

**Lizalise Idinga Lakho [Honour Thy Promise]: The Methodist Church Women's
Manyano, the Bifurcated Public Sphere, Divine Strength, Ubufazi and
Motherhood in Post-Apartheid South Africa.**

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Abstract

This study examines the socio-political role of the Christian church based women's Manyano organisations in post-apartheid South Africa. Specifically, the study examines the ways in which the women's Manyano organisations offer black women a site for the performance of citizenship. The study is based on life history interviews conducted with seventeen members of the Methodist Church Women's Manyano of the Lamontville Circuit in Kwa-Zulu Natal. The study shows that dominant literature on Manyano women is primarily located in the historiography of the formation of Manyano groups within the historical development of the black church from the moment of missionary contact in South Africa. This literature shows that the missionaries used the coming together of black women in the church to promote ideas of devout domesticity that are based on Anglophone Victorian womanhood. This literature also shows that the structural constraints of colonisation and apartheid transformed the black church into a counterpublic space which focused largely on the liberation of the black majority from political, economic, and social exclusion from the colonial and apartheid public sphere. These constraints also transformed the role of women's Manyano organisations to become an important space from which black women came to resist and defeat apartheid. This study shows that this historical framing of women's Manyano groups has shaped their role in post-apartheid South Africa. Located in the African feminist theory, the study argues that Manyano women's publicness is not limited to gendered expressions of the public and private sphere. Instead, Manyano women demonstrate that their publicness in post-apartheid South Africa ought to be understood through a combination of the varied identities that they straddle, such as those of a politically and culturally defined womanhood and communally based motherhood, which express their understanding and performance of citizenship. The thesis, therefore, argues that the contemporary role and functioning of Manyanos is located within both the hegemonic public sphere that is granted by the civil liberties of the new South Africa, and the historical black bifurcated counterpublic -- which combined offer black women the ability to devise strategies to confront present-day socio-economic challenges such as structural poverty that shapes the lives of the majority of black women in post-apartheid South Africa. The study contributes, therefore, to the reconstruction of the concept of the public sphere through the use of Manyano women's dynamic position in post-apartheid South Africa. It shows that the dualist nature of Manyano women's position and identity allows for a multi-faceted approach in the understanding of citizenship for Manyano women today. Furthermore, and importantly, the study shows that the complex roles that Manyano women navigate within the different spheres complicate the interpretations of womanhood and motherhood as understood in dominant (white western) feminist theory in ways that often lead to the delegitimisation and erasure of Manyano women's contributions to ideas about post-apartheid feminisms.

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Zulu and Xhosa terms used in the Study

Omama: Mother(s) or Senior Woman/Women

Umfundisi: The Pastor

iPasika: Easter Weekend Services

Izintombi Zesiphika: The Methodist Church Young Women's Manyano

Amamdodana: The Methodist Church Young Men's Guild

Amazwi Asixhenxhe : Good Friday Easter Service/ The Final Seven Words of Christ

Ekhaya Ezilalini : The Rural Home

Izizukulwana: Grandchildren

Gqokisa Omama: The Women's Manyano Induction Service

Abbreviated Terms

ANC: The African National Congress

PAC: Pan African Congress

TRC: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

ANCWL: African National Congress Women's League

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 The Black Church in South Africa: Locating the Manyano

The black church in South Africa is an integral part of black life as this is the space where oppressed black people have seen the possibility of recognition through their belief that God is the one who has the power to deliver them from suffering and strife. Although the black church in South Africa has no definite moment of formation or formalization, religion “has helped shape the political ideas and the behaviour of most political groups and classes in South Africa” (Mills 1997: 337). Anti-colonial struggles, the civil rights movement in the United States of America and the anti-apartheid struggles for liberation in South Africa saw the church emerge in the public imagination as a site where black people mobilise and construct political ideas in order to resist and overthrow colonial occupation and enslavement. In the South African context, Steve Biko argued that black theology “is a situational interpretation of Christianity. It seeks to relate the present-day black man to God within the given context of the black man’s suffering and his attempts to get out of it” (1987: 74 sic). Walshe (1997) argues that the “apartheid struggle in South Africa was theological, as well as it was political” as “generations of leaders of the African National Congress (ANC) drew on Christian values for the building of a broader political community” (1997: 383 -384). The banning of liberation movements such as the (ANC) and the Pan African Congress (PAC) by the apartheid state in 1960, limited conventional spaces for political resistance forcing black people to subvert conventionally apolitical spaces, such as the church, for political ends.

