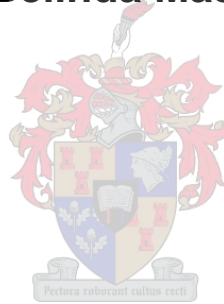


# **LIMITS OF CITIZENSHIP: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ZIMBABWEAN AND SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN'S CITIZENSHIP AGENCY**

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University

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## **Declaration**

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## Abstract

Developmental initiatives in Sub-Saharan Africa emphasise participatory citizenship as the means through which poor women can assert and claim their citizenship rights. Although citizenship and agency are crucial elements in this narrative, little is known about the citizenship process for African women. Furthermore, there is no analytic framework to guide an empirical analysis of agency. This dissertation aims to address these gaps by examining how marginalised Black African women understand themselves as citizens, navigate their structural barriers and develop strategies to negotiate their membership in and relationship with their states.

This dissertation uses a deviant case analysis of women living in Zimbabwean and South African townships, who identify as members of the isiNdebele and isiZulu ethnic groups respectively, to Western theories of agency. Data was collected through the use of in-depth interviews and analysed using content and relational analysis. Results indicate that the women use a range of everyday resistance strategies to negotiate their relationship with their states. These strategies are mapped onto an innovative analytic framework that synthesizes feminist, androcentric and subaltern theories of citizenship agency, in order to highlight the non-conventional ways that marginalised African women exercise their agency as citizens.

Interestingly, both sets of women emphasise the obligation to vote, work and support oneself without recourse to the state, rather than a reciprocal and participatory relationship. The internalisation of citizenship as an obligation without a corollary emphasis on rights and participation is problematic given that both governments suffer from legitimacy, corruption and governance issues. The main policy implication arising from the study is that there is a need for civic education in schools as well as a feature of women's empowerment and community development programs so that marginalised African women are encouraged to expand their participatory skills to collectively challenge, contest and improve the substance of existing citizenship rights.

## Opsomming

Ontwikkelinginisiatiewe in Afrika beklemtoon deelnemende burgerskap as 'n manier hoe arm vroue hul regte kan eis. Hoewel burgerskap en die agentskap (agency) belangrik in hierdie verhaal is, weet ons baie min oor hoe swart vroue burgerskap ervaar. Verder is daar geen analitiese raamwerk om 'n empiriese ontleding van hul agentskap te lei nie. Die proefskrif spreek hierdie gapings aan deur 'n ondersoek oor hoe arm swart vroue in Afrika hulself as burgers verstaan, hoe hul strukturele hindernisse navigeer en strategieë ontwikkel om hul lidmaatskap van en verhouding tot die staat te onderhandel.

Hierdie proefskrif gebruik 'n vergelykende gevallestudie benadering wat vroue wat in Zimbabwe en Suid-Afrika in "townships" woon en wat hulself as isiNdebele en isiZulu identifiseer na te vors. Data is verkry deur die gebruik van in-diepte onderhoude, inhouds- en verwantskapsanalise. Die resultate dui aan dat vroue 'n reeks strategieë gebruik vir "daaglikse weerstand" om hul verhouding met die staat te onderhandel. Hierdie strategieë word gekarteer op die innoverende analitiese raamwerk, wat 'n sintese is van feministiese, androsentriese en subalterne teorieë van burgerskap, om sodoende die nie-konvensionele maniere waarop swart vroue hul agentskap uitoefen te beklemtoon.

Beide groepe vroue beklemtoon die verpligting om te stem, werk en om jouself te onderhou sonder hulp van die staat, eerder as om 'n wederkerige en deelnemende verhouding met die staat te beoefen. Die internalisering van burgerskap as 'n verpligting sonder die wederkerige nadruk op regte en deelname is problematies. Dit kan gekoppel word aan die feit dat albei regerings gebuk gaan onder legitimiteitsprobleme, korrupsie en probleme rondom regeerkunde, wat vrae genereer oor hoe om hierdie regerings verantwoordbaar te hou. Die hoof beleidsimplikasie van hierdie studie is die daarstelling van burgerlike onderwys in skole, sowel as vroue se bemagtiging in ontwikkelingsprogramme. Dit sal bydra daartoe dat gemarginaliseerde swart vroue aangemoedig word om hul vaardighede rondom deelname te ontwikkel en die substansie van hul bestaande burgerskap kollektief uit te daag en te verbeter.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1. Introduction

This dissertation contributes to the theoretical and methodological development of citizenship agency as well as the small body of literature on women's participation in township community politics. Based on the literature reviewed throughout this project, little is known about the participation, agency and citizenship of African women. This dissertation aims to address this theoretical gap by examining how poor Black African women understand themselves as citizens, navigate their structural barriers and develop strategies to negotiate their membership in and relationship with their states. It is designed as an exploratory study to present an analytic framework for analysing citizenship agency, defined as empirically observable actions undertaken to claim citizenship rights or improve the substance of existing ones.

This framework is a synthesis of existing studies of citizenship and agency. It takes account of Black African women's self-determined motivations, interests, values and their self-perceived capability to act as citizens. In so doing, the framework portrays more accurate accounts of their lived realities. It also acknowledges the transformative potential of their collective everyday resistance strategies, without glamorising their struggles, or overstating the extent that resistance is possible, given their particular contexts.

Sections 2 and 3 describe the background and research context, namely the research problem, rationale, significance and research questions guiding the study. Section 4 summarizes the research methods and conceptual definitions used, while the last section presents an overview of the remaining chapters in the thesis.

### 2. Background

A good citizen in modern liberal-democratic states is normatively constructed as a White, heterosexual, gainfully employed male, who pays taxes and actively participates in democratic government processes. His agency is crucial to his citizenship status because he does not passively accept his civil and political rights,

but actively engages with political institutions in order to contest, expand and shape them (Lister, 1997). Black African women are excluded from this construction in five main ways, namely, identity, employment, basic resources, normative values and participation.

Firstly, with respect to identity, feminists criticise hegemonic constructions of citizenship on the basis of gender, race and developing country status. They argue that there are inherent structural barriers and constraints that perpetuate women's exclusion (Jones, 1990, Kymlicka and Norman, 1994, McEwan, 2005, Voet and Voet, 1998, Young, 1989). They also take issue with the implicit assumptions about women in these constructions, arguing that the illusion of public equality is based on women's subordination and inequality in the private sphere. That is, women safeguard the family and home to enable men to fully participate in both the public sphere and capitalist marketplace (Fraser and Gordon, 1994, Silbergleid, 1997, Pateman, 1988).

Additionally, socialist feminists highlight that racism, nationality, male dominance, capital accumulation and class are inextricably linked and all have an enduring influence on women's identities and experiences (Dietz, 2003, Eisenstein, 1994, Jaggar, 1983, Lister, 1997, Young, 1989, Yuval-Davis, 1997b). Although race is no longer the sole determinant of economic and cultural privilege in Africa, value systems inherited under colonialism have been institutionalised and gender inequalities entrenched (Mamdani, 1996). As a result, multiple layers of oppression and varying levels of disadvantage mean that citizenship rights have failed to meet the needs of some groups, particularly marginalised Black African women.

The postmodern feminist desire to deconstruct underlying theoretical assumptions and consider competing perspectives has created a space for 'the voices of displaced, marginalised, exploited and oppressed black people' (Hooks, 1984). It has also highlighted the need to explore the multiple truths, roles and realities that characterize non-Western women's lives without comparing them to Western women (Lazreg, 1988, Mohanty et al., 1991, Parpart, 1993). Although some progress has been made, discursive representations of African women still largely situate them as a homogenous, voiceless and powerless group that is oppressed by tradition,

patriarchy and postcolonial politics (Andersen, 2005, Bayat, 1997, Cornwall et al., 2007, Mohanty et al., 1991).

Secondly, Black African women are excluded from the dominant construction of citizenship on the basis of employment. Feminists problematize the fact that a good citizen's ability to access social rights is largely dependent on continuous full-time employment. There is a widely acknowledged link between social rights and agency, where conferring social rights to disadvantaged groups encourages them to exercise their civil and political rights. Withholding or violating any of these rights marginalises individuals and prevents them from participating in society as full and equal members (Doyal and Gough, 1991, Kymlicka and Norman, 1994, Lister, 2001, Macedo, 1990).

This criticism is particularly significant in the sub-Saharan African context because the vast majority of Black African women do not work in the formal sector. They are not protected by labour laws and their jobs are characterised by odd working hours, low wages and job insecurity. Coverage by statutory social security schemes is very limited in sub-Saharan Africa and is largely confined to workers in the formal economy. As a result, women in the informal sector have little to no access to health insurance, pensions or life insurance. The vast majority (84%) of female non-agricultural workers in Africa are employed in the informal sector (ILO, 2009). So the obligation to work places a disproportionate burden on them because it does not confer work opportunities that facilitate access to social rights. African women still do the bulk of reproductive and care work while men are supposed to do the productive work.

Thirdly, according to the prevailing definitions of citizenship full and equal membership in a polity is expressed in terms of rights or resources (Kymlicka and Norman, 1994, Mouffe, 1992, Nelson, 1984). For instance, theories influenced by liberalism argue that civil, political and social rights are the means by which the state guarantees freedom and equality for all sovereign members of the community (Marshall, 1950, Rawls, 1971). Theories influenced by civic republican citizenship argue that basic resources, rather than rights, are important for enabling individuals to fulfil their obligation to participate in the community (Isin and Wood, 1999, Oldfield, 1995).



In fact, citizenship rights and basic resources are tenuous across much of the continent. One of the countries chosen for case study is Zimbabwe, a country with an authoritarian regime that has committed gross human rights violations against its citizens and routinely violates civil and political liberties. The country has gone through more than a decade of economic collapse and de-development, with a virtual collapse of the health and education sectors, so social rights are also precarious.

The other country chosen is South Africa, which has a liberal-democratic regime that emphasizes civil, political and socio-economic rights in its constitution. However, South Africa exhibits similar structural constraints seen in most developing regions, particularly in Africa. Robust economic growth has failed to translate into job creation and broad-based human development that is needed to reduce poverty (Kabeer, 2012, UNDESA, 2014). Despite progress in African women's participation in economic activities, inequalities continue to grow with women and girls becoming poorer and more vulnerable than before (Kanengoni, 2014, Mutume, 2005). In other words, there are substantial differences between African women's substantive rights and resources, and the basic conditions outlined in hegemonic citizenship theories.

Fourthly, concepts such as autonomy, choice, self-government, independence and individualism that are implicit in contemporary understandings of citizenship are heavily based on political liberalism discourses (Berlin, 1969, Dietz, 1987, Durish, 2002, Frank, 2006, Jaggar, 1983, Lépinard, 2011). Feminism is attempting to move towards relational and minimalist definitions of autonomy that refer to an individual's interdependent relations with her environment, culture, institutions, family and community (Brah, 1996, Nedelsky, 1989 quoted in Lepinard, 2011, Lister, 1997). However, Black African women are still largely excluded from these relational definitions because the underlying liberal-democratic ideals of individualism and self-government stand in stark contrast to the African ethos of community and duty (Ikuenobe, 2006). The majority of African cultures place a strong emphasis on personal obligation to the community and according to Ikuenobe (2006) 'rational' African individuals are conceptualised as those who seek guidance from their elders in order to develop their critical thinking and decision making ability.

And finally, citizenship participation is increasingly promoted as a right that enables a citizen to claim rights and exercise their agency (Ferguson and Britain, 1999, Lister, 1998, Rawls, 1971). The reality of African politics is that incumbent governments often win elections and use various tactics to ensure they remain in power.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, postcolonial African societies contain three types of socio-political structures, namely: indigenous pre-colonial institutions transformed through their relationship with European imperialism; structures migrated from Europe that have taken a unique form in Africa; and emergent structures that are neither indigenous nor inherited but have grown out of the particularities of colonial and post-colonial life (Ekeh, 1983). So the central assumption that African governments would feel pressured to respond, or that they can be held accountable to the needs and priorities of marginalised women, in a similar way to Western governments is flawed.

Women's citizenship in post-colonial Africa thus falls far short of being the enabling environment that Lister (1997) argues is necessary for all citizens to participate, break the chains of victimhood, and emerge as full and active citizens.

### 3. Problem statement, rationale and significance

Developmental initiatives on the African continent emphasise participatory citizenship as the means through which people assert and claim their citizenship rights. The argument is that poor people's participation in community projects will increase their influence over decisions that affect their well-being; and that their participation in decentralised local governance structures will increase government's responsiveness to their needs and priorities (Cornwall et al., 2007, Schneider, 1999).

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<sup>1</sup> In 2009 President Mamadou Tandja of Niger was the 12th African President in ten years to force a constitutional amendment in order to remain in power. Paul Biya of Cameroon and Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria successfully extended their terms. Prior to that, Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, Zine el Abidine Ben of Yunisia, Idriss Deby in Chad, Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso, Abdou Diouf in Senegal, Sam Nujoma in Namibia, the late Lansana Conte of Guinea, the late Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo, and the late Omar Bongo of Gabon all amended their constitutions to remain in power. Several Presidents have tried and failed to prolong their terms: Bakili Muluzi of Malawi, Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and Frederick Chiluba of Zambia. They have all used several tactics such as dissolving parliaments or constitutional courts, assuming emergency powers to rule by decree and appoint more 'compliant' politicians in top posts. Implementing checks and balances to curb Presidential power, promoting free and fair elections, an independent civil society and media are crucial for ensuring African leaders adhere to their Presidential term limits.

However, little is known about the citizenship process for African women. A review of the feminist literature shows that they are excluded from dominant constructions of citizenship on the basis of gender, race, class, patriarchy and cultural context. According to Mohanty (1991), few studies focus on poor Black African women as agents, who 'make choices, have a critical perspective of their own situations and think and organize collectively against their oppressors.'

In addition, the underlying theoretical assumptions that civil and political rights are uniform, or that political institutions will respond and be held accountable to their citizen's articulation of rights, are problematic in the African context; given the pervasiveness of authoritarianism and de-facto one-party states on the continent. It is therefore important to analyse the relationship between poor Black African women and their states in order to critically assess the feasibility of current development discourses. Such an exercise would enable policy makers to determine how best to open spaces of political participation and better engage with subaltern women for development initiatives.

The main challenge is how to make visible their agency as citizens given their structural constraints, as well as their self-determined goals and interests. Although agency is widely acknowledged as a crucial element if one is to act as a citizen, there is as yet no analytic framework to guide an empirical analysis of agency.

This research therefore addresses three main gaps in the literature. First, it will document the voices, experiences and resistance strategies of a demographic that is underrepresented in the literature. Secondly, it contributes to the small body of literature on participation in township community politics, which currently focuses on formal electoral participation, thereby erasing the significance of women's informal political participation. And finally, this dissertation is designed as an exploratory study to present an innovative framework for an empirical application of agency. It thus contributes to the methodological development of citizenship agency and makes an important step towards understanding alternative forms of struggle, and acknowledging the transformative potential of marginalised African women's daily resistance strategies.

### 3.1. Research questions

The main question asked was how do poor Black African women living in townships exercise their agency as citizens? Answering this question involved asking three related questions: first, how do these women understand their citizenship? Secondly, how do they understand and negotiate their structural impediments. And thirdly, how do they participate as citizens? This project thus aimed to make visible marginalised Black African women's participatory citizenship, without overstating the extent to which resistance or agency is possible in certain structural contexts, and without losing sight of the structural inequalities that undermine their citizenship rights.

There were four inter-related objectives. The first was to examine the factors influencing citizenship and agency for marginalised African women. The second objective built on the first by exploring and identifying alternative and non-conventional ways that these women exercise their agency as citizens. The third objective was to gather and critically analyse data on their experiences and perceptions, in order to develop an analytic framework of citizenship agency. The information gathered in the first three phases was used to formulate policy recommendations and suggestions for further study, thereby reaching the final objective.

#### 4. Research methods

This dissertation used an interpretive paradigm, combining quantitative methods such as the design and application of a survey, with qualitative techniques such as interviews. The study was concerned with how marginalised women in two countries actively participate in the citizenship process, with data collected over a short period of time. It was qualitative, explorative, descriptive and contextual in nature. In particular, it was designed as a cross-national, cross-sectional, collective, deviant case study where countries were the context of study.

The two countries chosen, Zimbabwe and South Africa have different political conditions. South Africa is a liberal-democratic regime that emphasizes civil, political and socio-economic rights in its constitution, while Zimbabwe is constitutionally a republic, but with a militarized authoritarian state that uses coercion and violence to repress political and civil liberties and monopolise power. So a collective case study

design was helpful for understanding the influence of context such as political culture in each country, on the phenomenon being studied, namely, poor Black women's citizenship agency. A deviant case method highlights ways that African women's agency does not fit Western theories, in order to contribute to the methodological development and refinement of feminist theories of agency.

#### 4.1. Data collection

Data was collected using in-depth interviews, which aimed to understand both the content and context of responses (Babbie and Mouton, 1998, Hesse-Biber, 2012). A fairly structured questionnaire, consisting of a series of closed and open-ended questions, was administered to each respondent. The first two sections of the questionnaire asked closed-ended questions in order to capture consistent information on socio-demographic characteristics, household decision making and domestic violence from each participant. The next two sections asked open-ended question in order to gain insight about the respondent's perceptions, aspirations and beliefs.

#### 4.2. Sampling

The study focused on townships because women's developmental needs are more apparent there, due to a general shortage of resources. Community based organizations, churches and non-governmental organizations are also more visible and more active at the grass-roots level in townships, relative to wealthier neighbourhoods. Two research assistants were hired, one in each country. The choice of townships for fieldwork was influenced by where each research assistant lived, namely, Nketa Township in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, and KwaMashu Township in Durban, South Africa. A convenient random sampling technique was used, where the interviewers visited every second house.

Fieldwork in Zimbabwe occurred between November 2012 and January 2013. Seventy-five homes were visited to obtain twenty questionnaires (26% response rate). The majority of Ndebele respondents were interviewed during normal business hours, that is, Monday to Friday between 9am and 4pm. South African fieldwork occurred between September and November 2013. Fifty-three homes were visited to

generate seventeen respondents in the allocated time (32% response rate). All Zulu respondents were interviewed during weekends and public holidays; between 9am and 4pm. Differences in interview times may result in a larger proportion of unemployed respondents in the Zimbabwean sample.

#### 4.3. Target population

The main challenge facing this project is that there are multiple layers of oppression and varying levels of disadvantage among Black African women. A comparative analysis of two groups of women with many shared characteristics but living under different political environments, may thus allow for a more nuanced understanding of the underlying processes influencing marginalised African women's citizenship agency. The isiNdebele ethnic group in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe and the Zulu ethnic group in Durban, South Africa present a unique opportunity for such a case study. This is because the isiNdebele are an off-shoot of the Zulu empire, breaking away almost two hundred years ago during the Mfecane<sup>2</sup> or "Time of Calamity. The choice of ethnic groups is influenced by fact that the researcher is a cultural insider in the isiNdebele group and has lived on and off in South Africa for the last fifteen years. The cultural beliefs, normative values and ways of understanding the world are interchangeable between the two groups, while the language remains similar.

Four qualifiers were added for research participants. First, they must have identified as Black African and as women, biologically, as well as with respect to their gender identity.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, only those individuals who were eighteen years or older were eligible to participate, as the study focused on individuals who had the legal capacity to vote. Thirdly, respondents in South Africa had to be native-born South African citizens and those in Zimbabwe had to be native-born Zimbabwean citizens; who had lived in their country of citizenship continuously, from birth until the age of 18.

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<sup>2</sup> This was a period of sustained warfare during the reign of king Shaka of the Zulu empire, when catastrophic clashes led to the widespread movement of peoples.

<sup>3</sup> These questions were asked in private and off the record. Sexuality was not included as a criterion because homosexuality is a sensitive issue that is prosecutable in Zimbabwean courts and there are high levels of violence against lesbians in South African townships, in spite of the legal protections they enjoy under the country's constitution.

And finally, respondents in KwaMashu Township had to self-identify as members of the Zulu group, while those in Nketa Township had to identify as members of the isiNdebele ethnic group. Although other household members were present during the interview, only one household member per house was interviewed, to allow for as much diversity as possible in the relatively small sample.

#### 4.4. Data analysis

Content analysis was used to evaluate data from the in-depth interviews. The structured sections of the questionnaire were coded beforehand and a pre-defined set of relevant concepts were set, to guide coding for the open-ended part of the interview. The coding process was flexible and additional concepts that were indicative of the research questions were added as needed. Responses were classified manually in two phases. First, conceptual analysis was used to examine key-word presence with respect to the research question. Relational analysis was then used to identify themes and sub-themes from the interviews. The unit of analysis was the individual as individual experiences were analysed to describe the collective experiences of each group.

#### 4.5. Conceptual definitions

Citizenship agency is conceptualised as empirically observable actions that claim citizenship rights or improve the substance of existing ones. This was an exploratory study and as such focused on the process itself, that is, actions that result in intentional as well as unintentional consequences on an individual's citizenship rights. The term African women will be used throughout this dissertation to refer to the racial grouping of Black African women. Other race groupings in each country will be referred to as White, Indian, Mixed or East Asian Africans.

Subaltern is used to refer to 'the general attribute of subordination' in groups that are socially, politically or culturally outside hegemonic power structures (Guha, 2000, Gramsci 1929 quoted in Morton, 2007). Hegemonic structures are the material resources, intersubjective beliefs and institutions that work to reinforce the dominant order (Cox, 1983). Zulu and Ndebele women's subaltern subordination is expressed in terms of class and gender as well as in two others ways. First, they were excluded

from colonialist narratives and are now excluded from nationalist ones. Elite politicians wield discursive power that allows them to speak for 'the masses', so that these women's voices, concerns and interests rarely 'appear without the thought of the elite' (Spivak, 1987). Secondly, subaltern women continue to be treated as subjects of development and as subordinates. Their voices, perceptions and ideas are not included in problem identification or policy formulation, at either the international or national level (Lawson, 2007). In other words, the term subaltern is not used to suggest that Ndebele and Zulu women are rendered without agency by virtue of their social status, but that their agency is invisible due to systematic exclusion from society's established structures for representation.

Marginalisation refers more specifically to their social exclusion, that is, the process through which groups of people systematically face multiple forms of economic, social, political and cultural disadvantage, which in turn influences their ability to access various rights, opportunities and resources that are fundamental to social integration and wellbeing (Hills et al., 2002, Silver, 1994). Township women's marginalisation is often connected to their social class, educational attainment, poverty and geographical location. For instance, compared to wealthier groups in their respective countries, women living in townships are often unable to access similar quality education, health care, housing, sanitation, community safety, and employment opportunities etcetera.

References to "Western feminism" and "African feminism" are not meant to imply that either is a monolith. There are many different branches of feminist theories and movements in Western, as well as in African feminism. These terms are used to refer to the general points of departure between (usually White) feminists in Western countries and their (usually Black) African counterparts, whose feminism is rooted in traditional African cultural models; and whose strategies are centred on African women's more immediate struggle to secure basic human needs for daily survival.

## 5. Contribution

This dissertation makes three main contributions. First, it adds the perceptions and experiences of subaltern African women to debates about citizenship and agency. It finds that both sets of women identify with more communitarian definitions of



citizenship, with their group memberships and identities featuring more strongly in their stories. The dominant orientation in Zimbabwe is membership below the state or local/urban citizenship, while Zulu women's dominant political orientation is towards the state with a categorical rejection of the local. When questioned further on the various dimensions of citizenship, both sets of women emphasise the obligation to vote, work and support oneself without recourse to the state, rather than a reciprocal and participatory relationship between themselves and the state. This internalisation of citizenship as an obligation without a corollary emphasis on citizenship rights and participation is problematic as it may legitimise state inaction in the African context.

Secondly, this dissertation contributes to the small body of literature on women's participation in township community politics. It finds that homeownership plays an important role with respect to facilitating entry into formal political spaces at the local level. And that subaltern women's cultural ethos of 'Ubuntu' plays a role in encouraging informal political participation among the women interviewed. Given that the public (masculine) sphere of politics in most African countries is often volatile and corrupt, an approach of 'feminising' the public sphere by making it more relevant to the women's interests, motivations, spaces and spheres of autonomy, and of improving community cohesion or Ubuntu, may encourage African women to engage with their institutions.

Thirdly, the dissertation contributes to the theoretical and methodological development of citizenship agency. It is designed as an exploratory study to present an analytic framework for analysing citizenship agency. This framework synthesizes androcentric, subaltern and feminist theories of citizenship and agency. The study identifies a number of everyday resistance strategies used by Ndebele and Zulu women, which are mapped onto the framework for a comparative analysis. The areas of difference between the two sets of women are ascribed to different political and patriarchal environments, while overlapping regions indicate areas influenced by the structural constraints that limit the range of options available to both sets of women.

The main policy implication arising from the study is that there is a need for civic education as a regular part of the curriculum in schools, as well as a feature of

women's empowerment and community development programs. Although civics can be learned through action, education plays an important role in building civic knowledge, teaching civic skills and encouraging a critical or civic disposition about the reciprocal nature of citizenship rights and obligations.

## 6. Thesis outline

This introductory chapter provides an overview of background information on African women's citizenship and agency. The rationale and significance of this study are discussed and the overall research questions and objectives guiding this study are identified. The chapter also presents a brief outline of the research methods and conceptual definitions that are central to this study.

Chapter 2 presents a literature review that is focused on providing insight into feminist theories of citizenship and agency for non-Western women. It finds that feminist studies of citizenship and agency have undergone a significant transformation in an effort to move away from victim feminism, especially with respect to the discursive representations of non-Western women. However, concepts such as autonomy are based on political liberalism discourses and are contested in collectivist cultures. Additionally, feminism fails to fully theorize the realm of informal political activity. Such an exercise is important given that the lives of marginalised African women are often heavily intertwined with the everyday politics of informality and street politics.

Chapter 3 focuses on the research methods that will be used to gather empirical data. It discusses the research strategy, data collection techniques, ethical considerations and the implications of using a research team of cultural insiders. The chapter also summarizes androcentric definitions of human agency and social structures in order to develop a conceptual framework that will guide the fieldwork.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the fieldwork in Zimbabwe and Chapter 5 presents the results of the fieldwork in South Africa. Chapter 6 synthesises the empirical findings with the findings from the literature review and presents an analytic framework that makes visible marginalised women's citizenship agency. The foremost outcome is that the women's voices are added to the abstract debates

about citizenship so that the dissertation provides empirical support for expanding and refining theories of agency in citizenship.

The final chapter revisits the aims and objectives of the thesis, in order to ensure that they have been met. Conclusions are reached, recommendations made based on these findings, and the main contribution of the research project is summarized.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 1. Introduction

There are two main images of African women in gender studies, women as heroines and women as victims. These contradictory images have been inextricably linked to Western feminism's changing political perspectives and interests (Cornwall et al., 2007). The heroine narrative promoted by activists and scholars in the 1960s depicts African women as strong and resourceful 'African queens' in positions of social, political and cultural authority (Paulme, 1963). Early feminists thus campaigned for women's rights using African women in authority as living examples of more women-empowering regimes.

In contrast, the victim narrative situates African women as a homogenous voiceless and powerless group that is oppressed by tradition, patriarchy and postcolonial politics (Andersen, 2005, Bayat, 1997, Cornwall et al., 2007, Mohanty et al., 1991). The discursive shift started in the 1970s, coinciding with feminist debates over women's reproductive rights, the public-private divide and women's labour market potential. Compared to discursive self-representations of European women, African women, who had not attained comparable citizenship rights, were presented as having limited freedom to act independently and exercise their agency.

Accordingly, feminist studies of citizenship are concerned with moving away from victim feminism, in order to portray more accurate accounts of non-Western women's lived realities. This means recognising that African women are neither heroines nor victims, but that they are agents who make choices, reflect critically about their situations, struggle over and devise strategies to negotiate their oppression (Lister, 1997, McNay, 2000, Mohanty et al., 1991).

Most feminists agree that moving beyond victim feminism in citizenship studies necessitates studying agency, structural constraints and the relationship between the two (Andersen, 2005, Lister, 1997, Wharton, 1991). Such an approach would make visible marginalised women's agency without overstating the extent to which resistance is possible in certain structural contexts, and without losing sight of the

structural inequalities that undermine citizenship rights. This chapter provides an overview of feminism's move towards incorporating non-Western women's agency.

## 2. Theories of citizenship

Citizenship is a highly contested concept that describes the relationship between an individual, the state and society. Contemporary citizenship theories unite liberal, communitarian and civic republican strands of thought, to describe citizenship as a set of rights and a series of obligations to a community of members. Theories that emphasise citizenship as a set of rights are influenced by liberalism and argue that civil, political and social rights are the means by which the state guarantees freedom and equality for all sovereign members of the community. Although an emphasis is placed on achieving and protecting citizenship rights, these theories also argue that citizenship carries inherent responsibilities and duties, such as obeying the law and voting (Castles and Davidson, 2000, Marshall, 1950). Liberal-democratic ideas of rationality, autonomy and abstract individualism are central to liberal constructions of citizenship. For instance, Marshall (1950) and Rawls (1971) argue that granting this minimum set of rights will improve social cohesion and reduce economic and political inequalities. Citizens will consequently act rationally to advance their own interests, and the state's role will be to protect an individual's capacity and ability to pursue these interests (Oldfield, 1990, Smit 1998). But by arguing that only individual human beings can be considered as 'self-originating sources of valid claims', Rawls (1971) essentially argues for a concept of autonomy where individuals are abstract from their socio-cultural contexts, which are not seen to play a role in shaping rational choices and actions.

Communitarian citizenship theorists such as Sandel (1998) and Taylor (1985) rightly critique this notion of self-autonomous, abstract individuals and argue that cultures, ethnicity and group membership are fundamental elements shaping action in both the private and public realm. Collective identity and group representation in the public sphere emerge as paramount mechanisms through which groups can bargain, negotiate and claim their rights (Sandel, 1998, Taylor, 1985). Communitarians thus emphasise an individual's social relations and interaction with social structures, and citizenship is seen to develop through civic virtues such as respect for others and public service (Isin and Wood, 1999, Smith 1998).

Civic republican citizenship thought aims to combine liberal and communitarian thought by arguing that basic resources, rather than rights, are important for enabling individuals to fulfil their obligation to participate in the community (Isin and Wood, 1999, Oldfield, 1995). The essence of citizenship is seen to be active participation in public life. All citizens must thus participate in the political, economic and social spheres of society, in order to reach their full potential and empower themselves against the environment in which they are born. Although there is a focus on civic duties, the main emphasis in liberal-democratic states is on the citizen's obligation to work and support him or herself without recourse to welfare (Castles and Davidson, 2000, Gouws, 2008, Lister, 2001, Kymlicka and Norman, 1994).

Additionally, theorists such as Habermas (1998) and Miller (1988, 1995) argue that the promotion of a common civic identity can unite diverse groups of citizens to share a common public culture, as long as this civic identity is stronger than separate group identities. Group representatives thus advocate for particular interests but maintain an overriding concern on 'fairness between different sections and the pursuit of common ends.' In other words, deliberative forms of democracy, rather than the liberal emphasis on representative political systems, underlie much of civic republican thought (Habermas, 1998, Kymlicka and Norman, 1994).

Citizenship theories thus all associate rights with obligations, but differ with respect to the appropriate balance between the two, as well as the constitutive elements of each (Kymlicka and Norman, 1994, Mouffe, 1992, Nelson, 1984). Accordingly, full and equal membership in a polity is expressed in terms of rights as well as agency. It is therefore not sufficient to simply be a citizen, but one must act as a critical citizen as well (Lister, 1997).

Feminists vehemently criticise this construction of citizenship because in spite of its claims to universal equality and justice, women still appear to be second class citizens (Pateman, 1988, Voet and Voet, 1998). For them, women's exclusion from citizenship is institutional in the sense that there are inherent structural barriers and constraints that perpetuate the exclusion of women and other social groups (Kymlicka and Norman, 1994, McEwan, 2005, Young, 1989). They distinguish between the formal possession of rights and substantive citizenship, defined as the actual rights that women can claim (Castles and Davidson, 2000, Durish, 2002).

Two tenets of feminism are central to this research project, namely, its conceptualisation of women's agency as citizens and the public-private divide.

With respect to the former, a good citizen in modern liberal-democratic states is normatively constructed as a White, heterosexual, gainfully employed male, who pays taxes and actively participates in democratic government processes. His agency is crucial to his citizenship status because he does not passively accept his civil and political rights, but actively engages with political institutions in order to contest, expand and shape them (Lister, 1997).

Feminists take issue with the implicit subsumption of women, who safeguard the family and home to enable men to fully participate in both the public sphere and capitalist marketplace (Fraser and Gordon, 1994, Pateman, 1988, Silbergeld, 1997). They also problematize the fact that a citizen's ability to access social rights is largely dependent on continuous full-time employment. This criticism is particularly significant in the sub-Saharan African context, where the vast majority of citizens lack social protection because coverage is generally reserved for employees working full-time in the formal sector (Kalusopa et al., 2012). African women's choices and opportunities for participation in formal production economic activities are limited (UNDESA, 2014). Consequently, the vast majority of them (84%) work in the informal sector, which does not confer work opportunities that facilitate access to social rights (ILO, 2009, Kaluposa et al. 2012). This is a large-scale violation of African women's social rights that according to the literature, marginalises them further, has negative impacts on their agency, and affects their ability to participate in society as full and equal members (Doyal and Gough, 1991, Kymlicka and Norman, 1994, Lister, 2001, Macedo, 1990).

Women in the West also work in worse jobs compared to Western men, are paid lower wages and are more likely to work in the unpaid private or domestic sphere (Gilligan, 1982, King, 1987, Okin Moller, 1989). As a result, some feminists argue that it is necessary to expand social and reproductive rights and rearrange duties in the private sphere. This would allow men and women to have comparable access to full time employment as well as comparable responsibilities in the private sphere (Okin Moller, 1989)

The public-private debate is arguably one of the most important contributions that feminists have made to the field of citizenship studies<sup>4</sup> (Durish, 2002). In her seminal work *The Sexual Contract*, Pateman (1988) argues that liberalism deals with the problem of gender by relegating women to the private realm thereby de-politicising their issues and concerns. The effect is that the illusion of public equality is based on women's subordination and inequality in the private sphere. The construction of the two spheres, their interconnectedness and fluidity of their boundaries thus has profound implications for women's citizenship (Lister, 1997).

With respect to agency for example, the main challenge for women is that their multiple responsibilities in the private sphere often determine the extent to which they are 'active' or 'passive' citizens (Gouws, 2005, Lister, 1997). Spending a disproportionate amount of time and energy on reproductive and care work not only places constraints on women's availability for public sector participation, but as a corollary, it may also hinder them from building civic knowledge and learning civic skills through action. According to Lister (1997) this has implications for women's citizenship agency:

To act as a citizen requires first a sense of agency, the belief that one can act; acting as a citizen especially collectively in turn fosters that sense of agency. Thus agency is not simply about the capacity to choose and act but it is also about a conscious capacity which is important to the individual's self-identity. The development of a conscious sense of agency at both the personal and political level is crucial to women's breaking of the chains of victimhood and their emergence as full and active citizens (Lister, 1997:38).

Unequal power relations and representation in the public sphere may also constrain the substantive rights that women can claim. So feminist theories of citizenship are centred on re-gendering and creating more egalitarian citizenship, by understanding the construction of the private sphere and reconfiguring its interrelationship with the public arena (Gouws, 2005, Jones, 1990)

The main implication drawn from the overview above is that the process of claiming citizenship is arguably just as important as the outcome of that process, particularly

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<sup>4</sup> The private-public divide has ignited considerable debate among feminists. Some scholars argue that this division is a theoretical fiction, is not applicable to non-Western contexts and that all activities have both a public and a private dimension. Others argue that it is important to keep the idea of the private sphere as a non-political realm (Durish, 2002:9).



given the challenges and structural constraints in sub-Saharan African. As a result, special emphasis will be paid to the struggle itself, that is, the process through which Zimbabwean and South African women actively engage with their communities in order to gain new rights, or improve the substance of existing ones. The next section examines feminism in Africa.

## 2.1. Feminism in Africa

African feminist discourse and political practice is not homogenous but comprises various theoretical perspectives that are informed by differences in material conditions, identities, goals and analyses (Ahikire, 2014, NNaemeka, 2005). Some of the difficulties arising from attempts to categorize the diverse body of Western feminist literature emerge during similar attempts to define African feminism (Arneil, 1999, Braidotti, 1999, Cornwall, 2005, Dietz, 2003, Grant, 1993, Jagger, 1983, Mikel, 1991, Tong, 1989). In particular, the challenge is how to advance common issues without masking important cultural, social and economic differences between women on the continent? Additionally, constructions of African feminism still have echoes of Mohanty's (1988) 'non-Western Other', in that definitions are generally placed within the context of Western feminism (Nnaemeka, 2005). However, such a comparison is useful for contextualising Afro-centric ideas about feminism that speak to the challenges facing subaltern Zulu and Ndebele women. The next section summarizes key similarities and differences between African and Western feminist theories that are important for this dissertation.

### 2.1.1 Western and African Feminism(s) in Africa

Clear polarization between African and Western feminist strategies can be exemplified by the differences that emerged during the United Nations Decade for women (1975-1985). Both groups share a common goal of fully incorporating African women into the political, economic and social spheres of their countries (Dolphyne, 1991, Enslin, 2003, Jagger, 1983). They also agree on the obstacles to the achievement of full and equal citizenship for African women, with illiberal practices such as polygamy, bride-wealth and female circumcision receiving particular attention (Dolphyne, 1991).

The preferred strategies for eradicating these and other harmful practices emerged as a key sticking point during the conferences. On the one hand, the majority of Western women wanted immediate institutionalisation of laws banning such practices; a position that is in line with liberal feminism's focus on using legal instruments to effect change (Arnot, 1997, Dietz, 1987, Friedan, 2013, Jaggar, 1983, Jones, 1990, Nelson, 1984). On the other hand, African women argued that illiberal practices are deeply rooted in tradition and have religious and cultural significance that many African women value. For that reason, they advocated for a more comprehensive and culturally sensitive approach that focuses on education, socio-economic development and women's emancipation (Dolphyne, 1991).

The African women in Copenhagen were essentially arguing on the side of an emerging African feminist approach that is concerned with the 'bread, butter, culture and power issues' that affect an African woman's ability survive (Mikel, 1997). For them, African women's emancipation is inextricably linked with and cannot be separated from international political issues such as colonialism, capitalism, economic dependence, racism, underdevelopment, education and health etcetera. The discursive language they use differs from Western feminism. For instance, Marxist feminists seek to *overthrow* the socially constructed sexual division of labour (Jaggar, 1983, Mies, 1976); radical feminists seek to *transform* and *reorganise* society into either a matriarchal or androgynous one (Elshtain, 1981, Hartsock, 1983, Jaggar, 1983, Millett, 1970, Mies, 1976); socialist feminists argue for the *democratic control of procreation* (Jaggar, 1983); while Postmodern feminists seek to *deconstruct* underlying theoretical assumptions (Hooks, 1984).

In contrast, African feminists seek *negotiation* and *compromise* with their oppressors, namely, patriarchy and imperialism (Mikel, 1997, Carmen Pereria quoted in NNaemeka, 2005). Mikel (1997) thus describes African feminism as distinctly 'heterosexual and pro-natal', in that it 'celebrates women's ability to give birth and refuses to subordinate their biological roles to other roles within society.' She argues that African women were integrated into pre-colonial structures and traditionally played a wide range of roles in their families and communities, as well as in political and economic life. Moreover, African women's histories suggest that the feminist spirit is indigenous to the continent (Aidoo, 1998, Cornwall, 2005, Nnaemeka, 2005).

Women's current oppression is seen as an antithesis to traditional African cultural models. African feminists thus argue that the fundamental problem is one of survival and national development; the provision of basic necessities and opportunities would enable African women to gain the necessary skills and knowledge for emancipation and improving their status in contemporary society (Dolphyne, 1991).

It is important to note that other schools of African (and Western) feminism criticise this position on two main fronts. First, African women have goals beyond mere survival, with personal desires that include political, socio-economic and equal educational opportunities for themselves and their children (Mama, 1996). Second, they argue that gender hierarchies existed in pre-colonial African societies and were simply exacerbated by colonialism. As a result, it is important to challenge the status quo by critically engaging with contemporary as well as traditional patriarchal constraints, both of which systematically discriminate against African women (McFadden, 1995).

The above analysis reveals two main insights that are important for this dissertation. First, the public private divide in collectivist African societies may differ from the Western conceptualisation. That is, more traditional African women may see the bearing of children as their primary responsibility, but may also believe in their responsibility towards their families and wider communities (Mikel, 1997). Secondly, there are tensions between political liberalism's discourses surrounding women's agency and autonomy, and Afro-centric emphases on culturally linked forms of agency and public participation. The concept of autonomy has received considerable attention and will be examined in more detail below.

## 2.2. Women's agency in non-Western societies

The feminist concern with agency reflects a collective desire to move beyond victim feminism and account for diversity and group difference among women. In practice, the challenge of how to recognise and account for non-Western women's agency has proved to be a difficult one, largely due to cross-cultural differences in autonomy, cultural ethos and socio-political structures.

Concepts such as autonomy, choice, self-government, independence and individualism that are implicit in contemporary understandings of citizenship are influenced by political liberalism (Berlin, 1969, Dillabough and Arnot, 2000). Like all hegemonic knowledge, liberalism is embedded in the specific historical time within which it was created (Derrida, 1976, Lyotard, 1984, Foucault, 1972, Foucault, 1980). Political liberalism's values are rooted in the West and do not consider the voices and cultures of marginalised or exploited Black people. The concept of autonomy has received considerable mainstream attention and public debates about the autonomy of 'illiberal' groups of women have ignited anxieties about the tension between multiculturalism and feminism.<sup>5</sup>

Embedded in liberal understandings of agency, autonomy is defined as the 'capacity for self-determination.' Lépinard (2011) argues that this is a substantive definition of autonomy that assumes individuals are rational, self-reflexive and self-determining. This definition uses a negative conception of liberty, where choice is only possible in a social environment free from external constraints. That is, a non-Western woman is perceived to have autonomy when she maintains a critical distance from her culture, freely chooses whether to abide by her community's rules, does not feel constrained by internal group restrictions, and continuously reflects on her identity and cultural practices. Multicultural feminists have rightly criticised this model for imposing unrealistic demands on socially embedded actors. Instead they propose a more neutral, minimalist definition of autonomy that can be applied cross-culturally. This focuses on 'an agent's self-conception, her social context and her capacity for autonomy, rather than on the substantive liberal ideals of self-realization, independence from social context and rationality' (Lépinard, 2011)

Feminism has thus moved towards a more relational definition of autonomy that is used in social theory. The relational self as described by Frazer and Lacey (1993) acts to 'collapse the individual-community dichotomy that underpins the separations of liberal and civic republican formulations of citizenship.' Relational autonomy within the context of citizenship and agency theories thus refers to the subject's

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<sup>5</sup> Susan Okin's essay "Is Multiculturalism bad for women?" argued that 'granting specific rights to minorities is detrimental to women's individual rights because these rights generally favour a traditional or patriarchal interpretation of a group's culture' (Okin, 1997 quoted in Lepinard, 2011:205)

interdependent relations with her environment, culture, institutions, family and community (Brah, 1996, Frazer and Lacey, 1993, Lépinard, 2011).

