, the focus of the action plan is on the relationship between women and men and their individualistic nature (SIDA, 1997).

The review of policies is imperative, as men and women are biologically different. The biological differences inevitably imply different needs concerning time and roles amongst men and women, who also co-exist in the same spaces (Budlender, 1997). Thus, a one-suit policy is not applicable. “Pollical market” reformation is essential for a fair implementation and execution of policies.

Women's active and impactful participation in politics can be effectively achieved when they are politically prepared, especially in civil society, to receive intra- and inter-network support (Meintjes, 2003). In addition, a sustainable and dynamic programme involves effective cooperation (Meintjes, 2003).

Have women's participation in politics been on the rise? Does it imply that there will be a successful transformation with significant impacts? When will the theme of 'gender equality' be entirely realistic and independent of other factors such as political challenges? Will harnessing all resources in the private and political sectors facilitate changes?

Methodology

A critical review of published appropriate academic literature databases, including books, was conducted to examine the gender-sensitive policy-making processes and recommendations for political participation, political leadership and representation in South Africa with emphasis on women. The aid of numerous search engines such as Google Scholar, Scopus, governmental communication information portals and other online library resources were employed.

Influence of gender in policy-making

The affairs of gender equality are of paramount importance to the SADC (Vleuten & Hulse, 2014). Among the accomplishments of past presidents, Mandela and Mbeki, is the 10% increase in women's parliamentary participation from 2.7 to 27% post-1994 elections (Hills, 2015:157). South Africa's women parliamentary involvement increased from 2.7% before the 1994 elections to 27% immediately after.

In South Africa, several developments occurred post-apartheid, including gender equality in policy-making (Baden, Hasim & Meintjes, 1998). It is believed that inadequate or absence of finances, lack of education and high unemployment rate, inequality amongst women and men in job allocation, and harmful domestic and cultural practices have restricted the participation of women in politics (Hills, 2015). In 2000 the cabinet accepted South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality introduced by the Office on the Status of Women (Hills, 2015).

Women's strategic political mobilisation paved the way for gender equality and rights in policy-making (Meintjes, 2003). The Women in Development (WID) and UN conferences on women have established plans to intensify the involvement of women in policy formulation (Luckham, 2003). Although some parties create and recognise women's wings, women are still being feminised and

relegated to political power. Hence their presence in policy-making is negatively affected (Baden, Hasim & Meintjes, 1998; Selolwane, 2006).

Women in parliament are remarkably trained and supported by the political empowerment sector in South Africa (Baden, Hasim & Meintjes, 1998; Manjoo, 2005). The diversity regarding time and roles amongst women is a bottleneck for policy-makers (Budlender, 1997). Governmental programmes on gender equality, including the Department of Land Affairs, vehemently states, “there is no doubt that the Bill respects, protects, promotes and fulfils the rights of women” (DLA, 2003:2).

The thought diversity, high intuition capacity, empathetic, nurturing and humane nature of women are significant and effective policy-making attributes. Hence, women should be involved in policy-making (Hills, 2015).

Role of legislature in policy-making

According to the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996*'s Bill of Rights, gender equality is based on the rights of South African women (RSA, 1996; Budlender, 1997; Kgosimore, 2000). The national gender machinery (Geisler, Mokgope & Svanemyr, 2009) was birthed through this Bill of Rights to ensure a significant development in the status and lifestyle of women and with offshoots such as the Commission on Gender Equality, the Parliamentary Joint Monitoring Committee and the Office on the Status of Women (Hills, 2015).

In a legislative setting, the behaviour of committee members and witnesses is affected by the gender ratio of the chairs (Kahlene, 1994). Policy development is significantly appreciated, but its management is poorly understood (Baden, Hasim & Meintjes, 1998). Amongst their various functions, the legal rights and violence against women are involved in the legal rights and gender research and training (Baden, Hasim & Meintjes, 1998). Owing to the general ‘Africanised’ belief that women should be unheard of, a significant presence of women in legislative hearings usually leads to more controlling nature and verbal aggressiveness of men (Kahlene, 1994).

These factors consequently result in unfavourable participation of women in legislative policy-making (Kahlene, 1994). The passage and implementation of these policies ought to be strictly monitored (Heyman et al., 2019). The values and principles of women, in reality, politics and other programmes have been significantly restructured

by the National Policy Framework for Women Empowerment and Gender Equality legislation. This legislation has remarkably aided gender equality and quota in the governmental and private sectors (Hills, 2015).