It can be argued that the black church gained its prominence when new converts came to realise that white churches had failed to denounce racism in ways that would contribute to the fall of the apartheid state. This resulted in disillusioned and cynical black Christian apartheid activists as white churches failed to live out Christian values of humanity and equality (Walshe, 1997:384). The black church became not only a spiritual and religious institution; it soon became infused with the political agenda of black activism and the agitation for the fall of the apartheid state (Walshe, 1997:394). At the peak of the state of emergency and state repression, particularly toward township activists in the mid-late 1980s, the black church became immersed in political action such as; protesting funeral restrictions and challenging the

legitimacy of the apartheid state in all respects (Walshe, 1997:394-395). Christian values of equality, freedom, and peace soon intersected with African nationalism and its values, and thus consolidated a broader community base. The situatedness of black theology, its liberatory ideals, and the Christian values it maintained, created the space in which black people could organise towards the realisation of freedom based on the fusion of the activism and religion (Walshe, 1997: 397). It is within this historical context that the black church is understood to form part of a counterpublic sphere that was marginal and in opposition to the colonial white minority public sphere. Although the black church was a body which agitated for the liberation of all black citizens, through collaborative efforts with those inside and out of the church, the evolution of the church and its meaning for everyday life carried different implications for black women and men. Therefore, black women's evolving participation and activities in the church are understood within the context of the historical development of the black church from the moment of missionary contact in South Africa.

Within the black church, the Manyano is the longest standing and most prolific African women's organisation, which is a union of mothers who are mostly recognised by their distinct uniform (Gaitskell 1979, 1981 and 1983, Haddad 2000 and 2004, and Holness 1997).

The term Manyano is a Xhosa term which refers 'to join' Haddad (2004:4). The term is believed to have been "first coined amongst Xhosa people of the Ciskei, the region with the earliest missionary concentration" (Haddad 2004:5). The term was used to describe the weekly prayer unions amongst black women in the Methodist Church (Gaitskell 2002: 380). Haddad (2004:5) notes that the "Methodists in the Transvaal appear to be the first to formally organize women into an organization in about 1906 which was known as the Manyano, followed shortly thereafter by the Anglicans with the introduction of the Women's Help Society". Gaitskell (1990: 254) describes the Manyano as a missionary project to foster the idea of "devout domesticity" as an imposition of Victorian Christianity offered to black women as "a way to escape from pre-Christian society" (1990:254). Haddad (2004) notes that African women were encouraged by missionaries to pray together and the meetings were used "to prepare the young converts for domestic service by teaching them skills such as sewing, washing, and laundering as they saw appropriate to an ideal Victorian home" (2004: 5). The Manyano in South Africa have been widely recognised for their revivalist prayer meetings and spirituality. Being firstly "recognised in rural Natal, Transkei, and North-western Transvaal, these were the first meetings which formally structured the Manyano movement" (Holness 1997:23). However, with the influx of women migrants living in urban areas, the Manyano soon became a source

of mutual support for women separated from their families (Holness 1997:23). What began as a space of support and prayer, began to incorporate coping mechanisms for the economic and political burdens suffered by women both in the rural and urban areas. The Manyano has since constituted “an important part of the social history of black women’s economic, religious [and political] role in South Africa” (Holness, 1997:23).

With the change in South Africa’s political climate and the formalisation of apartheid rule, the Manyano began to transform and evolve into spaces which provided rural and urban women with the support they required to deal with the challenges of routine apartheid violence in urban areas. The Manyano also offered rural woman support due to the psychological challenges rural women experienced as a result of the migrant labour system which separated them from their families. This reconfiguration of the home –and black communities at large– as sites of state oppression and ongoing violence (Cock 1981 and Haddad 2000), saw the Manyano evolve from a strictly religious institution, to one which focused on strategies to cope with the devastating results of apartheid rule in both urban and rural areas in South Africa. Bonnin (2000) argues that the nature of apartheid violence was such that everyday routines and tasks were disrupted and at times indefinitely suspended “as surviving the violence became an all-consuming preoccupation” (2000: 310). According to Beall et al (cited in Cherry, 2007: 301), the overreaching nature of apartheid violence meant that “the site of struggle shifted to the home and community, into a sphere in which women have particular responsibility and which they feel particularly obliged to defend.” It is in this context that black women’s use of the church as a space for political, social and economic mobilisation should be understood.