One of the main advantages of the minimalist version of autonomy is that it avoids the autonomy – dependence dichotomy, which essentially equates autonomy with power, and dependence with powerlessness. It therefore creates space for women who are empowered and disempowered at the same time, or those who are dependent without necessarily losing their capacity for autonomous action (Frank, 2006, Wray, 2004). In some cases, benefits, power and influence accrue from submission to tradition and community, for example, when an impoverished woman decides to enter into a polygamous marriage with a wealthy and influential man.

Although Lépinard (2011) acknowledges that minimalist autonomy does not depart significantly from the liberal version, she fails to acknowledge one of its main shortcomings, namely, that it equates autonomy with agency and does not distinguish sufficiently between agency as the potential to act and agency as action itself. Additionally, the majority of African cultures place a strong emphasis on personal obligation to the community. In fact, 'rational' African individuals are conceptualised as those who seek guidance from their elders in order to develop their critical thinking and decision making ability (Ikuenobe, 2006). Therefore, African women are still largely excluded from relational definitions of autonomy, in that liberal-democratic ideals of individualism and self-government stand in stark contrast to the African ethos of community and duty.

Thirdly, it bears repeating that citizenship in post-colonial Africa falls far short of being the enabling environment that Lister (1997) argues is necessary for all citizens to participate, break the chains of victimhood and emerge as full and active citizens. Socio-political structures in Africa are different from Western ones, containing a mixture of: indigenous pre-colonial institutions transformed through their relationship with European imperialism; hybrid structures migrated from Europe that have taken a unique form in Africa; and emergent structures that are neither indigenous nor inherited, but have grown out of the particularities of colonial and post-colonial life (Ekeh, 1983).

Political, civil, social, economic and cultural rights are tenuous across the region and the reality of African politics is that incumbent governments often win elections and use various tactics to ensure they remain in power<sup>6</sup>. So the assumption that they would feel pressured to respond, or can be held accountable to the needs and priorities of marginalised women in a similar way to Western governments, is flawed and problematic.

The difficulties inherent in feminism's move away from Anglo-centrism leads scholars like Mahmood (2005) to question the appropriateness of asking some questions across cultural contexts. It is also important to reconsider the privileging of acting in public spaces when discussing agency in African socio-political settings. For example, there is an authoritarian regime in Zimbabwe and the ramifications of public resistance are deliberately severe. The next section provides a brief overview of feminist case studies of non-Western women's agency.

### 2.3. Selected case studies

Feminist scholars have conducted a number of case studies in an effort to recognise non-Western women's citizenship agency. They present several useful analytical categories for understanding the different types of women's agency in non-Western societies. These are: covert resistance (Mullings, 1999); active or overt resistance (Moghadam, 1998, Tabari and Yeganeh, 1982); acquiescence (Gerami and Lehnerer, 2001, Hoodfar, 1996, MacLeod, 1996); co-option (Brink, 1991, Gerami and Lehnerer, 2001, Hegland, 1995); subversion (Ebaugh, 1993, Gerami and Lehnerer, 2001); collaboration (Gerami and Lehnerer, 2001, Hegland, 1990); and patriarchal bargaining (Kandiyoti, 1988).

Mullings' (1999) article is particularly interesting because she draws on Colburn (1989), de Certeau (1984) and Scott (1989) to examine the role the private sphere plays in enabling covert acts of resistance, among female data entry operators in Jamaica's public sphere. Although everyday acts of resistance such as pilfering,

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<sup>6</sup> Twelve African Presidents in the last ten years have dissolved parliaments or constitutional courts, assumed emergency powers to rule by decree and appoint more 'compliant' politicians in top posts.

poor productivity, sabotage and feigned ignorance can seem insignificant by themselves, she argues that they can have large-scale structural consequences.<sup>7</sup> (Colburn, 1989, De Certeau, 1998, Mullings, 1999, Scott, 1986). The main difficulty she encounters is her attempt to distinguish between coping and resistance, with the former defined negatively as a lack of intent to subvert, or an act of complying that does not embody conscious political action (Mullings, 1999:293). It is difficult to uncover critical consciousness or intent and find the demarcation between the two. This is because there is a general sense of critical consciousness and a feeling of deprivation among impoverished households in South Africa and Zimbabwe, which is related to the legacy of settler colonialism and the political economies in each country. In spite of this, the stated motivations for covert acts of resistance such as pilfering are more likely to be centred on meeting basic needs for food, hunger and safety, instead of politics.

Similarly, Gerami and Lehnerer (2001) examine the impact of repressive state policies on Iranian women and the strategies used to negotiate patriarchy, societal and familial pressures. They identify four strategies, namely, collaboration, acquiescence, co-optation and subversion. Collaboration refers to concerted efforts some women made to enforce the regime's laws, thereby gaining power and influence in both the private and public spheres. Acquiescing refers women's submission to the regime's repressive policies, even though this meant retreating into the private sphere. Co-optation on the other hand, refers to those women who managed to achieve their desired ends by actively manipulating laws, without deviating from accepted patriarchal norms and expectations of women. And finally, subversion refers to acts of defiance, as well as those actions that undermined the regime, such as women smuggling their sons out of the country in order to prevent their war draft (Gerami and Lehnerer, 2001).

Several other scholars describe similar strategies that highlight the different types of activism that women engage in, at both the individual and local scales of action.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Covert practices of resistance are defined as 'tactics used as weapons by the weak, who being unable to circumscribe their own spaces to limit the influence of 'the Other,' must make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers" (De Certeau, 1984).

<sup>8</sup> See Moghadam (1998) Tabari and Yeganeh, (1982), Hoodfar, (1996), MacLeod (1996), Brink (1991), Hegland (1990; 1995) and Ebaugh, (1993).

Kandiyoti (1988) provides an interesting overview of how rural women in Kenya, the Gambia and Ghana 'bargain with patriarchy' through acts of everyday resistance. She stresses that these African women do not live under classic patriarchy as seen in the Middle East and Asia. Instead, they have existing spheres of autonomy that they safeguard or expand through: negotiation, overt bargaining, vocal protests, refusing to cooperate with and even deserting husbands when all else fails. She contrasts these open acts of resistance to the subservience and manipulation (passive resistance) that she sees under classic forms of patriarchy (Kandiyoti, 1988).

The everyday resistance paradigm represents a symbolic shift by feminists to not only understand alternative forms of struggle, but to also acknowledge the value of small-scale forms of political activism (Bayat, 1997, Lépinard, 2011). Theorising agency as relational and multi-dimensional is thus an important step towards meeting the challenge of incorporating diversity. However, more work needs to be done. As Lois McNay (2000) argues:

It is crucial to conceptualize these creative or productive aspects immanent to agency in order to explain how when faced with complexity and difference, individuals may respond in unanticipated and innovative ways which may hinder reinforce or catalyse social change (McNay, 2000:4).

Feminist theories are essentially in agreement that society needs to change before women can gain substantive citizenship. They also agree about the importance of the private sphere as the site of women's agency and their oppression (Lister, 1997). This means that any social change that occurs as a result of women's agency is likely to originate in the private sphere. One of feminism's greatest oversights therefore, is its failure to fully theorize the realm of informal politics in the private sphere. The next section draws on literature from Subaltern Studies, which provides some important insights into the politics and agency of marginalised individuals.

### 3. Subaltern agency

The hegemonic model of active participatory citizenship uses an exclusionary definition of the political arena that prevents women from claiming full and equal citizenship (Gouws, 2008, Lister, 2001, Naples and Desai, 2002, Young, 1989).



Defining political participation narrowly, in terms of voting or other formal campaign involvement, ignores the fact that women are generally socialized to different contexts, choose to use different skill sets and carry out the majority of their political work in the private sphere (Hassim, 1999, Jones, 1990, McEwan, 2005, Pateman, 1988). The literature on subaltern politics reveals two significant feminist theoretical oversights. The first, discussed below, is feminism's failure to account for the range of political activity in the private sphere. The second, discussed in 3.1 is feminism's uncritical use of the term 'civil society' to refer to women's political activity in the informal realm.

Street politics is the articulation of discontent by people who operate usually outside the modern institutions (like the unemployed, or casual workers or housewives); or by those groups who may enjoy the institutional settings (such as factory workers or students), but wish to gain support and solidarity beyond the confines of their institutions among the general public (Bayat, 2010:62).

There are five main models describing political action by marginalised or subaltern groups of people, namely: quiet encroachment (Bayat, 2010); the passive poor (Lewis, 1975, Harrington, 1962); the surviving poor (Escobar, 1997); the political poor (Castells, 1988, Goirand, 2003) and the resisting poor (Scott, 1986).

The model of quiet encroachment describes a non-collective but prolonged form of direct action by dispersed individuals, resulting in the acquisition of basic necessities. This encroachment is done in a quiet and unassuming illegal fashion, but when acquired gains are threatened, there are often episodes of collective action and open protest in defence of those illegally acquired gains (Bayat, 2010). Quiet encroachment differs from urban social movements in that it is not wholly collective in nature, does not have a structured bureaucracy and often does not have a clear leadership or ideological foundation.

There is a great deal of empirical evidence supporting the concept of quiet encroachment from informal settlements in Lebanon, Egypt, Chile, India, Nigeria and even South Africa (Appadurai, 2000, Bayat, 1997, Lindell, 2010, Marx, 2007). The illegal use of urban services often compels the authorities to extend services into the relevant informal settlements. Once installed, residents often refuse to pay for these

services citing moral reasons, citizenship rights and impoverishment to advance their cause.

The subaltern lack of organization may be one of their greatest strengths because authorities find it difficult to identify and negotiate with the different factions. Continuous attempts to develop associations representing informal workers over the last decade have resulted in the global emergence of collective subaltern political organisations<sup>9</sup> (Lindell, 2010, Skinner, 2011). In spite of this, it is still difficult to discern clear patterns of organisation and categorise the dynamics of these associations. As a result, subaltern agency in postcolonial societies can be clearly distinguished from more conventional forms of agency.

The second model of subaltern political action is the passive poor one, developed by Lewis (1975). This model acknowledges systematic causes of poverty but argues that people who grow up poor also acquire a 'culture of poverty', that is, value systems, attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate their poverty. The idea that people are poor because of their values is essentialist, fatalistic and blames the poor for their political and economic marginalisation (Bayat, 1997). Thirdly, the surviving poor model maintains that although poor people are powerless they cope and ensure their survival by begging, stealing or engaging in prostitution. The types of survival strategies listed suggest that any survival by poor people comes at the expense of themselves or other people. The model thus fails to acknowledge empowering actions that are directed at self-improvement.

Fourthly, the political poor model is based on the urban social movements phenomena observed in many parts of Latin America. This model argues that marginalised people participate in politics, elections and mainstream economic activities, and also engage in territorial movements, and establish community organisations in the quest for self-empowerment (Castells, 1988, Goirand, 2003). Empirical evidence for this model is however scarce outside Latin America. And finally, the resisting poor paradigm looks at everyday acts of resistance by

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<sup>9</sup> Lindell (2010) provides a comprehensive overview of collective political organisations by groups of informal workers around Africa. Examples include National alliances of Informal workers in Kenya and Zambia, the International alliance of street traders (Streetnet), and the Self-employed women's union etcetera.

marginalised groups of people against the prevailing power structures. Several feminists have incorporated the resistance paradigm into their analysis of women's agency (Section 2.3).

The main insight from these models is that subaltern political action is non-conventional in that it is more likely to be centred on 'a politics of redress, not one of protest' (Bayat, 2010). Additionally, most forms of activism are non-collective, small-scale in nature and occur for two main reasons. The first is the quest for an acceptable standard of living through the redistribution of basic social goods such as land, water and electricity, or the opportunity to make a living through street trading for example. The second goal is the attainment of cultural and political autonomy, such as the freedom to live without interference and harassment from bureaucratic institutions (Bayat, 2010). This suggests that political action by subaltern people is usually directed at claiming substantive social and civil rights.

Even though feminism's incorporation of resistance is commendable, there is room to integrate other elements of subaltern politics into feminist frameworks. Recognising and understanding the range of non-conventional actions or the varied motives behind the different types of activism would be particularly helpful for analysing subaltern women's agency in postcolonial societies, and understanding African women's lived realities.

### 3.1. Women's participatory citizenship

As seen above, subaltern politics recognizes that marginalised people in postcolonial societies engage in a range of collective actions at the grassroots level, in the informal arena of politics. By challenging the state's selective definition of what constitutes legitimate civil society behaviour, informal community based activism 'invents new spaces of citizenship and transcends legal civil citizenship in order to achieve substantive citizenship' (Bayat, 2010, Miraftab, 2004).

Feminists recognise the importance of the private sphere and use the term 'reservoirs of citizenship,' to describe the many voluntary associations of civil society in which women are most likely to be active (Leca, 1992 quoted in Lister, 1997). Despite this, feminism generally uses the term civil society uncritically, which is problematic.

Miraftab (2004) uses the example of grassroots organizations to expose the dichotomous nature of civil society. By introducing two related and mutually constitutive concepts of 'invited' and 'invented' spaces of citizenship, Miraftab (2004) argues that 'invited spaces' are occupied by the 'authentic' civil society organizations that are legitimized by donors and government interventions. These are mostly geared towards helping the poor cope or survive and are widely perceived as operating through officially sanctioned channels. 'Invented spaces' on the other hand are also occupied by grassroots action, but are criminalized by the media and neoliberal state. This is because they tend to challenge the status quo or resist neoliberal policies and are consequently painted as consisting of 'outcasts or extremist' groups.

The main relevance of this insight for postcolonial societies is that the state grants civil society status and thus essentially defines the spaces where women's citizenship can be practiced (Miraftab, 2004). Being 'approved' by the state is however a double-edged sword, especially in authoritarian regimes such as Zimbabwe, where civil society often sacrifices associational autonomy for legitimacy. In fact, women's organizations on the African continent that are 'approved civil society organisations' are less effective than their counterparts, and less likely to push for policies that are unpopular with the ruling elite (Disney, 2008, Trip et al, 2009).

It is important for feminists to recognise that the opening up of citizenship spaces is generally a highly selective and politicised process in sub-Saharan Africa. So it is important to expanding the concept of political participation, beyond both formal politics and informal civil society participation, to incorporate both invited and invented spaces of citizenship. This may facilitate the continued move towards recognising African women's agency as citizens.

### 3.2. Barriers to women's participation

There is a critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having real power to affect the outcome of a process. Participation without a redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless because it allows the powerful to claim that all sides were considered but only makes it possible for some sides to benefit. It maintains the status quo (Arnstein, 1969:216).

Arnstein's (1969) statement reminds us that there are many barriers to participatory citizenship for women in general and subaltern women in particular. Her eight rung ladder in Figure 1 illustrates that the extent of a citizen's participation in decision making ranges from mere tokenism to genuine power sharing (Arnstein, 1969). Participation rarely erases pre-existing power differentials but may contribute to a more equitable distribution of resources, the improvement of low-income communities and the empowerment of participants (Bowen, 2007).

Figure 1: Ladder of citizen participation

8	Citizen control	Citizen power
7	Delegated power	Citizen power
6	Partnership	Citizen power
5	Placation	Tokenism
4	Consultation	Tokenism
3	Informing	Tokenism
2	Therapy	Non-participation
1	Manipulation	Non-participation

Source: Arnstein (1969) 'Eight Rungs on a Ladder of Citizen Participation'.

Jones (1990) and Lister (1997) argue that participation at the neighbourhood level often allows disadvantaged women to develop confidence and self-esteem, and may even lead to women's engagement in formal political activity (Jones, 1990, Lister, 1997). A study of poor women's participation in KwaZulu, South Africa is revealing. It found that the majority of women were involved in various community groups but few were involved with civil society organisations. When women attended meetings, they did so as passive observers and did not voice their opinions. Furthermore, they faced intimidation and threats from men when they tried to press their claims, with the result that few women's issues were raised and included in community programmes (McEwan, 2005).

The above study illustrates some of the barriers to subaltern women's participatory citizenship. First, is the importance of genuine participation as explained by Arnstein

(1969). Secondly, is the importance of analysing power relations in the private sphere and of examining culturally accepted avenues through which claims can be made. And finally, is the validation of feminism's continuing concern with the gender gap<sup>10</sup>. There are several different explanations for this gender gap; and the most relevant ones for this dissertation will be briefly examined below.

Less educated or illiterate women are more likely to occupy informal sectors of the economy and have less access to information and political resources in the public sphere. Socio-economic factors can thus disenfranchise women's participatory citizenship (Pateman, 1989, Nelson, 1984). Additionally, women's unequal representation at all levels of political decision making, combined with the 'hostile culture' and gendered nature of political agendas means that women's interests and needs are not being met through active participation (Gilligan, 1982, Gouws, 2008, Jones, 1990). Furthermore, women have differential power in relation to electoral processes due to their responsibilities and unequal power in the private sphere. Their 'time-work poverty' thus acts as a significant constraint on their ability and capacity for active participation (Kabeer, 1994, Hassim, 1999, McEwan, 2005).

#### 4. Conclusion

Feminist studies of citizenship and agency have undergone a significant transformation in an effort to move away from victim feminism, especially with respect to the discursive representations of non-Western women. In addition, the move towards a more relational conceptualisation of agency and the incorporation of the resistance paradigm into feminist analyses have helped highlight that women's agency is not universal, but varied, continuously changing and culturally specific. As such, accounting for non-Western women's citizenship agency is challenging. This is because concepts such as 'agency' are not in fact value free but embedded in Western normative ideals. And because citizenship in post-colonial Africa falls far short of being the enabling environment that Lister (1997) argues is necessary for all citizens to participate, break the chains of victimhood and emerge as full and active citizens.

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<sup>10</sup> The gender gap refers to the extent that women's political participation differs from men, as well as the fact that significantly more women consider themselves to be politically incompetent relative to men ((Verba et al, 1997).

A review of subaltern literature reveals possibilities for expanding feminist frameworks to better recognise and understand the range of non-conventional actions and the different types of activism used by the urban poor in postcolonial societies. In particular, subaltern politics accounts for the range of political activity in the informal sphere, and uses the term 'civil society' critically, which is an important distinction given the mutually constitutive concepts of 'invited' and 'invented' spaces of citizenship. The next chapter presents the methodological approach used to make visible African women's lived realities as citizens and agents.

## Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework

### 1. Introduction

One of the primary aims of this dissertation is to distinguish subaltern women's citizenship agency as an analytical category in its own right, with theoretical manifestations that are distinct and clearly distinguishable from Western women's. As such, it follows the postmodern feminist tradition that defines agency as an empirically observable, functional and testable outcome that can be perceived through women's everyday decisions, behaviours and social contexts (Fisher, 1999). However, agency also encompasses the individuals 'sense of agency' or the meaning, motivation and purpose that individuals bring to their activity (Kabeer, 1999). So although the primary focus is on empirically observable action, this dissertation will also attempt to assess each woman's self-perceptions of agency.

This chapter examines androcentric theories of human agency in Section 2, which provide several key ideas about the internal structure and constitutive elements of agency. Section 3 synthesizes androcentric, subaltern and feminist theories to present a conceptual framework for analysing citizenship agency in marginalised Zimbabwean and South African women. The remainder of the chapter describes the research methods that were used to guide the research.

### 2. Human agency

A review of the literature shows that agency is viewed as an inherently human capacity that is differentially endowed among individuals. People who are perceived to have more agency are often constructed as those who have relatively more options and resources to direct towards the achievement of their self-determined goals, even when faced with obstacles or opposition from others (Kabeer, 1999, Kockelman, 2007). This caveat is essential to any understanding of agency because agency is mostly understood in terms of resistance against pre-existing structures or antagonists (Mullings, 1999, Kockelman, 2007). This implies that the dominated are not only aware of the status quo, but are also unhappy or critically conscious of their deprivation and inequality relative to the elite.



A study in the Republic of Guinea reveals one of the inherent difficulties in an empirical application of women's agency. Shaffer (1998) found that women and men recognised male dominance and gender inequalities in terms of women's heavier workloads, but that neither felt that these inequalities were unjust. The acceptance and internalisation of what Bourdieu calls "doxa" is likely to influence non-Western women's choices, actions and inactions, so that the range of available options is a function of relationality and positionality in any given context (Bourdieu, 1984, Kabeer, 1999). Race, gender, class, levels of education and internalisation of social environment are powerful mediating factors that influence the range of available options. Local studies of agency must therefore be sensitive to the fact that women are unlikely to exercise their choices in uniform ways.

It is important to provide a brief overview of the difference between classic and more instrumentalist approaches to studying agency. The former focuses on the types of strategies that humans use to negotiate their way around elite structures. They are grounded in rational choice theory, which argues that agents are rational utility maximizing consumers, who determine how they should act by comparing the costs and benefits of all possible courses of action, before choosing one that maximizes their benefits and minimizes their costs. In contrast, instrumentalist approaches to agency place an emphasis on an individual's values and objectives. So achievement or action is evaluated according to the totality of an individual's considered goals and objectives, even if that action does not affect well-being positively (Kabeer, 1999, Sen, 1985). The distinction between the two approaches is important for analysing illiberal practices by non-Western women. Classic theories may view such practices as evidence of patriarchy and subordination, while instrumentalist approaches may also emphasize how maintaining networks of mutual obligation and implicit contracts within extended families may result in future pay-offs for women.

Political science theories of agency are grounded in rational choice and relax many of the stringent assumptions in classic agency theory. For example, they assume there are multiple actors with many different goals and account for the possibility of conflict and competition between principals and agents (Shapiro, 2005). However, political scientists mostly theorize agency from the perspective of better endowed principals, who introduce incentives to align agent interests with their own, and

monitor behaviour to ensure that agents carry out their will. The discipline is mostly concerned with the negative meaning of agency in relation to power over someone, that is, an actor's ability to supersede the agency of others through the use of violence, coercion or threats. As a result, like other paradigms grounded in rational choice theory, political science provides one-sided views of agency and often conflates dimensions of agency such as goal-seeking, autonomy and judgment with agency itself (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998).

Theorists who attempt to move beyond rationality, define agency in terms of an individual's capacity to act independently, make their own free choices, impose those choices on the world and achieve self-determined goals (Gubrium and Holstein, 1995, Kockelman, 2007, Sen, 1985). Agents are thus actively involved in shaping their own destinies at both the individual and collective levels, as well as through democratic participation. Concepts such as subjectivity, power, hegemony, freedom, action and choice are thus often linked to agency, with the latter constructed as the core element that is at stake (Kockelman, 2007).

These theorists also relate agency to social structure, a term that is generally used to refer to those dynamic, self-reproducing institutions of social life that have an underlying logic of their own, and are thus durable enough to constrain agent's choices and opportunities (Giddens, 1984, Gubrium and Holstein, 1995, Hays, 1994, Sewell, 1992). In other words, agency refers to an actor's attempts to create, recreate, influence, and transform social structures for the attainment of individual goals. The permissive characteristics of social structures enable agency, while its more restrictive features limit the range of available options. Concepts such as resistance, performativity, institutions, motivation and praxis or routine practice, are thus also linked to the word agency (Frank, 2006, Hays, 1994).

Several scholars embed agency in time and space. For instance Emirbayer and Mische (1998) define agency as:

A temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past in its habitual aspect, but also oriented toward the future (as a capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as a capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment) (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 963).

This and similar definitions of agency are relevant for this dissertation because African women generally live in societies where the social, institutional and cultural contexts are simultaneously orientated towards tradition (past), modernity (future) and the present. Mead (1932) calls this aspect of social reality emergent events, and argues that actors caught between the old and the new are forced to develop new ways of integrating past, present and future perspectives. The constitutive elements of agency will be briefly examined using Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) terminology namely iteration (past), projectivity (future) and practical evaluation (present).

### 2.1. Constitutive elements of human agency

Theorized by Giddens (1979, 1984), Mead (1932), Ortner (1984), Turner, (1994) and Bourdieu (1984), iteration or the past plays an important role in informing those routine and habitual behaviours that agents perform with little or no effort. The 'primary locus of agency' lies in an actor's ability to recognize that this is a habitual occurrence, where routine actions that were developed through past interactions can be selected and implemented (Bourdieu, 1984, Emirbayer and Mische, 1998, Giddens, 1979, Giddens, 1984, Mead, 1932, Ortner, 1984, Turner, 1994).

The mechanical, effortless and habitual nature of iterational actions has led critics to question the necessity of incorporating the past into any theory of agency. Their uncertainty is caused by the fact that iteration occurs at very low levels of conscious reflection and is also closely correlated to structure. These criticisms ignore Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) fundamental argument that all three dimensions are always simultaneously present in all forms of human action. Furthermore, these criticisms do not account for the fact that many non-Western human cultures have alternative constructions of time. The relationship between the past, present and future is important in both Zulu and isiNdebele culture. The values and norms associated with this relationship may constrain or enable agency. For example, a Zulu woman who believes that her circumstances are the direct result of ancestral intervention may not fully believe in her own capacity to determine her own future, until she has appeased her ancestors.

The second dimension of agency, projectivity, has been theorized by Dewey (1981), Joas (1993), Mead (1934), and Sewell (1992) and describes the imaginative “generation of possible future trajectories of action, in which received structures of thought and action may be creatively reconfigured in relation to their hopes, fears, and desires for the future” (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998).

Projectivity occurs when human actors react to life’s challenges in innovative and creative ways. This imaginative and reconstructive dimension to human agency materializes when agents distance themselves from their habits or routines and invent new possibilities for thought and action (Dewey, 1981, Joas, 1993, Mead, 1932, Sewell, 1992). The primary locus of agency lies in the agent’s ability to identify the range of available choices and imagine alternative scenarios based on their wielding of means towards specific ends (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998, Kockelman, 2007). It is important to note that projectivity must be viewed with regard to structures, or what Sewell (1992) calls schemas. Agents must have knowledge of rules and limitations in order to identify opportunities or transpose and extend schemas to new contexts (Sewell 1992). So although the range of innovative responses in townships may seem relatively mundane, such as starting a vending business or urban food garden, these would still represent creative responses to the problem of income and food insecurity.

The third and final dimension of human agency is the practical evaluative or present component, which is theorized by Arendt (1984), Benhabib (1992), Dewey (1969, 1978), Gilligan (1982) and Haraway (1998). This element of agency refers to the way actors adjust their strategies and actions in response to emergencies, uncertainties, unforeseen and unintended consequences. The primary locus of agency lies in an actor’s self-reflexivity, deliberation and use of normative expectations to make judgements about whether intervention is needed (Arendt, 1984, Benhabib, 1992, Dewey, 1969, 1978, Emirbayer and Mische, 1998, Gilligan, 1982, Haraway, 1988).

Emirbayer and Mische (1998) point out that all three agentic dimensions are always simultaneously present in all forms of human action. Nonetheless, one temporal orientation is dominant in any one situation, shaping the way in which actors relate to the other two dimensions of time. The feminist theories of citizenship agency in Chapter 2 largely emphasise the practical evaluative dimension of agency and have

collectively recognized the significance of their failure to incorporate temporality (Lepinard, 2011, McNay, 2000).

Analytically situating agency and structure within the flow of time, results in a flexible, and compelling theoretical framework with key insights that are useful for studying women's citizenship agency in both South Africa and Zimbabwe. There are however two main challenges associated with applying Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) framework.

The first is the inherent androcentric nature of the paradigm. The assumption that women and men experience the internal structure of agency in the same way,<sup>11</sup> together with their ambiguous conceptualisation of intractable social identities such as class, race and gender, means that the framework must be viewed in conjunction with feminist as well as social situating theories. Women's difference is a central tenet of the former, while class is central to the latter. According to these theories for example, poor and working class individuals often have an iterational outlooks, while middle class families have more projective outlooks (Bourdieu, 1984). Furthermore, Swindler (1986) found that most people used established cultural competencies (are more iterational) during periods of stability, and more projective during periods of upheaval, a finding that may be relevant for the Zimbabwean case study.

Secondly, Emirbayer and Mische's conceptualisation of the relationship between agency and structures is problematic because they define agency as both the reproduction and transformation of social structures. As a result, there are only two possible outcomes from all forms of action, namely, structural transformation and structural reproduction. In other words, any actions on the part of social actors will either cause structures to change (transform) or remain the same (reproduce), irrespective of whether those actions exhibit agency. Theories that emphasize structure instead of temporality present a more refined conceptualisation of the relationship between agency and structure.

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<sup>11</sup> The internal structure refers to how agency works to reproduce each dimension of agency: iteration (Emirbayer and Mische 1998:978), projectivity (Emirbayer and Mische 1998:990) and practical evaluation (Emirbayer and Mische 1998:997). See Tables VIII, IX and X in the Appendix.

## 2.2. Agency and social structure

Social structure refers to those dynamic, self-reproducing institutions of social life that have an underlying logic of their own, and are thus durable enough to constrain an agent's opportunities and choices (Giddens, 1984, Gubrium and Holstein, 1995, Lukes, 1977, Sewell, 1992). Hays (1994) argues that there are two main interrelated components of social structure, systems of social relations and systems of meaning.

Systems of social relations consist of patterns of 'roles, relationships and forms of domination' that influence an individual according to social categories such as class, gender, race and education. Systems of meaning on the other hand, are commonly called culture, and include a social groups' beliefs, normative values, language and way of understanding the world. Although analytically distinct, these two systems work together to constrain choices to those that are socially acceptable and shape normative patterns of behaviour so as to enable structural reproduction (Hays, 1994, Lukes, 1978). It is important to note that certain elements of culture such as language and attire are more dynamic and changeable than more durable elements such as gender roles and racial hierarchies.

The relationship between agency and structure has been conceptualised in four main ways. The first set of theories, pure structural determinism argues that social structures determine people's thoughts and actions in accordance with structural patterns. These structuralist views have been largely discarded because they depict agency-less humans who simply act as instruments for social structures (Hays, 1994). The second set of theories argue that there are different levels of social structures, with differing levels of visibility and influence over humans, and with differing levels of resistance to both intentional and unintentional human actions (Sewell, 1992, Hays, 1994). The more flexible structures can therefore be completely manipulated and controlled by humans so that human agency is only limited by agentic will and the scarcity of biological resources. This voluntarist concept of agency has also been largely discarded as individuals are not in complete control and cannot exercise their absolute free will over 'collectively owned' social structures.

The third set of theories refines the above theories by arguing that human agents create structures, which can only exist because of human participation, irrespective of whether these humans are willing or conscious participants. In other words, everyday actions serve to create and recreate structures with the result that structures are both the source and outcome of human agency (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998, Giddens, 1984, Hays, 1994). Also known as structurally reproductive agency, empirical work on this type of agency reveals how both conformist and rebellious everyday actions by the poor often reinforce the cycle of poverty and reproduce patterns of social relations (Swindler, 1986, Wacquant, 1992, Willis, 1977).

The final set of theories argues that the relationship between agency and structure is mutually constitutive so that structures enable and constrain agent's power and self-understanding by providing rules. Rules give agents a sense of identity through which personalities, interests and critical consciousness can develop and also provide a framework through which deliberate, purposive action can occur (Hays, 1994). This interrelationship allows agents to determine which and implement those behaviours, choices and actions that are most likely to have a significant impact on any given set of social structures (Hays, 1994; Lukes, 1977, Sewell, 1985). Social analysts and feminists are particularly interested in this type of structurally transformative agency, which results in an empirically observable change to social systems, such as social revolutions for example

The main advantage that these structural theories have over the temporal ones is that they allow for a more refined analysis of the relationship between agency and structure. For example, Hays (1994) places agency on a continuum ranging from the structural reproduction of existing relations to the structural transformation of successful revolutions. This continuum is influenced by the flexibility and durability of the structure in question, by the amount of power that the particular agent has and the larger cultural milieu in which choices are made. In contrast to Emirbayer and Mische (1998) who argue that all actions result in either structural transformation or reproduction, this framework acknowledges that differential power among agents and variable structural durability means that some actions are either not possible or will have no effect on a given social structure.

This acknowledgement together with a more refined analysis of the agency structure relationship is important when studying women's agency in general, and subaltern women in particular. This is because the implication in all definitions of agency is that there are alternative courses of action that allow agents to choose one action over the other. In reality, women's courses of action are socially shaped. For example, a study of rural women's participation in KwaZulu, South Africa shows that women had to weigh the opportunity cost of pressing for their claims against that of possibly alienating the men<sup>12</sup> in their community (McEwan, 2005).

Gender theorists argue that it is often the convergence of different processes and circumstances that force men to change their relationships with women, a viewpoint shared by Sewell (1992), who argues that human beings only change when they have no other choice. With respect to the KwaZulu study above, this raises the question of what structural change would actually mean, assuming that the conditions for patriarchal transformation are not present.

A number of other questions arise from these structural theories. Agency is seen as the capability or potential to influence social relations, instead of as an empirically observable action in the postmodern argument. How does one determine where different types of agency and action fall on the continuum and what does an empirical application of agency look like? The next section examines selected qualitative and quantitative studies of agency.

### 2.3. Studies of agency

Qualitative studies of women's agency use a number of frameworks to guide their research. For example Ahlberg (1991) uses the actor-systems dynamics analytical framework to understand how Kenyan women respond to family planning programs, while Meyers (2002) develops feminist voice theory in order to make visible women's self-determination, autonomy and emancipatory potential. Gallagher (2007) on the other hand uses Sewell's (1992) theory of structure and agency, to assess how lower income women in Damascus negotiate existing gender schemas to improve their access to more attractive employment opportunities.

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<sup>12</sup> A married Zulu woman continues to enjoy the patronage and protection of her male relatives namely her uncles, brothers and cousins; who may intervene or help her negotiate with her husband.



While these studies reveal interesting insights about the various strategies women use to negotiate social structures, it is difficult to establish the credibility and external generalizability of qualitative studies (Babbie and Mouton, 1998, Maxwell, 1992). But quantitative studies of agency tend to measure agency either as a dimension of well-being or as decision making ability, which does not capture its complexity, variability, local specificity and changeability across the public sphere, labour market, household or community (Alkire, 2005).

Multi-domain measures of human agency were developed in an effort to improve quantitative models. Two such measures have been tested in other cultures, namely, the self-efficacy approach and self-determination theory.<sup>13</sup> Bandura's (1989, 1995, 2000) self-efficacy scales predicted performance in different countries well, but his scales were found to operate differently in collectivist and individualist cultures. Self-determination measures of autonomy on the other hand were empirically validated across four different cultures, but their narrow conceptual definition and limited focus means that different questionnaires have to be developed to measure autonomy in different spheres (Chirkov et al., 2003, Deci and Ryan, 1987, Ryan and Deci, 2000, Ryan and Deci, 2001).

One of the greatest challenges with respect to indicators of subaltern agency will be determining how to handle the question of freedom and choice over one's own life. The question of autonomy lies at the heart of human agency and is understood both as freedom from coercion as well as an agent's freedom to be governed by rules and laws that are of their own making. According to self-determination theory coercion threatens autonomy (Alkire, 2005, Emirbayer and Mische, 1998, Kant, 1996, Rousseau, 1988, Ryan and Deci, 2000).

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<sup>13</sup> The self-efficacy theory holds that human agency has internal as well as external determinants which are an individual's internal personal factors, their behaviour and their external environment. People's perceived self-efficacy is a key determinant of people's motivation, their level of effort, and their perseverance in a task.

Self-determination theory argues that there are three basic psychological needs that people in all cultures value namely autonomy, competence, and relatedness. They distinguished autonomy conceptually and empirically from related concepts such as dependence, independence, collectivism and individualism then tested autonomy in four different countries by asking why individuals engaged in certain practices.

This implies that a subaltern woman, who is acting according to cultural norms or societal expectations, acts autonomously if she has 'internally endorsed' those rules. Her agency is only compromised if she feels coerced and oppressed when acting under norms she has not fully internalized. This is because self-determination theory argues that it is possible to be autonomously dependent or autonomously independent, and that autonomous people may be more individualist or collectivist (Alkire, 2005, Chirkov et al, 2003, Deci and Ryan, 1987, Ryan and Deci, 2000).

For instance, a subaltern Zulu woman living with her extended family may be autonomously dependent as well as collectivist, as she not only relies on others for support and guidance but is also a member of a culture that emphasises 'Ubuntu' or the collective's needs, norms, and goals over the individual's. This may in turn influence her perceptions about the desirability of autonomy as well as the culturally (collectively) acceptable ways to claim full citizenship.

### 3. Conceptualising citizenship agency

Citizenship agency is conceptualised as any empirically observable action that claims citizenship rights or improves the substance of existing ones. The emphasis is on the process of citizenship agency or the struggle itself, which allows for the analysis of all actions that result in intentional as well as unforeseen consequences on an individual's citizenship rights. The action and outcome are analysed irrespective of whether or not a woman speaks about the action or outcome within the context of citizenship rights.

The citizenship agency framework (Figure 2) starts by dividing these actions by their potential consequence. Actions that result in structural reproduction may be conformist or rebellious but simply reinforce and reproduce existing social structures, patterns and relations (Swindler, 1986, Wacquant, 1992, Willis, 1977). Actions that lead to structural transformation have the potential to radically change a given set of social structures and value systems (Hays, 1994, Lukes, 1978, Sewell, 1985).

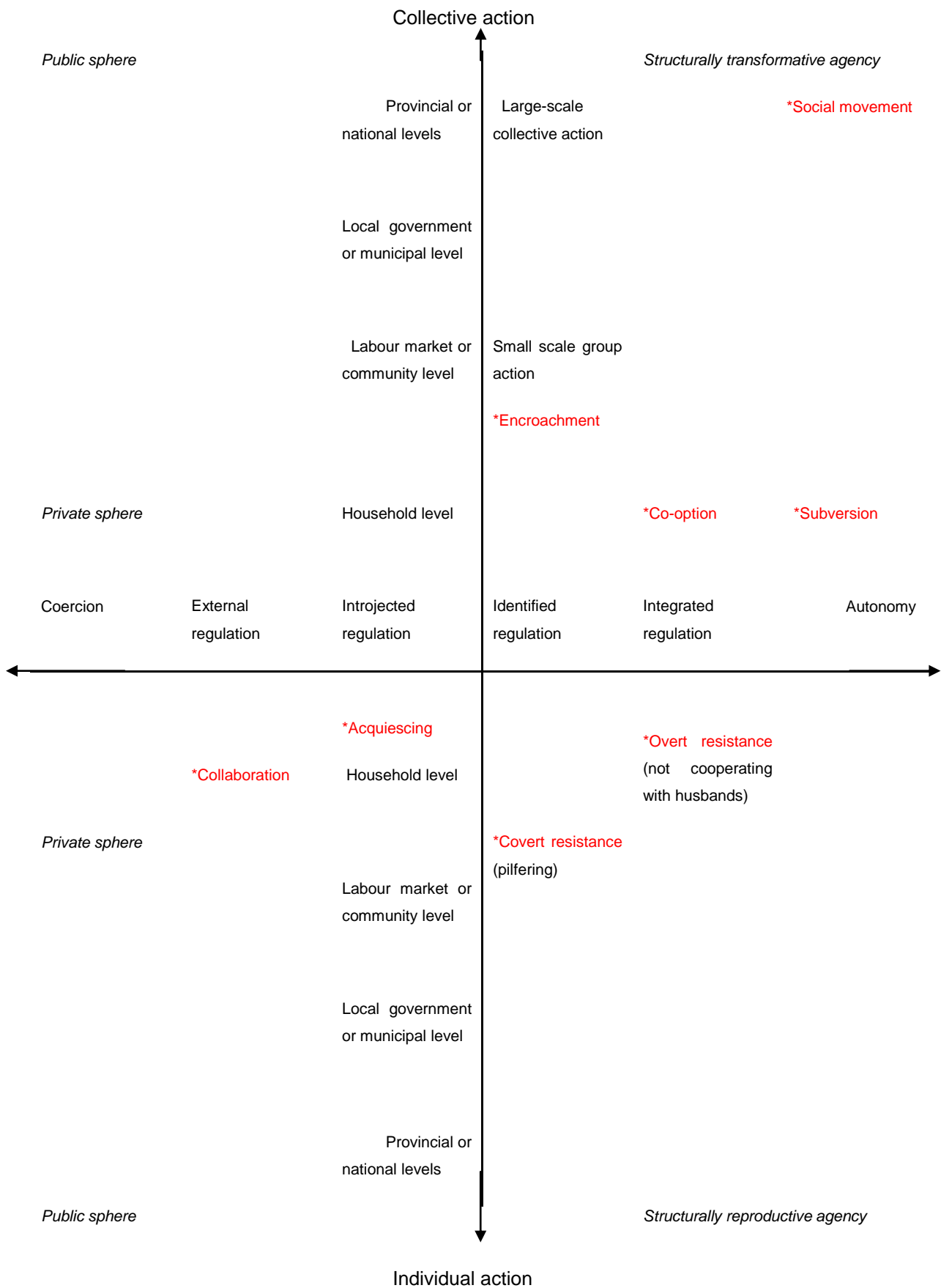
The x axis measures autonomy using self-determination theory, which defines agency as freedom from coercion as well as an agent's freedom to be governed by rules and laws that are of their own making (Alkire, 2005, Emirbayer, 1998, Kant, 1956, Rousseau, 1988, Ryan and Deci, 2000). The key according to this definition is

to evaluate whether subaltern women have internally endorsed cultural norms and societal expectations and whether they value autonomy, individualism or collectivism. Examined by using Chirkov et al. (2003) stated reasons for actions ranging from least to most autonomous

- External regulation refers to women who act in compliance with external pressures such as rewards or punishments or because someone else believes they should act.
- Introjected regulation refers to women who act in order to gain approval and who would feel guilty, embarrassed or apprehensive if they did not act. Also those who act because they believe they should.
- Identified regulation refers to women who act because they believe it is important and worthwhile to act.
- Integrated regulation refers to women who act because they have carefully considered the alternatives, have freedom to choose whether to act and decide that action on their part is warranted.