In conclusion, alliances between prominent male and female politicians are essential for policy-making and legislation (Meintjes, 2003).

Gender sensitivity and political participation

The history of women's role in the political dispensation only began to gain recognition in the last three to four decades (Tripp, 2001; Fountaine & McGregor, 2002; Kantola & Lombardo, 2019). Before then, all activities of women were not always given deserved acknowledgement. Most of the political antecedents were either centred on white political engagement or men's achievements without any reckoning of the role of women. Women's political involvement in South Africa dates back to the period of struggle for freedom, human rights, and gender equity. According to South African History Online (SAHO, 2022), South Africans were patriarchal in their disposition, as men were regarded as a symbol of authority in society while women were seen as child-rearing and family-caring beings. Today women are confronted with many issues such as domestic violence, unemployment, poverty and gender discrimination (Olanipekun, 2013).

Men always dominate politics all over the world. The report showed that about 85.8% of men are political leaders (COE, 2022). There is always discrimination against women in politics, with minimal seats to vie for and slight chances of winning. Shortly before the end of the apartheid era, in 1990, South African women only occupied 2% of the parliament seats. A quarter of a century later, this increased to about 42%. After the apartheid era in the 1990s, there has been a gradual increase in the participation of women in politics (Tripp, 2001). This was partly due to the Constitution, which guarantees gender equality, human rights and equal treatment for all South Africans (Maluwa, 1999).

After the election in 1994, 400 representatives were elected, out of which 111 were women. Out of all the parties for that election, the African National Congress (ANC) was the only party inclined to a quota system of 30% proportional representation. This quota was jacked up to 50% during the 2009 national election (Gouws, 2022). At one point

in 1995, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was constituted by the then Minister of Justice, Dullah Omar, followed in 1996 by a different constitution that provided women's rights. This necessitated the introduction of a Commission for Gender Equality (SAHO, 2022). The first parliamentarians enacted the feminist agenda under the influence of feminist activists who, at that time, were in control of the Women's National Coalition. Thereafter, there were many challenges for the women to overcome in the political scene until 2005, when a respite came the way of women with the announcement of Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, a woman, as the deputy president of Mbeki.

Mlambo-Ngcuka, a senior politician, campaigned for women's rights. She also believes in gender equality and political progress for South African women. The participation of women in decision-making notwithstanding, a more impressive turnout is still needed being one of the constituencies with the highest population according to the 2011 census (Lehohla, 2015). Factors responsible for the low-level participation of women in politics more than men may be partly due to the demonstration of violent behaviour against women and lack of confidence and discrimination in the performance of women without recourse to their competence (Meintjes, 1996). In Southern Africa, about half of the electorate, despite being women, only manage to cede 10% of the seats in parliament and 6% in national cabinets to women. The report showed that South Africa, with 29% of women representatives in all chambers, ranks as one of the countries with the top female representation as members of parliament (IDEA, 2021). Even with this low representation, South African women have been resolute in their quest for political participation. For instance, in the 2019 national elections, 55% of the registered voters were women against 45% of men (Gouws, 2019). A wide gender gap still exists when it comes to voting decisions, as women prefer to vote based on leadership and policies rather than party affiliation. In most African countries, political parties have women's auxiliaries aimed at mobilising women at the national level to further important feminine-inclined matters. For instance, in South Africa, the ruling party, ANC, has a women's league known as the ANC Women's League, which promotes the party agenda rather than gender equality (Gouws, 2022).

However, women should be actively involved in political activities to ensure full participation in decision-making in society. According to Gita Welch, the UN Development Fund for Women's Regional Advisor for Eastern and Southern Africa, "it is very expedient for women to make themselves available through political process at different

levels such as [the] rural council, urban council or other levels of policy-making” (SARDC, 1996). This will ensure they have adequate representation that can address their lot. The lack of institutional mechanisms that project women’s participation in the areas of politics and economic matters has been identified as a significant factor. More women should be encouraged through policies and laws that advance women’s courses and enhance their involvement for all-around participation in political activities. Government should establish institutional machinery that can mobilise, promote and monitor the advancement of women through policies and societal influence. Part of the strategy is to eliminate discrimination against women in politics.