The Thursday meetings that are known as Manyano Day, which coincided with the day black domestic workers were off duty, known as “Sheila’s Day”, offered black women a space to exchange prayer and “take turns to relate biblical text directly to their lived reality and helped shape theologies of survival” (Haddad 2004:157). Manyano meetings offered black women across the country “a mutual exploration of the practice of faith within the particular constraints of their lives” (Haddad, 2004: 10). The extent to which Thursday became synonymous with Manyano Day was also articulated in the radio programmes, such Radio Xhosa and Radio Zulu (now *UmhloboWenene* and *Ukhozi* FM) which were run by women church leaders who led cross-denominational public sermons that allowed women to call in and air their personal challenges, pray for others, and request to be prayed for by other women. These radio programmes still remain a prominent feature of many South African women who are part of

the Manyano and for those who continue recognise Thursday as a time for women to unite in prayer and to listen and share biblical teachings. In South Africa today, Manyano Day is still a widely recognised meeting for the Manyano in various parts of the country and are not only restricted to Methodist Manyano women as it is a day which recognises the prayer efforts of the Manyano of various church denominations.

This is not just a South African phenomenon, Ruwadzano, which is a Shona equivalent to the Manyano, have similar histories in which African women “viewed religion as a resource” (Moss 1999:109). Moss (1999) argues that the Ruwadzano “created a space for themselves within Methodism because they had distinctly different needs than African men” (p. 109-110). This historical formation of the Manyano and their resistance in the wake of apartheid violence led to their politicisation and contribution to liberation strategies against the apartheid regime (Meer 1985). It is thus not surprising that the Manyano played a central role in the Women’s National Coalition, formed in 1992, to ensure women’s participation in the political transition negotiations and to inscribe women’s rights in the constitution of the post-apartheid democratic order.

The prominence of the black church in South Africa was not only limited to life during apartheid. The transition to democracy, especially with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), saw the use of Christian motifs associated with forgiveness, healing redemption, and rituals of spiritual cleansing in order to move away from ideas of vengeance, rage, and hatred (Motsemme 2011: 221). These Christian motifs were championed by the TRC Chairperson, Archbishop Desmond Tutu. It is then not surprising that the South African narrative of a “peaceful transition”, based on forgiveness and peace, is not only connected with the personality and heroism of Nelson Mandela, but also individuals like Archbishop Tutu. It is, after all, Archbishop Tutu who labeled the citizens of the new South Africa “the rainbow children of God,” which has come to be understood as “the rainbow nation” (Gqola, 2016, 120).

The incorporation of the black citizenry into the formal public sphere in South Africa and the attainment of civil rights, the black church, and structures within it, continue to be recognised spaces where these rights find expression. Although citizenship for black South Africans is recognised by the state, the black church, and the Manyano more specifically, still resonate with black women as the space for the recognition and articulation of citizenship.

In *Unequal Freedoms: How Race and Gender shaped American Citizenship and Labour*, Glen (2004) defines citizenship as “those who are included and excluded members of the community entitled to rights, respect, and recognition” (2004:19). This study examines the role of Methodist Manyano in post-apartheid South Africa. Specifically, the study examines how the Manyano provide women the space for the public performance of citizenship.

1.2 The Public Sphere

Since the publication of Jürgen Habermas’ (1989) *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, conceptions of the ‘public sphere’, ‘public opinion’, and ‘reason and public debate’ have since emerged as key concepts in the study of modern democracies. These ideas have influenced theoretical understandings of citizenship, the state, and civil society (Crossley and Roberts 2004, Colhoun 1996). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* traces the historical and socio-political contexts which have developed and transformed the idea of the public sphere within the context of 18-19th century Europe. Habermas (1989) traces various shifts in the political, economic, and social terrains throughout the text that have set the agenda and scope of the debate on the transformation and development of the public sphere. Although an entry point to the discussion of the public sphere and heavily criticised later in the study, the work of Habermas is seminal in the intellectual project of developing the concept of the public sphere and the understanding of the political and institutional implications of the concept in modern day democracies. For the purposes of this study, the discussion of the historical development of ideas about the public sphere demonstrate how the evolution of the public performing citizen in Europe is based on the shifting of power from the monarchy to the increasing empowering of the private citizen in ways that transform the sharp distinction made between the private and public in that context. It will be shown that while the post-Westphalian European citizen grew to make multiple claims about their individual autonomy and their right to contest the state in the public sphere, this development happened parallel to the process in which European states colonised and took away the civilian claims of citizens of countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. As it argued in Chapter Two, the development of the public sphere takes place within a racialised, gendered, and classed context which have profound implications for the conception of the public sphere for those colonised by European powers and their forms of resistance. It is argued that the evolution of the role of women’s mobilisation

within spaces such as the church, should be understood within the historical, racialised, gendered, and classed development of the public sphere.