Some of the analytic categories discussed in the literature review and throughout this chapter are mapped for illustrative purposes, namely, collaboration, acquiescence, co-option and subversion. Though not explicitly captured in the framework, Lister's four inter-related dimensions of agency will be used to guide the interview questions: everyday agency is defined as daily decision making about how to make ends meet; strategic agency, which refers to decision making around longer term strategies; personal agency reflects an individual's own choices; and 'political and citizenship agency' relate to an individual's capacity to effect wider changes (Lister 2004).

Figure 2: Framework for analysing citizenship agency



### 3.1. Conceptual definitions

It is important to note that only those actions that have an impact on an individual's civil, political and social rights will be examined. According to Castles and Davidson (2000), civil rights are those that guarantee freedom from certain types of transgression by the state and include: freedom and inviolability of the person, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, prohibition of discrimination on any grounds and equality before the law. Political rights refer to the rights required to participate actively in democratic government processes without fear of persecution or marginalisation, for example, the right to vote and stand for political office, freedom of assembly and association, and freedom of information. Social rights are those that allow members to maintain a minimum standard of living whether they are able to make an economic contribution or not. For instance, the right to work, to have an education, to have access to health care as well as to have equal opportunities in society.

The term African women will be used throughout this dissertation to refer to the racial grouping of Black African women. Subaltern refers to subordinate women in developing countries whose voices are socially, politically, economically and culturally excluded from hegemonic power structures (Guha, 2000, Gramsci 1929 quoted in Morton, 2007). Marginalisation on the other hand refers to their systematic social disadvantage that constrains their ability to access substantive citizenship rights (Hills et al., 2002, Silver, 1994).

### 4. Problem and rationale

Developmental initiatives on the African continent emphasise participatory citizenship as the means through which people assert and claim their citizenship rights. The argument is that poor people's participation in community projects will increase their influence over decisions that affect their well-being, while their participation in decentralised local governance structures will increase government's responsiveness to their needs and priorities (Cornwall et al., 2007, Schneider, 1999). However, little is known about the citizenship process for African women. A review of the feminist literature shows that they are excluded from dominant constructions of

citizenship on the basis of gender, race, class, patriarchy and cultural context. According to Mohanty (1991), few studies focus on poor Black African women as agents, who 'make choices, have a critical perspective of their own situations and think and organize collectively against their oppressors.'

Additionally, African states have gone through several crises over the last three decades. Imperialism, post-Independence socialism, coups, military regimes, structural adjustment programs, economic instability and external pressures to implement progressive reforms have collectively transformed African socio-political structures so that they are different from those in mature liberal-democracies in the West (Ekeh, 1983). A simplistic transfer of frameworks between these contexts is flawed. For instance, the underlying assumption that civil and political rights are uniform or that African political institutions will respond and be held accountable to their citizen's articulation of rights is problematic, given the pervasiveness of authoritarianism and de-facto one-party states on the continent. It is therefore important to analyse the relationship between subaltern African women and their states, in order to critically assess the utility of current development discourses in their lives. Such an exercise would also enable policy makers to determine how and where spaces of political participation could realistically and feasibly be opened for poor African women.

The main challenge is how to make visible subaltern African women's agency as citizens, given their structural constraints as well as their self-determined goals and interests. Although agency is widely acknowledged as a crucial element if one is to act as a citizen, there is as yet no analytic framework to guide an empirical analysis of agency. This dissertation is therefore designed as an exploratory study that synthesizes existing literature on women's citizenship and agency to present an innovative framework for analysing women's citizenship agency, defined as empirically observable actions that claim citizenship rights or improve the substance of existing ones.

#### 4.1. Research questions

The main question asked was how do poor African women living in townships exercise their agency as citizens? Answering this question involved asking three

related questions: firstly, how do these women understand their citizenship? Secondly, how do they understand and negotiate their structural impediments. And thirdly, how do they exercise their agency as citizens? This project thus aimed to make visible marginalised Black African women's participatory citizenship without overstating the extent to which resistance or agency is possible in certain structural contexts, and without losing sight of the structural inequalities that undermine their citizenship rights.

There were four inter-related objectives. The first was to examine the factors influencing citizenship and agency for marginalised African women. The second objective built on the first by exploring and identifying alternative and non-conventional ways that these women exercise their agency as citizens. And the third objective was to gather and critically analyse data on their experiences and perceptions in order to develop an analytic framework of citizenship agency. The information gathered in the first three phases was used to formulate policy recommendations and suggestions for further study, thereby reaching the final objective.

## 5. Methods

This dissertation used an interpretive paradigm, combining quantitative methods such as the design and application of a survey with qualitative techniques such as interviews. Interpretative strategies are best used to understand the actions of people in specific social circumstances (Babbie, 2012, McNabb, 2010). They were therefore suited for the purpose of this dissertation, which was to examine the process of citizenship agency for subaltern Zimbabwean and South African women. A special emphasis was placed on understanding how they make sense of their citizenship and identifying the strategies they adopt to negotiate barriers to full citizenship within a given context.

The project started by conducting a Cochrane review of eight regional and international databases (Ebscohost, Science Direct, ProQuest, PubMed, Cochrane Library, the Campbell Collections and Google Scholar) to identify literature on African women's citizenship agency. The scan used approximately twenty keywords and combinations of keywords such as: citizenship theory, citizenship agency, women's citizenship, human agency theory, autonomy, self-determination, gender,

feminism, patriarchy, participatory citizenship, women's political participation, subaltern politics, resistance strategies, social structures, public participation, empowerment, Ndebele culture and Zulu culture.

The scan was in English and thus excluded articles written in French, Portuguese or other African languages. And although the search was conducted over a four year period from 2010 to 2013, the majority of articles were retrieved in the first two years with occasional reviews in the last two years. The literature review was thus designed to include peer-reviewed articles published before December 2013. In spite of these limitations, the search generated over two hundred articles that provide important insight into the theoretical development of citizenship and agency in various academic disciplines. Although every effort was made to include seminal articles in the literature review, it was also necessary to present a targeted review providing insight about women's citizenship agency in non-Western societies due to space and time constraints.

### 5.1. Research design

The study was qualitative, explorative, descriptive and contextual in nature. In particular, it was designed as a cross-national, cross-sectional, collective, deviant case study. Cross-national research studies social phenomena in different countries in order to find patterns and relationships across countries. There are four kinds of cross-national research. Firstly, countries can be the object of study when the researcher's interest lies primarily in the countries being studied. Secondly, countries can be the context of study, where the primary interest is comparing the phenomena and applicability of results across countries. Countries can also be the macro-level unit of analysis, when the characteristics of countries are the primary concern. And finally, countries can be treated as components of a larger international system in trans-national studies (Øyen, 1990). This study was concerned with how women in two countries actively participate in the citizenship process, with data collected over a short period of time. It was therefore designed as a cross-national study where countries are the context of study.



This exploratory study aims to make visible African women's agency. A deviant case method is well-suited for this purpose (Levy, 2008, Seawright and Gerring, 2008). This is because providing insight into how African women's citizenship agency diverges from Western theories will contribute to the methodological development and refinement of feminist theories of agency.

A collective case study, also known as a multiple case, instrumental or a cross-case study, is designed to compare and understand the 'influences of multiple-level social systems on people's perspectives and behaviours' across different countries (Babbie and Mouton, 1998, McNab, 2010). Best used for establishing or testing theories, collective case studies can also be used when identifying how a complex set of circumstances come together to produce a particular phenomenon (citizenship agency) in different countries. The two countries chosen, Zimbabwe and South Africa, have different political conditions so a collective case study design was helpful for understanding the influence of context, such as political culture in each country, on the phenomenon being studied, namely, subaltern African women's citizenship agency.

It is important to note that according to the GINI co-efficient measure, South Africa's neo-liberal macro-economic framework has contributed to one of the biggest gaps between rich and poor in the world, a gap that has been increasing since the end of Apartheid. And that Zimbabwe went through a postcolonial period where it was once one of the main exporters of food to the rest of Africa and had very good health and education systems. So although the countries have different political and economic trajectories, subaltern women in both countries have similar stories of food and income security, high unemployment rates and high barriers to upward mobility.

The study was thus designed to compare citizenship agency for two groups of women facing similar structural constraints but who live in two countries with different political systems. It focused on the Zulu ethnic group in Durban, South Africa and the isiNdebele in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe in order to minimise cultural differences. The isiNdebele are an off-shoot of the Zulu empire, migrating into modern day Bulawayo approximately two hundred years ago, during the Mfecane or Time of Calamity. The two groups of women have similar systems of meaning, with similar normative

values, culturally assigned gender roles, ways of understanding the world and their language remains similar. Additionally, they have similar systems of social relations, being the same race, gender, class and both living in relatively deprived urban townships.

## 5.2. Data collection

Data was collected through the use of in-depth interviews, which aimed to understand both the content and context of responses (Babbie and Mouton, 1998, Hesse-Biber, 2012). A questionnaire consisting of a series of closed and open-ended questions was administered to each respondent. The first two sections of the questionnaire asked closed-ended questions in a fairly structured manner, in order to capture consistent information on socio-demographic characteristics, household decision making and domestic violence from each participant. The next two sections asked open-ended questions in order to gain insight about the respondent's perceptions, aspirations and beliefs.

## 5.3. Sampling

There is a clear geographic dimension to rights, and debates about entitlement are mired in social and political struggles over the appropriation of urban space (Lefebvre, 1996). Public goods in both countries are provided by local governments at the municipal level. So richer municipalities have high tax rates to upgrade the state's basic infrastructure and provide their residents with superior services. They also invest heavily in private security and surveillance measures to keep 'less deserving' people out. As a result poorer municipalities with low tax revenues also attract the poorest migrants.

Townships refer to urban areas that were reserved for non-Whites during Apartheid and colonialism in South Africa and Zimbabwe respectively. Located on the periphery of cities, township populations grew rapidly as rural migrants moved to cities in search of employment. The influx of migrants was rarely accompanied by increased public spending on housing, electricity, sanitation, water, schools or health facilities. As a result, townships are historically the most underdeveloped neighbourhoods in each country, with high poverty levels, fewer social facilities, infrastructure and economic opportunities relative to middle and upper class

neighbourhoods. The majority of township residents are semi-skilled or unskilled Africans who fall into the lowest two wealth quintiles in their respective countries.

The study focuses on townships because women's developmental needs are more apparent there, due to a general shortage of resources. Community based organizations, churches, and non-governmental organizations are also more visible and more active at the grass-roots level in townships, relative to lower density suburbs. The Zimbabwean research assistant lived in Nketa Township in Bulawayo, while the South African research assistant lived in KwaMashu Township in Durban. Those two townships were consequently chosen for fieldwork. A convenient random sampling technique was used, where the interviewers visited every second house.

Fieldwork in Zimbabwe occurred between November 2012 and January 2013. Seventy-five homes were visited to obtain twenty questionnaires (26% response rate). The majority of respondents were interviewed during normal business hours, that is, Monday to Friday between 9am to 4pm. South African fieldwork occurred between September and November 2013. Fifty-three homes were visited to generate seventeen respondents in the allocated time (32%). All respondents were interviewed during weekends and public holidays; between 9am and 4pm. Differences in interview times may result in a larger proportion of unemployed respondents in the Zimbabwean sample.

#### 5.4. Target population

This project focused on subaltern African women's citizenship agency. Four qualifiers were added for research participants. Firstly, respondents must identify as Black African and as women, biologically as well as with respect to their gender identity<sup>14</sup>. Secondly, only individuals who were eighteen years or older were eligible to participate, as the study focused on individuals who had the legal capacity to vote. Thirdly, respondents in South Africa must have been native-born South African citizens and those in Zimbabwe, native-born Zimbabweans, who have lived in their respective countries from birth to the age of 18 years. And finally, respondents in

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<sup>14</sup> Sexuality was not included as a criterion because homosexuality is a sensitive issue that is prosecutable in Zimbabwean courts. Although South Africa's legal system is liberal and protects LGBTI rights, there is a high level of violence against and 'corrective rape' of lesbians in townships.

KwaMashu Township must self-identify as members of the Zulu group, while those in Nketa Township must identify as members of the isiNdebele ethnic group. Although other household members were present during the interview, only one household member per house was interviewed to allow for as much diversity as possible in the relatively small sample.

## 5.5. Data analysis

Content analysis was used to evaluate data from the in-depth interviews. The structured sections of the questionnaires were coded beforehand and a pre-defined set of relevant concepts were set to guide coding for the open-ended questions. The coding process was flexible and additional concepts that were indicative of the research questions were added as needed. Responses were classified manually in two phases. Conceptual analysis was used initially, to examine key-word presence with respect to the research question. Relational analysis was then used to identify themes and sub-themes from the interviews. The unit of analysis was the individual as individual experiences were analysed to describe the collective experiences of each group.

## 6. Limitations

Given that the logic of qualitative sampling is concerned with in-depth understanding of personal histories, qualitative samples are usually small-scale (Hesse-Biber, 2007). However, small sample sizes affect the external generalizability that is, the extent to which conclusions can be drawn beyond the group<sup>15</sup> (Letherby, 2003, Maxwell, 1996). This was an exploratory study concerned with internal generalizability, or applicability of conclusions within the group being studied. A convenient random sampling technique was used; data collected using a questionnaire (Figure 12 in the Appendix) and findings reported with enough detail, so as to allow other scholars to make subjective judgements about transferability.

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<sup>15</sup> It is important to note that African women living in townships are not a homogeneous group, most but not all are poor for example.

Equally important is credibility, which refers to congruency between the researcher's subjective interpretation of events and the constructed reality as it exists in the respondents' mind (Babbie and Mouton, 1998). Two methods were used to improve credibility, namely triangulation and peer-debriefing. Triangulation was achieved by asking the same question in different ways in order to detect discrepancies in individual responses. Collecting information from different points of view revealed a more comprehensive and clearer image of the participant's true beliefs and experiences. Peer-debriefing with research assistants occurred immediately after each interview, in order to arrive at a more objective assessment of each respondent.

### 6.1. Ethical considerations

There were two main ethical considerations raised in this research namely informed consent and the need for anonymity and confidentiality. Each respondent received an informed consent document detailing the purpose, time commitment, risks and benefits of the study, and the confidentiality of their information. The participants were informed that they had the right to participate in the research and the freedom to decline or withdraw from the interview at any time. They also needed to sign the informed consent form before the interview started.

The participants' privacy and confidentiality was ensured by coding with numerical identifiers rather than names from the beginning of the interview. This helped ensure anonymity of their responses and protect them from any negative consequences that could arise from any unfavourable comments made. Maintaining confidentiality and anonymity was particularly important given that there were questions about formal and informal political participation. The political climate in Zimbabwe is still tense, which led to a general unwillingness to discuss politics 'on the record.'

Care was taken to minimize any harm caused to the respondents, by asking at the outset whether they anticipated any negative impact being caused to them by participating in the interview and by not asking any questions about party affiliation. The raw data was stored in a password protected file and will not be disclosed to any unauthorized persons.

This dissertation adopts a feminist methodology, that is, the theory and analysis of how research should proceed (Harding, 1987). The study kept the five main feminist research values in mind. Firstly, it paid special attention to gender identities and relationships, in order to better understand the significance and relevance they played in shaping the women's opportunities and constraints. Secondly, it focused on the role the private sphere plays in shaping the women's experiences, perceptions and actions, thereby accounting for those practices that reproduce unequal or discriminatory social contexts. Thirdly, although the dissertation is written in the third person, the fieldwork itself acknowledged and welcomed subjectivity and emotional involvement on both the interviewers and respondents' parts (Hesse-Biber, 2012, Letherby, 2003, McNabb, 2010).

Fourthly, the researcher remained sensitive to exploitative relationships and attempted to reduce power hierarchies throughout the interview process. Feminists use a multiplicity of research methods, that is, techniques for gathering evidence (Harding, 1987). There is a preference for using less structured methods such as conversations and group discussions, as these mimic the normal ways that women communicate. This study used a fairly structured questionnaire as this was deemed to be the best way to obtain comparable information for each respondent, within the allocated time of one day. So the fourth feminist research value was achieved by highlighting that the respondents were the experts on their lives, encouraging questions and facilitating discussion during the open-ended part of the interview. And finally, reflexivity was an essential part of the research process with the researcher continuously questioning and reassessing her own assumptions and positionality in order to determine how these influenced the research (Binns, 2006, Hesse-Biber, 2012, Letherby, 2003, Momsen, 2006).

## 7. Conclusion

This chapter provides an overview of the conceptual framework and methods that were used to guide the research. The conceptual framework that was introduced in the chapter will be used to empirically observe subaltern women's citizenship agency in Zimbabwe and South Africa. It aims to locate the various types of agency described in feminism and subaltern studies, within the more comprehensive

theories of human agency and structure in sociology. This project was undertaken because of the difficulty experienced in determining what an empirical application of these theories looks like. That said there is an expectation that the framework will be modified during the fieldwork and data analysis phase to reflect citizenship agency in the South African and Zimbabwean context.

This research strategy can be summarised according to the four dimensions of social research that is, purpose, use, time and research techniques. The purpose of the study was to conduct a qualitative case study of two marginalised communities in Zimbabwe and South Africa. The data was used for basic research that is, to advance fundamental knowledge about an understudied group of women in feminist research, and to stimulate new ways of thinking about non-Western women's agency.

The unit of analysis was the individual, as individual experiences were analysed to describe the collective experiences of the community at a specific point in time (cross-sectional study). And finally, in-depth interviews were used to collect survey data on thirty-seven women, twenty from Zimbabwe and seventeen from South Africa. Although the small sample size will affect the external generalizability or the extent to which conclusions can be drawn beyond the group, the main focus was on achieving internal generalizability, or the applicability of conclusions within the group being studied.

Feminist methodology was used to guide this research project. This meant adopting a process that focused on enabling marginalised women to voice their experiences and perceptions of citizenship agency, and paying special attention to the moral, political and ethical issues associated with race, power, class and identity throughout the research process. An interpretative research strategy was used to understand how poor women in marginalised communities make sense of their citizenship experiences, and to identify the strategies they adopt to negotiate barriers to full citizenship. The next section presents the results from the fieldwork in Zimbabwe.

## Chapter 4: Zimbabwe Results

### 1. Introduction

Nketa Township is a high density suburb approximately thirty minutes' east of the centre of Bulawayo. Built on the periphery of cities, townships are historically the most under-developed neighbourhoods in Zimbabwe, with less infrastructure, higher poverty levels, insufficient economic opportunities and fewer social services than middle and upper class neighbourhoods. The majority of township residents are semi-skilled or unskilled Black Africans who fall into the lowest two wealth quintiles in their respective countries. Nketa has more dirt roads, litter and potholes than one would see in wealthier neighbourhoods in Bulawayo, but it does not have conspicuous sewage, flooding or visible health hazards. The houses are extremely modest but are all formal houses made out of brick and cement with roofs made out of tiles or corrugated iron. Each house has a small front garden leading to the house and a larger back yard where everyone interviewed had a small vegetable garden and one or more fruit trees (mostly guava, lemon and mango). Some houses also had small chicken coops, with hens reared for eggs rather than meat. Although Nketa is low-income and many houses are in a state of disrepair, there is still a sense of ownership in the community.

Many residents in Nketa are members of the isiNdebele ethnic group in Zimbabwe. The isiNdebele are an off-shoot of the Zulu empire, migrating into modern day Bulawayo approximately two hundred years ago, during the Mfecane or Time of Calamity. This was a period of sustained warfare during the reign of king Shaka of the Zulu empire, when catastrophic clashes led to the widespread movement of peoples. Around 1821, the Zulu general Mzilikazi of the Khumalo clan defied king Shaka, migrated north with his faction, and eventually settled and established his capital in modern day Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

Thandie\*<sup>16</sup> is thirty-five year old Ndebele woman with a Bachelor of Science degree, living in Nketa in the east of Bulawayo. Thandie moved to South Africa with her fiancé Paul\* four years ago, in order to save enough money for their wedding and to

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<sup>16</sup> Not their real names



buy a house. A qualified teacher with two years of teaching experience, Thandie was fortunate enough to obtain a teaching job paying close to a market related salary in Limpopo Province, where there is a dire shortage of teachers. Paul a qualified mechanic also found a relevant job within commuting distance, so it took them only two years to save enough money to establish themselves in Bulawayo. They are now married, have a child, a car and own their house in Nketa Township, within walking distance to both sets of parents. Thandie is currently working as the deputy headmistress at a high school in her neighborhood, while Paul has a home-based car repair business.

Although they have not ruled out emigrating permanently if the country becomes unstable again, this upwardly mobile young couple states that they would prefer to live and work in the neighborhood they grew up in, with their family and extended family nearby. With respect to citizenship agency, Thandie acknowledges that she was more active when she was younger, both as a university student in Zimbabwe and when she was working in South Africa. She used to join boycotts, go door to door asking people to sign petitions and even helped organize a peaceful demonstration against unfair practices on behalf of her South African students. But Thandie laments the lack of civil liberties in Zimbabwe and says “but I am scared to do that again, now that I have a family to think about.”

Thandie is one of the twenty women I was fortunate enough to meet during my fieldwork in Nketa Township. This chapter aims to describe their diverse personal histories and compelling survival strategies as well as highlight their agency as citizens. Section 2 presents their socio-demographic information and where possible, compares it to the Zimbabwean women sampled in the 2010 Demographic and Health Survey. Section 3 examines their autonomy, self-determination and decision-making ability as well as their gender roles, while the fourth and final section explores what the interviews revealed about their participatory citizenship.

## 2. Demographics

Nketa women’s responses will be compared to information from the 2010 Zimbabwean Demographic and Health Survey (DHS). The DHS is funded by the

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in order to provide low and middle countries with data needed to monitor and evaluate population, health and nutrition programs on a regular basis. This chapter focuses on responses to the DHS women's questionnaire, which collects information about socio-economic characteristics, reproductive history, maternity care, sexual activity and contraceptive use (Corsi et al., 2012). Most DHS countries use a two-stage stratified cluster-sampling design to randomly select a fixed number of households for the survey. This sampling technique may introduce intra-cluster effects so all frequencies were weighted using STATA version 12, in order to present nationally representative results (Vaessen et al., 2005).

Table 1 compares the age distribution of respondents in Nketa to that in the 2010 DHS survey. The Ndebele women in Nketa are slightly older, with a median age falling in the 30 to 34 year category, compared to a median age in the 25 to 29 age category for Zimbabwean women as a whole.<sup>17</sup> The mean age for the former is also higher at 36 years compared to 28 years for Zimbabwean women.

Table 1: Age distribution

	Age	Ndebele Respondents		Zimbabwean women	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1	18-24	4	20.0	2,602	32.6
2	25-29	4	20.0	1,696	21.3
3	30-34	2	10.0	1,287	16.1
4	35-39	3	15.0	1,034	13.0
5	40-44	1	5.0	727	9.1
6	45+	6	30.0	632	7.9
	Total	20	100.0	7,978	100.0
	Mean age	35.5 years		28.1 years	

Sources: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo. Zimbabwe 2010 DHS Survey

Older average ages in Nketa can be explained by the differences in sampling ages. The DHS survey focuses on the reproductive population, defined as women aged between 15 and 49 years, while this dissertation focuses on women who are eligible to vote that is, those who are 18 years and older. Four respondents in Nketa are

<sup>17</sup> Zimbabwean women and DHS sample are used interchangeably throughout this discussion as the DHS survey results are nationally representative of the population. All DHS percentages are weighted using women's individual weights.

over the age of 50 (20% of the sample) with the oldest being 58 years old, thereby increasing the average age for the respondents relative to the DHS sample.

In spite of older average ages, marriage rates among Ndebele women are lower than for Zimbabwean women as a whole (Table 2). Only 11 respondents (55%) have been ever-married (currently married, widowed, separated or divorced) compared to 81% of Zimbabwean women. Poverty may be influencing higher cohabitation rates for the respondents in Nketa Township. For example, Julie, who was unemployed and had just given birth four months ago, said that her boyfriend was not employed full-time and did not have enough money to pay for either the lobola<sup>18</sup> (dowry) or a wedding. She was hoping to find a job when her daughter was older, so that they could help each other with household expenses and save enough money to get married.

Table 2: Marital status

	Marital Status	Ndebele Respondents		Zimbabwean women	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1	Never married	5	25.0	1,283	16.1
2	Cohabiting	4	20.0	250	3.1
3	Married	8	40.0	5,196	65.1
4	Separated	0	0	368	4.6
5	Divorced	0	0	300	3.8
6	Widowed	3	15.0	581	7.3
	Total	20	100	7,978	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo. Zimbabwe 2010 DHS Survey

The women in Nketa are more educated than Zimbabwean women as a whole (Table 3). This is likely due to the education gap between rural and urban women in Zimbabwe. Nketa is located in an urban area so women there have had more access to educational opportunities relative to their rural counterparts, who are included in the figure for Zimbabwean women. As a result only one quarter (25%) of respondents has junior school or less compared to almost one third of Zimbabwean women (33%). Furthermore, three times as many Ndebele than Zimbabwean women pursued their education after high school (15% compared to 5%). Of the three

<sup>18</sup> Lobola, otherwise known as bride wealth, is a payment made at marriage which guarantees the husband's right to the progeny of that marriage. It is not a purchase of the bride. Among matrilineal peoples, lobola does not occur, because rights to the children remain in the mother's line (Parpart, 1995).

respondents who furthered their education, one obtained a degree, one completed a secretarial course and another completed a book-keeping diploma.

Table 3: Highest educational attainment

	Educational attainment	Ndebele women		Zimbabwean women	
		Number	%	Number	%
1	No education	0	0.0	221	2.8
2	Junior School	5	25.0	2,380	29.8
3	High School	12	60.0	4,985	62.5
4	Higher (diploma, apprentice, degree)	3	15.0	392	4.9
	Total	20	100.0%	7,978	100.0%

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo. Zimbabwe 2010 DHS Survey

Seven of the seventeen Nketa women who have high school or less mentioned that they have since tried to pursue their education (41%). Of these seven, one successfully completed a dress-making course that allowed her to start a work-from-home business as a tailor, and another completed a hair-dressing internship that allows her to supplement her income by doing people's hair at home. Neither of these women received official recognition in the form of certificates or diplomas for these courses, which have helped diversify household income sources. The high failure rate is worth noting, five of the seven women (71%) who actively tried to pursue their education as adults were unsuccessful, which may be indicative of high barriers to self-improvement and upward mobility in Nketa

The remainder of the seventeen women with high school or less (ten respondents) never tried to pursue their education. Seven of the ten simply said that they had no money to pursue their education (70%). Two respondents were planning to pursue their education in the near future and one 58 year old respondent with a junior school education said "I won't lie to you; I just didn't want to continue with school...."

Zimbabweans are generally very aware of the link between educational attainment and potential earnings because of the large scale brain (and brawn) drain of both skilled and semi-skilled Zimbabweans over the last fifteen years. The three women who furthered their education are the only ones working full time in the formal sector, and two of them get benefits such as pension, medical aid and paid leave (Table 4). Coverage by statutory social security schemes is very limited in Zimbabwe and is mostly confined to workers in the formal economy. Furthermore, Zimbabwe does not have social welfare programs such as unemployment or child care grants. In other

words, the vast majority of women in Nketa (90%) do not have access to any form of government social spending. According to the literature, this may have an impact on their citizenship agency. This is because there is a link between social rights and agency where conferring social rights to disadvantaged groups encourages them to exercise their civil and political rights, whereas withholding or violating any of these rights marginalises individuals and prevents them from participating in society as full and equal members (Doyal and Gough, 1991, Macedo, 1990, Kymlicka and Norman, 1994 and Lister, 1997).

Table 4: Current employment status

	Current employment status for respondents	Number	Percentage
1	Unemployed, not looking for work	3	10.0
2	Unemployed, looking for work	4	13.3
3	Subsistence agriculture / urban good gardens	8	26.7
4	Casual or trading jobs in the informal sector	10	33.3
5	Casual or temporary jobs in the formal sector	2	6.7
6	Working full time in the formal sector - no benefits	1	3.3
7	Working full time in the formal sector - benefits	2	6.7
	Total	30	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo

Table 4 shows that only five respondents work either full or part-time in the formal sector (25%). It is important to contextualise this finding. Firstly, economic collapse and state failure in Zimbabwe have effectively restructured the labour market resulting in a rapidly shrinking formal sector. The proportion of the labour force employed in the formal sector has declined from approximately 47% in 1980 to 31% in 1995, and 6% in 2010 (Ncube, 2000, USAID, 2010). So the fact that three women (15%) work full-time in the formal sector means that a greater proportion of women in Nketa work in the formal sector relative to the Zimbabwean population as a whole.

Secondly, formal sector salaries in Zimbabwe are generally too low to make ends meet so many Zimbabweans, including the women interviewed, either choose the informal sector or supplement formal sector incomes through informal side-businesses (Anyadike, 2013). So the sector remains an important source of livelihood for the majority of Zimbabweans, in spite of the fact that workers there are unprotected, unrepresented, poorly remunerated and insecure due to highly variable incomes. Thirdly, the ILO has been actively involved in trying to develop an international definition of unemployment since the 1970s that recognises the scale of

economic production in the informal sector and the dynamism of its entrepreneurs. According to this definition, growth in Zimbabwe's informal sector has had the effect of keeping the unemployment rate at below 10% (Leubker, 2008).

The study asked questions about unemployment in several ways, in order to account for these larger structural changes in Zimbabwe's labour markets and economy. Comparing the classic and expanded unemployment figures is revealing. Only four respondents state that they are unemployed and actively looking for work (20%). But only three of the fifteen respondents who do not work in the formal sector at all indicate that they are not looking for work, leaving twelve respondents (60%) who are effectively 'unemployed' with respect to the formal/informal sector dichotomy. This figure of 60% is in line with that found by the DHS 2010 survey, where 61% of Zimbabwean women state that they were not working in 2010 (Figure 4 in the Appendix). The unemployment rate of 60% is comparable to the oft-quoted unemployment rate of figure of 70%-80% in Zimbabwe.

Comparing employment status to income sources reveals that self-employment is the most important source of income in Nketa, with one in three women (33.3%) relying on this type of work to make ends meet (Table 5). The second most important source of income is contributions from other household members, tied with formal sector employment, with each accounting for 16.7% of total income sources. The importance of pension income was unexpected. Firstly, because the majority of women work in the informal sector so do not qualify for any government or private pension schemes. And secondly, because no respondents are over the pensionable age of sixty with 58-year-old Gogo (grandmother) being the oldest respondent interviewed (Zimbabweans can receive a pension at fifty-five under exceptional circumstances). Of the four women who live in households receiving pensions, two are married to pensioners and two are widows. Both widows are the primary breadwinners, one has a junior school education and works in the informal sector and the other has a high school education, is unemployed and looking for work. This suggests that they may receive pensions from their deceased husbands, who were members of a scheme at the time of their death.

Table 5: Income sources

	Monthly household income sources	Number	Percentage
1	Employment	6	16.7
2	Government grant	0	0
3	Child support	0	0
4	Remittances	3	8.3
5	Self-employment, trading or casual piece jobs	12	33.3
6	Pension	4	11.1
7	Rental or lodging income	1	2.8
8	Contributions from other household members	6	16.7
9	Contributions from boyfriend or same sex partner	4	11.1
10	Other	0	0
	Total	36	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo.

Table 6 shows that the mean and median household size is 5 for the respondents as well as for the Zimbabwean population in general. However, the distribution for Zimbabwean women differs slightly with more outliers than in Nketa; there are more households with only one or two individuals (10% versus 5% among respondents) and more households with eight or more people in the population of Zimbabwean women (17% versus 10% among respondents).

Table 6: Household size

Household Size	Ndebele respondents		Zimbabwean women	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1	0	0.0	209	2.3
2	1	5.0	681	7.4
3	3	15.0	1,328	14.5
4	3	15.0	1,648	18.0
5	4	20.0	1,566	17.1
6	5	25.0	1,271	13.9
7	2	10.0	918	10.0
8	1	5.0	544	5.9
9 or more	1	5.0	1006	11.0
Total	20	100.0	9,171	100.0
Mean household size	5.3		5.4	
Median household size	5		5	

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo. Zimbabwe 2010 DHS Survey

The latter difference may be due to the fact that none of the Nketa respondents lived in polygamous marriages, which occur in 12% of marriages in the 2010 DHS survey (Figure 5 in the Appendix). The maximum household size is 11 among respondents and 24 in the population, with the latter figure likely reflecting a polygamous union.

Table 7 divides household composition into nuclear families, immediate families, relatives and lodgers with each tier indicating the strength of family ties according to Western definitions. For instance, a nuclear family is defined as one consisting of either the respondent alone or with a partner, their own children and any step-children, while immediate family is defined as one consisting of a nuclear family as well as the respondents' siblings, grandparents and parents. Only one quarter of women (25%) live within nuclear families, illustrating the importance of kinship ties in Ndebele culture. Half of the respondents (50%) live in the third family tier, with households consisting of nuclear, immediate and family members such as aunts, first cousins, nieces or nephews.

Table 7: Household composition

	Household Composition	Number	Percentage
1	Nuclear family (respondent, partner, own children)	5	25.0
2	Immediate family (nuclear, siblings, grandparents, step-child)	0	0
3	Family (immediate, aunts, first cousins, nieces, nephews)	10	50.0
4	Relatives (family, other blood relatives, in-laws)	0	0
5	Lodgers or roommates with relatives	4	20.0
6	Lodgers or roommates without relatives	0	0
7	No info	1	0
	Total	20	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo.

It is important to note that traditional Ndebele culture does not differentiate between the first and third family tier in the same way that Western culture does. So aunts are mothers, cousins are siblings nephews are sons; and the Ndebele words for aunt, cousin and nephew signify this. For instance the word for mother is Mama, for her older sister it is uMama Omdala (direct translation is older mother) while her younger sister is uMama Omncane (younger mother).

Two stories emerged of families informally adopting double orphans whose parents passed away from HIV/AIDS. And in three instances, families were looking after children whose parents were working in the Diaspora and sending remittances to contribute to the upkeep of their children (Table 5). However, large household sizes are not necessarily a reflection of more dependents. In several households, living



with adult relatives was an important survival strategy to pool income and spread income risk.

With respect to financial contributions to households, almost half of the Ndebele women interviewed state that they are either the primary breadwinner in their households (30%) or contribute equally with their partners (15%) (Table 8). When only looking at the subgroup of currently married or cohabiting respondents, 17% report they are the primary breadwinners and a quarter (25%) report that they contribute equally to the household. In other words, almost half of the women currently living with male partners (42%) feel that they make significant financial contributions to their households.

Table 8: Primary breadwinner

	Primary breadwinner	Number	Percentage
1	Respondent	6	30.0
2	Other household member - partner	6	30.0
3	Other household member	3	15.0
4	Non-household member	2	10.0
5	Respondent and partner equally	3	15.0
	Total	20	100.0
	Average monthly household income	Number	Percentage
1	\$0 – \$55	2	10.0
2	\$56 - \$99	0	0
3	\$100 - \$134	1	5.0
4	\$135 - \$154	0	0
5	\$155 - \$279	3	15.0
6	More than \$280	4	20.0
7	Refused to answer	10	50.0
	Total	20	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo.

This finding presents the first significant difference between the respondents and Zimbabwean women in the DHS (Figure 6 in the Appendix). A lower proportion of married or cohabiting respondents in Nketa live in households where their husbands are the primary breadwinner, 50%, compared to 61% of all Zimbabwean women. Although greater contributions may not translate to greater control over economic resources, the fact that women in Nketa believe they make significant financial contributions to their households may influence their decision-making power and sense of agency.

Respondents were generally reluctant to discuss their average household incomes or estimate the value of goods received, with high refusal rates for both questions. This was not unexpected, as anecdotal evidence suggests that it is difficult to collect such information, as income is considered private and rarely discussed outside the family unit. Additionally, respondents may have been self-conscious about discussing their income with the Research assistant who lived in the neighbourhood. Six out of ten women who answered this question had monthly household incomes of less than US\$279 (60%) and four of more than US\$280 a month (40%). A 2011 nationally representative survey of 31,248 households in both rural and urban areas found that the gross monthly cash income in Zimbabwe is US\$180 per household (Dzinotizei, 2011). This average takes into account households with no incomes, such as subsistence farmers in rural areas.

According to the Consumer Council of Zimbabwe (CCZ), the cost of living as depicted by the Low Income Urban Earner Basket of Goods for a family of six was US\$505 a month in August 2012, while the CCZ basket for transport, rent, water, electricity health, education, clothing and footwear was US\$344. The monthly cost of living for a low-income family of six was therefore US\$849 a month in 2012, which equates to US\$705 for a family of five, the median household size in Nketa. In other words, the majority of women who answered the question (60%) live on less than half Zimbabwe's poverty line.

Thirteen respondents also received goods from non-household members (65%), mostly in the form of clothing, food and groceries from relatives in the Diaspora or those working elsewhere in the country (Table 9). These in-kind gifts play an important role in Zimbabwean households by helping to alleviate the burden on earned income (Crush and Tevera, 2010).

The researcher was unaware of the fact that Nketa was initially planned as a housing scheme providing affordable loans and a path to home ownership for low-income war veterans. The majority of loans were obtained in the post-Independence boom when the economy was booming and the government was expanding social investment programs. African women who were viewed as legal minors under colonial laws, were for the first time granted full citizenship status, access to education, reproductive health care and maternity leave (McFadden, 2005, Parpart,

1993). This gave Zimbabwean women the opportunity to invest more time in employment, open bank accounts, and own property in their own names. So apart from war veterans, other low-income earners including women were able to apply for and obtain mortgages for the modest homes in Nketa Township.

Table 9: In-kind non-cash receipts

	Goods received in 2012	Number	Percentage
1	Food and groceries	5	25.0
2	Books, stationary and educational materials	0	0
3	Household appliances and electronics	0	0
4	Clothing	7	35.0
5	Household investment e.g. furniture, bicycle	1	5.0
6	Business investment e.g. livestock, equipment	0	0
7	N/A	7	35.0
	Total	20	100.0
	Average value of goods received	Number	Percentage
1	\$0 – \$55	1	5.0
2	\$56 - \$99	2	10.0
3	\$100 - \$134	0	0
4	\$135 - \$154	0	0
5	\$155 - \$279	1	5.0
6	More than \$280	1	5.0
7	Refused to answer or n/a	15	75.0
	Total	20	100

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo.

There are thus higher levels of home ownership in Nketa than among Zimbabwean women (Table 10). Half the women in Nketa owned their homes with five having titles in their name alone (25%) and five in both their husband and their names (25%). This can be compared to a third of Zimbabwean women who own their homes (36%). According to the DHS survey, 9% of Zimbabwean women have titles in their name alone and 27% have joint titles with their husbands (Figure 7 in the Appendix). Interestingly, homeownership rates are consistent with the proportion of women who are primary or joint breadwinners in their households, namely 45% of the women in Nketa and 33% of Zimbabwean women.

Although the DHS and the study's interview questions on homeownership are comparable, the latter also attempts to capture whether respondents who don't own homes lives in homes owned by other family members. This is because familial property ownership in marginalised communities may have an impact on respondent

desires, goals and perhaps even agency. The interview results illustrate that a significant proportion of respondents who do not own their homes (60%) live in homes owned by other family members. The interviews did not probe whether they pay rent, but even those who do are likely to have greater flexibility with respect to household budgets than those renting from people who are not relatives.

Table 10: Homeownership rates

	Household Ownership	Number	Percentage
1	Yes – respondent’s name alone	5	25.0
2	Yes – respondent and partner’s name alone	5	25.0
3	Yes – respondent and someone else’s name	0	0
4	No – partner’s name alone	0	0
5	No - family owned	6	30.0
6	No - rental	4	20.0
7	No – squatting or appropriated home	0	0
	Total	20	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo.

The mean age for female homeowners in Nketa is 46 years and the youngest homeowner is 35 years old. In contrast, the mean age for female Zimbabwean homeowners is 34 years and the youngest homeowner is 15, likely due to inheritance or marriage. The average age for non-homeowners is 25 years for both the women in Nketa as well as Zimbabwean women in the population. Given the continued informalisation of the Zimbabwean labour market, limited mortgage financing and the fact that the average semi-detached 2 bedroom house in Nketa costs US\$15,000 to US\$25,000, the younger generation will face considerably higher barriers to homeownership.<sup>19</sup>

Most houses in Nketa do not have dwellings in the back due to stringent town planning laws and a 2005 government operation that destroyed illegal outside dwellings. As a result, only one respondent lived in an informal dwelling; a brick hut in the back yard. Table 11 shows that all houses except that hut come with infrastructure for basic amenities, namely electricity, tap water and a flush toilet. All houses had at the very minimum a two-plate stove, at least one mattress, a radio, a

<sup>19</sup> The average detached three bedroom house in a middle class neighbourhood in Bulawayo costs US\$70,000 to US\$150,000, while the average four bedroom detached home in Bulawayo’s wealthiest neighbourhoods costs US\$250,000 – US\$400,000. According to Dzinotei (2011) the per capita income in Zimbabwe is US\$500 and average household income US\$180.

television and a cell-phone. Thirteen houses had a fridge (65%), seven a bicycle (35%), six a car (30%) and 5 a landline telephone (25%).

Table 11: Amenities in the house

	Amenities	Number	Percentage
1	Electricity in the home	18	90.0
2	Tap water in the home	19	95.0
3	Working Flush toilet in the home	19	95.0
4	Geyser for hot water	2	10.0
5	Access to outside sources of clean drinking water	4	20.0
6	Access to flush toilet outside the home	3	15.0
7	The house has an unfinished floor (sand, cement etc.)	0	0
8	The house uses dirty cooking fuel (firewood, paraffin)	1	5.0
	Total		

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo.