Challenges hindering women’s effective participation in political and economic sectors

Several challenges hinder the effective participation of women in both political and economic sectors. According to Gita Welch from Mozambique, the low level of involvement of women in important sectors of society such as civic, economic and political matters have to do with several factors, ranging from lack of political commitment, lack of finance, and lack of political base (SARDC, 1996). Some of these factors are being abated while some persist, such as:

- Lack of financial strength: Most South African politically inclined and economically oriented women lack the financial strength to actualise their goals. Politicians now use the money to buy and protect votes (Jensen & Justesen, 2014). In most cases, women aspirants will have to look for sponsors to finance their political activities, including electioneering campaigns. When this happens, the sponsors will always want to dictate to the elected officials. In some cases, the advice of the sponsors may be anti-masses, which the elected officials may find difficult to turn down. Many of our women lack the financial capability and may not be able to compete favourably in the political space.
- Educational influence: Some South African women are educationally disadvantaged and find it difficult to gain full support in the political space. There are minimum academic requirements for elective positions, without which the person will be put aside or replaced. Women who find themselves in this type of precarious situation feel disadvantaged. Education is also critical for a woman to be economically viable because education is needed for growth and development. Furthermore, as established in the findings

above, black South African women are more deprived educationally than their white counterparts. This has been viewed to be due to racial disparity.

- **Cultural limitations:** Some cultural beliefs limit and prevent South African women's political participation. In some regions, it is always considered an insult for a woman to compete in an election with a male counterpart. Some of these "taboos" have limited women's participation in politics. It is expected that some of these cultural beliefs must be abolished to give room for women to participate in political activities. It is said that some regions still believe that women are only needed in the home to care for and nurture husbands and children. Empowerment of women is a critical way of ensuring gender equality and women's rights. When women are economically empowered, they can compete favourably with their male counterparts in the existing market. It will also ensure they have decent work and participate meaningfully in economic decision-making at all levels of society.
- **Limited experience:** Many South African women are always sidelined due to their limited knowledge of politics and economic sectors. It, therefore, means that South African women must acquaint themselves with adequate knowledge guiding political activities in South Africa. It is a reality that most political parties would prefer more knowledgeable individuals with a better winning strategy than a political novice. Most political parties look out for experienced politicians who can help protect their political future's sanctity. There are more gains when a woman is skilful and professional, which will further narrow the gender gaps in the labour market.
- **Societal influence:** Some regions are indifferent to women's participation in politics and other vital sectors. Such hostility against women is sometimes premised on the fact that women may not have the capacity to govern well. In most instances, women are not given a level playing ground to showcase their competencies. Society needs to favour women in their current disposition by ensuring gender equality takes centre stage.

How to facilitate meaningful and sustainable gender equity and equality

After the apartheid era, women and youths were not adequately represented in the political space despite being the political driving

force due to their number and closeness to the rural settlers. Gender equity and equality have been a challenge in South Africa. Women are being deprived of heading and handling leadership positions in all sectors. Gender inequality exists at the household, community, political, civic, economic, academic, and political levels. A major factor is the lack of empowerment, as women are denied equal access to most resources, such as education and property. In politics, the most impeding factor against women's full participation includes social attitudes, economic inequities, access to education, and poor incomes. Active political involvement is associated with high expenses, and most women may not be buoyant enough to afford it. Also, the most popular belief is that politics is a male field that women should not venture into; they are believed to be homemakers whose positions are meant to be in the home.

On the other hand, the poor educational background of most South African women was found to be a significant contributory factor to their low participation in political activities. It determines to a large extent their voting behaviour, including effective networking for political activities. Despite the series of evidence showing the importance of women in decision-making in politics, several factors undermine women's political participation. These factors may be apportioned into two categories: The first is "informal factors", which include custom, culture, tradition, socialisation and gender stereotypes, also expressed as gender violence. The second category is the "formal" or more immediate factors, which are more within women's control. It includes the media, electoral systems, election management, finance and resources. However, the Commission for Gender Equality aims at monitoring, protecting, promoting, and evaluating gender equality through public education, policy development, research, legislative initiatives, effective monitoring and litigation.

Following are ways to facilitate meaningful and sustainable gender equity and equality in South Africa:

- Improved government policies and laws: Some laws can be improved based on the current reality about gender equality, or in some cases, the government can make new policies that can enhance gender equity and equality in South Africa. This will further promote social cohesion among her citizens.
- Abolishing socio-cultural practices that promote inequality: Some cultural practices promote inequality in some regions of the country, and such practices should be abolished by the government to create equal opportunity, irrespective of gender. Everybody

has the right to aspire to any position without any form of socio-cultural limitation based on gender.