In this regard, it is argued that Habermas' conception of the public sphere "does not adequately account for the ways that inequality alters discursive relations between citizens, nor does it speak to the ways that the relatively powerless are excluded from the idealized bourgeois space" (Harris-Lacewell 2004:5). As Dawson (1994:199) also argues, Habermas' conception of the public sphere does not take into consideration the reality that the stratification of societies, which favour and privilege particular groups of society, "systematically exclude[s] specific social groups from the public sphere" – as was case for black people living in segregated America and under apartheid in South Africa. Harris-Lacewell (2004: xxi) argues that this alienation from the formal public sphere created a distinct black "counterpublic" which is "both a reaction to exclusionary policies of white institutions and an assertion of the value of intragroup interaction that is neither observed nor policed". For Harris-Lacewell (2004: xxi), black dominated churches and barbershops constitute these sites of black "counterpublics". In apartheid South Africa, the majority of the black population was excluded from the public sphere as conceptualised by Habermas. Black South Africans appropriated institutions such as the church as "counterpublics" that offered them a space to cope with, form opinion about, and resist the apartheid state. Therefore, counterpublics offered black South Africans a space to devise alternative understandings of citizenship and the opportunity to create a public based on ideas of liberation and the emancipation of black South Africans from the apartheid regime.

At first glance, the exclusion of black citizens from the dominant white public sphere in America may share similarities with the South African public sphere and the subsequent formation of the black counterpublic sphere. However, the particularity of the colonial reality in Africa complicates the understanding of the counterpublic sphere and its formation in Africa. The institutionalisation of racism in Africa as a result of colonial imposition drastically shifts the ways in which the public sphere is understood and black people's positionality within in it.

In *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, Mahmood Mamdani (1996) argues that the nature of colonialism and formalised apartheid in South Africa not only excluded black South Africans from dominant civil society (the white public sphere), it also bifurcated the South African state along rural and urban lines (1996: 19). This bifurcation of the South African state produced two distinct spheres; the urban/civil public sphere with

racially constituted citizens, and the rural/customary public sphere which created indigenous black subjects confined to the rural areas through the use of indirect rule (Mamdani, 1996:19). Through this bifurcated understanding of the public sphere in South Africa, Mamdani (1996) provides the tools to explore how hegemonic and counterpublics emerge in South Africa and their meaning for citizenship in racially stratified post-apartheid South Africa.

Furthermore, and importantly, the study shows that the public sphere expresses itself in gendered ways for men and women. Western feminist scholars (Fraser 1990, Eley 1996, and Ryan 1996) enter the debate on the public sphere from two primary themes up for critique. Firstly, the argument is made that the idea of the public sphere being constituted by private individuals who engage in rational debate draws on “classical traditions that cast femininity and publicity as oxymorons” (Fraser, 1990: 59). This is because men are considered to be private individuals who transcend the private sphere and enter the public sphere as rational beings. Eley (1996) argues that ideas of rationality and logic are confined to patriarchal understandings of the functions of women and womanhood, in ways that restrict femininity to the private sphere (Eley 1996: 309). This demarcation accounts for white women’s exclusion from the public sphere, even though it is presumed to be accessible to both men and women.

Secondly, western feminists argue that the constitution of the public sphere through the logic of sexual difference relegated women to the private sphere, which is assumed to be distinctly different from the workings of the public sphere, without considering how the public man acquires ideas of consciousness. It is argued that this separation of the private and public sphere does not consider the point that the bourgeois public sphere acquired rationality and subjectivity from the private sphere; namely the conjugal family, where ideas of consciousness move from this domain to wider society through literature and interaction with the greater private body (Eley 1996: 314). Therefore, these feminists argue that the public sphere, as theorised by Habermas, does not account for the ways in which the private man is able to engage in public debate and thus attain his publicness (Fraser 1990, Eley 1996 and Ryan 1996).

Furthermore, Chapter Two shows that whereas demarcations of the public and private sphere have been central to western feminist scholarship’s attempt to demystify the gendered nature the public sphere, African feminist scholarship contends that the universal application of western feminist conceptual tools fails to acknowledge the particularities of the public sphere of colonised African states. In this regard, Oyěwùmí (1997) and Amadiume (1997) argue that

the African socio-political economy historically does not have a clear separation of the public and private sphere. They argue that African women, under the matriarchal socio-economic and political organising of society, were present in the economy and political life. However, with colonial imposition and the systematic overhaul of indigenous forms of social organisations, matriarchal ordering of society was discarded in order for colonised African states to reflect the patriarchal ordering of coloniser states.