The economic collapse in Zimbabwe resulted in major foreign currency, fuel and infrastructure constraints across the country. Urban centres are facing persistent shortages that rarely occurred a decade ago. So although all houses visited had the necessary facilities, there were daily electricity blackouts and weekly water rationing where tap water was only available two or three times a week. Of the two houses that did not have electricity, one was the hut and the other, a house that had been disconnected from the electricity supply because the owner could not afford to pay the bill. The government supplier accepts partial payments and only disconnects the electricity when no payment has been received for several months.

### 3. Decision-making ability

Autonomy is defined in sociological literature as “the degree of access to and control over material and social resources within the family, in the community and in society at large” (Dixon, 1978). Autonomy is an aspect of individual power that includes one’s ability to “influence and control one’s personal environment” and to “obtain information and make decisions about one’s own private concerns” (Safilios-Rothschild, 1982). Autonomy is the key to improving women’s living conditions and is influenced by factors such as education, access to resources, gender roles, region (rural or urban) and freedom of movement (Anwar et al., 2013, Dixon, 1978). A study in Nepal found that women’s autonomy in decision-making is positively associated with age, employment and the number of living children (Acharya et al., 2010). Other factors likely to influence women’s decision making roles in Zimbabwean households

include religion, cultural norms, being a primary breadwinner, age, employment status, marital status and homeownership.

Bank accounts are important vehicles for promoting savings, borrowing and asset-building, particularly for low-income individuals who are less able to absorb unexpected financial and economic shocks. Owning a bank account may also have an influence on Zimbabwean women's autonomy and ability to make financial decisions independently of her husband or other family members.

Table 12 shows that almost half of the women in Nketa have bank accounts in their own name (45%), which is more than double the rate for women in Africa as a whole (22%) and exceeds the percentage of men in Africa with bank accounts (27%) (London, 2012). High informal sector employment levels means that some women maintain bank accounts and pay bank fees in spite of irregular work and less predictable earnings.

Table 12: Bank account ownership

	I have	Number	Percentage
1	A bank account in my own name	9	45.0
2	A joint bank account with my partner	0	0
3	A joint bank account with someone else	0	0
4	Permission to use someone else's bank account	5	25.0
5	I do not have access to any bank account	7	35.0
	Total		

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo.

Table 13 shows that the majority of respondents make everyday household decisions alone (63%) or in consultation with their partners (11%). High levels of sole decision making about everyday household matters is consistent with the literature that finds that Kenyan, Gambian and Ghanaian women did not exist under classic forms of patriarchy, but had spheres of autonomy that they can safeguard or expand (Kandiyoti, 1988). Ndebele culture traditionally assigns mothers relative autonomy over the basic running of the household. The three respondents who said other household members made decisions were thus in the 18 to 24 age-group, and living at home with their mothers who took on the running of the household.

Table 13: Decisions about everyday household expenditures

	Decisions about everyday household expenditures	Number	%
1	Respondent	12	63.2
2	Partner	1	5.3
3	Respondent and partner jointly	2	10.5
4	Other household members	3	15.8
5	Other non-household members	1	5.3
	Total	19	100

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo.

Table 14 compares household decision making for Ndebele respondents to Zimbabwean women in the DHS survey. Slightly more respondents in Nketa make decisions about larger household expenditures alone, relative to the Zimbabwean population as a whole (25% compared to 19% of Zimbabwean women). Additionally, women in Nketa are less likely to live with partners who made those decisions without consulting them (10% compared to 12% of Zimbabwean women).

Table 14: Decisions about larger household expenditures

	Decisions about larger household expenditures	Ndebele women		Zimbabwean women	
		Number	%	Number	%
1	Respondent	5	25.0	1,061	19.0
2	Partner	2	10.0	668	12.0
3	Respondent and partner jointly	7	35.0	3,817	68.4
4	Other household members	5	25.0	23	0.4
5	Other non-household members	1	5.0	7	0.1
	Total	20	100.0	5,578	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo. Zimbabwe 2010 DHS Survey

Zimbabwean women are however more likely to be involved in such decision making as a whole, with 87% making these decisions either alone or with a partner, compared to 60% of women in Nketa. Unemployment levels are high so unmarried women in Nketa would be less likely to live alone as heads of their own households. Marriage may thus be important for facilitating the transition to adulthood and increased autonomy over the household for marginalised Ndebele women in Nketa.

The DHS survey does not capture women's control over other expenses such as household bills and children's school fees. Table 15 shows mixed results with respect to Nketa women's control over these bills. Similar proportions of women are involved in decisions over household bills as are primary or joint breadwinners. Half of the respondents are involved in decisions about bills, either alone or jointly with

their partners (50%) and 45% of the respondents are either primary or joint breadwinners in their households. And an equal proportion of women are involved in decision making about school fees and education (44%) as are primary or joint breadwinners (45%).

Table 15: Decision making about bills and school fees

	Bills	Number	Percentage
1	Respondent	8	40.0
2	Partner	5	25.0
3	Respondent and partner jointly	2	10.0
4	Other household members / with respondent	4	20.0
5	Other non-household members	1	5.0
	Total	20	100.0
	School fees and education	Number	Percentage
1	Respondent	5	31.0
2	Partner	4	25.0
3	Respondent and partner jointly	2	12.5
4	Other household members	3	18.8
5	Other non-household members	2	12.5
	Total	16	100.0
6	Other/na	4	
	Total	20	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo.

This suggests that women's decision making power over household bills, school fees and education may be influenced by income earnings. However, Zimbabwe only recently introduced online bill payments (enabling heads of households in the Diaspora to pay bills) and the majority of people still pay bills in person. City councils operate during normal business hours so women, who are more likely to be at home during the day, are often tasked with paying bills. And according to one respondent, in the event of a disagreement she has de facto final say over what bills actually get paid, and can avoid an argument if she gets the timing correct or intercepts any late payment notices.

When asked to summarize the extent to which they can make their own decisions as a proxy measure for self-determination, half the respondents state they can make their own decisions a great deal while 40% state that they can do so a fair amount (Table 16). One can thus conclude that Ndebele women in Nketa believe they have an acceptable amount of autonomy to make their own decisions, given their individual socially constructed expectations. And that although some decisions are made in consultation with others or after considering loved one's feelings, any such



decisions are generally made either without coercion or with a level of coercion that respondents find tolerable. Applying Gilligan's (1982) Ethics of Care principles to the collectivist Ndebele culture suggests that marginalised Nketa women may focus on maintaining caring responsiveness and value compromise or accommodation over sole decision making, in order to maintain relationship networks that are important for their identity, well-being and survival strategies.

Table 16: Perceptions about own decision-making ability

	What degree can you make your own decisions	Number	Percentage
1	A great deal	10	50.0
2	A fair amount	8	40.0
3	Very little	1	5.0
4	Not at all	0	0
5	Not sure	1	5.0
	Total	20.0	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo.

### 3.1. Gender roles

Deeply patriarchal practices were evident in Nketa, with strongly defined gender roles that assign women dominion over the basic running of the household, including all chores. For instance, not one husband or boyfriend was reported to contribute to cleaning, cooking, washing dishes or bathing children (Table 17). Daughters are socialised to help their mothers run the house from a very early age, while the decision about whether to teach boys was seemingly left to the mother. So although living in larger households allows females to share the burden of housework and childcare, almost all the housework observed was performed by either the respondents themselves or other female household members.

An attempt was made to ascertain respondents' reasons for doing housework as well as their feelings about these gender roles. Table 18 shows that more than half of the women (55%) agree with the statement "I do housework because I have no choice." The majority of women are choosing to conform with gender roles because they have either internalised them or because the perceived social cost of not conforming is too high.

Table 17: Housework burden

	Who cleans the house	Number	Percentage
1	Respondent	10	50.0
2	Partner	0	0
3	Respondent and partner jointly	0	0
4	Other household members	0	0
5	Respondent and other household members jointly	9	45.0
6	Other – e.g. maid	1	5.0
	Total	20	100.0
	Who bathes the children	Number	Percentage
1	Respondent	7	50.0
2	Partner	0	0
3	Respondent and partner jointly	0	0
4	Other household members	0	0
5	Respondent and other household members jointly	7	50.0
	Total	14	100.0
6	N/a	6	30.0
	Total	20	100.0
	Who cooks	Number	Percentage
1	Respondent	9	45.0
2	Partner	0	0
3	Respondent and partner jointly	0	0
4	Other household members	1	5.0
5	Respondent and other household members jointly	10	45.0
6	Other	0	0
	Total	20	100.0
	Who washes the dishes	Number	Percentage
1	Respondent	6	30.0
2	Partner	0	0
3	Respondent and partner jointly	0	0
4	Other household members	4	20.0
5	Respondent and other household members jointly	10	50.0
6	Other	0	0
	Total	20	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo.

The social costs of non-conforming can be extremely high, particularly for women with no steady jobs or those who are financially dependent on husbands. As evidenced by the significant proportion of married women who allude to a measure of coercion in that respect; three of the twelve respondents who are married or cohabiting (25%) do the housework because their husbands will be angry if they don't.

Table 18: Reasons for doing housework

	I do housework because I have no choice	Number	Percentage
1	Completely true	8	40.0
2	Somewhat true	3	15.0
3	Not very true	6	30.0
4	Not true at all	3	15.0
5	Other	1	5.0
	Total	20	100.0
I do housework because my partner will be angry			
		Number	Percentage
1	Completely true	3	15.0
2	Somewhat true	0	0
3	Not very true	1	5.0
4	Not true at all	13	65.0
5	Other/NA	2	10.0
	Total	20	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo.

The literature review chapter highlights that feminism has moved towards a more relational definition of autonomy that is used in social theory. One of the main advantages of this definition is that it creates space for women who are empowered and disempowered at the same time, or those who are dependent without necessarily losing their capacity for autonomous action (Brah, 1996, Frank, 2006, Frazer and Lacey, 1993, Lépinard, 2011, Wray, 2004). The Nketa case study illustrates that marginalised Ndebele women may gain some autonomy over their households, in exchange for taking on traditional gender roles and submitting to patriarchy.

With respect to whether male partners treat respondents as equals, Table 19 shows that the responses are evenly split with only a quarter feeling they are treated as equals all the time (24%) and 29% feeling that they are rarely or never treated as equals. Table 19 also shows that the majority of women feel that Ndebele culture does not treat men and women equally (63%). The aim was to see if any women spoke about the unfairness of the roles they were socialised into, without prompting from the interviewer. Only four women (25%) voluntarily spoke about the unjustness of this situation, without being prompted. In one woman's words "This culture of mine seems to think that a woman's main job is to make her husband's life easier!"

Table 19: Feelings of equality and fairness

	My partner treats me as an equal	Number	Percentage
1	All the time	4	23.5
2	Most of the time	4	23.5
3	Sometimes	4	23.5
4	Rarely	4	23.5
5	Never	1	5.8
	Total	17	100.0
6	Not applicable	3	15.0
	Total	20	100
<b>Are men and women are treated equally in Ndebele culture</b>			
	Are men and women are treated equally in Ndebele culture	Number	Percentage
1	Yes	5	26.3
2	No	12	63.2
3	Don't know	2	10.5
	Total	19	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo.

Like all cultures, isiNdebele culture is dynamic and changeable so there is no one “Ndebele tradition.” Particularly as the isiNdebele are an amalgamation of groups whose ancestors came from the Zulu empire as well as cultures that Mzilikazi assimilated during his migration and the indigenous Kalanga groups that were already living in modern day Bulawayo. There are differences in traditions, beliefs and practices among the Ndebele, even those belonging to the same clan. So the women’s responses indicate that Ndebele culture as they understand it, does not assign equal status, opportunities and roles to men and women.

The literature on pre-colonial Zimbabwean women mostly focuses on the majority Shona ethnic group. This historical information was produced by White men, often Colonialists, whose biases are evident, so there may be a gap between what is classified as Ndebele tradition and what existed in the past or indeed what exists now (Cheater, 1986). Nonetheless, it is likely that pre-colonial isiNdebele women were similar to Shona women in that they can be regarded as forming the equivalent of the labour class in industrial systems of production (Cheater, 1986). This is because they were economically active in agriculture, craft making and invested in livestock and their own grain stores, but did not control the means of production in agriculture or metallurgy, in spite of providing most of the required labour. Instead, women exercised a great deal of authority in their role as mothers, aunts, agents of (patriarchal) cultural reproduction and had autonomy over the running of their own

household dwelling. Women's authority grew with age and post-menopausal women would acquire the status of 'honorary male' in village society, having abandoned domestic duties to younger women and acquired personal property (Cheater, 1986).

What is certain is that colonialist policies ensured that Black Zimbabwean women were systematically excluded from all forms of citizenship (McFadden, 2005, Oldfield, 1990). Women's unremunerated work as agricultural producers and the official labour force reproducers was the backbone of the colonial capitalist economy and legal mechanisms were used to reinforce their exclusion and relegate women's bodies and labour to rural areas, while men moved to cities as miners and labourers (Benson and Chadya, 2003). Zimbabwean women's subsequent contribution to anti-colonial struggles allowed them to gain citizenship status from the neo-colonial state and institutional concessions for women's empowerment. There was however a significant backlash against their entry into public domains with arguments for the re-domestication of Zimbabwean women and public statements glorifying Black women's roles as wives and mothers (Parpart, 1995). The economic crisis has reinforced this notion, with women encouraged to stay home, raise children and allow men to take the few well-paying jobs.

Freedom of movement is an essential component of women's autonomy as well as their citizenship agency. Table 20 shows that half the women interviewed are able to leave the house whenever they want to (50%) , slightly more than a third (40%) needs permission to leave the house and only 15% is completely free to move around without having to consider anyone else's wishes.

Table 20: Freedom of movement

	Restricted movements	Yes	Percentage
1	I am able to leave the house whenever I want to	10	50.0
2	I need permission in order to leave the house	8	40.0
3	I need to be careful where I go so that my partner and neighbours don't hear bad things about me	3	15.0
4	If I want to go out I will go out even if my partner doesn't want me to go out	0	0
5	I am completely free to move around and do not have to consider anyone else's wishes	3	15.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo.

A slight pattern emerged with respect to questions about women's autonomy, decision-making and gender roles. Respondents could generally be split down the

middle for most responses, half siding with the more liberal and autonomous responses and the other half with the opposite. This is an interesting finding as Ndebele women are caught between old 'traditional' beliefs and newer more "Western" ideas that have filtered down through the media and through grassroots advocacy organisations.

Splitting the responses by age or education does not reveal a further pattern in this small sample. Several young women in the 18 to 24 year old age group are less 'liberal' than some respondents in their forties and fifties, and more educated women are not necessarily more 'autonomous' than less educated ones. This suggests that other factors such as socialisation, personality and partner's values play a significant role with respect to the internalisation of gender roles and autonomy in decision making.

### 3.2. Physical/bodily integrity

Body politics refers to power and control over women's sexuality and health as well as other bodily qualities such as a secure place to sleep, clean water and sanitary conditions. Central to the lived experience of body politics are family politics which frame a woman's position in marriage, the control she has over her own sexuality and fertility and over her home (Oldfield et al, 2009)

The history of black Zimbabwean body politics is mired with the racist colonial labour policies in sub-Saharan Africa, which were focused on supplying cities and mines with Black male labour. Women's bodies were relegated to rural areas and black women were only allowed to occupy urban spaces as wives, cooking and cleaning for permanently employed workers. Unmarried women in urban areas were constructed as threats to society, labelled prostitutes, their sexuality was demonised and they were vulnerable to sexual violence and abuse (Benson and Chadya, 2003, McFadden, 2005, Parpart, 1995).

Several questions about the respondent's ability to make decisions about her own health were included in the interview along with attitudes about domestic violence, in order to assess modern Ndebele women's physical integrity. There is a general lack of control over personal health-care decisions among women in Nketa as well as in

the general population. Only a third of Nketa women (35%) and a quarter of Zimbabwean women (25%) can make decisions about their own health (Table 21). Women in Nketa are more likely to make decisions about their contraceptive use than Zimbabwean women in general (30% compared to 19%). These results indicate that women in Nketa have more control over their own reproductive health than other Zimbabwean women, but that levels of control in Zimbabwe are generally low.

Table 21: Decisions over respondent's health

		Ndebele women		Zimbabwean women	
Health decisions		Number	%	Number	%
1	Respondent	7	35.0	1,358	24.4
2	Partner	3	15.0	755	13.5
3	Respondent and partner jointly	4	20.0	3,391	60.8
4	Other household members	5	25.0	64	1.2
5	Other non-household members	1	5.0	8	0.1
Total		20	100.0	5,578	100.0
		Ndebele women		Zimbabwean women	
Who decides when you use contraceptives?		Number	%	Number	%
1	Respondent	6	30.0	622	19.0
2	Partner	1	5.0	328	10.0
3	Jointly	10	50.0	2,308	70.6
4	Other	0	0	10	0.3
Total		17	100.0	3,268	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo. Zimbabwe 2010 DHS Survey

An important caveat is that consultative decision making does not necessarily equate to lack of power over the final decision. Figure 8 in the Appendix shows that all the women feel that they are able to decide whether to go to the hospital or not, which suggests that they may either prefer consultative decision making or need to engage in it because of limited budgets. Zimbabwean clinics and hospitals charge user fees for almost all services with mandatory upfront payment required. According to Kevany et al. (2012) a study of costs at a government district hospital showed that outpatient consultations cost \$24, antenatal care \$80, a medical examination \$101, a general admission \$60, and a paediatric admission \$30. Private health care consultations begin at \$200, and increase to \$500 per night of inpatient care. It bears repeating that the gross monthly household income is US\$180 (Dzinotizei, 2011).

Women in Nketa reported that there were additional costs of visits. For example, women giving birth would have to pay for transport to the clinic, buy and take their own cotton wool, sanitary pads, methylated spirits, gloves for the nurses, razors to cut the umbilical cord, bed sheets, candles in the event of a power cut and a bucket of water. Although not explicitly asked in the questionnaire, the women's stories revealed that a number of children had been born in South Africa. In fact, a pregnant subaltern woman with relatives in South Africa may find it cheaper and safer to give birth there, given that a bus ticket from Bulawayo to Johannesburg costs US\$15 to US\$30 and that in theory, South African public hospitals cannot turn away pregnant mothers about to give birth, irrespective of immigration status or ability to pay.

The health consequences of marital infidelity can be severe in Zimbabwe, which has an HIV prevalence rate of 15% among 15 to 49 year olds (Dzinotei, 2011). When given multiple options, only one woman, a 58 year old widow said that she would (and did) look the other way (Table 22). The majority of women would talk to their partners (52%) and if that failed, some would also seek help from family members. These two steps are the traditional process for resolving marital disputes in Ndebele culture. A 47 year old married woman however said that she has reached the age where she feels she cannot go to her elders, because younger relatives now come to her for help with their marital disputes. This is an interesting example of the transition Ndebele women make from youth to respected elders, whose familial role once she stops menstruating is akin to that of an 'honorary male.' In her case she said that she would either solve the problem herself or go to her priest.

Table 22: Attitudes towards infidelity

	What would you do if your partner was cheating on you	Number	Percentage
1	Nothing, I would stay with him and not say anything	1	4.0
2	I would stay with him but confront him so we work it out	13	52.0
3	I would seek help from his family	3	12.0
4	I would seek help from my family	3	12.0
5	I would go to someone else for help e.g. priest	2	8.0
6	I would leave the relationship	2	8.0
7	Other	1	4.0
	Total	25	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo. Zimbabwe 2010 DHS Survey

When asked a similar question about physical abuse, it is telling that only four respondents would file a police report (20%). In spite of widespread legislative



reforms and the creation of specialised units, the Zimbabwean police are perceived to be reluctant to investigate domestic violence reports (Table 23). Most respondents would turn to their partner's family (35%) or their own (5%) for help. This is once again the culturally acceptable way of handling marital problems, and highlights the importance of investing in and maintaining extended family relationships. An elder explains the process in the case of severe abuse:

Umfazi (wife) can ask a sister or even brother he is close to, who can have a quiet word with him. If that doesn't work then she can approach an impartial elder they both respect, who can intervene more forcefully. If he still mistreats his wife then she could ask her parents to meet with his parents on her behalf (translated quote from Gogo)

The intervention of parents is traditionally an embarrassing event as it has implied connotations that their son was not raised well. Should this intervention fail to stop the abuse, then the wife would be justified in deserting her husband and there would be no expectation that the lobola (dowry) will be returned. This is embarrassing for the husband and his family, so threats of such interventions on the woman's part may stop the abuse, even if it is just for a short while. In spite of this, there appears to be a culture of silence about intimate partner violence among some respondents, with a sizeable proportion (30%) saying they would not tell anyone about the abuse.

Table 23: Attitudes towards intimate partner violence

	What would you do if your partner was physically abusive	Number	Percentage
1	I would not tell anyone	6	30.0
2	I would tell my family	1	5.0
3	I would tell his family	7	35.0
4	I would talk to someone else e.g. priest, therapist	1	5.0
5	I would leave the relationship	1	5.0
6	I would file a police report	4	20.0
7	Other	0	0
	Total	20	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo. Zimbabwe 2010 DHS Survey

It is therefore difficult to summarize attitudes about intimate partner violence. The majority of women (65%) vehemently disagreed with all justifications for violence, with many stating quite strongly that domestic violence is never justified, under any circumstances! However, 35% of women believe it is ok for a man to hit his wife if she cheats on him and a surprising 25% believe it is ok for a man to hit his wife if she

refuses to cook or clean for him (Table 24). Additionally, a full 40% of women do not believe that it is possible for a man to rape his wife (Figure 9 in the Appendix).

Table 24: Justification for intimate partner violence

Is it ok for a husband to hit his wife	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. If she cheats on him	5	2	0	0	13
2. If she gives him HIV/AIDS	4	1	1	0	14
3. If she disobeys him	3	1	0	2	14
4. If she refuses to cook or clean for him	4	1	0	1	14
5. If she refuses to have sex with him	0	0	1	1	18
6. A man can hit his wife whenever he wants to	0	0	0	0	20

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo. Zimbabwe 2010 DHS Survey

The researcher decided to focus on physical rather than emotional abuse because the latter is more clearly definable across different cultural contexts. And while women are capable of being violent against other women, the question aimed to assess male-on-female violence, rather than general violence. There are high levels of physical violence perpetuated against women in Nketa, with only 30% stating that they have never been hit or sexually assaulted by any man whether a father, partner, male relatives or male stranger (Table 25).

Table 25 shows that nine out of twenty women were hit by their fathers as children (45%) and six have been hit by their partners (30%). The women were more likely to excuse their father's actions as warranted. The father's role as the ultimate authority and head of household came through clearly in their different stories. For example, when asked if her father was ever punished or shouted at for hurting them, one respondent's answer "by whom?" sums up the many quizzical expressions encountered when respondents heard that question.

Table 25: Experience of physical violence from men

	Physical violence	Yes	Percentage
1	My father has hit me before	9	45.0
2	My brothers or male relatives have hit me before	4	20.0
3	I have had a boyfriend or husband who hit me	6	30.0
4	A man has sexually assaulted me	2	10.0
5	I have been raped	1	5.0
6	I have never been hit or assaulted by a man	6	30.0
7	Refused to answer	1	5.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo. Zimbabwe 2010 DHS Survey

The respondent's different personalities and differing sense of bodily integrity came through very strongly during these questions. For example, when asked what she did when she was sexually assaulted (caressed by a strange man once when she was in the city centre), Thandie said "I hit him!" with a sense of gleeful triumph, then added "And I shouted at him very loudly, so that everyone would know he was a pervert!"

In contrast, when asked if she thought her rapist's actions were justified, VM's unassuming voice replied 'well I think so because he wanted to do it and he did what he wanted to do, so yes he was correct in doing that!' She didn't express a sense of violation or anger when prompted but grudgingly admitted 'No, I don't know why he did that [raped me], but he ran away and we couldn't find him so he wasn't punished!' The man was never found or prosecuted for raping her and her words [he was correct in doing that] could suggest that she blames herself for the rape. She was given the contact details for and encouraged to go to a free counselling centre. The reported incidence of sexual violence in this study is 15%, while the 2006 DHS survey found that 25% of Zimbabwean women had experienced sexual violence at least once in their lives.

#### 4. Goals and aspirations

One of the clearest and most significant findings to emerge from the research project is that Zimbabwean women have a different understanding of what citizenship entails. The country's educational curriculum does not talk about civic duties and politics is such a highly charged and sensitive topic that it does not enter the general public discourse, unless it is in the form of propaganda. As a result, the women in Nketa struggled to explain what a good citizen was with most defining it in terms of being law abiding (40%) and getting national registration documents such as birth certificates (25%). Even after prompting, none of the respondents mentioned political activities such as voting, civic engagement or rights as being constitutive of good citizenship, in spite of the fact that 85% believe that it is important to vote (Figure 10 in the Appendix).

The questions on citizenship agency started by asking each woman what her goals were. The vast majority expressed a desire to improve something material in their lives such as home or car ownership (95%). This was followed by improving family

relationships (55%) and starting or expanding a business (35%). Only one woman did not wish to change anything in her life and was ‘fine with what God chose to give her’ (Table 26). Detractors emphasise the fixed, inflexible and limiting nature of goals, while proponents argue that they are crucial for success and prevent one from living an aimless life akin to driftwood. This paper views the presence of goals as indicative of a belief in one’s ability to determine one’s own future as well as suggestive of a conscious sense of relative deprivation, which is an important motivator for action.

Table 26: Top three goals

	What three things would you like to change	Number	Percentage
1	Material possessions (house, car ownership)	19	95.0
2	Family relationships	11	55.0
3	Business of self-employment	7	35.0
4	Self-improvement (e.g. education, spirituality)	5	25.0
5	More money	3	15.0
6	Nothing	1	5.0
7	Relationship with partners	0	0
	How could you change these three things	Number	Percentage
1	Work hard	11	55.0
2	Get money	4	20.0
3	Further my education	3	15.0
4	Invest money	3	15.0
5	Nothing I can do	1	5.0
6	Look for a job	1	5.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo. Zimbabwe 2010 DHS Survey

When asked how they could change their circumstances, eleven women mentioned working harder (55%), which is indicative of recognition of their internal power to change their circumstances and lack of dependence on the state. These women were however split into six respondents who simply said “I have to work harder” and five who had concrete plans about starting or expanding trading businesses in order to save money and realise their goals. This latter group of women (25% of respondents) exhibit projective agency, that is when agents invent new possibilities for thought and action by identifying the range of available choices, and imagining alternative scenarios based on their wielding of means towards specific ends (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 984). The former group of women (30%) have more iterational outlooks as agents, which are defined as routine or habitual responses to problems, reflecting low levels of conscious reflection, and that agents perform with little or no effort.

It is interesting to note that this split also occurs with women who mention ‘getting money’ to achieve their goals (20%), which is indicative of an external focus to change their circumstances as they will be getting money from someone. The two women with iterational outlooks thought that getting money from the government or a donor would help them achieve their goals, compared to the two with more projective outlooks, who were more specific about how they would direct those resources. The woman who felt she couldn’t do anything to achieve her goals wanted to marry her boyfriend and own a house. She said “I have no power over the situation!”

These women’s goals and aspirations are universal and highlight the commonalities shared by women the world over, such as the desire for homeownership, marriage or resolving family disputes. Twelve women felt that they were currently doing something to achieve their goals or were on the right track in that regard. Of the eight women who were not working on their goals, five said they did not have the money (63%), and only one said that family responsibilities were keeping her from achieving her goals. She had just had a baby and wanted to wait until he was a few months older before reassessing the situation.

People perceived to have agency are actively involved in shaping their own destinies at both the individual and collective levels, as well as through democratic participation. One question asks respondents whether they can decide their own destiny or whether everything in life is determined by fate. This question can be used to shed light on a respondent’s self-efficacy, which is a key determinant of motivation, level of effort and perseverance in a task (Bandura, 1989, Bandura, 1995, Bandura, 2000). Nketa women generally believe in their self-efficacy with two thirds (60%) believing that hard-work plays a greater role in life than fate (Table 27).

Table 27: Role of fate and destiny

	Fate versus hard work	Number	Percentage
1	Everything in life is determined by fate	2	10.0
2	Most things are determined by fate	1	5.0
3	Some things are determined by fate and some hard work	5	25.0
4	Most things are determined by hard work	4	20.0
5	Everything in life is determined by how hard you work	8	40.0
	Total	20	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo. Zimbabwe 2010 DHS Survey

Furthermore, when asked whether they felt it was the government's responsibility to ensure all citizens had adequate housing, electricity, clean water and enough food to eat, a full 60% of low-income women in Nketa argue that no, people should take care of themselves and not rely on the government. Only three respondents (15%) believe that the government has a responsibility to provide social assistance (Table 28).

The country is essentially a failed state with a government that routinely violates its citizen's civil, political and social rights. The Zimbabwean government did not give houses away in the post-Independence boom but chose to implement policies and reforms that facilitated home-ownership. It was still up to the individual citizen to be employed and meet the requirements to qualify for a mortgage loan. So welfare may be inextricably linked to the economic crisis in the public consciousness. This is because it was precipitated by President Mugabe's decision to provide free housing and social assistance to war veterans, the alleged architects of political violence in the country. Zimbabwe's recent history may thus have a significant influence on the internalisation of the obligation to work and support oneself without recourse to public welfare; an ideal that is deeply rooted in civic republican ideals of citizenship as a set of obligations.

Table 28: Government versus individual responsibility

	Is it the government's responsibility to provide welfare	Number	Percentage
1	Yes	3	15.0
2	No	12	60.0
3	Both	5	25.0
	Total	20	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo. Zimbabwe 2010 DHS Survey

In summary, the women in Nketa live in a highly patriarchal society with strongly defined gender roles. They perceive themselves to have high levels of autonomy, self-efficacy and self-determination. They have a conscious sense of relative deprivation but believe in a citizen's obligation to work without recourse to welfare. There are however significant structural barriers to the achievement of goals such as their socio-economic status, subaltern existence and cultural structures that limit their choices and options for action. The next section examines whether these women are active citizens, in spite of these barriers.

#### 4.1. Participatory citizenship

This project is concerned with empirically observable actions in the post-modern argument. The section on participation started by assessing voting behaviour and found that all respondents who were eligible to vote have voted at least once. Table 29 shows that slightly more than half of all women in Nketa have voted in every single election that they were old enough to vote in (55% - 60%). Voter turnout, a measure of public trust in government and of citizens' participation in the political process, was 60% among subaltern Ndebele women compared to 62% for Zimbabwean women as a whole. These percentages fall short of the average female voter turnout of 73% among 27 African countries surveyed<sup>20</sup> and the OECD female voter turnout of 72% among women.

When asked whether they discussed politics in the privacy of their own homes, half the women report that they never discuss politics and only 15% have regular political discussions. Most respondents do not have satellite television and the local television and radio stations broadcast political speeches on a daily basis, mostly those by the President, the First Lady and high-ranking ruling party officials. These messages are broadcast throughout the day, particularly during prime viewing times, so there is a high level of exposure to politics/propaganda in the home.

Table 29: Voting behaviour and politics

	Have you voted	Number	Percentage
1	In all national elections you were old enough to vote in?	12	60.0
2	In all provincial elections you were old enough to vote in?	11	55.0
3	In all local elections you were old enough to vote in	11	55.0
4	Too young to vote in previous election (20 yrs. or less)	3	15.0
<b>How often do you discuss politics at home</b>			
		Number	Percentage
1	Never	10	50.0
2	Sometimes (e.g. Once a month)	7	35.0
3	Not sure	0	0
4	Often (e.g. twice a month)	0	0
5	All the time (e.g. once a week or more)	3	15.0
	Total	20	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo. Zimbabwe 2010 DHS Survey

<sup>20</sup> Based on Afrobarometer's 2010-2012 survey of 31 African countries. Online database: <http://www.afrobarometer-online-analysis.com/aj/AJBrowserAB.jsp> [date accessed: 15 July 2013]

The level of participation in formal political activities is shown below. The women in Nketa were more likely to attend municipal meetings (Table 30), with many homeowners doing so regularly. One quarter of respondents has ever-signed petitions and picketed. The two most politically active women were a 58 year old widow and Thandie. The widow said she was extremely politically active during the freedom fight but was too old to participate in those activities now. Thandie was politically active as a University student in Zimbabwe as well as very politically active in South Africa. She is one of the two women who has joined boycotts, unofficial strikes and marched in peaceful as well as violent protests. However she states that she would never do that now because she is older, married and worried about the repercussions of such activity. "I have a family to think about now!"

Table 30: Type of political activity

Type of political activity	Have participated	
	Number saying yes	Percentage
Attend municipal meetings	8	40.0
Sign a petition	5	25.0
Picketing and chanting slogans	4	20.0
Attending iZimbizo	3	15.0
Join boycotts	2	10.0
Join unofficial strike	2	5.0
Occupy buildings or stage sit ins	1	5.0
March in peaceful protest/toi toi	2	5.0
Participate in a protest that became violent	2	5.0
Attend meetings about protests	1	5.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo. Zimbabwe 2010 DHS Survey

Participation at the neighbourhood level often allows disadvantaged women to develop confidence and self-esteem, and may even lead to their engagement in formal political activity (Jones, 1990, Lister, 1997). There are very high levels of active involvement in various community organisations, with a mean, median and mode of four organisations per respondent. Almost all respondents are church members (90%) and many join recreational organisations to pursue their interests and hobbies (60%). One woman was the assistant sports director at the local community centre and another was the netball coach at her daughter's junior school. Eleven of the fourteen women with school-aged children were active members of child-centred organisations, such as the parent-teachers association (Table 31). The women in Nketa thus have everyday lives that resonate with women around the



world. The only difference is that their memberships have locally specific contexts due to the marginalised nature of their communities. For instance, one of the women explained how she founded the Parent, Teachers Association (PTA) and became its co-ordinator.

Miss Sibanda (the teacher) stopped coming to work. She showed us her salary. It isn't enough for rent, food and ETs (public transport). She was better off staying at home and trying to start a project (trading business). So I spoke to the other mothers and now we help her with transport. It's difficult because we are all suffering but we need her –our children have to learn! Quote from Gogo (Grandmother), PTA co-ordinator.

According to a September 2012 Zimbabwe Teachers Association Report ZIMTA, teachers earn salaries of US\$230 a month, with a transport allowance of US\$95 and a housing allowance of US\$94, giving a gross salary of US\$419 a month. The Consumer Council of Zimbabwe estimated the cost of living for a low income household of six to be US\$849 a month in August 2012. Teacher earnings thus keep them among the poorest people in the country and teacher absenteeism is now a serious problem. In response to the untenable situation, Gogo asked mothers at the school to contribute monthly, in order to supplement the teacher's salaries so that they could afford make a living as teachers, providing an essential service to the community. She co-ordinates this effort and then explains

Then one of the children fainted from hunger. You know uNaMusa (Musa's mother) - the small house by the roundabout, near the shoe-maker? Her husband passed away last year? Yes, shame, her son fainted at school! Miss Sibanda said many of the children are so hungry they can't concentrate in class. So I spoke to the other mothers and we try to give some maize-meal, every week. Mrs Nkala cooks porridge for all the children at breakfast ...all they have to do is bring a bowl and spoon from home. Then we planted a vegetable garden behind the school and now we can cook lunch for them, isiTshwala lombhida (basic local meal of maize meal and collard greens). Quote from Gogo, PTA co-ordinator.

These women are effectively filling the gap left by the state. Their work is however unrecognised and unremunerated. Another difference in these women's lives arises from the fact that their continual struggle to make ends meet means that their recreational and professional memberships are also centred on income generation. For instance, hobby clubs for women who like to crochet and basket-weave have

opportunities for them to sell their wares. And the main professional organisation cited was a trading club, where a group of women pool resources to buy goods for resale in flea markets, such as clothing and hair products. Money from the pool funds a bus trip to South Africa to purchase agreed upon goods from predetermined wholesalers, for the entire group of women. This has the effect of lowering business and opportunity costs for each member, as the women rotate trips, so that no one woman invests more money or spends significantly more time away from her family.

Table 31: Community membership

	Community membership	Number	Percentage
1	Church	18	90.0
2	Sports, artistic, recreational organisations	12	60.0
3	Stokvel or burial society	12	60.0
4	Children's school activities	11	55.0
5	Professional or environmental organisation	7	35.0
6	Charitable	7	35.0
7	Political party	4	20.0
8	Consumer	3	15.0
9	Other	3	15.0
10	Labour union	2	10.0
<b>How often do you attend meetings</b>			
	How often do you attend meetings	Number	Percentage
1	More than once a week	7	36.8
2	Once a week	6	31.6
3	Two or more times a month	2	10.5
4	Once a month	4	21.1
5	Rarely	0	0
	Total	19	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo. Zimbabwe 2010 DHS Survey

So although an average membership of four societies per woman is time-consuming with more than two thirds of women attending meetings once a week or more (68%), multi-tasking and a focus on income generation means that community memberships are probably seen as worthwhile investments. And the wide range of topics discussed during meetings shows that these organisations are a space for women to talk about their lives from empowerment to job creation and women's rights (Table 32).

It is logical that the practical evaluative dimension of agency is expressed at the group level in such as collectivist culture, which emphasises consultative problem

solving. Women use meetings to evaluate their situations, determine if action is needed and discuss strategies to solve problems, respond to emergencies and unforeseen events. In this instance, the primary locus of agency lies in their self-reflexivity, deliberation and use of normative expectations to make judgements about what interventions are needed. In other words, these women's politics are centred on empowering each other to safeguard and improve their families' and community's well-being. The fact that they have little regard for continuing power struggles between the nation's elites is reminiscent of a case study of Brazilian favelas that found a categorical withdrawal from mainstream politics in favour of the local sphere, because the state was seen to be responsible for injustices and inefficiencies (Goirand, 2003).

Table 32: Topics of discussion

	What do you talk about during these meetings	Number	Percentage
1	Women's empowerment (adult education, survival strategies)	17	85.0
2	Children and children's education	16	80.0
3	Work and job creation	16	80.0
4	Religion	16	80.0
5	Relationships	15	75.0
6	Rights (women's rights, human rights, children's rights)	14	70.0
7	Poverty and economic hardship	13	65.0
8	Crime	9	45.0
9	Politics	5	25.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo. Zimbabwe 2010 DHS Survey

Half the women had leadership positions in junior school, namely monitors and prefects (50%). Six of the fifteen women who went to high school had leadership positions there, such as prefects and sports captains (40%), and seven women currently hold leadership roles in the community (35%). Many of these seven women have been leaders throughout their lives. For instance Memory, the 36 year old book-keeper was head-girl at junior school, deputy head-girl and secretary for the student's representative council in high-school and is currently a member of eight community organisations. She is the PTA treasurer, youth-group pastor at church and secretary for both the labour union at work as well as for her trading organisation (she supplements her income by running a side-trading business with her sister). Memory is also married, with two children and is the third most politically active woman in the group interviewed, being the only other woman who has joined

boycotts, unofficial strikes and marched in peaceful as well as violent protests (Table 30).

Table 33: Leadership positions

	Leadership positions	Number	Percentage
1	In junior school	10	50.0
2	In High school	6	40.0
3	As an adult	7	35.0
	Total		

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo. Zimbabwe 2010 DHS Survey

The cultural preference for consultative decision making expresses itself in women's community groups, with most decisions being made using a bottom-up process (60%). Members sit down, discuss problems and decide on a solution together, which the leader executes on behalf of the group (Table 34). The second most popular method is a top down decision-making process, utilised in 30% of cases, with leaders providing a range of pre-determined options that are debated and voted upon. These women's meetings thus operate in stark contrast to the model utilised in modern democratic government processes, where the people are generally not involved in either problem identification or problem solving.

Table 34: Common decision-making process

	How are decisions made	Number	Percentage
1	Bottom up (we decide, vote and tell the leader)	11	55.0
2	Top down (leader gives us a range of solutions and we vote)	6	30.0
3	Male leader decides alone or after consulting other leaders	1	5.0
4	Female leader decides alone or after consulting other leaders	1	5.0
5	Male from outside community decides	1	5.0
6	Female from outside community decides	0	0
7	Don't know	0	0
8	Other	0	0
	Total	20	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo. Zimbabwe 2010 DHS Survey

The main disadvantage of the method used is that power inequalities and differentials may play a role within communities, with some people having more influence than others. Half the women feel their meetings create space for them to voice their opinions and genuinely participate in the decision-making process (Table 35). And a quarter said they prefer to keep quiet in the event of disagreements, but

feel comfortable enough to speak to the leader and group influencers outside the formal meeting space.

Table 35: Genuine or empty ritual of participation

	What do you do when you disagree with the decision maker	Number	Percentage
1	I voice my opinion during the meeting	10	50.0
2	I keep quiet but talk to the leader afterwards	5	25.0
3	I keep quiet but complain to my friends and family afterwards	0	0
4	I keep quiet and stop attending meetings for a while	2	10.0
5	I keep quiet, don't complain and continue going to meetings	1	5.0
6	N/A	1	5.0
	Total	20.0	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo. Zimbabwe 2010 DHS Survey

The interviews also assessed how women felt about the possibility of effecting genuine change, either alone or within these community groups (Table 36). The majority of women believe that it is difficult to change things in the community (60%) and three quarters believe it is difficult to change their socio-economic circumstances (75%). Marginalised women in Nketa thus believe that there are high barriers to social mobility in Zimbabwe.

Respondents were also shown a ladder representing power in Zimbabwe, with the first rung indicating people with no power and the tenth rung indicating people who have a lot of power. The mean was 3.5 and the median was the 5<sup>th</sup> rung of power. Some individual self-perceptions of power differ from the researcher's assessment of those individuals. For instance Memory, the book-keeper and Thandie the deputy headmistress both felt they were on the average or fifth rung of power. Both women are married, in their thirties and educated; Memory has a diploma and Thandie a degree. Both women own their homes, are two of the three most politically active women interviewed and are also highly active in the community; Memory is a member in eight organisations and Thandie in six.

Additionally, both women have occupied leadership positions throughout their lives: As mentioned earlier, Memory was head-girl at junior school, deputy head-girl and secretary for the student's representative council in high-school and is currently the PTA treasurer, youth-group pastor at church and secretary for both the labour union at work as well as for her trading organisation. Thandie was a prefect in junior

school, deputy head girl at high school and is currently PTA secretary, labour union representative, women’s group chair at church and assistant sports director at the local community centre.