- Make participation in political activities attractive to women: There are many ways politics can be made attractive to women. It all starts at the political party level. More political positions can be ceded to women. Also, financial empowerment should be encouraged for women interested in political activities. More support is needed for women to flourish in the political space.
- Start the advocacy about gender equity and equality early on in schools: For proper integration of sustainable gender equity and equality in South Africa, enough advocacy should start in the schools where all the students will be made to understand the essence of gender equality. This will shape the direction of society towards the attainment of gender equity and equality in future.
- Women empowerment: For the sake of self-dependence, women should be empowered in skill acquisition to enhance their capability. This will strengthen and enhance sustainable gender equity and equality within society.

Conclusion

In conclusion, women have not been satisfactorily represented in the realm of politics in South Africa, even nearly thirty years after the apartheid era. Women are as skilled as their male counterparts and must be part of the socio-economic discussions that affect the state. The following have been identified to encourage women's participation in politics:

- Rising to the challenge of marginalisation: More women should be bold enough to participate in political activities. This singular act will make women more relevant in society. That means women must surmount the socio-cultural hindrances favouring men over women. If women refuse to come out or are intimidated by socio-cultural beliefs, women's empowerment may not be making any headway. More non-governmental organisations and women organisations should come out to encourage and support women's participation in politics. Such organisations must be willing to train and enlighten women leaders in capacity building and management of political positions. The national machinery should also be activated to give more recognition to aspirant women politicians.

- Legislative intervention: It is excellent and satisfying to note that much has been done in legislation and that women are currently enjoying some legislative interventions and policies by the executive, coming as a respite for women. It is imperative to note that more areas are beginning to become glaringly in need of legislative attention to give women better and easier access to power through political activities. The legislature and laws should explore these areas and be enacted to make up for any deficiencies.

New policies: More policies encouraging women's participation in politics can be introduced. Though some of these policies are already in place, more are still expected, among other things, to reduce vote-buying and expensive politics. Regardless of their status, everybody should have the right to compete and be voted for without being side-lined.

- Educational influence: Most South African women should be encouraged to be educated. Grants and scholarships can be a motivation to actualise this landmark. It is well known that uneducated persons are not always valued in politics, irrespective of gender. For better advantage of women over their male counterparts, education is sacrosanct and must be encouraged at all levels.

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Concluding remarks

This book has explored the different dimensions relevant to diversity, inclusivity and transformation in political leadership pertaining to gender, race and politics in South Africa. It takes stock of the progress made towards diverse, inclusive and transformed political leadership and the current and developing barriers to inform policymakers and relevant stakeholders and provides various recommendations to be incorporated into South Africa's gender policies to help remove these obstacles for women. Arguably, some progress has been made in various aspects, for instance, in the number of women in parliament, women and minority groups' political voices on various decision-making and decision-engaging platforms.

Notwithstanding all the gains, the book acknowledges the persisting challenges towards a gendered and racially inclusive and transformed political leadership in South Africa. It highlights that these challenges exist on three levels: the social level, the organisational level and the individual level. It argues that social norms and attitudes, especially in a patriarchal society like South Africa, have a huge impact on women, youth and minority groups' ascendancy to political leadership roles, as they entrench gender stereotypes in the society. Likewise, at the organisational level, policies made with men in mind, organisational cultures, and/or workplace stereotypes impede women's successful integration into leadership structures. On an individual level, it accounts that women often suffer from the feeling of incompetence for a specific job or position, especially when it is a shared space with men. It further acknowledges that these three categories of barriers do not work in isolation but rather tend to reinforce each other. For instance, structural, informal and formal barriers on social and organisational levels often create barriers on an individual level. The negative gender stereotypes permeate the social, organisational and individual level barriers to women, youth and minority groups taking up leadership roles. As Mestry & Schmidt (2011) notes, people tend to remember instances where stereotypes are confirmed rather than when they are challenged. Substantive gender and race inequality persist at a broad structural societal leadership level and in instances of direct discrimination regularly encountered in the political leadership arena. Prominent indications include the continued, not only existence but the escalation of gender-based violence attacks. Women of colour, especially black women, and gender minorities have continued to be

prejudiced by cultural, structural and systemic inequalities relating to sexual divisions of labour and power within the society and the inaccessibility of income streams, land and other resources and social services such as education. Conclusively, the lack of adequate progress suggests wilful indifference entertained by the government and other actors often avoid implementing interventions perceived to question culture and the status quo of social and political platforms pertinent to gender and race inequalities in South Africa. Empowering women and youth and promoting gender and race equality, including providing equal access to education and opportunities for employment is essential to accelerate sustainable development.

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