The study shows that the intimate nature of apartheid violence, in the homes and communities of black people, was resisted through a reliance on the use of spaces that are historically understood to be “women’s spaces” in ways that placed black women as critical actors within the black counterpublic sphere. Spaces such as the church, house meetings, burial societies and *stokvels* transformed into solidarity networks where black women and mothers “developed collective consciousness that can be mobilised when the survival of communities is at stake” (Hassim 2005: 4). Furthermore, house meetings and church groups such as the Manyano, were used as a means to avoid police harassment in urban areas as these soon became spaces where urban black mothers and women organised and found new recruits for political mobilisation (Magubane 2010: 998). Spaces conventionally relegated to the private sphere soon developed as arenas where struggle and oppositional strategies were devised (Hassim 2005:4). It is then not surprising that these matriarchal foundations become articulated in women’s central use of their role as mothers who mobilised to provide for their family’s and communities’ economy and for the protection of their families from an apartheid system whose brutality was articulated in the destruction of the family.

The study makes use of concepts of the public sphere, the bifurcated South African state, the counterpublic, and African feminist approaches in examining how the Manyano navigate their identity in post-apartheid South Africa.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the role the Manyano play in post-apartheid South Africa. Among other sub-goals included:

- To examine whether the Manyano provide a space for the performance and expression of citizenship by black women.

- To examine how the Manyano offer a space for the public performance of citizenship by black women.
- To assess how women in the Manyano understand, navigate, and negotiate their relationship between the church and society.

1.4 Chapter Outline of the Study

The study is organised into six chapters. This chapter outlined the context and aims of this research, which is to examine the role of the Manyano in post-apartheid South Africa. The chapter provided a brief context of the historical development of the Manyano within the black church in South Africa. The chapter also introduced the conceptual tools used in the study. These included the Habermasian concept of the public sphere and its historical formation in Europe and its criticism by African American scholars that Habermas does not take seriously that access to the public sphere is racially stratified. The chapter also introduced the concept of the bifurcated South African sphere to show how the public sphere was constituted in South Africa. The study also shows that the public sphere, as understood by Habermas, is premised on the idea of sexual difference that distinctly demarcates the public and private sphere in gendered ways. Western feminist scholarship has offered measured critique on gendered publicness and the exclusion of women from the public sphere. Within the African context, African feminist scholarship has showed how this universal application of the gendered private and public sphere does not account for the particularity of indigenous forms of social ordering. The use of motherhood – and spaces which have been relegated to the private sphere–reconfigure the idea of a gendered public and private sphere when applied to the actions of African women, including women in the Manyano.

Chapter Two of this study provides a discussion on the historical formation of the public sphere as proposed by Habermas (1974 and 1989), and its distinct implications for the gendered public/private sphere. This concept of the public sphere is evaluated in order to argue that the public sphere does not present itself as a cohesive unit which can be understood through a unitary lens, especially in fragmented societies like South Africa. The particularity of colonial and apartheid history in South Africa suggest that the ‘public sphere’ exists within this complex and entangled history. To further this argument, the chapter outlines literature on the bifurcated nature of the South African public sphere and how this bifurcation presents various publics,

including black counterpublics and hegemonic publics, which challenge dominantly held views on not only the nature of the public sphere, but also how the Manyano function within this bifurcation. African feminist literature highlights how an alternative reading of the public sphere calls into the question the idea of the private sphere and the work associated to it. Therefore, this chapter shows how varied readings of the public sphere highlight tensions within feminist literature on the legitimacy of maternal activism in the context of apartheid violence. It shown further how apartheid violence reconfigured the ways in which the work of mothering for black women moved beyond the private sphere and became an entry point for the Manyano into the resistance of the apartheid regime.

Chapter Three of this study situates the study in Lamontville and Malukazi Methodist Church Circuits in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The study used qualitative research methods through observations and semi-structured interviews with members and leadership of the Manyano to collect data. These interviews were supplemented by observations of the 2016 Easter services from both the Lamontville and Malukazi Methodist Church Circuits. The collected data was recorded, translated, transcribed, and analysed, using thematic analysis of narratives to gain insight on how the Manyano navigate their relationship and experiences in the church and the community.

Chapter Four reports on the findings of the study. This chapter seeks to amplify the voices of the Manyano interviewed through detailed descriptions of their experiences and meaning they attach to being part of the Manyano and how this has come to form a crucial part of their identity. This chapter highlights themes of womanhood (*ubufazi*), motherhood, spirituality, endurance, the symbolism associated to the uniform worn by the Manyano, and the class dynamics of the group. These themes proved important in the shaping and understanding of the Manyano's identity and their role in their families, church and communities in post-apartheid South Africa.

Chapter Five, provides a discussion, comparison and connections between the findings of the study and the existing body of literature on womanhood, motherhood, strength, and the publicness of the Manyano in post-apartheid South Africa.