Table 36: Power to effect change

	How easy is it for women like you to change things in the community	Number	Percentage
1	Very easy	1	5.0
2	Somewhat easy	3	15.0
3	A little difficult	1	5.0
4	It is very difficult	11	55.0
5	Don’t know	4	20.0
	Total	20	100.0
	How easy is it for women like you to change standard of living	Number	Percentage
1	Very easy	2	10.0
2	Somewhat easy	3	15.0
3	A little difficult	6	30.0
4	It is very difficult	9	45.0
5	Don’t know	0	0
	Total	20	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo. Zimbabwe 2010 DHS Survey

Furthermore, their positions in labour unions and sports mean that they are the only two women who are active (and leaders) in male dominated groups (Figure 11 in the Appendix). Both women are friendly, extroverted and have a great-deal of self-confidence and self-belief. These women have greater than average power to effect change compared to their peers. The researcher would assess them on the 7<sup>th</sup> rung of power, especially in light of Thandie’s statement:

“I don’t know how easy it is to change things in the community because I have never tried...”

Contrast their stories to VM, who is 18 and was raped as a child but her rapist was never found and she never went for counselling. She finished high-school and was interested in continuing with her education but was unable to do so. She is currently doing casual work in the formal sector and has a boyfriend. She was too young to vote in previous elections so has never voted and never participated in any formal political activities. She has never held any leadership positions in school or the

community, but attends church regularly. VM does most of the housework at home, needs permission to leave the house and believes that domestic violence is justifiable under certain circumstances. She is a shy, unassuming young woman whose responses indicate that she feels powerless; she placed herself on the first rung of power.

There is no apparent relationship between power score and age. Respondents in their twenties had a mean score of 4, those in their thirties and forties had mean scores of two, while those in their fifties had mean scores of 5. The fact that women in their fifties have the highest mean scores is expected, because of the respect and status afforded to older women in Ndebele culture. There is also no apparent relationship between power scores and educational attainment. Women who left school at junior school had mean scores of 5, those who continued onto high-school had mean scores of 3 and those with post high-school qualifications had mean scores of 4.

Gogo (grandmother), the 58 year old widow who was politically active during country's Independence war had the highest self-perceived score of 8, in spite of the fact that she only has a junior school education and works as a trader in the informal sector. She is one of the three most politically active women interviewed, is a member in six different community organisations, and occupies many leadership positions in the community. For example, she is the co-founder and coordinator of the PTA, is an elder and marriage counsellor for her church, co-ordinates fundraising efforts for her burial society and organises 'open days' for the women in her basket-weaving hobby group to display and sell their wares.

In summary, Westerners assign power largely according to wealth, education and leadership, influence or fame. However, women from wealthier households in Nketa (with cars, better maintained and bigger homes) were not necessarily the most influential in Nketa. In fact, their self-perceived power scores were lower than average. The six women living in households with a car had mean scores of 2.6, compared to 3.5 for all women respondents. This suggests that self-perceptions of power in Nketa may be influenced more by culturally specific understandings of status such as Ubuntu, community leadership and age, than by socio-economic

status. Women like Memory and Thandie who are in their thirties and very active in the community, are thus likely to feel more powerful when they become older. This is partly because female 'elders' in Ndebele society have 'honorary male status' and are supposed to be automatically treated with the respect accorded to male 'elders', by both men and women in the community.

## 5. Conclusion

The Ndebele women in Nketa Township live in a country with an authoritarian regime that has committed gross human rights violations against its citizens and routinely violates civil and political liberties. The country has gone through more than a decade of economic collapse and de-development with virtual collapse of health and education sectors so social rights are also tenuous. There are few social programs, limited opportunities for formal sector employment and low returns for furthering one's education unless one is willing to consider emigration.

Despite this, the women have goals and aspirations that resonate with women around the world, such as the desire for homeownership, marriage and ensuring their children's safety and success. Although they feel they have the autonomy to make their own decisions and determine their daily lives, they face many structural barriers such as their socio-economic marginalisation and systems of social relations that place the burden of unpaid care and domestic work on their shoulders. Membership in multiple community organisations creates a space for them to share their burden with other women and also allows them to pool resources and work on income generation projects as a group. So their continual struggle to make ends meet means that their recreational and professional memberships are often centred on income generation and livelihood.

One of the clearest and most significant findings to emerge from the research project is that the women in Nketa have a different understanding of citizenship. None of the respondents mentioned political activities such voting or civic engagement as being constitutive of good citizenship, in spite of the fact that the majority believe that it is important to vote. There are lower levels of engagement with formal political institutions, except for voting and attending municipal meetings. They see a minimalist role for the state and have internalised the obligation to work that is the



main emphasis in liberal-democratic states. The next chapter compares these results to those of the Zulu women in Durban, South Africa.

## Chapter 5: South Africa Results

### 1. Introduction

KwaMashu is one of Durban's oldest residential townships located 25km north-west of the city centre. Established according to the principles of the 1959 Group Areas Act and its entrenchment of the Apartheid ideal of racial segregation, KwaMashu was reserved for Black Africans. The township has a feel of informality with a wide variety of accommodation structures lining the mostly untarred roads; small brick houses interspersed with metal shacks, wooden structures and even sticks covered by black plastic garbage bags. There is a lack of basic infrastructure, few economic opportunities, widespread poverty and high crime rates. The central taxi rank in particular, is in a state of neglect with conspicuous amounts of waste, no noticeable drainage systems, squalid portable toilets and no tap water for the many vendors. However, there is a neater appearance further away from the main roads where residents take ownership over their own houses and yards.

Myna<sup>\*21</sup> is thirty-nine year old Zulu woman who has lived in KwaMashu her whole life. A nurse assistant with over ten years of experience, she has a permanent job with full benefits and owns her home. She acknowledges the disadvantages of living in the neighborhood but she is also a single mother of two, whose job sometimes requires her to work odd hours. Living in the same community as her parents helps relieve some of the worry associated with obtaining safe childcare. And lower housing costs in KwaMashu mean that she can afford to send her children to better resourced schools in town, because she says that the local school has one of the highest failure rates for Matric (school leaving exams) in the country.

Myna is one of the seventeen women I was fortunate enough to meet during my fieldwork in Durban, South Africa. This chapter aims to describe their diverse personal histories and compelling survival strategies as well as highlight their agency as citizens. Section 2 presents their socio-demographic information and where possible, compares it to the Zimbabwean women interviewed in Nketa Township. Section 3 examines their autonomy, self-determination, gender roles and decision-

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<sup>21</sup> Not their real names

making ability as well as their gender roles, while the fourth section explores what the interviews revealed about their participatory citizenship.

## 2. Demographics

This section compares socio-demographic information for South African Zulu respondents in KwaMashu Township to that of Ndebele respondents in Nketa Township, Zimbabwe. The Zulu respondents are slightly younger than the Ndebele ones, with a median age falling in the 25 to 29 year age cohort and a mean age of 35 years, compared to a median of 30 to 34 years and a mean of 36 years for Ndebele respondents in Zimbabwe (Table 37). This is largely because there are more women over the age of 45 years in the sample of Ndebele women.

Table 37: Age distribution

	year	South African Zulu women		Zimbabwean Ndebele women	
	Age	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1	18-24	4	23.5	4	20.0
2	25-29	5	29.4	4	20.0
3	30-34	2	11.8	2	10.0
4	35-39	1	5.9	3	15.0
5	40-44	2	11.8	1	5.0
6	45+	3	17.6	6	30.0
	Total	17	100.0	20	100.0
	Mean age	35.1 years		35.5 years	

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

In spite of similar mean ages, marriage rates among Zulu women are significantly lower than among Ndebele women (Table 38). Three times as many Zulu women have never been married (76%) than Ndebele women (25%). African women in South Africa have very low marriage rates and African women living in KwaZulu Natal Province have some of the lowest marriage rates in the country. 12% of women aged 20 to 45 were married compared to a national marriage rate of 25% for African women<sup>22</sup> (Posel et al., 2011). Worryingly, marriage rates in the Province have been on a downward trend in the post-Apartheid period, dropping from 31% in 1995 to 12% in 2008 (Posel et al. 2011).

<sup>22</sup> KwaMashu Township is located in Durban, KwaZulu Nata Province. The majority of isiZulu speaking South Africans live in KwaZulu Natal so these marriage rates are believed to be representative of Zulu women.

There are also relatively high rates of never-married women who were single mothers in the KwaMashu sample. Eight of the thirteen never-married Zulu women had given birth to at least one child (62%) compared to none of the five never-married Ndebele women. This finding is consistent with other studies that find high adolescent pregnancy rates for Black South Africans, with up to a third of young women having had their first birth when they were unmarried adolescents (Pettifor et al., 2004).

Table 38: Marital status

	Marital Status	South African Zulu women		Zimbabwean Ndebele women	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1	Never married	13	76.0	5	25.0
2	Cohabiting	0	0	4	20.0
3	Married	2	12.0	8	40.0
4	Separated	2	12.0	0	0
5	Divorced	0	0	0	0
6	Widowed	0	0	3	15.0
	Total	17	100	20	100

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

On average, the Zulu women in KwaMashu have lower levels of educational attainment than their Zimbabwean counterparts. Half of them (50%) completed high school or more, compared to three quarters of Zimbabwean women (75%). Additionally, three South African women (19%) have had no schooling while all Zimbabwean women interviewed had gone to junior school (Table 39).

Table 39: Highest educational attainment

	Educational attainment	South African women		Zimbabwean women	
		Number	%	Number	%
1	No education	3	18.8	0	0.0
2	Junior School	5	31.3	5	25.0
3	High School	5	31.3	12	60.0
4	Higher (diploma, apprentice, degree)	3	18.8	3	15.0
	Total	16	100.0%	20	100.0%

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

The survey was taken in 2012-2013 in both countries that is, 19 years after the end of Apartheid in South Africa and 32 years after Independence in Zimbabwe. So the slightly higher levels of education in Zimbabwe should be viewed in this context, as Zimbabwean adults have had more time to benefit from President Mugabe's post-

independence investment in education. The educational attainment result may thus differ going forward given Zimbabwe's economic collapse and South Africa's increased investment on education for the poorest economic groups.

Of the three South African women who continued with post-high school education; one received training as a cashier, another completed a call centre training course and a third a nursing diploma. A similar pattern observed in Zimbabwe emerges namely that there is a link between continuing education and full-time employment. The three women with post-secondary training are the three women working full-time in the formal sector (Table 40). However, Myna the nurse assistant is the only one who is receiving full benefits such as pensions, paid leave, housing subsidy and medical aid. There are several layers of exclusion from benefits, even for women working full-time. For example, Qeque the cashier is a casual employee and does not qualify for benefits. And Ayanda the call-centre agent has a two-year contract working full-time, but feels that she cannot afford to join any schemes on her salary. She is the only income-earner in her family and feels that the cost of private medical is prohibitively expensive.

Table 40: Current employment status

	Current employment status	South Africa		Zimbabwe	
		Number	%	Number	%
1	Unemployed, not looking for work	3	17.6	3	10.0
2	Unemployed, looking for work	8	47.1	4	13.3
3	Subsistence / urban good gardens	1	5.9	8	26.7
4	Casual or trading in the informal sector	2	11.8	10	33.3
5	Casual or temporary jobs in formal sector	0	0	2	6.7
6	Full time in the formal sector - no benefits	2	11.8	1	3.3
7	Full time in the formal sector - benefits	1	5.9	2	6.7
	Total	17	100.0	30	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

Table 40 shows that there are very low participation rates in paid labour in KwaMashu with only six women working in either the formal or informal sector (35%). The vast majority of Zulu respondents state that they are unemployed: eight women were unemployed and looking for work (47%), while three are either voluntarily unemployed or had given up looking for work (18%). South Africa's unemployment rate at the end of 2013 was 24% according to the narrow definition and 43% according to the expanded definition (Lehohla, 2014, Statistics South

Africa, 2014). The Zulu women in KwaMashu Township are thus more likely to be unemployed compared to the general population.

Of the six women who participate in the labour force, three women worked in the formal sector (18%) and a further three had urban food gardens and trading jobs in the informal sector (18%). South Africa's informal sector absorbs a small proportion of the workforce by developing country standards. Low rates of participation in the informal economy in spite of high involuntary unemployment, is a characteristic feature of the South African labour market. Kingdon and Knight (2001) find that informal sector forms 30% of total employment in South Africa compared to approximately 90% in India. The informal sector in Zimbabwe forms approximately 94% of total employment in Zimbabwe (USAID, 2010).

It is important to reiterate that according to the literature, there is a link between social rights and agency where conferring social rights to disadvantaged groups encourages them to exercise their civil and political rights, whereas withholding or violating any of these rights marginalises individuals and prevents them from participating in society as full and equal members (Doyal and Gough 1991, Macedo, 1990, Kymlicka and Norman, 1994 and Lister, 1997). The fact that only three of the thirty-seven women interviewed in both countries (6%) received benefits from the private sector illustrates the size of the gap for marginalised women in the African context.

The South African government is making an effort to fill this gap. It emphasizes civil, political and socio-economic rights in its constitution and is committed to expanding social assistance to the most vulnerable members of society, introducing social welfare programs that provide pensions, child grants and free health care for fully subsidised patients<sup>23</sup>.

Table 41 illustrates that social welfare is an important livelihood strategy for the Zulu women interviewed. Half of all respondents (47%) depend on child support, pensions

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<sup>23</sup> The public health system uses a Uniform Patient Fee Schedule that classifies individuals into three categories based on income and a number of other variables: fully subsidised, partially subsidised and full paying patients. Anyone receiving government grants and most unemployed people are fully subsidised and receive free health care. The government also implemented child grants of R300 (US\$30) per child per month. Qualifying income is less than R33, 600 per annum for single parents and less than R67, 000 per annum for married caregivers.

and other government grants to meet daily living requirements. When considering multiple income sources, social assistance forms one third (32%) and contributions from other household members form a quarter (24%) of all income sources. There are therefore higher levels of dependence on external income sources in KwaMashu compared to Nketa. For instance, the vast majority of women in Nketa (90%) do not have access to any form of government social spending. And self-generated income from employment or self-employment comprises a quarter (24%) of total income sources in KwaMashu compared to half (50%) of all stated income sources in Nketa (50%).

Table 41: Income sources

	Monthly household income sources	South Africa		Zimbabwe	
		Number	%	Number	%
1	Employment	3	12.0	6	16.7
2	Government grant	1	4	0	0
3	Child support	5	20.0	0	0
4	Remittances	0	0	3	8.3
5	Self-employment, trading or casual jobs	3	12.0	12	33.3
6	Pension	2	8.0	4	11.1
7	Rental or lodging income	1	4.0	1	2.8
8	Other household members	6	24.0	6	16.7
9	Boyfriend or same sex partner	0	0	4	11.1
10	Other	2	8	0	0
	Total	25	100.0	36	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

Table 42 divides household composition into nuclear families, immediate families, relatives and lodgers with each tier indicating the strength of family ties according to Western definitions. Traditional Zulu culture does not differentiate between the first and third family tier in the same way that Western culture does. Aunts are parents, cousins are siblings, nephews are sons; and the words for aunt, cousin and nephew signify this. For instance the word for mother is Mama, for her older sister it is uMamkhulu (direct translation is big mother) while her younger sister is uMamncane (younger mother)<sup>24</sup>. These direct translations indicate the importance and strength of family relationships in both Zulu and Ndebele cultures.

<sup>24</sup> The Zulu word Umamkhulu (big mother) has the same meaning in isiNdebele but is used less often than uMam'omdala (older mother).

Table 42: Household composition

	Household Composition	South Africa		Zimbabwe	
		Number	%	Number	%
1	Nuclear family (respondent, partner, own children)	3	18.8	5	26.3
2	Immediate family (nuclear, siblings, grandparents, step-child)	3	18.8	0	0
3	Family (immediate, aunts, first cousins, nieces, nephews)	7	43.8	10	52.6
4	Relatives (family, other blood relatives, in-laws)	3	18.8	0	0
5	Lodgers or roommates with relatives	0	0	4	21.1
6	Lodgers or roommates without relatives	0	0	0	0
	Total	16	100.0	19	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

The most common household structure encountered in KwaMashu was one where two or three unmarried women with children, were all living together with an older female relative. For example, Sihle who is unemployed was living with her daughter, aunt, two female cousins and their children. That is, the majority of the women interviewed live in households comprising the third and fourth family tiers (63%). KwaMashu households were noticeably comprised of family members with only one lodger encountered. He lived in a self-contained dwelling behind the main house with his own makeshift kitchenette and use of the outside facilities so was not considered part of the household. In contrast, four Zimbabwean households had people not related to each other. One was a lodger who lived in the main household and paid rent monthly. The other three households consisted of two or more relatives sharing a house with friends. For example one household had two sets of unmarried sisters who are mutual friends sharing a two bedroom house.

South African women live in larger households with a mean of 6 and median of 7 people, compared to a mean and median of 5 people in Zimbabwe (Table 43). Unemployment levels are high and social assistance is limited so larger households allow members to pool all forms of income in order to meet the costs of living. For instance Sihle is an adolescent mother of one and has never been employed. The only assistance available to her is a child grant of R300 (US\$30), which is inadequate for meeting both their expenses. Statistics South Africa estimated a 2011 per capita poverty line of R620 (US\$62) per month. This is deemed to be the amount necessary to purchase enough food to meet the basic daily food-energy



requirements as well as essential non-food items such as accommodation, electricity, clothing or schooling for children (Lehohla, 2014).

Table 43: Household size

Household Size	South African respondents		Zimbabwean respondents	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1	0	0.0	0	0.0
2	0	0	1	5.0
3	1	8.3	3	15.0
4	1	8.3	3	15.0
5	1	8.3	4	20.0
6	1	8.3	5	25.0
7	5	41.7	2	10.0
8	3	25.0	1	5.0
9 or more	0	0	1	5.0
Total	12	100.0	20	100.0
Mean household size	6.4		5.3	
Median household size	7		5	

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

Table 44 illustrates that there are similar proportions of Zulu women who are primary breadwinners (53%), as those where another household member is the primary breadwinner (47%). This proportion of Zulu primary breadwinners is higher than that of Ndebele women (30%) possibly due to lower marriage and cohabitation rates among the Zulu women interviewed. Interestingly, the majority of Zulu households had no adult males in their households. Some households were female only, that is comprised of women and girl children only. This suggests that there may be a greater proportion control over household economic resources resting in South African women's hands than in Zimbabwean women.

South African respondents were more open to disclosing their average household incomes than Zimbabwean women. The majority of women (81%) had total household incomes of less than R2, 500 per month. This is close to the indigence monthly household income of R2, 400 (2006 prices), which is used by municipalities to determine eligibility for social grants. Given a mean and median household size of 6 and 7 people respectively, the 2011 poverty line of R620 per capita would translate to a monthly household income of approximately R3, 720 – R4, 340 per household.

Table 44: Primary breadwinner

	Primary breadwinner	South Africa		Zimbabwe	
		Number	%	Number	%
1	Respondent	8	53.3	6	30.0
2	Other household member - partner	0	0	6	30.0
3	Other household member	7	46.7	3	15.0
4	Non-household member	0	0	2	10.0
5	Respondent and partner equally	0	0	3	15.0
	Total	15	100.0	20	100.0
	Average monthly household income	Number	%	Number	%
1	R0 – 499 (\$0 – \$55)	0	0	2	20.0
2	R500 – R899 (\$56 - \$99)	2	12.5	0	0
3	R900 – R1,199 (\$100 - \$134)	2	12.5	1	10.0
4	R1,200 – R1,399 (\$135 - \$154)	4	25.0	0	0
5	R1,400 – R2,499 (\$155 - \$279)	2	12.5	3	30.0
6	+R2,500 (+\$280)	3	18.8	4	40.0
	Total	16	100.0	10	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

QeQe the cashier's story serves to further illustrate income insecurity in KwaMashu. QeQe lives with seven other people: her daughter, her grandmother, her sister who has just finished high school, her unemployed cousin, and her unemployed sister who has two children. Total household income comprises of her salary of R2, 000 a month, her grandmother's pension of R1, 200 a month and child grants for three children totalling R900 a month. Even though total income at R4, 100 a month is greater than the lower bound poverty line of R3, 544 for a household of 8<sup>25</sup>, her grandmother sends R500 a month to her unemployed son. This reduces the per capita income to R381 a month, so that the household does not have enough money to meet basic food and non-food requirements. The other two households falling above the R2, 500 thresholds belonged to Myna, the nurse assistant and Ayanda, the call centre agent, who have similar stories to tell of financial obligations extending beyond the immediate household.

<sup>25</sup> The Lower bound poverty line in March 2011 was R443 per capita. This amount includes non-food items, but requires that individuals sacrifice food in order to obtain these, while individuals at the Upper bound poverty line of R620 per capita can purchase both adequate food and non-food items (Lehohla, 2014).

Home ownership rates in KwaMashu were low with four women (24%) having their names on the title (Table 45). Two major Apartheid-era Land Acts dispossessed Africans and removed their freehold rights. The 1913 Land Act reserved 87% of the land for White, Coloured and Indian South Africans who comprised approximately 25% of the population. And the 1936 Trust and Land Act which introduced inferior forms of land titles for Black South Africans. In KwaZulu Natal for example, 5% of the land available to blacks was held by freehold, while the rest was owned by the government through the South African Development Trust. These Acts thus created a severe land shortage for Black South Africans and people who moved to townships such as KwaMashu were essentially informally occupying state-owned land. The ANC government is in the process of upgrading land titles but faces a monumental task and progress is slow. The majority of residents in KwaMashu thus have insecure land tenure and contested 'homeownership' rights over their homes.

The majority of women in KwaMashu (77%) are living in homes that are *owned* by the family, with no respondents indicating they were renting their homes. The interviews did not probe whether they pay rent to family owners, but even those who do, are likely to have greater flexibility with respect to household budgets than those renting from people who are not relatives.

Table 45: Homeownership rates

	Household Ownership	South Africa		Zimbabwe	
		Number	%	Number	%
1	Yes – respondent's name alone	1	5.9	5	25.0
2	Yes – respondent and partner's name alone	2	11.8	5	25.0
3	Yes – respondent and someone else's name	1	5.9	0	0
4	No – partner's name alone	0	0	0	0
5	No - family owned	13	76.5	6	30.0
6	No - rental	0	0	4	20.0
7	No – squatting or appropriated home	0	0	0	0
	Total	17	100.0	20	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

There are three main differences between Nketa and KwaMashu that are worth noting. Firstly, all the women in Nketa had vegetable gardens and fruit trees in the back yard, compared to only one South African woman. Secondly, Nketa like most Zimbabwean townships was formally planned and this is reflected in the structure and feel of the township such as parallel roads, drainage systems, city council

services, formally allocated houses and plots and a formal business area made up of local grocery stores in brick structures.

The land area allocated to each house in KwaMashu is small so that houses are built one or two metres from a main dirt road, leaving two or three metres of back yard. Most of the houses encountered were small four-roomed brick and cement houses with two bedrooms, a kitchen and a bathroom. Most however, had corrugated iron shacks at the back where some household members lived, to accommodate a median household size of 7. So although interviews were held in a relatively wealthier part of KwaMashu where the research assistant lived, the township has a more haphazard feel than Nketa, with more dirt roads and ubiquitous makeshift accommodation structures. Nonetheless, all houses had electricity, tap water, and working toilets either inside or outside the house (Table 46). Half of the respondents (47%) also had a geyser supplying hot water to the main house.

Table 46: Amenities in the house

	Amenities	Number	Percentage
1	Electricity in the home	17	100.0
2	Tap water in the home	17	100.0
3	Working Flush toilet in the home	16	77.0
4	Geyser for hot water	8	47.0
5	Access to outside sources of clean drinking water	15	88.0
6	Access to flush toilet outside the home	16	77.0
7	The house has an unfinished floor (sand, cement etc.)	1	6
8	The house uses dirty cooking fuel (firewood, paraffin)	0	0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

### 3. Decision-making ability

Bank accounts are important vehicles for promoting savings, borrowing and asset-building, particularly for low-income individuals who are less able to absorb unexpected financial and economic shocks. Owning a bank account may also have an influence on South African women's autonomy, as it would enable them to have a measure of control over their own finances, independently of other household members. Fourteen women had their own bank accounts (82%) and only one woman did not have access to an account (Table 47). This is an extremely high rate in the African context where only 22% of African women own bank accounts (London, 2012).

Table 47: Bank account ownership

	I have	South Africa		Zimbabwe	
		Number	%	Number	%
1	A bank account in my own name	14	70.0	9	45.0
2	A joint bank account with my partner	1	5.0	0	0
3	A joint bank account with someone else	0	0	0	0
4	Permission to use someone else's account	4	20	5	25.0
5	I do not have access to any bank account	1	5	7	35.0
	Total	20	100.0	20	100.00

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

It is interesting to note that South African women are more likely to engage in collaborative decision making about everyday household expenses (Table 48). Women chose the "Other" category and volunteered that decision-making is collective. In fact, a fewer proportion of respondents make these decisions alone than are primary breadwinners suggesting that some primary breadwinners also say that such decisions are made collectively.

Table 48: Decisions about everyday household expenditures

	Decisions: Everyday household expenses	South Africa		Zimbabwe	
		Number	%	Number	%
1	Respondent	6	35.3	12	63.2
2	Partner	0	0	1	5.3
3	Respondent and partner jointly	0	0	2	10.5
4	Other household members	6	35.3	3	15.8
5	Other non-household members	0	0	1	5.3
7	Other (entire household)	5	29.4	0	0
	Total	17	100.0	19	100

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

A similar pattern is observed with respect to decisions about larger household expenditures (Table 49). Approximately one third of respondents make decisions alone (35%), a third make these decisions collectively (29%) and a third state that other household members make these decisions (35%). Although the distribution varies in the two countries, an equal proportion of Zulu and Ndebele women are involved in household decision-making as a whole, namely 68% of Zulu women in KwaMashu and 67% of Ndebele women in Nketa. The expectation would be that Ndebele women's involvement would be significantly lower than Zulu women due to higher marriage rates. But both Ndebele and Zulu culture traditionally assign

mothers relative autonomy over the basic running of the household, so responses to other questions may be more revealing.

Table 49: Decisions about larger household expenditures

	Decisions: Larger household expenses	South Africa		Zimbabwe	
		Number	%	Number	%
1	Respondent	6	35.3	5	25.0
2	Partner	0	0	2	10.0
3	Respondent and partner jointly	0	0	7	35.0
4	Other household members	6	35.3	5	25.0
5	Other non-household members	0	0	1	5.0
7	Other (all household members jointly)	5	29.4	0	0
	Total	17	100.0	20	100

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

Table 50 reveals that similar proportions of Zulu and Ndebele women are involved in decisions about bills and school fees. 52% of South African women and 50% of Zimbabwean women make these decisions either alone, with their partners or other household members. The pattern is the same as in the previous set of questions, in that Ndebele women are more likely to make the decision alone, whereas Zulu women are more likely to use collaborative decision making.

Table 50: Decision making about bills and school fees

	Bills	South Africa		Zimbabwe	
		Number	%	Number	%
1	Respondent	3	18.8	8	40.0
2	Partner	0	0	5	25.0
3	Respondent and partner jointly	2	12.5	2	10.0
4	Other household members	8	50.0	4	20.0
5	Other non-household members	1	6.3	1	5.0
	Other (all household members jointly)	2	12.5	0	0
	Total	16	100.0	20	100.0
	School fees and education	Number	%	Number	%
1	Respondent	7	43.8	5	31.0
2	Partner	0	0	4	25.0
3	Respondent and partner jointly	2	12.5	2	12.5
4	Other household members	5	29.4	3	18.8
5	Other non-household members	1	6.3	2	12.5
6	N/a	1	6.3	4	
	Total	16	100.0	16	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

When asked to summarize the extent to which they can make their own decisions as a proxy measure for self-determination, Zulu women were less likely to say they

could make their own decisions a great deal, 40% versus 50% for Ndebele women (Table 51). These results suggest that living with other adult women who contribute to household expenses may act as a constraint on South African women's decision making-ability. This may be involuntary, such as when a younger woman is living with parent figures, but it is possible that female-centred households also foster more consultative forms of decision making. Marginalised women in KwaMashu may value caring and compromise over sole decision making, in order to maintain relationship networks that are important for their identities, well-being and livelihood.

Table 51: Perceptions about own decision-making ability

	Can you make your own decisions	South Africa		Zimbabwe	
		Number	%	Number	%
1	A great deal	6	40.0	10	50.0
2	A fair amount	8	53.3	8	40.0
3	Very little	1	6.7	1	5.0
4	Not at all	0	0	0	0
5	Not sure	0	0	1	5.0
	Total	15	100.0	20.0	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

### 3.1. Gender roles

Patriarchal attitudes and practices were less evident in the KwaMashu homes visited, largely due to the general absence of men. However, one of the two married Zulu women stated that she shared household chores with her husband, she did the cooking and they shared household cleaning and dishwashing duties (Table 52). This is in contrast to the Ndebele women, where not one husband or cohabiting boyfriend was reported to contribute to any household chore whether it was cleaning, cooking, washing dishes or bathing the children. Living in larger households would in theory allow women to share the burden of housework and childcare. However, the majority of Zulu respondents (56% to 63%) report that they do the bulk of domestic work. In fact, Ndebele women were more likely to report sharing household work with other household members than Zulu women.

Table 52: Housework burden

		South Africa		Zimbabwe	
Who cleans the house		Number	%	Number	%
1	Respondent	10	62.5	10	50.0
2	Partner	0	0	0	0
3	Respondent and partner jointly	1	6.3	0	0
4	Other household members	1	6.3	0	0
5	Respondent and other household members	4	25.0	9	45.0
6	Other – e.g. maid	0	0	1	5.0
	Total	16	100.0	20	100.0
Who bathes the children		Number	%	Number	%
1	Respondent	10	62.5	7	50.0
2	Partner	0	0	0	0
3	Respondent and partner jointly	0	0	0	0
4	Other household members	2	12.5	0	0
5	Respondent and other household members	2	12.5	7	50.0
	Total	0	0	14	100.0
6	N/a	2	12.5	6	30.0
	Total	16	100.0	20	100.0
Who cooks		Number	%	Number	%
1	Respondent	9	56.3	9	45.0
2	Partner	0	0	0	0
3	Respondent and partner jointly	0	0	0	0
4	Other household members	2	12.5	1	5.0
5	Respondent and other household members	5	31.3	10	45.0
6	Other	0	0	0	0
	Total	16	100.0	20	100.0
Who washes the dishes		Number	%	Number	%
1	Respondent	9	56.3	6	30.0
2	Partner	0	0	0	0
3	Respondent and partner jointly	1	6.3	0	0
4	Other household members	2	12.5	4	20.0
5	Respondent and other household members	4	25	10	50.0
6	Other	0	0	0	0
	Total	16	100.0	20	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

An attempt was made to ascertain respondents' reasons for doing housework as well as their feelings about these gender roles. Table 53 shows that half of the women (50%) agree with the statement "I do housework because I have no choice" and half disagree with it (50%).



Table 53: Reasons for doing housework

I do housework		South Africa		Zimbabwe	
because I have no choice		Number	%	Number	%
1	Completely true	6	37.5	8	40.0
2	Somewhat true	2	12.5	3	15.0
3	Not very true	5	31.3	6	30.0
4	Not true at all	3	18.8	3	15.0
5	Other	0	0	1	5.0
Total		16	100.0	20	100.0
because my partner will be angry		Number	%	Number	%
1	Completely true	0	0	3	15.0
2	Somewhat true	1	7.1	0	0
3	Not very true	4	28.6	1	5.0
4	Not true at all	9	64.3	13	65.0
5	Other/na	0	0	2	10.0
Total		14	100.0	20	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

These findings are difficult to interpret in the South African context. Large household sizes, all with more than one female adult would suggest that women have the ability to shift or negotiate these chores. But high unemployment rates could also mean that respondents feel they are assigned the bulk of household chores, either by virtue of being home or in an effort to contribute to the household in non-financial ways. Additionally, one's status in the Zulu household is dependent on age, financial contribution and motherhood. So it is possible that gender roles are subconsciously reinforced for household members exhibiting the most 'feminine' characteristics such as youth and financial dependence.

With respect to whether male partners treat respondents as equals, Table 54 shows that the majority of women feel their partner treats them equally some of the time (42%) and only a quarter saying they are treated equally all the time (25%). The majority of Zulu women also agree that their culture does not treat men and women equally (56%). None of the Zulu women voluntarily spoke about the unjustness of this situation without being prompted. This is in contrast to Zimbabwe where four women (25%) argued that culturally determined gender roles were unfair and served to make their lives more difficult.

Table 54: Feelings of equality and fairness

		South Africa		Zimbabwe	
My partner treats me as an equal		Number	%	Number	%
1	All the time	3	25.0	4	23.5
2	Most of the time	3	25.0	4	23.5
3	Sometimes	5	41.7	4	23.5
4	Rarely	1	8.3	4	23.5
5	Never	0	0	1	5.8
Total		12	100.0	17	100.0
6	Not applicable	5	29.4	3	15.0
Total		17	100.00	20	100
Are men and women are treated equally in Zulu (Ndebele) culture		Number	%	Number	%
1	Yes	4	25	5	26.3
2	No	9	56.3	12	63.2
3	Don't know	3	18.8	2	10.5
Total		16	100.0	19	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

Freedom of movement is an essential component of women's autonomy as well as citizenship agency. Table 55 shows that almost half the Zulu women interviewed are able to leave the house whenever they want to (47%) and one quarter needs permission to leave the house (24%). There are two significant differences between Zulu and Ndebele women that are worth noting. On the one hand, twelve Zulu women feel that they are completely free to move around without having to consider anyone else's wishes (71%) compared to only three Ndebele women (15%). And seven women would go out even if their partner did not want them to (41%) compared to none of the Ndebele women.

On the other hand, Zulu women are more concerned about other people's opinions with eleven believing they need to be careful where they go so other people do not hear or say bad things about them (65%). The three Ndebele women who agreed with that statement (15%) had never been married. It is speculated that internalised societal controls may serve to constrain women's behaviour in the absence of husbands. For instance, an unmarried Zulu woman may be able to date and go out with her friends, but she may feel that she needs to watch her 'reputation' if she is to have a chance of attracting and marrying a good, respectable man.

Table 55: Freedom of movement

	Restricted movements	South Africa		Zimbabwe	
		Yes	%	Yes	%
1	Leave the house whenever I want to	8	47.1	10	50.0
2	I need permission in order to leave the house	4	23.6	8	40.0
3	I need to be careful where I go so that my partner and neighbours don't hear bad things	11	64.7	3	15.0
4	If I want to go out I will go out even if my partner doesn't want me to go out	7	41.2	0	0
5	I am completely free to move around and do not have to consider anyone else's wishes	12	70.6	3	15.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

This 'reputation' is determined by patriarchal norms about 'good, moral women' and 'bad, lose' women. Even married women may have to negotiate this space with their husbands. For example, Azola who is one of the two married Zulu women laments the loss of her single life. She submits to her husband by not going out to 'bad' parties or clubs without him. In return she has complete freedom to attend 'good' events at church or her burial society without him, even though one of those fundraising events was a party late on Friday night.

In summary, Zulu women are more likely to engage in collaborative decision making about household expenses and bills compared to Zimbabwean respondents who are more likely to make household decisions alone. This is probably because South African households were more likely to have multiple adult females who were collectively contributing to household expenses and decision making. In contrast, Zimbabwean women tended to have one recognised head female that was married, widowed or separated. In other words, no Ndebele households were encountered where two married women or two single parents were living together under one roof. Zimbabwean respondents were thus more easily classified as adults (married, with children and thus given autonomy over the running of their household), or children (unmarried, childless women whether adult or not). This difference could also explain why Ndebele women were more likely to acknowledge and voluntarily comment on the unfairness of gender roles, because they are more likely to be living with men and thus more acutely aware of or affected by patriarchal norms.

### 3.2. Physical/bodily integrity

The history of black South African women's body politics is mired with the racist Apartheid-era policies in the country. A 1974 state-sponsored family planning program that was linked to White fears of a growing black population was particularly controversial. Reports of forced sterilization and coerced contraceptive use for black women led to accusations that this was a eugenics program of control with genocidal undertones. Nonetheless, one of the legacies of this policy is that use of family planning and contraceptive services has increased steadily since 1974 and total fertility rates have declined (Kaufman, 1997).

Several questions about the respondent's ability to make decisions about her own health were included in the interview along with attitudes about domestic violence, in order to assess Zulu women's physical integrity. There is a great deal of control over personal health care in KwaMashu. The vast majority of women (81%) make decisions about their own health and all of them are in control of their own reproductive health (Table 56).

Table 56: Decisions over respondent's health

	Health decisions	South African women		Zimbabwean women	
		Number	%	Number	%
1	Respondent	13	81.3	7	35.0
2	Partner	0	0	3	15.0
3	Respondent and partner jointly	2	12.5	4	20.0
4	Other household members	1	6.3	5	25.0
5	Other non-household members	0	0	1	5.0
	Total	16	100.0	20	100.0
	Who decides when you use contraceptives?	South African women		Zimbabwean women	
		Number	%	Number	%
1	Respondent	16	100	6	30.0
2	Partner	0	0	1	5.0
3	Jointly	0	0	10	50.0
4	Other	0	0	0	0
	Total	16	100	17	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

High levels of control over health are likely influenced by the Zulu women's ability to access free public health care. KwaMashu results are in stark contrast to Nketa

where Ndebele women are more likely to engage in consultative decision making about their health needs. Zimbabwean clinics and hospitals charge relatively high user fees for almost all services, with upfront payment required<sup>26</sup> (Kevany et al., 2010). Ndebele women may thus need to consult with family before redirecting a sizeable amount of their household budgets towards health care needs.

The health consequences of multiple sexual partners can be severe in South Africa, which has one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in Africa. Half the Zulu women interviewed said they would leave the relationship if their partner was cheating (47%) and five women (29%) would remain in the relationship but confront their partner to try and work it out (Table 57). Only two Zulu women would seek help from family members (12%) compared to six Ndebele women (30%). A few older Zulu women told the researcher that women are expected to look the other way and not question their partners about 'such matters,' because polygamy (common law or otherwise) is permitted in Zulu culture. However, the responses indicate that there has been a cultural shift for these women, with the majority having expectations of monogamy.

Table 57: Attitudes towards infidelity

	What would you do if your partner was cheating on you	South Africa		Zimbabwe	
		Number	%	Number	%
1	I would stay with him and not say anything	0	0	1	4.0
2	I would stay but confront him to work it out	5	29.4	13	52.0
3	I would seek help from his family	1	5.9	3	12.0
4	I would seek help from my family	1	5.9	3	12.0
5	Go to someone else for help e.g. priest	1	5.9	2	8.0
6	I would leave the relationship	8	47.1	2	8.0
7	Other	1	5.9	1	4.0
	Total	17	100.0	25	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

When asked a similar question about physical abuse, it is telling that none of the respondents would keep quiet about intimate partner violence, whereas almost one third of Ndebele women would (30%) (Table 58). Most Zulu women would file a

<sup>26</sup> According to Kevany et al (2010) a study of costs at a government district hospital showed that outpatient consultations cost \$24, antenatal care \$80, a medical examination \$101, a general admission \$60, and a paediatric admission \$30.11 Private health care consultations begin at \$200, and increase to \$500 per night of inpatient care. The per capita income in the country is approximately US\$500.

police report (38%) or tell family members (33%). It is difficult to generalise the mood, facial expressions and tone that the Ndebele and Zulu women used when responding to this question. Although strong personalities were encountered in both groups of women, Zulu women tended to be more vocal, more genial and more willing to talk about and share their personal experience of domestic violence. Ndebele women on the other hand used variations of this close-ended response given by Thandie: “violence against women is never justified!” and when prompted would simply repeat “never justified under any circumstances!”

Table 58: Attitudes towards intimate partner violence

	What would you do if your partner was physically abusive	South Africa		Zimbabwe	
		Number	%	Number	%
1	I would not tell anyone	0	0	6	30.0
2	I would tell my family	3	14.3	1	5.0
3	I would tell his family	4	19.0	7	35.0
4	I would talk to someone else e.g. priest,	1	5.9	1	5.0
5	I would leave the relationship	4	19.0	1	5.0
6	I would file a police report	8	38.1	4	20.0
7	Other	1	4.8	0	0
	Total	21	100.0	20	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

Interestingly, Zulu women were less likely to strongly disagree with any of the justifications for intimate partner violence, such as a man hitting a woman when she cheats on him (Table 59). On average, four or five Zulu women (25 to 32%) strongly disagree with any of the statements compared to thirteen or fourteen Ndebele women (65 to 70%). The majority of Zulu women do nonetheless disagree with domestic violence, with only one woman believing it is ok for a man to hit his wife whenever he wants to.

Table 59: Justification for intimate partner violence

Is it ok for a husband to hit his wife	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. If she cheats on him	2	1	0	9	4
2. If she gives him HIV/AIDS	1	0	0	10	5
3. If she disobeys him	2	0	0	10	4
4. If she refuses to cook or clean for him	1	0	0	10	5
5. If she refuses to have sex with him	1	0	0	10	4
6. whenever he wants to	1	0	0	10	5

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

The researcher decided to focus on physical rather than emotional abuse because the latter is more clearly definable across different cultural contexts. And while women are capable of being violent against other women, the question aimed to assess male-on-female violence, rather than general violence. There are high levels of physical violence perpetuated against women in KwaMashu, with only a quarter (24%) stating that they have never been hit or sexually assaulted by any man whether a father, partner, male relatives or male stranger (Table 60). Although violence against women is more prevalent in KwaMashu, the levels are extremely high in both groups of women with 76% of Zulu respondents in KwaMashu and 70% of Ndebele respondents in Nketa having been either hit or assaulted by men.

Table 60 shows that six out of seventeen Zulu women have been hit by their partners (35%) and four by their brothers or other male relatives (24%). Some of the explanations given are revealing. For example, Ayanda who is very funny, full of youthful energy and a gifted orator described how her ex- boyfriend once 'beat her to a pulp' when he found out she was cheating on him. "Eish, I found out how painful cheating could be!" but she also said "I was wrong to cheat so I didn't file a police report." Ayanda had disagreed with the statement that a man can hit his wife if she cheats on him and when probed about this said "a man shouldn't hit a woman for that, but everyone would understand if he did". She then added "but he wasn't even my husband, I was a free agent!"

And Khanya a 24 year old unemployed woman who is involved in a relationship with an older, wealthier married man said that she has asked him to stop hitting her to no avail. She thinks the problem is that he also sees himself as a father figure disciplining her in 'wifely' duties. She is thinking of leaving him but says "but he is so generous, he can spend R3, 000 on me, just like that!" Transactional sex was not explicitly explored in the interviews but instances of it are found in some of the South African women's stories.

It is therefore difficult to summarise Zulu women's attitudes about domestic violence. The women clearly believe they have the right and ability to confront their partners about infidelity and domestic violence. They also believe they have the choice to leave these partners, but that will consider the context within which the violence

occurred, their individual circumstances and their options before making any decisions. What is worrying is that both Zulu and Ndebele respondents are exposed to high levels of intimate partner violence but Zulu women as a whole seem more willing to excuse this violence than Ndebele women. The results from these interviews are consistent with a 2006 report by the Department of Social Development that found high levels of support for violence against women in KwaMashu, by men and women of all ages (DSD, 2006). South Africa has a significantly higher crime rate than Zimbabwe, and most of the violence and crime is concentrated in marginalised townships such as KwaMashu. Zulu women may thus have internalised some of the excuses that are used to justify violence against women.

Table 60: Experience of physical violence from men

	Physical violence	South Africa		Zimbabwe	
		Yes	%	Yes	%
1	My father has hit me before	3	17.6	9	45.0
2	My brothers or male relatives have hit me	4	23.5	4	20.0
3	I have had a boyfriend or husband who hit me	6	35.3	6	30.0
4	A man has sexually assaulted me	1	5.9	2	10.0
5	I have been raped	1	5.9	1	5.0
6	I have never been hit or assaulted by a man	4	23.5	6	30.0
7	Refused to answer	0	0	1	5.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

#### 4. Goals and aspirations

One of the clearest and most significant findings to emerge from both the South African and Zimbabwean fieldwork is that both sets of women have a different understanding of what citizenship entails. Zulu women struggled to explain what good citizenship is, with the majority defining it in terms of racial equality and diversity (35%), obeying the countries laws especially staying away from crime (29%) and patriotism (24%). It is important to contextualise these results to the particularities of these women's lives. The principles of racial equality and diversity remain at the forefront of South African citizenship discourses due to the country's complex history of racial segregation and Apartheid. And the country continues to battle violent, pervasive crime and consistently tops the lists of the most violent societies for women in the world.



However, it is significant that even with prompting, only one woman associated being a good citizen with political activities such as voting (6%), in spite of eleven respondents (65%) believing it is important to vote. The first ever democratic vote was held in 1994 where all South Africans aged 18 and over were allowed to vote irrespective of race and gender. So Black South African women have only had suffrage for twenty years or five general elections. The fact that education curricula and general public discourse do not currently emphasise civic duties as being constitutive of good citizenship in either Zimbabwe or South Africa, increases the importance of examining these women's citizenship agency from their own perspectives.

The questions on citizenship agency started by asking each woman what her goals are. The vast majority expressed a desire to change their employment status (59%). This was followed by gaining material possessions such as houses or cars (47%) and improving family relationships (41%). Three women did not wish to change anything in their lives and were 'fine with the way things were' (Table 61). This dissertation views the presence of goals as indicative of a belief in one's ability to determine one's own future as well as suggestive of a conscious sense of relative deprivation, which is an important motivator for action.

When asked how they could change their circumstances, nine women mentioned looking for a job (53%). These women could be split into five respondents who simply said "I have to look for a job" and four who had concrete ideas about exploring alternative strategies for finding jobs such as online applications and recruitment agencies. This latter group of women (25% of respondents) exhibit projective agency, that is when agents invent new possibilities for thought and action by identifying the range of available choices, and imagining alternative scenarios based on their wielding of means towards specific ends (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). The former group of women (31%) have more iterational outlooks as agents, defined as those routine or habitual responses to problems that reflect low levels of conscious reflection and that agents perform or state with little or no effort.

Table 61: Top three goals

	What three things would you like to change	Number	Percentage
1	Unemployment	10	58.8
2	Material possessions (house, car ownership)	8	47.1
3	Family relationships	7	41.2
4	Self-improvement (e.g. education, stop drinking)	6	35.3
5	More money	3	17.6
6	Nothing	3	17.6
7	Business or self-employment	1	5.9
	How could you change these three things	Number	Percentage
1	Look for a job	9	52.9
2	Education	4	22.2
3	Work hard	2	11.1
4	A rich boyfriend or husband	2	11.1
5	Nothing	1	5.9

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

Differences in South African and Zimbabwean women's responses are revealing. Zulu women were more likely to state that they are looking for a job or for scholarships to continue with their education. These strategies indicate an external focus in that achieving one's goal is dependent on someone else such as a hiring manager or a government official. The most popular strategy for Ndebele women was working harder, mentioned by eleven respondents (55%). Though driven by state failure and economic collapse, their response is indicative of recognition of their internal power to change their circumstances.

Table 62: Role of fate and destiny

	Fate versus hard work	South Africa		Zimbabwe	
		Number	%	Number	%
1	Everything in life is determined by fate	0	0	2	10.0
2	Most things are determined by fate	0	0	1	5.0
3	Both fate and hard work	2	13.3	5	25.0
4	Most things are determined by hard work	11	73.3	4	20.0
5	Everything is determined by hard work	2	13.3	8	40.0
	Total	15	100.0	20	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

Agents are actively involved in shaping their own destinies at both the individual and collective levels as well as through democratic participation. For instance, one question asks respondents whether they can decide their own destiny or whether everything in life is determined by fate. This question can be used to shed light on a respondent's self-efficacy, which is a key determinant of motivation, level of effort

and perseverance in a task (Bandura, 1995). Zulu women are more likely to believe in their self-efficacy than Ndebele women with 87% believing that hard-work plays a greater role in life than fate, compared to 60% of Ndebele women (Table 62).

It is important to reiterate that South Africa is one of the few countries in the world where social rights are enshrined in the Constitution. This was in an effort to alleviate poverty and address social inequalities resulting from Apartheid-era policies and to enable previously disadvantaged people to claim citizenship and make demands on the state (Enslin, 2003, Amisi and Ballard, 2005). The well-publicized Reconstruction and Development Program was established to that end and aims to provide free social housing, clean water, electrification, land reform, healthcare and public works for all South Africans.

Table 63: Government versus individual responsibility

	Is it the government's responsibility to provide welfare	South Africa		Zimbabwe	
		Number	%	Number	%
1	Yes	6	35.3	3	15.0
2	No	8	47.1	12	60.0
3	Both	3	17.6	5	25.0
	Total	17	100.0	20	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

But, when asked whether they felt it was the government's responsibility to ensure all poor citizens had adequate housing, electricity, clean water and enough food to eat, almost half of low-income women in KwaMashu (47%) argue that no, people should take care of themselves and not rely on the government (Table 63). That is, half of low-income Zulu women who are the intended recipients of most government social welfare programs do not accept state welfare uncritically. Possible reasons for this result will be explored in the next section, which examines women's voting behaviour.

#### 4.1. Participatory citizenship

Although citizenship theories differ with respect to the appropriate balance between rights and obligations, they all identify voting as an essential duty in liberal-democratic states. The section on political participation started by assessing voting

behaviour and finds that voter turnout, a measure of public trust in government and of citizens' participation in the political process, was 88% among subaltern Zulu women (Table 64). Voter turnout for South Africa women as a whole is 75% and exceeds the average OECD female voter turnout of 72% as well the average female voter of 73% among 27 African countries surveyed<sup>27</sup>. There are however extremely high levels of dissatisfaction with the government, with many respondents stating that they are 'tired of empty promises' and vowing to boycott the 2014 general elections because 'nothing ever changes.'

The researcher was surprised by the level of anger and disillusionment expressed by some of the women. "We will vote for the ANC (ruling party) because there is no-one else to vote for, but they have to stop stealing money and start creating jobs!" Sihle's statement echoed many of the other women's sentiments such as Azola's heated words "My life is the same as it was twenty years ago. I am still poor and I am still unemployed. The government promised us jobs and we want jobs!"

Table 64: Voting behaviour and politics

Have you voted		South Africa		Zimbabwe	
		N	%	N	%
1	In all national elections you were old enough to vote in?	15	88.2	12	60.0
2	In all provincial elections you were old enough to vote in?	10	58.8	11	55.0
3	In all local elections you were old enough to vote in	13	76.5	11	55.0
How often do you discuss politics at home					
		No.	%	No.	%
1	Never	2	12.5	10	50.0
2	Sometimes (e.g. Once a month)	6	37.5	7	35.0
3	Often (e.g. twice a month)	4	25.0	0	0
4	All the time (e.g. once a week or more)	0	0	3	15.0
5	Not sure	4	25.0	0	0
Total		16	100.0	20	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

These statements combined with the women's belief in hard work suggest that women in KwaMashu may desire true empowerment rather than limited social

<sup>27</sup> <sup>27</sup> Based on Afrobarometer's 2010-2012 survey of 31 African countries. Online database: <http://www.afrobarometer-online-analysis.com/aj/AJBrowserAB.jsp> [date accessed: 2 July 2013]

assistance programmes. In other words, Zulu women in KwaMashu who argued against welfare in Table 63 may be making the case for poverty alleviation through full employment opportunities that pay living wages and provide full benefits, rather than through cash transfers that cannot meet basic living costs. That is not to minimise the importance of these grants for the women, but cash transfers in the absence of job creation, job skilling and educational opportunities recreates poverty cycles and relative deprivation in marginalised communities.

Zulu women report that they are more likely to vote and discuss politics at home than Zimbabwean women (Table 64), but they are less likely to have ever participated in formal political activities (Table 95). Only four Zulu women have ever attended municipal meetings (24%) and one of these women also marched in a peaceful protest. So the Ndebele women are more likely to have participated in formal political activities than Zulu women, in spite of their limited civil, political and social rights.

Table 65: Type of political activity

Have you participated	South Africa		Zimbabwe	
	Yes	%	Yes	%
Type of political activity				
Attend municipal meetings	4	23.5	8	40.0
Sign a petition	0	0	5	25.0
Picketing and chanting slogans	0	0	4	20.0
Attending iZimbizo	0	0	3	15.0
Join boycotts	0	0	2	10.0
Join unofficial strike	0	0	2	5.0
Occupy buildings or stage sit ins	0	0	1	5.0
March in peaceful protest/toi toi	1	5.9	2	5.0
Violent protest	0	0	2	5.0
Attend meetings about protests	0	0	1	5.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

Ndebele women are also more likely to participate in community and neighbourhood organisations, with a very high mean, median and mode of four organisations per respondent. Table 66 shows that church and stokvels<sup>28</sup> are the most popular

<sup>28</sup> Stokvels are an informal rotating savings scheme of twelve or more people who contribute fixed sums of money to a central fund on a regular basis. The pooled money is often invested to earn better returns and a different member receives money from the fund every month. Although most members have low-incomes, the popularity of stokvels in South Africa is such that they are estimated to be worth about R25 billion (US\$2.5 billion) and to have about 8.6 million members.

community memberships for Zulu women, but that most women rarely attend meetings. So it is possible that Zulu women who have a mean, median and mode of one organisation per respondent, are not 'graduating' to formal political participation.

Zulu women were also less likely to have had occupied leadership positions in junior and high school, and none of the women interviewed currently held leadership positions in the community (Table 67). The seven Ndebele women who held leadership positions as adults were also the most politically active of the women interviewed. It appears that less educated and self-employed women were able to gain a measure of community and self-respect through their participation.

Table 66: Community membership

	Community membership	South Africa		Zimbabwe	
		Number	%	Number	%
1	Church	9	52.9	18	90.0
2	Stokvel or burial society	9	52.9	12	60.0
3	Sports, artistic, recreational organisations	1	5.8	12	60.0
4	Children's school activities	4	23.5	11	55.0
5	Professional or environmental organisation	0	0	7	35.0
6	Charitable	0	0	7	35.0
7	Political party	2	11.8	4	20.0
8	Consumer	1	5.9	3	15.0
9	Other	0	0	3	15.0
10	Labour union	0	0	2	10.0
<b>How often do you attend meetings</b>					
		Number	%	Number	%
1	More than once a week	0	0	7	36.8
2	Once a week	2	11.8	6	31.6
3	Two or more times a month	1	5.9	2	10.5
4	Once a month	1	5.9	4	21.1
5	Rarely	4	23.5	0	0
	Not applicable	9	52.9	0	0
	Total	17	100.0	19	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in KwaMashu (Durban) and Nketa (Bulawayo) Townships.

The interviews also assessed how women felt about the possibility of effecting genuine change, either alone or within these community groups (Table 68). The majority of Zulu women (69%) believe that it is difficult to change things in the community and believe it is difficult to change their socio-economic circumstance (86%). The comparable figures for Ndebele women were 60% and 75% respectively.

In other words, both sets of marginalised women believe that there are high barriers to social mobility in their respective countries.

Table 67: Leadership positions

	Leadership positions	South Africa		Zimbabwe	
		Number	%	Number	%
1	In junior school	5	29.4	10	50.0
2	In High school	5	29.4	6	40.0
3	As an adult	0	0	7	35.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo. Zimbabwe 2010 DHS Survey

Respondents were also shown a ladder representing power in South Africa, with the first rung indicating people with no power and the tenth rung indicating people who have a lot of power. The values ranged from 4 to 7 and the mean was 5 and median was the 5<sup>th</sup> rung of power. Although Zimbabwean values had a wider range from 1 to 8, the mean and median scores were similar at 4 and 5 respectively.

Table 68: Power to effect change

	How easy is it for women like you to change community	South Africa		Zimbabwe	
		Number	%	Number	%
1	Very easy	1	6.3	1	5.0
2	Somewhat easy	0	0	3	15.0
3	A little difficult	7	43.7	1	5.0
4	It is very difficult	4	25.0	11	55.0
5	Don't know	2	12.5	4	20.0
	Total	16	100	20	100.0

	How easy is it for women like you to change standard of living	South Africa		Zimbabwe	
		Number	%	Number	%
1	Very easy	0	0	2	10.0
2	Somewhat easy	0	0	3	15.0
3	A little difficult	8	57.1	6	30.0
4	It is very difficult	4	28.6	9	45.0
5	Don't know	2	14.3	0	0
	Total	14	100.0	20	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo. Zimbabwe 2010 DHS Survey

There is no apparent relationship between power score and age. Zulu respondents in their twenties had a mean score of 5.5, those in their thirties and forties had mean scores of 5 and 5.5, while those in their fifties a mean score of 5.7. This is a similar pattern observed among Ndebele women, namely that women in their fifties have the

highest mean scores followed by women in their twenties. Higher mean scores for the oldest women are expected, because of the respect and status afforded to older women in both Ndebele and Zulu culture.

## 5. Conclusion

The women in KwaMashu are empowered and disempowered at the same time. They have civil, political rights, some social rights as well as high levels of control over their own bodies. Although they believe that they have the autonomy to make their own decisions and determine their daily lives, many are single parents who bear a disproportionately high burden of poverty and marginalization. They face many structural barriers on a daily basis such as unemployment, high levels of crime, endemic levels of violence against women in their communities, socio-economic marginalisation and systems of social relations that place the burden of unpaid care and domestic work on their shoulders.

As a group, women in KwaMashu have more iterational outlooks and more of an external focus compared to Zimbabwean women. For instance, when faced with high unemployment rates the latter group turned to the informal sector and community partnerships, whereas the former look for formal sector employment, in spite of the fact that opportunities for low-skilled women are limited. Zulu women are also less likely to engage in either formal political activities or participate in the community than their Ndebele counterparts. This suggests that the relationship between social rights and citizenship agency is complex for subaltern women, and may extend beyond the mere granting of social rights or the development of a conscious sense of agency (belief that one can act).

The women in KwaMashu define being a good citizen in terms of racial equality, obeying the countries laws, staying away from crime and patriotism. And the Nketa women define being a good citizen in terms of terms of being law abiding and getting national registration documents such as birth certificates. Only one woman mentioned political activities such voting as being constitutive of citizenship, in spite of the fact that the majority believe that it is important to vote. It is therefore important to acknowledge that the majority of women interviewed meet the duties and



obligations of citizenship according to their own understanding. The next chapter explores these findings further and situates South African and Zimbabwean women's citizenship agency using the framework for analysis introduced in the conceptualising agency chapter.

### 5.1. A note

I occupied the space between complete insider and complete outsider in each country. And the specific location changed depending on each research participant, their personality and relationship with the research assistant. The Zimbabwean research assistant has a warm, engaging and open personality. She has lived in Nketa her whole life, is active in the community and was on friendly terms with several of the respondents interviewed. She is also studying for her degree and is considered a neighbourhood success story, which was helpful in gaining access to the community.

The fact that I am also a student, originally from Bulawayo and who speaks isiNdebele helped create an easy, informal atmosphere for 'us women' to talk about gender. Their questions to me were mostly centred on life in the Diaspora with many asking me about scholarship or employment opportunities for Zimbabweans in South Africa. However, Nketa respondents were hesitant to open up about sensitive topics, particularly gender violence and politics. These topics are likely only discussed with trusted people, family and friends, indicating that there was a line drawn between complete insider and outsider.

The South African research assistant is a young, unemployed, single mother who did not complete high school. She is a kind and considerate young woman, friendly and open with respondents she felt comfortable with but more reserved with those she did not know well. I felt welcome into each home but there was a sense that my positionality as an 'educated black woman' who 'employed' a local woman had an impact on the power dynamic. For instance, the vast majority of respondents either asked if I was hiring or could help them with scholarships or suggestions on how to motivate their children to stay in school. This influenced the tone of some interviews,

with a couple of respondents being more formal and 'interviewing' rather than openly discussing issues.

In addition, I grew up in Bulawayo and had a very happy childhood there so have fond memories of my life there. I have visited townships there numerous times and thus felt at ease in Nketa. My family moved to South Africa in 1995 and I have lived here on and off for the last twenty years, but had not spent time in a township prior to these interviews. Like other foreigners, I am aware of the high crime rates and general xenophobic sentiments particularly against Zimbabweans. I felt safer with a research assistant who was a cultural insider but I was on my guard and did not disclose the fact that I was Zimbabwean except to those respondents who asked about my educational background. After this disclosure, respondents often asked my opinion about perceived higher educational attainment, entrepreneurial drive and labour market success among Zimbabweans, though I did not sense any animosity on their parts.

It is important to note that interviews in both townships were mostly conducted when the women were doing chores and with other household members or friends present. There were constant interruptions from children, noise from the television and input from other women during the interview process. This provided a wonderful opportunity to observe and understand the women's lives. I humbly recognise, acknowledge and give credit to these women who welcomed me into their homes and lives. This dissertation aims to document their experiences and highlight how difference, power inequalities and identities influence their agency as citizens.

## Chapter 6: Discussion

### 1. Introduction

This chapter distinguishes subaltern African women's citizenship agency as an analytical category in its own right, with distinct manifestations that are clearly distinguishable from those of Western women. It focuses on the process of citizenship agency, defined as empirically observable actions undertaken to claim citizenship rights or improve the substance of existing ones. This allows for the analysis of actions that result in intentional as well as unforeseen consequences on individual's citizenship rights.

Section 2 presents a contextual examination of the strategies Ndebele and Zulu women use to engage with more powerful state actors in their respective countries. Section 3 examines these strategies in more detail, with an emphasis on how these everyday survival and resistance strategies have allowed the women to gain concessions from the state. Section 4 presents an analytic framework for an empirical application of subaltern women's citizenship agency and is followed by Section 5, which discusses this dissertation's main contribution to the theoretical and methodological analysis of citizenship agency.

### 2. Citizenship agency

Much of political science and sociological literature focuses on large scale protest movements that have potentially revolutionary consequences on either the state or class relations. This type of action has been accused of being the preserve of the middle class and intelligentsia, because it presumes a minimum level of political organisation (Scott, 1986). Large scale collective action has rarely been seen among subaltern groups in developing nations. Subaltern and anthropological literature suggests that activism by less powerful groups is in fact non-conventional, in that it is non-collective, small scale and operates outside formal political institutions (Bayat, 2010, Scott, 1986). And Feminist literature indicates that non-Western women can exercise power and make real gains when they do not challenge the larger symbolic order (Rogers, 1980, Rogers, 1975). This dissertation finds evidence that marginalised Ndebele and Zulu women avoid open confrontation with state

authorities and patriarchal norms; are more likely to work the system to meet their survival needs rather than challenge larger state structures; and use informal networks and various forms of individual self-help to negotiate their daily lives and claim their citizenship rights in small but significant ways. Section 2.1 discusses their relationship with their respective states in formal spaces of political participation.

## 2.1. Formal participation

In this dissertation, formal participation is defined as any direct engagement with the state apparatus such as through voting, political party membership or engaging in campaign-orientated activities on behalf of a political party (Jones, 2004). Although the lines between formal and informal participation have become increasingly blurred, this type of activity is normally uncontroversial and sanctioned in Africa, especially if done in concert with the ruling party. Politics was not explicitly discussed in Nketa due to the tense political climate in Zimbabwe. Nevertheless, Ndebele women's encounters with the state emerged through their stories:

Mandisa: The Youth always come to that flea market so we have to carry our membership cards all the time when we sell there.

Mandisa who buys goods from South Africa and resells them in Bulawayo flea markets is referring to ruling party (Zanu PF) membership cards. Under recently introduced rules, anyone who wants to trade at the flea market is forced to register and purchase a card for between US\$1 and US\$3. The army, police and youth militia demand to see membership cards in exchange for granting flea market stalls. Cards are also required to access humanitarian food aid, health care, scholarships, civil service jobs and training opportunities in nursing or teachers colleges. Subaltern groups are perceived to form the base for the populist opposition party so linking Zanu PF cards to livelihood is one of the most effective ways to register them as Zanu PF members. These massive registration drives are an important income source for the ruling party and also facilitate the electoral rigging and voting irregularities that have allowed the ruling party to stay in power.

The Youth who patrol flea markets feature strongly in the women's stories. Effectively trained as child soldiers, the Youth militia are the most commonly

reported architects of electoral and political violence in Zimbabwe, with allegations of systematic torture, murder, rape, arson and vandalism against all individuals, women and children included. So the costs of not owning a membership card are extremely high. Subaltern women are not able to earn a living or access services without one and also leave themselves vulnerable to harassment and militia brutality

Gogo: His mother told me that he failed maths so I don't know how he got a place at the teachers college.

Dumi: He joined the Youth

Gogo: [Shocked] What? He joined the Youth...?

It would, under these circumstances, be rational for the Ndebele women to align themselves with the ruling party and engage in what Gerami and Lehnerer (2001) call collaboration with the regime, in order to maximise their chances of gaining influence and accessing opportunities for their children. However, none of the women interviewed in Nketa had any of the incongruous material benefits that accrue to active supporters. They did not display signs of Zanu PF support, did not report attending mandatory political rallies and responded evasively to the few political questions. Scott (1986) notes that subordinate groups have historically avoided any direct symbolic confrontation with authority, particularly when such activity would be dangerous or suicidal. The culture of fear and silence combined with the universal lack of collaboration in spite of significant poverty and hardship is perhaps one of the clearest indications of the women's silent protest and false compliance with respect to Zimbabwean regime.

The women in Nketa and Zimbabwean women in general, have one of the lowest voter turnout rates for women in sub-Saharan Africa<sup>29</sup>. A measure of public trust and citizen participation in the political process, voter turnout was 60% among Ndebele women, 62% among Zimbabwean women as a whole and 72% for sub-Saharan African women. Interestingly, Ndebele women's turnout is comparable to the United States where approximately 60% of women voted in the last two elections.

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<sup>29</sup> Based on Afrobarometer's 2010-2012 survey of 31 African countries. Voter turnout among Zimbabwean women only surpasses that of women in Cameroon (46%), Madagascar (58%) and Swaziland (59%). <http://www.afrobarometer-online-analysis.com/aj/AJBrowserAB.jsp>

The South African example provides a parallel strategy that is revealing. Voter turnout was 88% among subaltern Zulu women compared to 75% among South African women as a whole.<sup>30</sup> South African women have similar voter participation rates to the average for sub-Saharan African women (72%) and general OECD average of 73%. Female voter turnout rates in KwaMashu are among the highest in the world for countries without compulsory voting.<sup>31</sup> There are however extremely high levels of dissatisfaction with the government, with many Zulu respondents stating that they are “tired of empty promises” and vowing to “boycott” the next elections because “nothing ever changes.” Azola’s heated words bear repeating, as they summarize the general feeling encountered:

Azola:           My life is the same as it was twenty years ago. I am still poor and I am still unemployed. The government promised us jobs and we want jobs!

Protesting by abstention is increasingly being used by poor South African groups looking to claim citizenship rights. For instance, the South African Landless People’s Movement, the Western-Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign and Abahlali baseMjondolo have boycotted elections under “No Land! No House! No Vote!” campaigns. Activists also use controversial tactics to claim their basic rights, such as the appropriation of water, electricity and land. According to Amnesty International, they have been beaten, arrested, jailed and even tortured by the South African police for doing so. Ironically, Zimbabwe’s collapse is used as a cautionary tale to garner public opinion against these movements, while turning a blind eye to the South African state’s parallel use of intimidation and repression.

KwaMashu women are therefore drawn to a strategy that arises out of the popular discontent. Abstention seems to be less about overthrowing the post-Apartheid government than it is about forcing it to prioritise electoral promises to provide land,

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<sup>30</sup> Based on Afrobarometer’s 2010-2012 survey of 31 African countries: <http://www.afrobarometer-online-analysis.com/aj/AJBrowserAB.jsp> [date accessed 7 July 2013]

<sup>31</sup> Based on the remapping debate website that collects voter turnout rates from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance for compulsory voting statistics: <http://www.remappingdebate.org/map-data-tool/voter-turnout-different-oecd-countries> [date accessed 1 January 2014]

housing, sanitation, education and jobs or social citizenship rights to poor South Africans who form the bulk of the ruling party's political base. Zulu women's stated strategy for expressing discontent is more overt than Ndebele women. The former freely and openly indicated that they may choose to abstain from voting, while the latter remained silent on the issue but simply stay away, as evidenced by their low voter turnout rates. Although the women's decisions to choose overt versus covert resistance may be attributable to the different political systems, both strategies are what Scott (1986) calls token or incidental forms of resistance that are:

Unorganised, systematic and individual; opportunistic and self-indulgent; have no revolutionary consequences; and imply an accommodation with the system of domination (Scott, 1986:29).

In other words, with respect to formal political engagement Zimbabwean and South African women are both "working their respective systems' to their minimum disadvantage (Hobsbawm, 1973, Scott, 1986). The relationship between Zulu women and their states is complex and multilayered. Their dominant orientation is towards the state, and the majority are state clients who are largely dependent on social welfare. However, Zulu women generally believe that one should support oneself without recourse to state. High levels of anger and disillusionment are centred on their government's failure to create equitable opportunities that would allow them to do so. Yet the majority are unwilling to vote for another party, stating that they were considering protesting by not voting.

The second most common form of formal political participation for both sets of women was attendance at municipal meetings. These meetings are supposed to be the key institutional structures through which the community can participate in local democratic governance and contribute to the political and administrative affairs of their municipalities. All women who attend these meetings are homeowners, with twelve of the fourteen homeowners (85%) attending regularly. Women in Nketa have higher attendance rates than women in KwaMashu. Homeownership rates are higher in Nketa where 50% of women in Nketa own their homes, compared to 24% of the women in KwaMashu, figures that are similar to the municipal meeting attendance rates of 40% and 24% respectively.

Homeowners have an added incentive to attend meetings because agendas often include community development issues that affect the quality of life and value of property in the neighbourhood, such as building roads, traffic lights, speed bumps, improving policing, maintaining parks and improving service delivery of water and electricity. Memory in Zimbabwe explains:

Memory: I try to go to every meeting. We all do because if we don't then the city council will do what they want and say they gave us our chance to talk to them. So we take our chance and talk to them at the meeting.

The economic collapse in Zimbabwe resulted in major foreign currency, fuel and infrastructure constraints across the country. Urban centres are facing persistent water shortages, electricity blackouts, sanitation blockages and maintenance challenges that rarely occurred a decade ago. Financially strapped town councils try to recover costs by increasing bills and rates to reflect the true costs of providing basic services. The women in Nketa have a vested interest in attending these meetings because councils have previously implemented price hikes of up to 1000% at a time, when attendance at the meetings was low (Sithabile, 2013). Memory is referring to the fact that councils now actively encourage residents to attend, in order to minimise account arrears or disconnections and avoid the strikes, backlash and protests that occur when residents deem price hikes to be untenable.

As illustrated in Chapter 4, Ndebele women generally exercise a great deal of autonomy over the running of their households. And councils have made their meetings more accessible to women, in a concerted effort to have a truly consultative process. For instance, township council meetings are held at local primary schools and community halls during daytime hours. In these meetings, marginalised women who are less able to absorb the shock of steep price hikes are given an opportunity to set out mutual expectations and negotiate over how much they can realistically pay for services.

In contrast, ward meetings in KwaMashu are indelibly linked to ruling party (ANC) politics because most ward councillors in the township belong to the party. ANC councillors across the country are generally perceived to be corrupt and ineffective, misappropriating development funds, making decisions unilaterally without consulting their committees and not calling or attending quarterly community



meetings, particularly in townships (MXA, 2007, Paradza et al., 2010). The women in KwaMashu echoed these sentiments stating that their councillor never visited the area except to campaign for votes visit various mistresses and allegedly steal money to fund his lavish lifestyle. When asked about the councillor,

Ayanda: Ha, you mean Casper, the ghost! You only see him when he wants votes... [laughter].

Sakhile: I hear he is very rich now. He must be too busy counting his money.

Ayanda: You mean OUR money.

Sakhile: Well, it's his money now!

Furthermore, ward meetings have previously been marred by violence, a situation made worse by the fact that most meetings are held in the evening and finish after dark. This is likely to discourage women who need to use public transport and mothers with young children. Additionally, many of the issues that the women in KwaMashu are concerned about such as utility costs, housing, jobs and education are actually set at the district not ward level. In other words, women in KwaMashu negotiate legitimacy, governance, safety and alienation issues in local spaces of political participation.

Low-income homeownership has typically been viewed through the lens of asset building and security. And this study finds that the impact of having at least one home in a family extends beyond the nuclear family, providing shelter for extended family and kin. The main insight provided by this study is that homeownership may play an even larger role for marginalised African women. Relatively high municipal participation rates in spite of lower levels of trust in formal institutions in Zimbabwe, suggests that homeownership may also be an important tool that encourages subaltern women to engage with political institutions in order to contest, expand and shape them.

It bears repeating that Zimbabwean and South African women do not live under classic patriarchy as seen in the Middle East and Asia but have existing spheres of autonomy in a similar vein to Kandiyoti's (1988) study of women in Kenya, Gambia and Ghana. Participating in local governance structures that are concerned with the 'feminine sphere of household bills and community' may be a way for marginalised

African women to safeguard their homes and protect their family's ability to make ends meet, while expanding their spheres of autonomy into the realm of formal political institutions. The next section analyses women's participation in the informal realm of politics.

## 2.2. Informal political participation

In this dissertation, informal political participation is defined as any form of civic engagement that falls outside the electoral arena, namely cause-orientated and civic orientated activities. The former focuses on influencing issues for political and ethical reasons through protests, demonstrations, petitions and consumer politics (boycotting products). Civic-orientated activities refer to associational memberships in community groups that are working to solve local problems (Jones, 2004).

The study found that Zimbabwean women were more likely to engage in cause-orientated activities than South African women. For instance, 25% of Ndebele women had ever-signed petitions, 20% had picketed and 10% had ever-participated in boycotts, protest marches or demonstrations. The fact that only one woman in KwaMashu had ever-participated in any of these activities (marched in a peaceful protest) was an unexpected finding, as South Africa has been dubbed the protest capital of the world, with an average of 8,000 incidents a year since the mid-2000s according to the South African Police Service (Mottiar and Bond, 2011).

Afrobarometer's 2010-2012 survey found that South African women are three times more likely to have participated in demonstrations or marches than Zimbabwean women, and also more likely to do so than African women as a whole (Table 69). In fact, Zimbabwean women have one of the lowest protest and demonstration rates on the continent, which is consistent with the high risk associated with such activity in the country. The results for marginalised South African and Zimbabwean women are thus atypical, and potential reasons will be explored below.

The ongoing urban unrest in South Africa is seen to be indicative of a broader rebellion of the poor. Most are disillusioned by the ANC's failure to deliver on electoral promises. They believe that conventional ways for engaging with the state have failed and are looking for alternative ways to force the state to guarantee their

need for housing, water, electricity and jobs. The separate community organisations and movements have not yet formed a sustained and collaborative political organisation. So participation in a protest is largely dependent on one's associational memberships and networks.

Table 69 : Participation in demonstrations and protests in sub-Saharan Africa

Percentage who have ever attended a demonstration or protest march			
	Men	Women	Interviewed women
Zimbabwe	5%	3%	10%
South Africa	12%	9%	6%
African	10%	7%	N/A
UK	5%	6%	N/A

Source: Afrobarometer 2010-2012 Survey

For example, an analysis of social protests as recorded by the Centre for Civil Society in South Africa shows that the majority of protests in Durban over the last five years have been organised by unions, mostly for public sector workers and university students (Mottiar and Bond, 2011). These demonstrations would be unlikely to reach the women in KwaMashu who are mostly unemployed and did not proceed to tertiary education.

There have however been several protests that have occurred in their township over issues that the women mentioned during the interviews. For example, in 2013 there was an Anti-Wonga (drug), Crime and Rape protest, a protest against a senior police officer who was allowed to return to work in spite of repeated allegations of sexual harassment, as well as several service delivery related protests over housing, water, electricity and jobs. When asked why they did not attend protests, five women said that neighbourhood criminals and opportunists use demonstrations as an excuse to commit arson, vandalism and vigilantism, so they fear for their safety. And it is revealing that eight women said they rarely heard about protests beforehand, even those occurring in their neighbourhoods.

Azola: The problem is that some people just go to make trouble. You know those (drug) addicts. They always go to these things. I think it's just so they can burn things and steal to buy their drugs.

Jones (1990) and Lister (1997) note that participation at the neighbourhood level often allows disadvantaged women to develop confidence and self-esteem, and may even lead to their engagement in formal political activity. Zulu women had a mean, median and mode of one community organisation per respondent, mostly in a church or burial society. As a result, it is likely they are excluded from grassroots orientated information networks that play a large role in organising facilitating or encouraging activism and are subsequently not 'graduating' to formal political participation. Although most women interviewed had smart-phones and social media is playing an increasing role in South African movements, the relatively discrete nature of each protest means that women would still have to be members of several different organisations to receive updated news. Ndebele women who have an average of four community memberships mostly in church, recreational organisations, burial societies and parent teachers associations may be more likely to hear about events in their neighbourhood.

Ubuntu is humanist philosophy that defines Ndebele and Zulu (and other Southern African) social relations of kinship and community. These groups believe that individuals do not achieve their potential in isolation so the essence of humanity is to value the good of the community above self-interest. In other words, volunteerism, respect, honesty and trustworthiness form the essence of humanity in Zulu and Ndebele cultures. Worryingly, the majority of Zulu women believe that Ubuntu does not exist in their communities (80%), while the majority of Ndebele women believe it does (90%). Thandie is Zimbabwe's statement illustrates the value placed on Ubuntu:

Research assistant:           What would happen if you decided to only focus on your goals?

Thandie:                         [Thoughtful silence]... I would be lonely.

Associational memberships may thus be lower in KwaMashu because women feel it is a broken, crime-ridden and individualistic society that is antithesis to their culturally specific understandings of community. Theories of social capital emphasise the importance of these associational memberships in promoting interpersonal trust, social tolerance and co-operative behaviour. In Nketa, this has allowed the women to

work together to fill gaps where the state has failed by supplementing the local teacher's salary so that she could afford to teach the children; implementing a school feeding programme so that all the school children would eat at least one meal a day; forming home-grown professional associations to pool resources, share ideas and supplement incomes; and starting an afterschool sports program for neighbourhood children as the school could not afford to do so. The same gaps exist in KwaMashu Township. Zulu women there face similar financial constraints and socio-economic and cultural barriers as the Ndebele women in Nketa Township. However, the lack of Ubuntu and community spirit in KwaMashu may mean that the women interviewed are not motivated to work together in an effort to improve the community.

Another important finding to emerge from this study is that the majority of organisations in Nketa are grass-roots, home-grown and led by members of the community. Although a few churches and trading clubs had ties to overseas donors, the vast majority of funds were generated by local fundraising efforts or through remittances from community members living in the Diaspora. This is in sharp contrast to South Africa where government and NGOs play a significant role in community-led development activities in townships.

In KwaMashu for example, the government initiated a citizen activation and empowerment program, bringing together over five hundred NGOs and community-based organisations working together to empower and develop the community, improve governance and encourage income generation projects. A 2007 progress report highlighted the main challenges faced including public apathy, a disproportionate focus on big business at the expense of meeting the community's basic needs, and that accrued gains from these 'big' development projects did not filter down to the community but back to outside investors (MXA, 2007) Furthermore, political conflicts between civil society and ward councillors have resulted in the postponement and cancellation of several development projects in KwaMashu (Paradza et al., 2010, Xaba, 1994).

The confluence of big business, power struggles and the politicisation of community development initiatives in KwaMashu is likely to crowd out poorer and less educated women. Arnstein's ladder of participation suggests that any participation on the part of Zulu women is likely to be mere tokenism (informing, consulting and placation),

whereas participation in Nketa is more likely to involve genuine power sharing (partnership, delegated power and citizen control).

### 3. Citizenship rights

Scott (1986) argues that real resistance is organized systematic and cooperative; principled or selfless; has revolutionary consequences; and embodies ideas or intentions that negate the basis of domination itself. And according to Mullings (1999) although everyday acts of resistance such as pilfering, poor productivity sabotage and feigned ignorance can seem insignificant by themselves, they can have large-scale structural consequences. This section links the women's actions to the large scale transformations occurring in Zimbabwe and South Africa.

#### 3.1. Avoidance protest

The internationalisation of Nketa women's survival strategies was evident during the interviews. For instance, all the Ndebele women interviewed had relatives in the Diaspora, half of them earned income from buying goods in neighbouring countries and selling them in Bulawayo, and one quarter of the women had previously worked in neighbouring countries particularly South Africa and Botswana. In other words, the women in Nketa view trans-nationalism as a viable alternative to repression and react to tyranny, oppression and state failure by voting with their feet. Scott (1986) calls this an avoidance protests, and it has had several significant transformative impacts on Zimbabwean society.

A number of Nketa households had children who were born in the Diaspora either when their mothers was working there or in some instances, when they travelled with the specific purpose of giving birth in better equipped hospitals. Botswana's border town of Francistown is one hour's drive from Bulawayo and the South African border town of Musina is four hours' drive away from the city. However, South Africa's stronger commitment to its human rights obligations makes it a better alternative, as South Africa hospitals cannot turn away pregnant mothers about to give birth, irrespective of their immigration status. Although there are a few well publicised

media reports of pregnant Zimbabwean women being turned away and delivering in the street, there is clear evidence that some temporary Zimbabwean migrants have given birth in South African public hospitals.

Gogo: He [her grandson] was born in South Africa. It was the time we had cholera and the hospitals didn't have medicine. My youngest daughter was pregnant; it was almost time for her to give birth. We were very worried so we all agreed that she should go to her sister in South Africa and give birth there.

There are several other instances of large-scale movements of Zimbabwean women seeking medical treatment for themselves and their children in South Africa. For instance, during Zimbabwe's cholera outbreak in November 2008 when Zimbabwean hospitals were forced to turn away patients because they did not have medication to treat them. People who could make the trip travelled to neighbouring countries including South Africa, in order to seek treatment. Although initially turned away from public hospitals, trans-border cholera outbreaks in South Africa caused public health concerns, as South Africa has cholera 'hotspots' in poor towns. South Africa decided to provide free treatment to all Zimbabweans who were presenting with symptoms, in order to contain the outbreak (Khumalo, 2008).

South Africa's own public healthcare system is overburdened and under-resourced and the informal movement of patients from neighbouring countries including Zimbabwe has prompted the South African government to formalize arrangements for medical travel through inter-country agreements. The South African and Zimbabwean governments consequently entered into a bilateral agreement on health matters in April 2009, where South Africa can essentially bill the Zimbabwean government for Zimbabwean citizens treated in South African public hospitals (DIRCO, 2011). In other words, rather than have a direct confrontation with the state over untenable conditions in Zimbabwean hospitals, Zimbabwean women protested by avoidance and collectively claimed their right to adequate healthcare in a neighbouring country, namely South Africa. And the Zimbabwean government is forced to foot the bill.

However, Zimbabwean children born in neighbouring SADC countries face barriers to accessing public services such as government schools and hospitals in their countries of birth. Furthermore, the Zimbabwean education system is still ranked higher than many SADC countries including South Africa (Rademeyer and Wilkinson, 2013). So a sizeable number of Zimbabwean parents in these countries, particularly those with precarious immigration status, choose to send their children to live and be educated in Zimbabwe. Consequently, there is a sizeable number of foreign-born Zimbabwean children living and going to school in Zimbabwe.

The Zimbabwean government had in 2001, passed laws placing significant barriers for claiming citizenship by descent and refusing to grant dual citizenship. These political moves were designed to disenfranchise White Zimbabweans who were accused of backing the opposition party. As a collary of these laws, over two million Zimbabwean-born citizens whose parents were mostly born in Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia were also stripped of their right to vote and obtain Zimbabwean passports<sup>32</sup> (Jonas, 2011). High emigration rates after the economic collapse means that the new citizenship laws now also disenfranchise most foreign-born Zimbabwean children, who are often unable to claim citizenship rights in either Zimbabwe or their countries of birth. Furthermore, the government passed laws forcing all foreign-born children in Zimbabwe to pay exorbitant international tuition fees in an effort to extract taxes from parents.