The concluding chapter argues that the Manyano offer us the ability to re-think the concept of the public sphere in the post-apartheid South Africa. The dualist nature of the Manyano's

position, as both a hegemonic and counterpublic, allow for a multi-faced approach in the understanding of citizenship for the Manyano in post-apartheid South Africa.

Chapter Two

Contested Publics and the Publicness of The Manyano

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to examine and locate the publicness of the Manyano with the fall of apartheid and the institutionalisation of democracy in South Africa. This will be done through exploration of the public sphere conceptualised by Jürgen Habermas (1974 and 1989) in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. The chapter highlights the historical formation of the bourgeois public in Europe, in the context of colonial imposition in African states, and how this restructured the public sphere in African states. In South Africa, with the institutionalisation of white minority rule through the apartheid regime, the public sphere was racially constituted, meaning the black majority was excluded from the public sphere through the use of state sponsored violence meted out on black communities. Using Mahmood Mamdani's (1996) concept of the bifurcated South African public sphere in *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, the chapter shows that the distinct stratification of black people from the dominant white South African apartheid state profoundly challenges the logic of the concept of the public sphere and its development in South Africa and its meaning for the Manyano. The bifurcated nature of the South African public sphere under apartheid rule, and the exclusion the black citizenry created differing views on the public sphere and its legitimacy. The chapter shows how this, in effect, formalised the black counterpublic sphere which absorbed and transformed institutions such as the black church and the Women's Manyano into the liberation movement with its efforts directed to the demise of the apartheid regime. This chapter then argues that the role of the Manyano within the black counterpublic sphere provided counter narratives on the role of and position of women in the public sphere. With apartheid violence directed at black communities and black households, the Manyano play an integral role in the black counterpublic and thus destabilise the idea of the private/ public divide. This means that the theoretical and political assumptions embedded within the concept of the public sphere do not capture the life experiences and narratives of black women who are part of the Manyano. This chapter then argues that the publicness of the Manyano should be understood within this highlighted history of a complex South African public sphere.

Furthermore, the chapter contends that the claim made by Habermas of the public sphere being open and accessible to all is disputed by Western feminists who argue that, due to the patriarchal foundations of the public sphere, women are relegated to the private sphere and confined to gendered roles of mothering in the nuclear family. Through the use of African feminist scholarship, the chapter shows that the concept of the public sphere is premised on Western understandings of the separation between the private and public spaces, hence the public sphere has historically not been accessible to (white) women even though it is presumed to be accessible to all. For the purposes of this study, the gendered critiques of the public sphere are important in understanding the ways in which the Manyano, and black women's role in the anti-apartheid struggle in general, have been understood in South African feminist discourses. This discourse largely discredits black women's methods of resistance as reinforcing maternal understandings of femininity that deny women access to the public sphere as autonomous citizens who are not primarily defined by their relation to men or their children.

The chapter argues that this perception in Western feminist discourses has contributed to the limited attention given to these groups and therefore the erasure of spaces such as the Manyano and their meaning for women's roles during apartheid and after apartheid. In addition to this, African feminist scholarship, argues that the African socio-political economy is not constituted along gendered lines, and that an uncontested understanding of the private and public divide of society does not provide an accurate account of how African women organise and how they are positioned within African societies.

2.2 The Colonial Bourgeois Public Sphere

2.2.1 Foundations of the Habermasian Public Sphere

Habermas defines the public sphere as “a sphere which mediates between society and state, in which the public organizes itself as the bearer of public opinion” (1974:49). The emergence of the public sphere, as explained by Habermas, was due to significant changes in the idea of public representation throughout eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe. This is where political interaction shifted from representative publicness of the ruling monarch and absolutism found in feudal states to the formation of public opinion in the newly transformed social realm (Habermas 1989:5). Representative publicness “was not constituted as a social realm, that is, as a public sphere” (Habermas 1989:7). Instead, representative publicness was

embodied through manorial or lord status with displays “such as the public seal” (Habermas 1982:7) as these were not considered in the idea of a public sphere. Therefore, this did not create the opportunity for individuals to participate in the process of deliberation or within public debate (Habermas 1982:7). Habermas argues that representative publicness could be referred to as a “public representation of power” (Habermas 1974:50) and authority of such representation ought to be made publically. In simpler terms, Habermas suggests that in the era of feudal authority, the representative public sphere was “directly linked to the concrete existence of a ruler” (Habermas 1974:51). Thus, publicness referred to a representation of power before the people as opposed to representation for the people (Habermas 1974:51). However, the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth century saw the struggle against absolutism and feudal authority, which led to the polarisation of the emerging bourgeois that had established the distinction between the public and private sphere.