Phumzile: They [the primary school] said they charge international fees for foreign children. I tried to explain that he was my son. He came out of this body – the body of a Zimbabwean woman who has a Zimbabwean husband, so how can he be a foreigner? They refused and said the rules have changed. Can you believe that? We can't afford that foreign fees and even if we could, we would never pay foreign fees for our child! So we *had* to get a Zimbabwean birth certificate for him.

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<sup>32</sup> The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland comprised three South African territories under British colonial rule. The area covers modern day Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia), Zambia (Northern Rhodesia) and Malawi (Nyasaland). Fluid boundaries and circular migration across the three territories means that many Zimbabweans, particularly those living in the North of the Country, can trace their ancestry to Zambia or Malawi.



As a result, there is now a sizeable black market for Zimbabwean birth certificates and forged hospital records, where Zimbabweans who give birth abroad pay a hospital clerk to register the birth in Zimbabwe so that their child can get a Zimbabwean birth certificate, which entitles them to claim Zimbabwean citizenship and enrol for school in Zimbabwe. Phumzile's words indicate that she knows her child is entitled to Zimbabwean citizenship. But rather than risk outright confrontation with authorities over adverse policies, women choose to 'nibble' away at them through noncompliance, subversion and co-option, effectively undermining the regime and its ability to determine who is and is not a Zimbabwean citizen.

### 3.2. Tax resistance

According to a 2012 statement by Zimbabwe's Minister of Finance and Economic Planning Patrick Chinamasa, "Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector is dead, only operating at 39% capacity". Among the top five constraints to recovery mentioned are a lack of working capital, electricity shortages, antiquated technology and low domestic demand (Ndlovu, 2013). The Nketa case study illustrates how subaltern women's self-sufficiency has contributed to this problem.

All the women in Nketa had one to three fruit trees and small vegetable gardens. So they had access to lemons, guavas or mangoes, as well as onions, tomatoes, chillies and collard greens. Notably there was also product specialisation within networks of friends, so women who had chicken coops specialised in selling eggs and would supply their neighbourhood as well as friends in their associational memberships. Women who had access to subsistence farms in the rural areas sold maize meal, melons and peanuts or home-made peanut butter. And groups of women regularly pooled funds to buy an animal for meat, usually a goat, cow or chicken from a subsistence farm. However, there was no obligation to buy from friends so each woman had to be competitive in an open market.

Foodstuffs that could not be made, such as oil and sugar were mostly purchased during trips to South Africa or bought from women with family (wholesale) contacts in the Diaspora. Clothing is either made by a local tailor, bought in South Africa or from flea market traders who buy clothes in neighbouring countries for resale. So the vast majority of these women's daily lives bypass the formal sector, such that regularly

buying from chain supermarkets and clothing stores is largely the preserve of wealthier Zimbabweans. In other words, the women in Nketa have essentially adopted capitalist strategies of disintermediation or 'cutting out middlemen' and product specialisation in order to make ends meet.

These strategies are used by Zimbabwean women across the board such that the President of the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI), Mr Kumbirai Katsande, recently dubbed Zimbabwe a 'nation of traders' (Anyadike, 2013). The trade is mostly driven by subaltern women whose collective self-sufficiency has resulted in the low demand for domestic goods. The Zimbabwean government finds it very difficult to monitor and tax them in the informal sector. Even attempts to collect excise tax on imports at the border have been subverted through corruption. For example, individuals bringing more than a personal allowance of goods at border crossings are able to pay customs officials a relatively small fee to look the other way.

Mandisa: My cousin [in South Africa] also buys some things [goods] for me to sell [at the flea market]. But they gave her so much trouble at the border last time. It is so difficult these days - those officials now want more money or they won't let you cross with your goods [bribery].

Big business is less able to resist tax completely as there is a measure of accountability for large scale cross-border shipments. But subaltern women have an incredible capacity to resist tax because of the informal and unverifiable nature of their business. Their very invisibility is a significant strength. They are a social force with no formal organisation, no leaders, no manifestos and no banners, who have collectively transformed government policies.

For instance, in one household, women were discussing strategies for achieving their goal of homeownership and mentioned how lucrative foreign currency trading used to be<sup>33</sup>. Although not explicitly explored in interviews, foreign currency trading is

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<sup>33</sup> The government implemented a string of populist decisions to bolster waning political support in 1998, setting in motion a series of events that led to: capital flight, stock market crash, interest rate hikes, price controls to assuage striking masses, uncontrollable depreciation of the Zimbabwe dollar, fixed exchange rates, cash shortages in banks, and unbridled printing of money, commodity shortages, a month on month hyperinflation rate

another area where subaltern Zimbabwean women contributed significantly to transforming government policies. Informal sector foreign currency trading is historically women's work undertaken by amaPostori<sup>34</sup> women. Gender is central to their success as clients are unlikely to follow men into their homes or into alleys to exchange money. Other subaltern women entered the market at the height of the economic collapse and were able to consolidate their positions by trading with formal institutions and individuals who could no longer obtain foreign currency from a banking sector that was in crisis.

The government responded by criminalising informal foreign currency trading and ordering policemen to arrest and detain traders violating the law. However, society did not perceive them to be criminals but rather women (mothers) engaged in gainful employment to support their families, while meeting a critical need in the country. So most policemen chose to turn a blind eye, issue repeated verbal warnings or extort money from the traders instead. Foreign currency trading was driven a little further underground, but the practice grew as the Zimbabwean dollar became worthless. The public soon abandoned it in favour of foreign currency and this de facto dollarization of the economy was officially sanctioned by the Zimbabwean government in 2009 (Hanke, 2010).

The internationalisation of survival strategies combined with Bulawayo's proximity to Botswana and South Africa means that three currencies are in use at any one time. The US dollar is the official currency but South African Rands and Botswana Pula are widely used and accepted in Bulawayo. Flea market traders stay abreast of foreign currency fluctuations so that they quote the correct price in their client's preferred currency. And those who keep enough of each currency find that they do

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of 79,600,000,000 % in November 2008 and a black market for foreign currency (Hanke, 2008). Banks were forced to use an artificially low fixed exchange rate and reserve foreign currency for the government so institutions and individuals turned to the informal sector where they could obtain currency at market rates.

<sup>34</sup> Members of a religious minority group originally living in the border area between Zimbabwe and Botswana. Families and villages were split in half during the drawing of Africa's borders, and multiple generations of communities and families continue to maintain ties with their relatives across the border. The AmaPostori use their cross border networks to position themselves as foreign currency and commodity traders in order to resist their incorporation into wider society and protect their freedom of religion.

not have to exchange foreign currency before going to shop in neighbouring countries.

So although marginalised Zimbabwean women are relatively weak compared to more powerful state actors, their multiple community group memberships mean that information is shared and successful strategies by one community are quickly adopted by another. The sheer force of their numbers mean that strategies such as migration and trading have had unforeseen consequences, indelibly transforming Zimbabwean society and changing government policies towards health care, citizenship, taxation, and foreign currency .

This study thus shows that subaltern women in Zimbabwe exercise a unique type of real resistance that is not organised, systematic or particularly principled. They are more concerned with survival and “working the system” than outright confrontations with a repressive, violent regime seeking to extract taxes from them. Their struggle does not require coordination or planning but depends heavily on cooperation within small cells of women. The Zimbabwean government is able to react swiftly and violently to any organised form of open resistance, but has had little ability to deal with these women because of this mode of operation in informal cell networks. The State’s attempts to recast and renegotiate policies to control activities in the private sector have only highlighted its weakness, challenged its legitimacy and facilitated unprecedented levels of corruption. And the fact that President Mugabe’s regime is being undermined from the private feminine sphere is significant because this is where state power is most limited.

### 3.3. Co-optation and patriarchal bargaining

Motherhood emerges as a strong theme in South Africa. A notable finding is that women in KwaMashu have very high levels of control over their own reproductive health. All Zulu women interviewed state that they have complete freedom to decide whether or not to use contraceptives, which are available for free in free clinics. So the high single parent rates observed in KwaMashu suggest that marginalised South African women may be making autonomous decisions to become parents.

High single parent rates and adolescent pregnancies are driven by many historical, socio-economic and cultural factors. For instance, Zulu culture is highly patriarchal

with men traditionally playing the dominant role. However, many Apartheid policies such as the migrant labour system normalised de facto female-headed households thereby changing the structure of families and social relations in the country. Urbanization and industrialisation further compounded the problem, leading to the erosion of communities, disintegration of families and creating societies where crime, gender based violence, poor sex-education programs and risky sexual behaviour are daily facets of life (Bigombe and Khadiagala 2003).

The high single parent rates observed in KwaMashu are thus indicative of a larger phenomenon among urban females in South Africa, where female headed households are over-represented among the poor (Bigombe and Khadiagala 2003). And the cycle of poverty and relative deprivation is set to continue with the current generation of adolescents. An estimated one in three girls get pregnant before leaving school at the age of 18 years and few girls return to complete their education (Ndlovu, 2009). It is important to note that these teenagers are all coming of age in a post-Apartheid South Africa where teenagers do not need parental permission to access birth control or to have free abortions.

Zulu women's stories highlight that motherhood plays multiple important roles for marginalised South African women. By precipitating the transition into adulthood and collaborative decision making at home, and by facilitating access to childcare grants as well as opening the door to other forms of social assistance such as social housing. This is not to imply that women get pregnant in order to access the child grant. Although anecdotal evidence such as interviews with social workers suggests that some women boast about getting pregnant multiple times to get more money, the majority of studies do not find a causal link between child grants and the high rates of adolescent pregnancies and single parent rates (Kruger, 1998, Ndlovu, 2009).

There is however a significant black market in forged birth certificates allowing women to claim for phantom children, and this came up in some of the interviews. For example, Sihle is living with six other people: her daughter, aunt, two adult female cousins and their two children. She reported that there were seven household members, that all four adults were currently unemployed and mentioned that her elderly aunt is on a pension. However, she later stated that their total household

income was R3, 000 a month. This is a discrepancy as a pension is R1, 200 a month and child grants for three children total R900 a month, which would bring household income to R2, 100. When probed gently and after being assured that we were not with Social Security, she admitted that each of the three mothers had fake birth certificates claiming for a phantom child, thereby raising household income by 43%, from R2, 100 a month to R3, 000 a month.

Such co-option on the mothers' parts has an impact on poverty alleviation, increasing the per capita income from R300 per person to R429 per person, which is closer to the 2012 per capita poverty line of R620 per month (Lehohla, 2014). In other words, actively manipulating the state's laws allowed women in the household to claim an income that is closer to the minimum required to have a basic standard of living.<sup>35</sup>

Child grants are crucial for poverty alleviation and have a positive impact on South African children. A 2012 assessment shows child grants have had numerous positive effects on children, in spite of the fact that grants are inadequate for meeting living expenses. Mothers who receive grants use them to improve access to food education and basic services. And significantly, those children receiving grants from birth stay in school longer and are less likely to suffer ill-health than those who only access the grant later in childhood. The child grant was implemented in incremental phases starting in 1998 and is now the largest social assistance programme in South Africa benefiting over ten million children (Kruger, 1998, Ndlovu, 2009). The grant is designed to target the poorest children in South Africa so all low-income caregivers are eligible to apply, irrespective of whether they are the child's parents. By living in multi-generational, woman-centred households with multiple caregivers and fluid boundaries, South African women may have influenced the development of a poverty alleviation policy that is sensitive to the structure of their families.

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<sup>35</sup> The Lower bound poverty line in March 2011 was R443 per capita. This amount includes non-food items, but requires that individuals sacrifice food in order to obtain these, while individuals at the Upper bound poverty line of R620 per capita can purchase both adequate food and non-food items (Lehohla, 2014).

An ideal society for radical feminists is one that is organised as either a matriarchy or androgyny, so women can develop their full potential as citizens (Elshtain, 1981, Hartsock, 1983, Jagger, 1983, Millet, 1970, Mies, 1976). And although both societies fall far short of this ideal, the general absence of men in KwaMashu households provides an interesting commentary on gender relations. Although physical violence against women is high in both societies, it is more prevalent in KwaMashu where only one quarter of women (24%) have never been abused or assaulted by men. It is remarkable that women in KwaMashu are more likely to have been hit by their partners, despite the fact that they are less likely to live with them.

Ndebele women are likely to bargain with patriarchy over household work, violence and fidelity in exchange for the security of marriage and the gains in social and financial status arising from matrimony. Zulu women's stories also indicate that they are willing to bargain with patriarchy over infidelity and violence, particularly when financial or material gains are at stake or when there is a promise of marriage. So although both sets of women are strongly opposed to domestic violence, it appears that they have internalised beliefs about the desirability and potential gains arising from matrimony. And this may constrain their willingness to challenge male dominance in their day to day lives.

#### 4. Agency

There are similarities and differences in the lives of Ndebele and Zulu women. On the one hand, their systems of meaning or cultures are similar, that is their beliefs, normative values, language and humanist way of understanding the world. Both groups face similar structural barriers. They are poor, have few resources at their disposal, face constant threats of food and income insecurity, and are weighed down by the burden of caring and providing for family and extended family. Race, class, gender, poverty, educational attainment, socialisation and violence are powerful mediating factors that influence the range of available options available to each woman.

On the other hand, their systems of social relations differ, that is the patterns, roles, relationships and forms of domination that influence individuals (Lukes, 1978, Hays, 1994). Ndebele women are more likely to live with men and voluntarily comment on

the unfairness of gender roles. They also live under different political regimes. Zimbabwe is an authoritarian state that once had good health and education systems but has gone through a decade of economic collapse and de-development. In contrast, South Africa is a liberal-democratic regime that guarantees social rights through its constitution but has adopted a neo-liberal macro-economic framework that has contributed to one of the biggest gaps between rich and poor in the world. This dissertation thus provides an opportunity to evaluate African women's agency in conditions of poverty but under different political, economic and patriarchal conditions.

The literature reviewed presents several useful analytical categories for recognising and understanding the different types of agency by non-Western women. These are: covert resistance (Mullings, 1999); active or overt resistance (Moghadam, 1998, Tabari and Yeganeh, 1982); acquiescence (Gerami and Lehnerer, 2001, Hoodfar, 1996, MacLeod, 1996); co-option (Brink, 1991, Gerami and Lehnerer, 2001, Hegland, 1995); subversion (Ebaugh, 1993, Gerami and Lehnerer, 2001); collaboration (Gerami and Lehnerer, 2001, Hegland, 1990); patriarchal bargaining (Kandiyoti, 1988); Avoidance protest and non-compliance (Scott, 1986); and hidden transcripts (Scott, 1990). Additionally, subaltern politics describes five main models of political action by marginalised or subaltern groups, namely quiet encroachment (Bayat, 2010); the passive poor (Lewis, 1975, Harrington, 1962) the surviving poor (Escobar, 1995), the political poor (Castells, 1988, Goirand, 2003, Schurman and Naerssen, 1989) and the resisting poor Scott, (1986, 1990).

Identified forms of resistance in Nketa include boycotts, demonstrations, protests, petitions, pickets, strikes, co-option, abstention, false compliance, subversion, tax resistance, patriarchal bargaining, avoidance protests, repudiation and internationalisation. Abstention refers to protesting by boycotting elections. This wasn't mentioned by the Ndebele women, but they and Zimbabwean women in general have one of the lowest voter turnout rates for women in sub-Saharan Africa. Repudiation refers to the women's essential rejection of institutional authority and legitimacy through systematic noncompliance with certain laws thereby undermining the regime and challenging its legitimacy.



Identified forms of resistance in KwaMashu include abstention, patriarchal bargaining, co-option and repudiation. Both abstention and repudiation take more overt and direct forms in KwaMashu. Abstention is a strategy increasingly being used by poor South African groups looking to claim citizenship rights. It is heavily politicised and the Zulu women were openly and freely threatening to boycott elections. Zimbabwean women remained silent on the issue, simply choosing to abstain as evidenced by some of the lowest female voter turnout rates on the continent. Repudiation also takes a more direct in KwaMashu, through categorical disengagement from local government's spaces of civil society participation.

The results provide evidence that subaltern African women are agents who are actively involved in creating, recreating, influencing and transforming their substantive citizenship rights through individual and collective action. They use multiple survival strategies to negotiate their structures and everyday forms resistance to self-help without directly confronting authority. The role that corruption plays in the women's lives is noteworthy. In Zimbabwe, women use corruption to avoid exploitation, evade state attempts to extract tax and claim the right to make a living or pass citizenship on to their children. Corruption in South Africa is directed towards claiming substantive socio-economic rights, but is centred on a politics of redress, such as supplementing the child grant in order to improve their standard of living.

Zimbabweans and South Africans perceive high levels of corruption among officials in the office of the presidency, members of parliament, government, officials, police, and judges and magistrates. An Afrobarometer report shows that out of thirty-four sub-Saharan African countries surveyed, Zimbabweans rank ninth and South Africans, eleventh on the perception of corruption index (Richmond and Alpin, 2013). Additionally, the poor are more vulnerable to corruption than are their wealthier counterparts and are more likely to have paid a bribe than their wealthier counterparts (Richmond and Alpin, 2013). It is therefore important to analyse subaltern women's co-option within the context of pervasive corruption in their societies.

Anarchist criminologists argue that the political (and politically inequitable) nature of state law and state criminalization means that acts of crime under

such a system must also carry some degree of political meaning. And so, as with Foucault and Genet, anarchist criminologists seek to blur and explore the boundaries between crime and political resistance (Ferrell, 1998).

The state has monopoly over the use of violence and the authority to label that violence law, and assign the label of crime to any competing forces (Stirner, 1844, Weber, 1946). Criminality thus reflects the political, economic and cultural forces of the dominant forces, as evidenced by the state's ability to determine what crimes are prioritised by the police (Schmitt, 1923). For instance, there have been persistent allegations of corruption levelled against South African government officials; from the President himself to local government councillors (Berning and Montesh, 2014, MXA, 2007, Paradza et al., 2010). Attempts to investigate these allegations have been hindered by political interference and the enquiry is ongoing (Berning and Montesh, 2014). Conversely, social security fraud has received special attention with fraud hotlines, the introduction of fingerprinting, voice biometrics and re-registration drives yielding positive results. This focus on low-level at the expense of high-level corruption serves the interests of more powerful members in society. The link between political resistance and criminality is therefore complex, for example, subaltern women's co-option can be seen as a form of political resistance against an unjust social and political order. The next section maps subaltern African women's agency by modifying the framework developed in the conceptualising agency chapter.

#### 4.1. Mapping agency

Citizenship agency is defined as empirically observable actions undertaken to claim citizenship rights or improve the substance of existing ones. The citizenship agency framework (Figure 3) starts by dividing subaltern women's actions by their potential consequence. Actions that result in structural reproduction may be conformist or rebellious but simply reinforce and reproduce existing social structures, patterns and relations (Swindler, 1986, Wacquant, 1992, Willis, 1977). Actions that lead to structural transformation have the potential to radically change a given set of social structures and value systems (Hays, 1994; Lukes, 1977:3, Sewell, 1985).

The framework aims to avoid the public, private debate by focusing on the external sphere and internal sphere. The external sphere describes the arena of formal and informal participation where citizens engage directly and indirectly with each other and the state, through voting, political party membership, campaign orientated, cause-orientated and civic orientated activities (Jones, 2004). Listed in order of the potential for subaltern women to have the most influence and engage in genuine power-sharing, the highest level would be large scale collective participation in any cause or civic orientated activities organised on a national scale.

The internal sphere measures the individual's sense of agency or the belief that they can act in line with their own values and goals. This is measured using the median of women's self-perceived position on the ladder of power (Arnstein, 1967). The women's responses ranged from one to eight out of ten rungs of power, and the position is used as a proxy measure for their sense of agency. The framework thus incorporates instrumentalist approaches to agency in line with Kabeer (1999) and Sen (1985; 1999) as well as Lister's (1997) argument that to act as a citizen requires first a sense of agency or the belief that one can act.

The positive x axis measures resistance using the analytic categories discussed in the literature review and throughout this dissertation. Listed in order of least (covert) to most (overt) resistance that is: collaboration, acquiescence, patriarchal bargaining, co-option, subversion and overt resistance. The highest level would be participation in real, overt resistance that is systematic, organised, and principled and aims to overthrow the basis of domination.

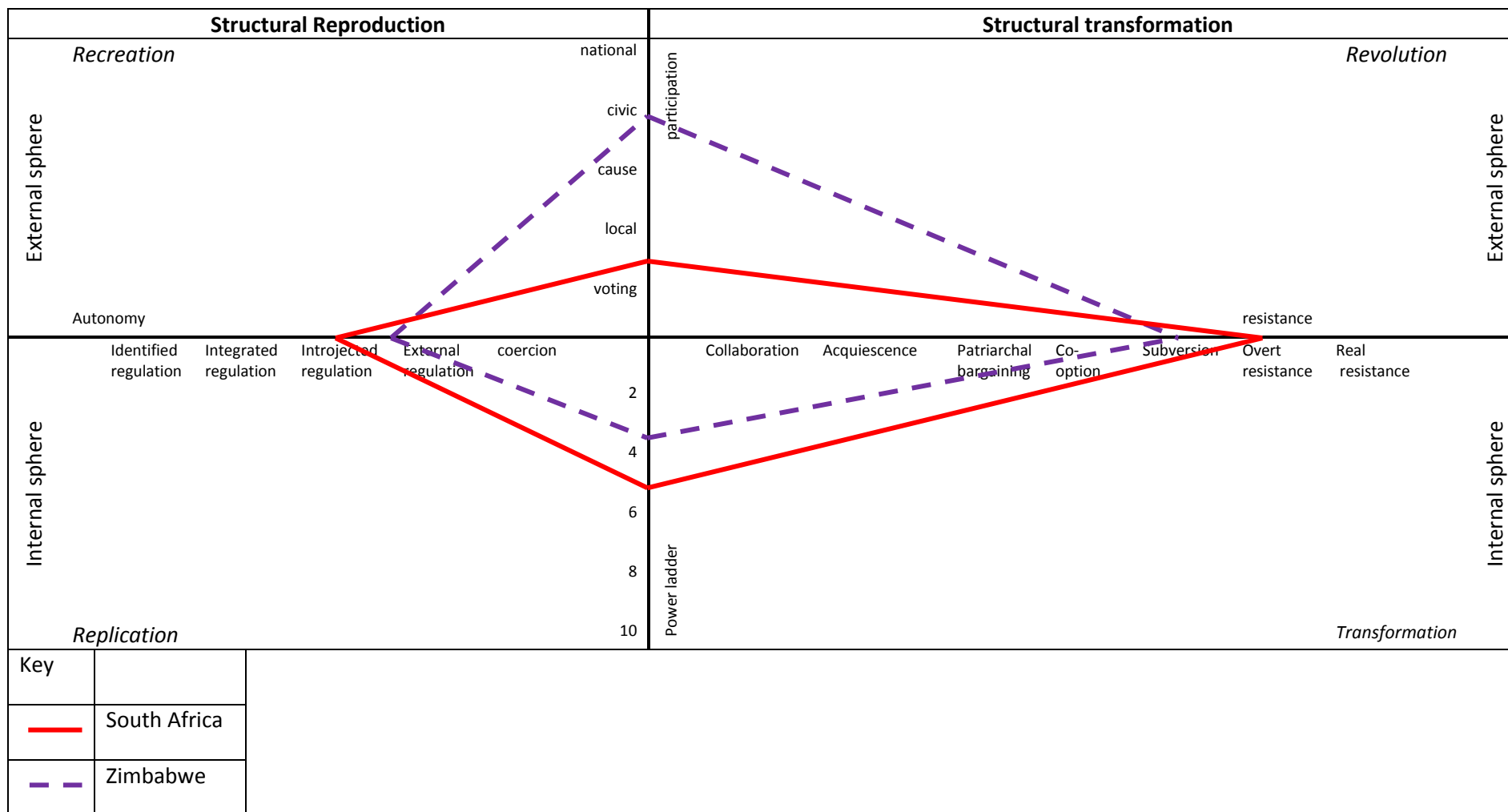
The negative x axis measures autonomy using self-determination theory, which defines agency as freedom from coercion as well as an agent's freedom to be governed by rules and laws that are of their own making (Alkire, 2005, Emirbayer, 1998, Kant, 1956, Rousseau, 1988, Ryan and Deci, 2000). The key according to this definition is to evaluate whether subaltern women have internally endorsed cultural norms and societal expectations and whether they value autonomy, individualism or collectivism. Examined by using Chirkov et al (2003:102) stated reasons for actions ranging from least to most autonomous

- External regulation refers to women who act in compliance with external pressures such as rewards or punishments or because someone else believes they should act.
- Introjected regulation refers to women who act in order to gain approval and who would feel guilty, embarrassed or apprehensive if they did not act. Also those who act because they believe they should.
- Identified regulation refers to women who act because they believe it is important and worthwhile to act.
- Integrated regulation refers to women who act because they have carefully considered the alternatives, have freedom to choose whether to act and decide that action on their part is warranted.

There are therefore four quadrants describing the potential impact actions may have on structures. The upper right quadrant describes women's resistance in the external sphere. Revolution occurs when real resistance occurs in large scale collective action organised on a national scale. The lower right quadrant captures women's resistance strategies given their self-perceptions of power or belief in their ability to act. Transformation of social values occurs when women with a strong sense of agency, collectively engage in real systematic and organised resistance.

The upper left quadrant links women's autonomy to their participation in the public sphere. Structural recreation occurs when women make autonomous decisions to participate in large scale collective action organised on a national scale. The sum of these women's autonomous collective action is likely to create new and recreate old structures, as some women will be promoting their internalised illiberal or conservative beliefs, while others will be acting for change. Finally, the lower left quadrant links self-perceptions of power to autonomous action. Structural replication occurs when women perceiving themselves to be the most powerful in society act autonomously in accordance with their own goals and values. Structural replication occurs as these women are unlikely to collectively change the status quo.

Figure 3: Citizenship agency framework



The citizenship agency framework can be applied to individual women or their collective acts. Y axis values were measured using medians of all responses and x-axis values were measured using qualitative judgements about where the women fall as a group. It is however possible to measure all axes using the means or medians. Figure 3 shows that overall the Zulu women were qualitatively judged as having more autonomy than Ndebele women. This is because a similar proportion of Zulu and Ndebele women are involved in household decision-making as a whole, namely 68% of Zulu women in KwaMashu and 67% of Ndebele women in Nketa. And similar proportions believe they can make their own decisions, namely 93% of Zulu women can and 90% of Ndebele women. However, external regulation in the form of marriage restricts Ndebele women's freedom of movement, which is a key component of autonomy. For example, twelve Zulu women feel that they are completely free to move around without having to consider anyone else's wishes (71%) compared to only three Ndebele women (15%). And seven Zulu women would go out even if their partner did not want them to (41%) compared to none of the Ndebele women.

Additionally, Zulu women are more likely to make decisions collaboratively with other household members and are more concerned about other people's opinions, which indicates introjected regulation on their parts. Furthermore, they have higher levels of control over their own health due to their ability to access free primary health care. As a result, the vast majority of Zulu respondents (81%) make their own decisions about their health and all of them are in control of their own reproductive health (100%) compared to 35% and 30% of Ndebele women respectively.

Figure 3 also shows that Zulu women are more likely to identify with overt forms of resistance such as abstention. And that they have higher median scores for self-perceived sense of agency. These results are likely influenced by the fact that Zulu women have more civil, political and social rights than Ndebele women. They live in an environment characterised by civil protest and open rebellion by the poor, compared to Zimbabwe that is characterised by a culture of fear, repression and intimidation. In spite of this, Zulu women's internal sense of agency has not translated into more action in the external sphere. The Zimbabwean case study suggests that the community in KwaMashu is not an enabling environment. Nketa women are more likely to own their homes and the local municipality has made

meetings more accessible and more relevant to their interests and concerns as mothers. Additionally, women in Nketa live in communities with lower crime rates and where Ubuntu still exists. That means they are more likely value volunteerism, respect, honesty and the good of the family and community above self-interest.

The areas of difference between the two sets of women may be ascribed to different political and patriarchal environments, while overlapping regions may indicate areas influenced by the structural constraints that limit the range of options available to both sets of women. The next section examines the contribution that this study has made to the literature.

## 5. Contribution to the literature

This dissertation contributes to the theoretical and methodological development of African women's citizenship agency. Based on the literature reviewed throughout this project, little is known about how marginalised African women understand themselves as citizens and how they make choices and develop strategies to negotiate their membership in their states. This project aims to address this theoretical gap by firstly examining subaltern Zimbabwean and South African women's understandings of their citizenship rights, duties and obligations. Secondly, by asking how they understand and negotiate their structural impediments. And thirdly, by highlighting the strategies women use to effectively claim their citizenship rights

The dissertation finds that both sets of women identify with more communitarian definitions of citizenship, with their group memberships and ethnic identities featuring more strongly in their stories. The women describe citizenship in terms of a set of social rules, feelings and documents regulating, describing and facilitating belonging to the greater community. The dominant orientation in Zimbabwe is membership below the state level or local/urban citizenship, which is likely influenced by the fact that the minority Ndebele ethnic group has a historically tenuous relationship with a ruling party that is mostly comprised of the majority Shona ethnic group. This finding echoes Goirand (2003) who finds that social exclusion in Brazilian favelas led citizens to organise their political belonging to local or communal modes because the national was seen to be responsible for injustices and inefficiencies.

In contrast, Zulu women's dominant political orientation is towards the state but with exasperation in some quarters that the Zulu President is 'doing nothing to help us Zulus'. There is categorical rejection of local spaces of political participation, which are highly politicised, suffer from legitimacy and governance issues, do not consult women in the problem identification phase, do not address the women's immediate concerns and have politically powerful players who are community outsiders.

Interestingly, the majority of women in both countries have internalised civic republican ideals of citizenship as a set of obligations that is, they believe in the importance of voting and in the obligation to support oneself without recourse to the state. This internalisation of liberal-democratic states' main dogma is problematic because formal sector work opportunities for low skilled women are limited in both Zimbabwe and South Africa. An emphasis on productive economic activities without highlighting the necessity for structural change perpetuates social exclusion. This is because any employment the women obtain is likely to be poorly paid, not confer benefits and ignore their subordination and inequality in the private sphere.

Secondly, the project advances theoretical knowledge by asking how marginalised women understand and negotiate their structural impediments. It finds the majority of women are critically conscious of their oppression and of state transgressions against them. For example, none of the Ndebele women in Nketa choose to collaborate with a regime that has committed gross human rights violations against its citizens. The Ndebele women, who are more likely to be living with men, are also more likely to voluntarily talk about the unfairness of gender roles. With respect to the Zulu women interviewed, they generally understand their poverty within the context of Apartheid and are critical about perceived failures and successes on the ANC government's part.

Both sets of women 'read the world' through their cultural lens of Ubuntu, where they are socialised to understand their positionality in relation to the community, and adopt the ideals of volunteerism, honesty, trustworthiness and mutual respect as a way to manage power, privilege and social inequalities in the community. They offer financial and other forms of assistance to family members in trouble, and in turn receive help when they are going through financial or other difficulties. Both groups of women live in underdeveloped neighbourhoods, with high unemployment, fewer



social facilities, infrastructure and economic opportunities relative to middle and upper class neighbourhoods. Nonetheless, Ndebele women are more likely to negotiate their structural barriers by participating in civic and cause-orientated activities in the external sphere. Higher participation rates among the Ndebele women may be influenced by the fact that Nketa has lower crime rates and respondents feel Ubuntu exists in that community.

And thirdly, the project advances theoretical knowledge by making visible the strategies women use to effectively claim their citizenship rights. Identified forms of resistance in both countries include boycotts, demonstrations, protests, petitions, pickets, strikes, co-option, false compliance, subversion, tax resistance, patriarchal bargaining, avoidance protests, abstention, repudiation and internationalisation.

This study introduces three types of resistance strategies that are not mentioned in the literature reviewed for this dissertation, namely abstention, repudiation and internationalisation. Abstention refers to protesting by boycotting elections, a strategy increasingly being used by poor South African groups looking to claim citizenship rights and identified in the media as contributing to low voter turnout among youth in municipal and local elections. Abstention is less overt in Zimbabwe, but is evidenced by the fact that Zimbabwean women have some of the lowest voter turnout rates in sub-Saharan Africa.

Repudiation refers to the women's essential rejection of the regime's or municipal's authority and legitimacy. This takes an indirect form in Zimbabwe through systematic noncompliance with laws thereby undermining the regime and challenging its legitimacy; and a more direct form in South Africa through categorical disengagement from local government's spaces of civil society participation, in favour of spaces such as church and stokvels. And finally, internationalisation refers to how women in Nketa organise their citizenship across states, without necessarily gaining membership in the second state. It differs from avoidance protest in that women continue to live in Bulawayo but may shop, work odd jobs and even claim social rights in neighbouring countries. Internationalisation thus refers to how women improve their substantive citizenship rights by expanding territorial spaces through human rights and refugee agreements. Internationalisation increases the importance of documents such as passports, which may also explain why the

women in Nketa explain citizenship in terms of registration for documents and being law-abiding (factors that impact on one's ability to obtain passports and visas).

Other resistance strategies common to both sets of women are patriarchal bargaining and co-option. Patriarchal bargaining is generally described in negative contexts such as domestic violence or domination by husbands, while co-option mostly facilitates the claiming of rights such as the right to earn an income, obtain social housing or pass citizenship onto children. Corruption thus acts as a significant barrier that enables and impedes subaltern women's ability to assert their rights and make claims on more powerful groups.

This dissertation also contributes to the methodological development of African women's participatory citizenship. The literature reviewed was mostly Euro or androcentric and do not describe what an application of agency looks like. The project is designed as an exploratory study to present an innovative framework for an empirical application of agency and thus makes an important step towards meeting the challenge of understanding alternative forms of struggle and acknowledging the transformative potential of African women's daily resistance strategies.

## 6. Conclusion

According to the literature reviewed, subaltern Zulu and Ndebele women's everyday resistance strategies would be classified as token or incidental forms of resistance that are 'unorganised, systematic and individual; opportunistic and self-indulgent, have no revolutionary consequences' and are largely directed towards survival and immediate gains (Scott, 1986). However, when adopted on a large-scale, these every day survival and resistance strategies have allowed the women to gain concessions and citizenship rights from the state, and also influenced government policy making with respect to child grants, citizenship, health care, tax and foreign currency laws. Furthermore, in the case of Zimbabwe, these strategies have collectively contributed to wider structural transformations in the labour and manufacturing sectors.

It is important not to glamorise their struggles. The women interviewed are poor, have few resources at their disposal, face constant threats of food and income insecurity, and are weighed down by the burden of caring and providing for family and extended family. Race, class, gender, poverty, educational attainment, socialisation, crime, violence and personality are powerful mediating factors that influence the range of available options available to each woman. This dissertation thus makes an important contribution to the literature, by documenting these women's stories, highlighting and acknowledging their successes and failures and making visible their alternative forms of struggle. The next chapter will summarize and conclude the project.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

### 1. Introduction

Citizenship theories all associate rights with obligations but differ with respect to the appropriate balance between the two, and the constitutive elements of each. The prevailing definitions of citizenship thus express full and equal membership in a polity in terms of rights as well as agency. In other words, it is not sufficient to simply be a citizen, but one must act as a critical citizen as well. This dissertation is concerned with two problems emerging from this hegemonic construction of citizenship. Namely that in spite of its claims to universal equality and justice, inherent structural barriers perpetuate the exclusion of women and other social groups. And that, although agency is a crucial element in this definition, there is no analytic framework guiding an empirical analysis of agency in citizenship.

This dissertation aims to make visible non-Western women's agency as citizens by asking: how marginalised Black African women understand themselves as citizens; make choices about their structural inequalities; and develop strategies to negotiate their membership in and relationship with their respective states? The results are used to propose a framework to understand the locales of activism used by a group of excluded women to claim citizenship rights or improve the nature of existing ones, without overstating the extent that resistance is possible in their structural contexts. Section 2 summarises the study's empirical findings and implications of these findings, while section 3 discusses the study's limitations and makes suggestions to guide future work.

### 2. Findings

African women are excluded from the hegemonic construction of citizenship on a number of fronts. In particular, the underlying assumptions of citizenship are largely centred on liberal-democratic ideals of individualism and self-government, which stand in stark contrast to the African ethos of community and duty. Additionally, the majority of African women do not enjoy the same set of citizenship rights as people in the West, face diverse sets of socio-structural barriers, multiple layers of oppression and varying levels of disadvantage. Each woman's position within the production process, exposure to male dominance, race, nationality, political

environment, class, education, socialization into the larger cultural milieu and personality are all inextricably linked and have an influence on her agency as a citizen. A comparative analysis of two groups of women with many shared characteristics but living under different political environments may thus allow for a more nuanced understanding of the underlying processes influencing marginalised African women's citizenship agency.

The isiNdebele ethnic group in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe and the Zulu ethnic group in Durban, South Africa present a unique opportunity for such a case study. This is because the isiNdebele are an off-shoot of the Zulu empire, breaking away almost two hundred years ago during the Mfecane or "Time of Calamity." Ndebele culture is still largely analogous to Zulu culture. Although more dynamic and changeable systems of social relations may differ between the two groups, more durable systems remain largely unchanged (Hays, 1994, Lukes, 1978). For instance, their cultural beliefs, normative values and ways of understanding the world are interchangeable, and even their language remains similar. But the roles, relationships and forms of domination faced by each woman differ because Zimbabwean women are more likely to be married and earn a self-generated income, while South African women live in a liberal-democratic country and enjoy constitutionally protected citizenship rights, including free health care and access to social grants if eligible.

The two groups of women interviewed in Zimbabwe and South Africa are similar in several respects: they are the same race (Black African) and gender (female), have similar mean ages of 36 and 35 years respectively; fall into the lowest socio-economic groups in their respective countries; live in impoverished urban townships; and face the threat of violence from men in their lives (partners, fathers and male relatives). Both groups of women also negotiate high levels of violence in their wider communities. South Africa has high levels of violent crime whereas the authoritarian state in Zimbabwe uses routine violence and intimidation to suppress dissents and maintain political power. The two groups of women differ in that the Nketa women are more likely to be educated, married, own their own homes and earn self-generated incomes, while South African women live in larger households, are more likely to have their own bank accounts and client relationships with the state.

This study takes these similarities and differences as a point of departure and firstly asks how these subaltern women understand their citizenship? Zimbabwean women define good citizenship in terms of being law abiding and obtaining national registration certificates such as birth certificates and national identity cards. South African women on the other hand define citizenship in terms of embracing racial equality and diversity, being law abiding and being patriotic. Only one woman associated good citizenship with political activities such as voting, even when prompted, in spite of the fact that three quarters of the women interviewed believe that it is important to vote. Adding these women's voices to the abstract debates about citizenship suggests that in the absence of civic education, marginalised women understand citizenship in terms of a set of social rules, feelings and documents regulating, describing and facilitating belonging to the greater community.

It is interesting to note that when questioned further on the various dimensions of citizenship, both sets of women emphasise the obligation to vote, work and support oneself without recourse to the state, rather than a reciprocal and participatory relationship between themselves and the state. This internalisation of citizenship as an obligation without a corollary emphasis on citizenship rights and participation is problematic given the post-colonial structures in each country, and the fact that both governments suffer from legitimacy, corruption and governance issues. So these governments are unlikely to be held accountable by a citizenry that has not internalised (been taught) that the concept of active participation is a crucial part of the liberal-democratic doctrine.<sup>36</sup> This reinforces the ruling party's dominance and possibly contributes to the erosion of democratic principles in each country.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> It is important to note that liberal democracy has been adopted as an agent of globalization so most African countries including Zimbabwe adopted the dogma after Independence in order to be accepted into the global community of sovereign nations. Obtaining financing from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was conditional on liberalising the economy, encouraging free-markets, holding competitive elections with multiple parties and to a lesser extent, protecting human rights, civil liberties and political freedoms.

<sup>37</sup> South Africa has a dominant party system, where the ruling ANC party faces little prospect of electoral defeat in the near future. The ANC has been able to obtain the two thirds majority vote required to implement its policies without being impeded in all elections thus far. Concerns have been raised about the possible impact of this on the government's response and accountability to the public opinion. The cost of active opposition party support in Zimbabwean is high with opposition supporters documenting being stripped, shackled, jailed, beaten with batons, brutal assaults, gang rape, evicted from "ZANU PF neighbourhoods", being denied access to food aid, civil service jobs, scholarships and training opportunities in colleges.

The dominant orientation in Zimbabwe is membership below the state level or local/urban citizenship where the rights, practices and obligations to associational neighbourhood organisations or ‘invented’ spaces of citizenship are more highly valued and trusted than those to a tyrannical, repressive regime that routinely violates human rights and civil liberties. Crossing borders is a fundamental component of the citizenship process for Zimbabwean women, allowing them to improve their substantive citizenship rights by expanding territorial spaces into neighbouring countries. In contrast, Zulu women’s dominant political orientation is towards the state with a categorical rejection of the local, where government spaces of participation suffer from legitimacy, governance and corruption issues. The women’s stories thus highlight the multiple layers of citizenship memberships and spaces, particularly for people living in failed/failing states.

Secondly, the dissertation asks how marginalised women understand and negotiate their structural impediments. It finds the majority of women interviewed are critically conscious of their relative deprivation, lack of educational opportunities, oppression and of state transgressions against them. Zimbabwean women who are more likely to be living with men are more likely to talk about the unfairness of gender inequalities. This finding is in contrast to Shaffer (1998) who finds that both women and men in the Republic of Guinea recognised male dominance and gender inequalities in terms of women’s heavier workloads, but that neither felt that these inequalities were unjust.

In spite of this, none of the Zimbabwean or South African women challenge patriarchal structures, but choose to bargain and negotiate with the men in their lives for more favourable or equitable treatment. When this fails then they assess their situations and make choices about the appropriate course of action. The study finds that both sets of women ‘read the world’ through their cultural lens of Ubuntu, where they are socialised to understand their positionality in relation to the community, and adopt the ideals of volunteerism, honesty, trustworthiness and mutual respect as a way to manage power, privilege and social inequalities. They offer financial and other forms of assistance to family members in trouble, and in turn receive help when they are going through financial or other difficulties. Freire's (1993) process of “conscientization” emerges through the women’s use of collaborative decision making and problem-solving to negotiate their structural impediments.

And thirdly, the project asks what strategies the women use to effectively claim their citizenship rights. It finds that both sets of women are more likely to work the system to meet their survival needs rather than challenge larger state structures. Their very powerlessness and marginalisation lends itself to more token forms of resistance that are 'unorganised, opportunistic, have no revolutionary consequences and imply an accommodation with the system of domination' (Scott, 1986). Identified forms of resistance include boycotts, demonstrations, protests, petitions, pickets, strikes, co-option, false compliance, subversion, tax resistance, patriarchal bargaining, avoidance protests, abstention, repudiation and internationalisation.

The literature reviewed for this dissertation does not mention or classify the resistance strategies of abstention, repudiation and internationalisation. Abstention refers to protesting by boycotting elections, a strategy increasingly being used by poor South African groups looking to claim citizenship rights. Repudiation refers to the women's essential rejection of institutional authority and legitimacy. Abstention is more overt in KwaMashu. Zulu women were openly and freely threatening to boycott elections compared to Ndebele women who remained silent on the issue, simply choosing to abstain as evidenced by some of the lowest female voter turnout rates on the continent. Repudiation is also more overt in KwaMashu. Women there have generally disengaged from local government's spaces of civil society participation, in favour of spaces such as church and burial societies. Whereas women in Nketa are more covert, systematically not complying with certain laws thereby undermining the regime and challenging its legitimacy. And finally, internationalisation refers to how women in Nketa improve their substantive citizenship rights by organising their citizenship across states, without necessarily gaining membership in the second state.

People, who have relatively more options and resources to direct towards the achievement of self-determined goals, are often perceived to have more agency (Kockelman, 2007). The marginalised women in Zimbabwe and South Africa face significant barriers that limit the range of options available to them. According to the literature reviewed for this dissertation, these women would be perceived as having less agency than more powerful groups in their countries. However, the results illustrate that they use multiple survival strategies to negotiate their structures and everyday forms of resistance to self-help without directly confronting authority or



patriarchy. In other words, they have the capacity to act independently, make their own choices and impose those choices on the world by using a range of practical evaluative, iterative and projective solutions. They are therefore agents who are actively involved in creating, recreating, influencing and transforming their substantive citizenship rights through individual and collective action. This study proposes that the range of strategies used by subaltern women in the African context may in fact be greater than those of wealthier women in Africa, who may effectively collaborate with existing social structures that perpetuate their relative advantage.

A noteworthy finding is that subordinate Ndebele women exercise a unique type of real resistance that is not organised, systematic or particularly principled. Their struggle does not require coordination or planning but depends heavily on cooperation within small groups of women. And the women have been able to make real gains as a collective by claiming social rights through sheer force of numbers. Similarly, in South Africa the Zulu women's individual and collective reproductive choices influenced government policy makers to focus their social programs around poverty alleviation of children and the women who are caring for them. The role that women's involvement in corruption plays in both countries is noteworthy. In Zimbabwe, women use corruption to avoid exploitation, evade state taxes and claim substantive social and civil rights such as their right to make a living or pass citizenship on to their children. In South Africa, corruption is also directed towards claiming substantive social rights but centred on a politics of redress such as using social grant fraud to effectively claim a 'living wage' from the government.

Local municipal meetings emerge as key institutional structures for marginalised women to engage in formal political spaces of participation. The fact that all women who attend these meetings are homeowners, with twelve of the fourteen homeowners attending regularly is significant. Homeownership may thus be an important tool encouraging poor women to expand their culturally determined spheres of autonomy into the realm of formal political institutions, when these are concerned with the 'feminine sphere of household bills and community.' The Nketa case study illustrates that the Bulawayo city council reached out to marginalised women by essentially feminising meetings. For instance meetings are held in 'feminine spaces' such as local primary schools and community halls, and there is a concerted effort to have a truly consultative process, where residents and councils

set out mutual expectations and negotiate over how much residents can realistically pay for services.

The main challenge was how to make visible African women's agency as citizens given their structural constraints as well as their self-determined 'feminine' goals and interests. Although agency is widely acknowledged as a crucial element if one is to act as a citizen, there was as yet no analytic framework to guide its empirical analysis. This dissertation was designed as an exploratory study to present an innovative framework for analysing citizenship agency, defined as empirically observable actions that either intentionally or unintentionally claim citizenship rights or improve the substance of existing ones. This framework had to speak to subaltern women's interests and be inherently feminist, in that it did not privilege the masculine sphere of public formal participation over feminine spheres of home, care and community.

The framework developed draws on feminist theories as well as theories of human agency in sociology, anthropology, development studies and political sciences. The first set of theories describes the relationship between agents and structures (Frank, 2006, Hays, 1994, Lukes, 1978, Sewell, 1985, Swindler, 1986, Wacquant, 1992, Willis, 1977). The second draws on self-determination theory, which defines agency as freedom from coercion so that agents have freedom to be governed by rules and laws that are of their own making (Alkire, 2005, Emirbayer, 1998, Kant, 1956, Rousseau, 1988, Ryan and Deci, 2000). Self-determination measures of autonomy are empirically validated across four different cultures that value autonomy, individualism and collectivism.

Thirdly, the framework combines Lister's (1997, 2003, 2004) insights with Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation to measure whether the women believe they have a sense of agency and can act as citizens. Their self-perceptions of power are measured according to a hierarchy of power ladder. And finally, the framework draws on the various analytic categories describing resistance by women or subaltern groups, classifying strategies according to whether they are mostly covert, overt, token or real forms of resistance (Bayat, 2010, Brink, 1991, Castells, 1982, Ebaugh, 1993, Escobar, 1995, Gerami and Lehnerer, 2001, Goirand, 2003, Harrington, 1962, Hegland, 1990, Hoodfar, 1996, Kandiyoti, 1988, Lewis, 1975, MacLeod, 1996,

Moghadam, 1998, Mullings, 1999, Scott, 1986, Tabari and Yeganeh, 1982, Schurman, 1989, Scott, 1986). This dissertation therefore synthesises existing studies from various disciplines in an effort to make visible marginalised African women's citizenship agency and transformative potential of their collective everyday resistance strategies.

## 2.1. Policy implications

Participatory citizenship is central to contemporary developmental initiatives on the African continent. The argument is that poor people's participation in community projects will increase their influence over decisions that affect their well-being, and concomitantly their participation in decentralised local governance structures will increase government's responsiveness to their needs and priorities (Cornwall et al., 2007; Schneider, 1999). The citizenship for development narrative thus places an equal emphasis on building individual capabilities to articulate and claim rights, as well as on the capabilities of political institutions to respond and be held accountable to its citizenry. However, the women's stories reveal that the empowerment narrative has been internalised or privileged at the expense of the state's role in redistribution and creating equitable opportunities. The main danger is that this may legitimise state inaction in the African context and lead to cynical or apathetic voters.

The results of this study suggest that there is a need for civic education as a regular part of the curriculum in schools, as well as a feature of women's empowerment and community development programs. Although civics can be learned through action, education plays an important role in building civic knowledge, teaching civic skills and encouraging a critical or civic disposition about the reciprocal nature of citizenship rights and obligations.

Adult citizenship education programs in South Africa mostly occur before elections and take the form of voter education drives. With respect to children, education policy aims to promote constitutional values in the education system in order to enable learners to become open, curious and empowered citizens. In practice, the emphasis in schools is on encouraging patriotism, rituals and reverence for national symbols such as anthems, flags and sports insignia, rather than on promoting critical citizenship and deliberative capacities (Enslin, 2003). Though citizenship education

in Zimbabwe has generally been neglected, there has since Independence been a sustained and consistent attempt to ensure national loyalty and national identity in schools, largely through forced loyalty to the ruling ZANU PF party rather than to the nation state (Hapanyegwi-Chemhuru and Shizha, 2011).

Both sets of women interviewed may therefore benefit from a civic outreach program encouraging them to reframe democracy as neither idealistic nor utopian so that they do not become cynical or apathetic when expectations are not met; but are rather encouraged to expand their participatory skills to collectively challenge, contest and claim accountability from their government. It is however critical to acknowledge the difficulties and dangers inherent in promoting civic education programs in politically tense authoritarian countries like Zimbabwe, particularly if such initiatives were to come from outsider or foreign sources.

This dissertation also finds that both sets of women view their governments as self-interested, corrupt and ineffective. But that corruption plays a significant role in impeding and facilitating the women's ability to make claims from the state. Corruption must thus be factored into policy planning and program implementation, where marginalised women engage with civil servants and bureaucrats.

Community level development initiatives are important as they often have more direct and immediate impacts on women's lives. Community engagement programs need a measure of community spirit in order to be successful. And although community spirit is difficult to measure objectively, the women's explicit statements and the researcher's personal experience in each community suggests that community spirit, 'Ubuntu' and social cohesion are lower in KwaMashu than in Nketa. And a number of social problems that are associated with a lack of Ubuntu and poor community cohesion reveal themselves through the Zulu women's stories, such as fear of crime, substance abuse and the lack of safe spaces for children to play and learn.

Concurrently, there is a significant difference in the number of associational memberships with women in KwaMashu being less involved in volunteerism and community engagement than the women in Nketa. This study finding echoes a 2007 government report stating that the public in KwaMashu are largely apathetic and do not participate in community development initiatives. The South African

government's efforts are rightly focused on developing physical and financial capital that is lacking in KwaMashu but policy makers must also recognise the importance of building community spirit to facilitate the success of community development initiatives.

Equally important for policy makers to consider is that community level development initiatives are structured differently in Nketa. They are almost all small, grassroots organisations co-founded and co-led by local women in response to their or the community's immediate needs. As a result, the majority of women interviewed feel like valued members of their groups, believe they participate in genuine power-sharing and make significant contributions to group decision making. Their organisations depend on a mixture of local fundraising efforts and remittances from community members in the Diaspora, so money is tight and initiatives are limited in their potential impact. This is in contrast to KwaMashu where the confluence of big business, powerful stakeholders and the politicisation of community led development initiatives has crowded out less educated people so that community members are only notified when policy responses have already been formulated. This issue has previously been brought to the attention of South African policy makers who argue that locals are not consulted in problem identification or formulation because they do not 'understand' the processes (Hicks and Buccus, 2008, Paradza et al., 2010). If that is the case then policy makers need to consider the civic education programs recommended earlier as well as the trade-off between project size, potential impact and encouraging genuine participation by and empowerment of marginalised African women.

Theorists also need to consider that volunteerism is unlikely to translate into broader political participation in either the Zimbabwean or South African context. The study finds that relatively high associational memberships in Nketa translate into low levels of formal participation. For instance only one in four women in Nketa has ever signed a petition in their lives, even though this is a relatively low risk activity for the signer. And only two women have ever participated in protests, strikes or marches; one is the pensioner who was active during the Independence war and the other was mostly active as a university student and when she was working in South Africa.

These low formal participation rates occur in spite of the fact that there are a number of leaders among the women interviewed in Nketa. Half the women held leadership positions in junior school, namely monitors and prefects (50%). Six of the fifteen women who went to high school had leadership positions there such as prefects and sports captains (40%) and seven of the twenty women interviewed currently occupy leadership roles in the community (35%). Almost all of these seven leaders are friendly, extroverted and have a great-deal of self-confidence. Additionally, three of these seven women are also leaders in male dominated groups such as labour unions at work, the local sports society and upper echelons of churches. In other words, theories that privilege masculine rather than feminine forms of participatory citizenship are doing these women a disservice. It is important to note that the masculine public sphere of politics in most African countries is often violent, chaotic, corrupt and volatile. So asking African women to engage with their institutions may be imposing a greater burden than for a woman in the West. As mentioned earlier, the Bulawayo city council has successfully engaged marginalised women by making municipal meetings relevant to the women's interests, motivations, locations and spheres of autonomy. A similar approach of making the masculine public sphere accessible and relevant to the feminine private sphere may thus be more successful in encouraging African women to engage with their institutions.

The third and final policy recommendation based on the study results is that policy makers reframe the discourse about African parenthood. Black Feminists highlight the problematic construction of African American parenthood, and a similar narrative is found in the South African literature. African pregnancy, particularly that of single parents and adolescents is depicted as a social problem born out of poverty, dysfunction, ignorant risk-taking that contributes to disease (STIs) and moral deficiencies on the part of black individuals, families and cultures. This problem is also seen to contribute to low educational attainment, the cycle of poverty and South Africa's poor performance on global indicators of development. There are alternative studies that highlight to the personal and structural constraints faced by African women and the fact that motherhood facilitates achieving adulthood status given the low marriage rates in the group. Nevertheless, the dominant approach views their reproductive potential as a problem.

And programs to 'prevent (teen) pregnancy' are based on the assumption that women view parenthood (their own or their children's) as a problem because of their poverty. However, the women's stories suggest that motherhood is a desired state, irrespective of whether one is poor or not. The main difference is that the women in Zimbabwe emphasise motherhood after marriage, but even there, one senses that motherhood must occur irrespective of whether a woman is married or fertile. For instance, it is an accepted and encouraged practice for infertile women to informally adopt orphaned children in their immediate or extended family. In other words, the women state that poverty, unemployment and poor social infrastructure are their problems, not motherhood. Policy makers thus need to interview women to find out the diverse reasons, motivations and beliefs about motherhood in order to develop programs that speak to locally specific cultural contexts.

### 3. Limitations

There are four main limitations arising from this comparative analysis of marginalised African women's citizenship agency. Firstly, it was designed as an in-depth examination of the experiences of a culturally similar group of women living in similar urban contexts and facing similar barriers and experiences. Although the two countries have followed different political and economic trajectories, the consequences of each country's post-colonial history are similar for both groups of women. Increasing income inequality, unemployment rates, segregation and corruption have perpetuated their marginalisation, pushing them further into the informal sector or into client relationships with their respective states. The questions and case studies are thus framed within the particularities of urban township and post-colonial life in Southern Africa so would have to be modified to suit different cultures, groups and contexts.

Secondly, although these women are relatively deprived, live in townships and face constant threats of food insecurity, they are not the poorest urban dwellers in either country. None of these women would be classified as middle class in their respective countries but they have a roof over their heads, generate household income and almost all live in formal homes with electricity, access to water and a working toilet. Some of the women own their homes and almost all live in a home owned by a relative, which also helps to relieve pressures on household budgets.

There are homeless people, people living in metal shacks, people without access to basic services and those who have to beg in order to eat. The analytic framework is largely descriptive and does not aim to determine or predict whether the women interviewed would have different locales of participatory citizenship than other groups in the same society.

And thirdly, the framework hides class, education and intra-household power differentials that exist within the group of women interviewed. For instance, older women are generally the most powerful female household members in all households where they were encountered, even if they are not the primary breadwinners. Daughters are supposed to defer to their mother figures (mothers, aunts, grandmothers) and this was observed in both countries when household members were interacting with each other. Older women's power extends over adult men to a certain extent, as men are supposed to respect, seek and consider the advice of mother figures whose wisdom is seen as born out of life experience.

And finally, the proposed framework hides the unique and non-uniform ways that individuals express their agency. The different ways that women describe co-option provides an example of this. Some women describe being extorted and taken advantage of, whereas others describe bribing someone to achieve their own ends. The former carries connotations of being a victim, while the latter denotes being a co-conspirator against the system. The same strategy thus has different implications for power and agency, and the way it is described is a function of each woman's perceptions, feelings of powerlessness and personality. The use of analytic categories does not lend itself to a more refined analysis of the relationship between agency, self-perceptions, structure and motivation for action.

### 3.1. Future work

The project was designed as an exploratory study to present an innovative framework for an empirical application of agency that makes visible marginalised African women's citizenship agency and acknowledges the transformative potential of their daily resistance strategies. Suggestions for further research include refining the framework to reflect the mutually constitutive relationship between agency and structure, and to determine what structural change would mean given that these



women are co-operating, negotiating and bargaining with power structures and patriarchy rather than challenging these systems. Additionally, a comparative quantitative study of African men and women's formal and informal participatory citizenship would provide great insight into the locales of female and male citizenship, and facilitate the move away from privileging male over female forms of participation. And finally, a study teasing out the relationship between self-perceptions, self-determination, resistance strategies and participation would help clarify the constitutive elements of citizenship agency.

#### 4. Conclusion

There is a lack of analysis of the participation and citizenship of women of colour in general and African women in particular. Feminist activists and scholars the 1960s mostly depict African women as strong and resourceful 'African queens' in positions of social, political and cultural authority. And a discursive shift from the 1970s situates African women as a homogenous voiceless and powerless group that is oppressed by tradition, patriarchy and postcolonial politics. Although contemporary feminist studies are concerned with moving away from victim feminism, there are few studies that focus on poor black women as agents, who 'make choices, have a critical perspective of their own situations and think and organize collectively against their oppressors (Mohanty et al., 1991).

This research thus addresses a significant gap in the existing literature by examining the alternative, non-conventional ways that citizenship is exercised by subaltern women who are in a weak position relative to more powerful groups. It finds that marginalised African women are neither heroines nor victims, but that they are agents who make choices, reflect critically about their situations, struggle over and work with family, extended family and social groups to claim rights and resist their oppression. This chapter illustrates that marginalised African women's everyday resistance strategies are often informal, covert and largely directed towards survival and immediate gains. However, when adopted on a large-scale. These every day survival and resistance strategies have not only allowed them to gain concessions and citizenship rights from the state, but also influenced government policy making with respect to child benefits, citizenship, health care, tax and foreign currency laws.

Furthermore, in the case of Zimbabwe, these strategies have contributed to structural transformations in the labour and manufacturing sectors.

This study also contributes to the small body of literature on the study of women's participation in township community politics. The academic literature currently focuses on formal electoral participation, thereby erasing the significance and transformative potential of women's informal political participation. The study finds that homeownership plays an important role with respect to facilitating entry into formal political spaces at the local level. And that subaltern women's cultural ethos of 'Ubuntu' plays a role in encouraging informal political participation among the women interviewed. Given that the public (masculine) sphere of politics in most African countries is often volatile and corrupt, an approach of 'feminising' the public sphere by making it more relevant to the women's interests, motivations, spaces and spheres of autonomy. Additionally, improving community cohesion or Ubuntu may encourage African women to participate in township and community politics.

It is important to note that although agency is a crucial element in the construction of citizenship, there is no analytic framework guiding its empirical analysis. This dissertation present an innovative framework for analysing citizenship agency, defined as empirically observable actions that either intentionally or unintentionally claim citizenship rights or improve the substance of existing ones. The framework is a synthesis of existing studies of citizenship and agency, takes account of African women's motivations, interests, values and self-perceived sense of citizenship agency. In so doing, the framework portrays more accurate accounts of these women's lived realities and acknowledges the transformative potential of their collective everyday resistance strategies, without glamorising their struggles or overstating the extent that resistance is possible given their particular contexts. Meeting these women was a privilege and this dissertation documents their stories in an effort to communicate who they are as women and as citizens.

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## Appendices

Figure 4: Employment status for Zimbabwean women in 2010 DHS Survey

	Employment status for Zimbabwean woman in DHS	Number	Percentage
1	Yes	3,120	40.0
2	No	4,858	60.0
	Total	7,978	100.0%

Source: 2010 DHS Survey for Zimbabwe. All Percentages are weighted.

Figure 5: Polygamy in 2010 DHS Survey

	Zimbabwean woman in Polygamous unions	Number	Percentage
1	More than one wife	607	11.5
2	One wife	4,683	88.5
	Total	5,290	100.0%

Source: 2010 DHS Survey for Zimbabwe. All Percentages are weighted.

Figure 6: Primary breadwinner in 2010 DHS Survey

	Primary breadwinner in 2010 DHS Survey	Number	Percentage
1	Respondent	298	13.5
2	Partner	1,363	61.8
3	Equal	411	18.6
4	Husband doesn't contribute	135	6.12
5	Total	2,207	100%

Source: 2010 DHS Survey for Zimbabwe. All Percentages are weighted.

Figure 7: Homeownership rates in 2010 DHS Survey

	Homeownership rates in 2010 DHS survey	Number	Percentage
1	Does not own home	5,749	63.7
2	Respondent's name alone	846	9.4
3	Respondent and partner jointly	2,433	27.0
4	Total	9,028	100%

Source: 2010 DHS Survey for Zimbabwe. All Percentages are weighted.

Figure 8: Other questions about decision making about health

	What would you do if you fell ill	Number	Percentage
1	Nothing (depends on illness)	1	5.0
2	I would go to the clinic /hospital	15	75.0
3	I would go to a traditional healer	0	0
4	I would consult my family about what to do	2	10.0
5	I would ask my employer for permission to stay home/clinic	0	0
6	I would ask my partner if I can go to the hospital	2	10.0
	Total	20	100.0
	I can decide whether to go to the hospital or not	Number	Percentage
1	Completely true	16	80.0
2	Somewhat true	4	20.0
3	Not very true	0	0
4	Not true at all	0	0
5	Other	0	0
	Total	20	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo.

Figure 9: Attitudes about marital rape

	Can a husband rape his wife	Number	Percentage
1	Yes	12	60.0
2	No	8	40.0
	Total	20.0	100.0

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo.

Figure 10: Attitudes about voting

	Do you think it's important to vote	Number	Percentage
1	Yes	17	85.0
2	No	1	5.0
3	Don't know	2	10.0
		20	100%

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo.

Figure 11: Gender composition of meetings

	Gender composition of meetings	Number	Percentage
1	Mostly men	2	10.0
2	Mostly women	11	55.0
3	Equal numbers of men and women	7	35.0
	Total		

Source: 2012-2013 qualitative interviews in Nketa Township, Bulawayo.

**Figure 12: Questionnaire****Section A: Demographic questions****Questionnaire number:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Country of birth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. South Africa</li> <li>2. Zimbabwe</li> <li>3. Other – does not qualify</li> </ul>
2. Ethnic group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Zulu</li> <li>2. isiNdebele</li> <li>3. Other – does not qualify</li> </ul>
3. Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Under 18 – does not qualify</li> <li>2. 18-24      4. 30-34      6. 40-44      8. 50-54</li> <li>3. 25-29      5. 35-39      7. 45-49      9. +55</li> </ul>
4. Marital status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Never Married</li> <li>2. Cohabiting</li> <li>3. Married</li> <li>4. Separated</li> <li>5. Divorced</li> <li>6. Widowed</li> </ul>
5. Who is present during the interview (incl. Interviewer and assistant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Respondent only</li> <li>2. Respondent and partner</li> <li>3. Respondent and other household members</li> <li>4. Respondent and non-household member relatives</li> <li>5. Respondent, friends and neighbours</li> </ul>
6. Highest level of education completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Junior School</li> <li>2. High school</li> <li>3. Apprenticeship, Certificate or Diploma</li> <li>4. University bachelor's degree</li> <li>5. Postgraduate degree or higher</li> </ul>

<p>7. Do you know how to read and write English?</p> <p>If No, skip to question 8</p> <p>7.1. If Yes, provide short newspaper text</p>	<p>1. No</p> <p>2. Yes</p> <p><b>7.1. Please read this text out aloud for me</b></p> <p>1. Reads very slowly, cannot pronounce many words</p> <p>2. Reads slowly/carefully, has difficulty with some words</p> <p>3. Reads texts easily, but hesitates or scans a few words</p> <p>4. Reads texts fluently, without stumbling or hesitating</p> <p>5. Refuses to read the text</p>
<p>8. Current employment status</p> <p><i>(circle all that apply)</i></p> <p>Job title: .....</p>	<p>1. Unemployed not looking for work</p> <p>2. Unemployed looking for work</p> <p>3. Subsistence agriculture / urban food gardens</p> <p>4. Casual or trading jobs in the informal sector</p> <p>5. Casual or temporary jobs in the formal sector</p> <p>6. Regular part-time job in the formal sector</p> <p>7. Working full-time in the formal sector – no benefits</p> <p>8. Full-time formal sector employment with benefits</p>
<p>9. Monthly household income sources</p> <p><i>(circle all that apply)</i></p> <p>Describe other income sources:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>1. Employment</p> <p>2. Government grant</p> <p>3. Child support</p> <p>4. Remittances</p> <p>5. Self-employment, trading or casual piece jobs</p> <p>6. Pension</p> <p>7. Rental or lodging income</p> <p>8. Contributions from other household members</p> <p>9. Contributions from boyfriend or same sex partner</p> <p>10. Other income sources</p>

10. Who is the primary breadwinner	1. Respondent 2. Other household member (explain)..... 3. Non-household member (explain).....	
11. If B or C. What is the primary breadwinner's occupation?	.....	
12. Average monthly household income  Income stated: .....  <i>Average monthly income for all household members, from all sources - including remittances from Diaspora, government grants, financial contributions from family members who do not live in the same household etc.</i>	1. R0 – R499 2. R500 – R899 3. R900 – R1,199 4. R1,200 – R1,399 5. R1,400 – R2,499 6. More than R2,500 7. Refused to respond	1. \$0 – \$55 2. \$56 - \$99 3. \$100 - \$134 4. \$135 - \$154 5. \$155 - \$279 6. More than \$280 7. Refused to answer
13. Did you receive any goods or non-monetary contributions from other people in 2012?	1. No ( <i>skip to question 16</i> ) 2. Yes	
14. What types of goods did you receive in 2012? (including Christmas and birthday presents)	1. Food and groceries 2. Books, stationary and educational materials 3. Household appliances and electronics 4. Clothing 5. Household investment e.g. furniture, cars, bicycles 6. Business investment e.g. livestock, agricultural equipment, inventory 7. Other.....	
15. What is the value of goods received?  Value stated: .....  <i>Average monthly income for all household members, from all sources - including remittances from Diaspora and/or financial contributions from family members who do not live in the same household</i>	1. R0 – R499 2. R500 – R899 3. R900 – R1,199 4. R1,200 – R1,399 5. R1,400 – R2,499 6. More than R2,500 7. Does not know or refuses	1. \$0 – \$55 2. \$56 - \$99 3. \$100 - \$134 4. \$135 - \$154 5. \$155 - \$279 6. More than \$280 7. Does not know or refuses

16. Household size	.....
17. Household composition <i>(circle all that apply)</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Husband</li> <li>2. Same sex spouse</li> <li>3. Boyfriend</li> <li>4. Same sex partner</li> <li>5. Own children</li> <li>6.. Husband or boyfriend's children</li> <li>7. Brothers or sisters</li> <li>8. Nieces or nephews</li> <li>9. Parents, grandparents</li> <li>10. Aunts, uncles, first cousins</li> <li>11. Other relatives and their children</li> <li>12. Lodgers</li> <li>13. Roommates</li> </ol>
18. Do you live in a house you own?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No <i>(skip to question 20)</i></li> <li>2. Yes</li> </ol>
19. If Yes, in whose name?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Respondent's alone</li> <li>2. Respondent and partner</li> <li>3. Respondent and someone else</li> <li>4. Partner alone</li> </ol>
20. If not owned, who owns it?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rented</li> <li>2. Relatives.....</li> <li>3. Squatter</li> <li>4. Rental or property agency</li> <li>5. Other.....</li> <li>6. Does not know</li> </ol>
21 Do you own any (other) land or property?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yes (explain) .....</li> <li>2. No</li> </ol>



<p>22. Type of Dwelling inhabited</p> <p><i>Observation</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Informal Dwelling</li> <li>2. Traditional or Zozo hut</li> <li>3. Matchbox type house</li> <li>4. House-share or granny flat</li> <li>5. Formal housing</li> </ol>
<p>23. Amenities</p> <p><i>(circle all that apply and ask if it's unclear)</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Electricity in the home</li> <li>2. Tap water in the home</li> <li>3. Flush toilet in the home</li> <li>4. Geyser for hot water</li> <li>5. Access to outside sources of clean drinking water</li> <li>6. Access to flush toilet outside the home</li> <li>7. House has an unfinished floor (sand, cement etc.)</li> <li>8. House uses dirty cooking fuel (firewood, paraffin)</li> </ol>
<p>21. Assets</p> <p><i>(Circle all that apply)</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fridge</li> <li>2. Stove/ Microwave</li> <li>3. Mattress</li> <li>4. Radio</li> <li>5. Television</li> <li>6. Telephone</li> <li>7. Bicycle</li> <li>8. Motorcycle</li> <li>9. Car</li> <li>10. Cellphone</li> <li>11. Other.....</li> </ol>
<p>22. Are all school age children enrolled?</p> <p>South Africa : compulsory for 7 to 15yrs</p> <p>Zimbabwe: compulsory for 7 to 12 yrs.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yes</li> <li>2. If no:             <p>Why? .....</p> <p>.....</p> </li> </ol>

<p>23. What education level did the following people in your life achieve? <i>(dnk – does not know)</i></p>	<p>1. Father..... 2. Mother..... 3. Partner..... 4. Oldest Son.....     Son 2.....     Son 3.....     Son 4..... 5. Oldest Daughter.....     Daughter 2.....     Daughter 3.....     Daughter 4..... 6. No children</p>
<p>24. Are any of your children working?</p>	<p>1. No 2. Yes 3. Not applicable</p>

**Notes**

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## Section B: Questions about Gender roles and decision making

### 1. Who (would) normally make decisions about the following aspects of household life?

<p>1. Everyday household expenditure e.g. groceries</p>	<p>1. Respondent 2. Partner 3. Respondent and partner jointly 4. Other household members 5. Other non-household relatives..... 6. Other.....</p>
<p>2. Larger household expenses e.g. buying new furniture</p>	<p>1. Respondent 2. Partner 3. Respondent and partner jointly 4. Other household members 5. Other non-household relatives..... 6. Other.....</p>
<p>3. Bills e.g. rent, accounts</p>	<p>1. Respondent 2. Partner 3. Respondent and partner jointly 4. Other household members 5. Other non-household relatives..... 6. Other.....</p>
<p>4. School fees and education</p>	<p>1. Respondent 2. Partner 3. Respondent and partner jointly 4. Other household members 5. Other non-household relatives..... 6. Other.....</p>

<p>5. Health decisions</p>	<p>1. Respondent                  2. Partner                  3. Respondent and partner jointly                  4. Other household members                  5. Other non-household relatives.....                  6. Other.....</p>
<p>6. Marriage e.g. if you couldn't agree</p>	<p>1. Respondent                  2. Partner                  3. Respondent and partner jointly                  4. Other household members                  5. Other non-household relatives.....                  6. Other.....</p>
<p>7. Political decisions e.g. who to vote for</p>	<p>1. Respondent                  2. Partner                  3. Respondent and partner jointly                  4. Other household members                  5. Other non-household relatives.....                  6. Other.....</p>

8. To what degree do you feel you could make your own personal decisions regarding ... (mention issues 1 – 7 where respondent does not have sole decision making responsibility?)

1. A great deal
2. A fair amount
3. Very little
4. Not at all
5. Not sure

<p>9. Who cleans the house</p>	<p>1. Respondent                  2. Partner                  3. Respondent and partner jointly                  4. Other household members                  5. respondent and other household members jointly                  6. Other.....</p>
<p>10. Who washes the children</p>	<p>1. Respondent                  2. Partner                  3. Respondent and partner jointly                  4. Other household members                  5. respondent and other household members                  6. Other.....</p>
<p>11. Who cooks</p>	<p>1. Respondent                  2. Partner                  3. Respondent and partner jointly                  4. Other household members                  5. respondent and other household members                  6. Other.....</p>
<p>12. Who washes the dishes</p>	<p>1. Respondent                  2. Partner                  3. Respondent and partner jointly                  4. Other household members                  5. respondent and other household members                  6. Other.....</p>

I am going to describe possible reasons why you housework. How well each describes your own reasons:

13. I do housework because I have no choice; there is no-one else to do it

- 1. Completely true
- 2. Somewhat true
- 3. Not very true
- 4. Not true at all
- 5. Other.....

14. I do housework because my partner will be angry if my house is dirty				
1. Completely true	2. Somewhat true	3. Not very true	4. Not true at all	5. Other

I am going to describe possible reasons why you do paid work or economic activity and ask you to rank how well each describes your own reasons: (hypothetical if n/a)

15. I work because	
1. I have no choice, I have to work to earn an income	
2. Someone insisted that I get a job	
3. So people think highly of me and respect me	
4. It is important to me to be financially independent	
5. I really enjoy working and find my job fulfilling	

16. How would you respond if you fell ill?	
1. I would not do anything	
2. I would go to the clinic or hospital	
3. I would ask my partner if I could go to the clinic or hospital	
4. I would go to a traditional healer	
5. I would consult my family about what to do	
6. I would ask my employer for permission to stay home or go to the clinic	
7. Other.....	

I am going to describe various scenarios and ask you to rank how well each describes your own situation

17. I can decide whether to go to the hospital or not				
A. Completely true	B. Somewhat true	C. Not very true	D. Not true at all	E. Other

18. I have ( <i>tick all that apply</i> )	
1. A bank account in my own name	
2. A joint bank account with my partner	
3. A joint bank account with someone else	
4. Permission to use someone else's bank account	
5. I don't have access to any bank accounts	
6. Other.....	

19. Where do you go on your own?

1. Wherever I want to
2. Some places I want to
3. Nowhere

20. Does this describe your situation, answer yes or no	
1. I am not able to leave the house whenever I want to	
2. I need permission in order to leave the house	
3. I need to be careful where I go so that people don't say bad things about me	
4. If I want to go out, I will go out, even if my partner does not want me to	
5. I am completely free to move around do not have to consider anyone else's	

wishes	
--------	--

22. Has a man ever used physical violence against you? Answer yes or no (tick all yes answers)	
1. My father has hit me before	
2. My brother or male relatives have hit me before	
3. I have a boyfriend or partner who hit me	
4. A man has sexually assaulted me e.g. touched me without my permission	
5. A man has raped me	
6. I have never been hit or assaulted by a man	

Probe further if any yes responses (*listen and make notes*)  
 22.1. Why did they do that?  
 22.2. Do you think their actions were justified?  
 22.3. Were they ever punished or shouted at for hurting you?

Respondent's explanation

22.1.....  
 22.2.....  
 22.3.....

23. Can a husband rape his wife?

- 1. No
- 2. Yes
- 3. Don't know

24. Who decides when you use contraceptives?

- 1. Respondent
- 2. Partner
- 3. Jointly
- 4. Partner does not want to use contraceptives

25. Do you ever discuss the spacing of your children?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Not applicable



26. Is it ok for a husband to hit his wife?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. If she cheats on him					
2. If she gives him an STD e.g. HIV/AIDS					
3. If she disobeys him					
4. If she refuses to cook or clean for him					
5. If she refuses to have sex with him					
6. A man can hit his wife whenever he wants to					

27. Do you think Ndebele men and Ndebele women are treated equally in Ndebele culture?

*(listen and make notes)*

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know

.....  
 .....

28. My partner treats me as an equal:

1. All the time
2. Most of the time
3. Sometimes
4. Rarely
5. Never
6. Not applicable

29. What role do traditional leaders play in your community?

*(Listen and make notes)*

.....  
 .....

30. What would you do if you found out your partner was cheating on you?	
1. Nothing. I would stay with him and not say anything to him	
2. I would stay with him but confront him so we could try to work it out together	
3. I would seek help from his family	
4. I would seek help from my family	
5. I would go to someone else for help e.g. a priest, pastor, traditional healer or therapist	
6. I would leave him	
7. Other.....	

32. How often do you discuss politics at home?

1. Never
2. Sometimes, Once a month
3. Not sure
4. Often, Twice a month
5. All the time, once a week or more

30. What would you do if your husband abused you physically (hit you)?	
1. I would not tell anyone	
2. I would tell my family or my friends	
3. I would tell his family or his friends	
4. I would tell someone else e.g. a priest, pastor, traditional healer or therapist	
5. I would leave the relationship	
6. I would file a police report	
7. Other.....	

## Section C. Questions about aspirations and agency

1. Would you like to change anything in your life?

- 1. No
- 2. Yes

1.1. If No, Why?

.....  
.....  
.....

2. What three things would you like to change (What three things do you want different in 5 years)

1.....  
2.....  
3.....

3. How could you change these 3 things? (*Listen and make notes*)

.....  
.....  
.....

4. Are you doing anything to change these 3 things?

- 1. No
- 2. Yes

4.1. If No: Why/ why not?

.....  
.....

5. Have you ever tried to further your education?

- 1. No
- 2. Yes

5.1. If No: Why not

.....  
.....

6. Some people think it is the government's responsibility to make sure all Zimbabweans have a house, electricity, clean water and enough food to eat. But other people think that everyone should get a job and take care of themselves without relying on the government. What do you think?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

7. What makes someone a good Zimbabwean citizen?

.....  
.....  
.....

8. Do you think it is important to vote?

- 1. No
- 2. Yes
- 3. Don't know

8.1. For all answers why / why not?

.....  
.....

9. Do you think your life is better, the same or worse than it was before independence?

- 1. Better
- 2. Worse
- 3. The Same
- 4. Not sure / too young

9.1. Why/why not?

.....  
.....

*If the respondent has no electricity, running water or flushable toilets in her home*

I see that some people have electricity/taps/toilets in their homes but that you don't

*Alternatively: If she has electricity, taps or flushable toilet*

I see that you have electricity/tap water in your home but that other people don't,

10. Why is that?

.....  
 .....

11. How can someone get electricity, water or toilets in your township?

.....  
 .....

12. Have you ever participated in any of these activities?

Type of political activity	Have participated		Would you ever participate in those activities			
	Yes	No	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Sign a petition						
Join boycotts						
Join unofficial strike						
Occupy buildings or stage sit ins						
Attend municipal meetings						
March in peaceful protest/toi toi						
Participate in a protest that became violent						
Attend meetings about protests						
Picketing and chanting slogans						
Attending izimbizos etc.						

13. Do you think participating in the above activities would help you (restate Q2 goals).

1. No

2. Yes

Why / why not?

.....  
 .....

14. Have you voted:	Yes	No	Notes (if any)		
In all national elections you were old enough to vote in?					
In all provincial elections you were old enough to vote in?					
In all local elections you were old enough to vote in					

15. Have you ever seen a politician in your neighbourhood who came to talk about service issues?

1. No
2. Yes

16. What leadership positions have you held?

1. In junior school.....
2. In high School.....
3. As an adult (church or community).....

17. Are you a member in any of these organisations?

Type of organisation	Active Membership	
	Yes	No
Church		
Children's school activities e.g. Parent Teachers		
Sport, artistic or recreational organisations		
Political Party		
Professional or Environmental organisation		
Consumer organisation or labour union		
Charitable organisation		
Stokvel, burial society etc.		
Other / developmental or grass roots		

18. How often do you attend meetings?

1. More than once a week
2. Once a week
3. Two or more times a month
4. Once a month
5. Rarely
6. Not applicable (*Skip to question 27*)

19. What do you talk about during these meetings? (*Circle all that apply*)

1. Children and children's education
2. Relationships
3. Poverty and economic hardship
4. Work, job creation
5. Empowerment including adult education, self-employment, survival strategies
6. Crime
7. Politics
8. Religion
9. Rights (human, women's, children)
10. Other

.....  
.....

20. How often do you discuss politics during these meetings?

1. Never
2. Sometimes
3. Not sure
4. Often
5. Almost every meeting

21. Are your meetings mostly men, mostly women or a mixture of both?

1. Mostly men
2. Mostly women
3. Equal number of men and women

I'm going to ask you questions about the last meeting:

22. Was the person who set the agenda male or female?

- 1. Male
- 2. Female

22.2. The person who set the agenda was from

- 1. The local community
- 2. A visitor or outsider from a nearby community
- 3. An NGO or non-profit
- 4. Municipality or government
- 5. Other.....

23. Did you contribute during the meeting?

- 1. No
- 2. Yes

23.1. If No: Have you ever contributed?

- 1. No
- 2. Yes

Why / why not?

.....  
.....

24. How was a decision made (or are decisions made?) – *circle gender where relevant*

- 1. Bottom up consensus (we decide/vote and tell the leader)
- 2. Top down consensus (leader gives us a range of solutions and we decide or vote)
- 3. Respected male in the community decides alone or after consulting mostly male/female/both leaders
- 4. Respected woman in the community decides alone or with other mostly male/female/both leaders
- 5. Male authority figure who is an outsider decides (grassroots, non-profit or ngo, government)
- 6. Female authority figure who is an outsider decides (grassroots, non-profit ngo, and government)
- 7. Not sure/ Don't know
- 8. Other.....



25. What do you do when you disagree with the decision maker?

1. I usually voice my opinion during the meeting
2. I usually keep quiet during the meeting but talk to the leader afterwards
3. I usually keep quiet during the meeting and complain to my friends or family afterwards
4. I usually keep quiet, do not complain but stop attending meetings for a while
5. I usually keep quiet, do not complain to anyone and continue going to meetings

26. Do you usually go with the children?

1. No
2. Yes
3. Not applicable

<b>26.1. If No, who looks after them when you go? (rank all that apply, in order they were mentioned)</b>	
A. Husband or boyfriend	
B. Same sex partner	
C. A household member 16 or older	
D. A household member under the age of 16	
E. Family members who do not live with me	
F. Neighbours	
G. Friends	
H. I attend meeting when they are somewhere else (school activities etc.)	
I. No-one (how old is the oldest child?)	
J. Not applicable (No children under 18)	
J. Other.....	

27. How easy is it for women like you to change things in their community?

1. Very easy	2. Somewhat easy	3. A little difficult	4. Very difficult	5. Don't know
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28. How easy is it for women like you to change their socio-economic positions (standard of living)

1. Very easy	2. Somewhat easy	3. A little difficult	4. Very difficult	5. Don't know
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29. This ladder represents power in Zimbabwe, on the first rung are people who have no power and at the top are people who have a lot of power. Which step are you on today?

10 Lots of Power
9
8
7
6
5 Average
4
3
2
1 No Power

30. Some people believe that individuals decide their own destiny, while others believe that everything in life is decided by fate. What comes closest to your own view?

- A. Everything in life is determined by fate
- B. Most things are determined by fate
- C. Some things are determined by fate and some by hard work
- D. Most things are determined by hard work
- E. Everything in life is determined by how hard you work

## Section D. Perceptions of group activities and collective autonomy

1. What do you think of Ubuntu?

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2. Do you send money to relatives? Who and why?

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.....

3. Have you ever received money from relatives? When and why?

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4. What would happen if you decided to only focus on your goals?

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.....

5. How much control do you have over your own life?

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.....

6. Do you consult other people when making decisions about your life?

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.....

7. Do you have the freedom to choose what to do with your life?

.....  
.....

8. Have your family and community responsibilities ever stopped you from achieving your goals?

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.....