The emergence of the bourgeois called for the transformation of the order of authority, and made the call for a “representative government and a liberal democracy and more broadly with basic civil freedoms before the law (freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of association)” (Eley 1996:290). Habermas makes the argument that the social transformation of the public sphere emerged out of opposition to feudal authority, in which private individuals were excluded (1974:51). However, the essence of Habermas’ argument on the social transformation of the public sphere rests on the idea that the transformation of commerce and trade from the feudal authority to early capitalism, precipitated the demand of the emerging bourgeois to challenge feudal institutions in order to protect economic interests (Habermas 1989:18). This argument suggests that interests of private individuals, who fell outside of the representative public, had vested interests in the economy. Therefore, they required an interactive public which could assemble freely in public debate through information made available with the emergence of the press. This flow of information resulted in the demand for accountability from private individuals (1984:20). According to Habermas (1974), the transformation of the social realm from representative publicness to a bourgeois society had two main implications on the transformation of the public sphere. Firstly, social transformation required that the information of the state and its functions be made accessible to the public for the purposes of public scrutiny which was facilitated through the idea of public opinion (1974:52). Secondly, the emergence of the bourgeois society and the economic interest then demanded legal and parliamentary institutions which would rationalise and legitimise state

authority and make it accountable to the public sphere of the bourgeois citizenry and its idea of the common good (1984:22). In short:

the bourgeois public sphere could be understood as the sphere of private individuals assembled into a public body, which almost immediately laid claim to officially regulated “intellectual newspapers” for the use against the public authority itself (Habermas 1974:52).

Habermas extends on the idea of social transformation through the shift in meaning between public and private sphere due to the emergence of the privatisation of interests and individual subjectivity. The public sphere, according to Habermas, is one that mediates between the private sphere and the state (1974:50) or alternatively, the public sphere is “the sphere of private people [who] come together as a public” (1989:27). This presupposes there is a distinction between a private and public sphere. With the emergence of the bourgeois in relation to the privatisation of interests and production, Habermas makes the claim that home and work belong to the private realm as it is controlled by an individual who enters into transactions with other private entities. Persons belonging to the bourgeois class “were private persons... [and such presented] power in rational critical public debate” of the authority (Habermas 1989:28). This meant the home was excluded as a form of public and, subsequently, from the sphere of social reproduction (1989: 28). However, according to Habermas (1989), since the private individual who participated in the public sphere was both in ownership of the economic interests (or the participant in the commodity market) and the head of the household, he enjoyed the status of the private man and the owner of property and thus served as the link to the public sphere (1989: 28). This, by implication reconstituted the public and private sphere in relation to the commodity. This reconstitution of realms also meant that the home and family were becoming increasingly privatised as it was considered as the outside world in relation to the public realm of debate, engagement, and public opinion (Habermas 1989: 28). It is under these conditions that the new concept of the bourgeois public sphere can be understood, at the meeting of private interests and private individuals coming together to form a public sphere (Habermas 1989:29)

2.3 Black Counterpublics

African American scholars (Dawson 1999 and Harris-Lacewell 2004) have argued that the nature of the public sphere, as explained by Habermas, does not adequately portray how the

public sphere was constituted by racialised lines. This inadvertently qualified the claim to citizenship in so far as it marginalised the black minority from the dominant white public sphere in the United States of America. These scholars argue that the black counterpublic sphere was formalised through the recognition that black life in America was articulated through a competing public which fostered ideas on the recognition of citizenship (Dawson 1999: 192).

In this regard, the literature on counterpublics stems from the idea that in stratified societies, there are competing publics, which are seen as alternatives to the dominant or hegemonic public sphere (Fraser 1990:60-61). Stratified societies, according to Fraser (1990), are those societies whose basic institutional framework generates unequal social groups in structural relations of dominance or subordination (1990: 66). Such stratification of societies, and their institutional frameworks, make the process of public debate and deliberation not accessible to all, especially to those considered to be minorities. This form of institutional arrangement makes impossible the idea of a singular understanding of the public sphere as proposed by Habermas (Fraser 1990:66). If one were to accept the idea of a singular public sphere based on particular ideological standpoints, “subordinated groups would have no arenas for deliberation among themselves about their needs, objectives, and strategies” (Fraser 1990: 66). In Western and colonised societies, where publics are gendered and racialised, counter publics are often identified as spaces which hold contesting ideological beliefs in relation to the dominant public sphere (Fraser 1990:67). Fraser (1990) argues that:

counterpublics emerge in response to exclusions within dominant publics, they help expand the discursive space. In principle, assumptions that were previously exempt from contestation will now have to be publicly argued out (1990: 67).

Fraser (1990) adds that subordinated groups such as “women, people of color, and gays and lesbians – repeatedly have found it advantageous to constitute alternative publics” which are often in opposition to the dominant social group (1990: 67). Fraser (1990) chooses to identify these counterpublics as *subaltern publics* “in order to signal that they are parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs” (Fraser 1990:67). Although subaltern publics and counterpublics are interchangeable and share the same meaning, for purposes of this chapter, I shall reference these publics as counterpublics.

Fraser (1990) and Warner (2005) argue that counterpublics possess dual characteristics. On the one hand, counterpublics are spaces of withdrawing from dominant and oppressive institutional frameworks, in order to regroup and focus on matters specific to their positionality, they also “function as bases and training grounds for agitational activities directed toward the dominant public they are institutionally excluded from” (Fraser 1990:68). Writing specifically on the African American counterpublic, Harris-Lacewell (2004) draws on the analogy of black life and its existence as one which “occurred behind a veil” (2004: xxi). She argues that due to segregation and institutionalised racism, “white America forcibly separated themselves from blacks, they lowered a dark shroud between races that allowed a certain covert reality for African Americans to operate beyond the reach of whites” (Harris-Lacewell 2004: xxi) This meant there was a

distinct, if not entirely separate, African American public sphere that operates among African Americans and it continues to influence the political views, thoughts, and attitudes of those who interact there (Harris-Lacewell 2004: xxi).

Just like Fraser (1990), Harris-Lacewell (2004) makes that claim that the black counterpublic has dual characteristics; it is a reaction to exclusion due to institutionalised racism, but it is also the “assertion of value and intergroup interaction which is neither policed nor observed” (2004: xxi) by those outside of this public. According to Harris-Lacewell (2004), the black counterpublic is often free from the restrictions which are often present in the dominant public sphere. Furthermore, black people operating in the counterpublic sphere do not need to ascribe to the ideological baggage of the dominant public sphere in order to make meaning of their lives and society. Therefore, the black counterpublic offers black people the opportunity to “exchange interpretations of truth, to understand the complexity of the political world, to link individual experiences to group narratives” (Harris-Lacewell 2004: xiii) which all contribute to the “necessary building [of] the social language and individual knowledge structure that is political ideology” (Harris-Lacewell 2004: xxiii).

Although arguments made by Fraser (1990) and Harris-Lacewell (2004) carry weight in the understanding of the counterpublics, it is nevertheless important to contextualise its meaning for African and South African historical realities. While similarities may be suggested between racial segregation in America and South Africa and the subsequent formation of a black counterpublic, a deeper analytical approach is important when considering the formation of the South African state and its implication for the black counterpublic. This distinction, I wish to

argue, is important to make so as to avoid the universal application of American black life and their conception of the counterpublic sphere on particular realities in South Africa. This attention to context makes it possible to place the Manyano and their activism within the complex history of South Africa, and gives an insight into where we can locate the Manyano in the South African public realm after 1994.

2.4 The Two Publics: The Primordial and Colonial African Public

In *Colonial and Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement*, Ekeh (1975) traces the African colonial experience which has led to the formation of contemporary post-colonial Africa. At the heart of Ekeh's argument is how colonialism reconfigured the nature of African politics in distinct ways, the most salient of these is the belief that the idea of a public realm is not monolithic (Ekeh 1975:91-92). Ekeh argues that the conception of the public and private realm in Western societies used to describe and theories the politics of previously colonised African states, "limits the scope of politics" in Africa (1975: 91- 92). Ekeh (1975) places African politics and the development of public realms within two political moments; namely the pre- and post-colonial structures. In both historical moments, he argues, there are varied understandings and conceptions of citizenship (Ekeh 1975:106). This means that citizenship and the expression of it "has acquired various meanings which depend on whether it is conceived in terms of either of the two public realms described below" (Ekeh 1975: 106).

Although Ekeh writes broadly from the African context and later focuses on the Nigerian context, he proposes the idea that in Africa, within the colonial and post-colonial moments two distinct, but now dialectical, publics emerged and shaped modern African politics (1975:93). On the one hand, Ekeh (1975) refers to the primordial public realm with its roots and foundations in pre-colonial organising based on shared and communal duties and obligations which have moral linkages to the idea of the good and just (1975: 92). In this realm, the individual "sees [their] duties as moral obligations to benefit and sustain the primordial public realm of which [they] are a member" (Ekeh 1975:106). These moral obligations and duties may differ within each context or setting, but within "most of Africa, they tend to be emergent in ethnic groups" (1975:107) and the moral codes which order them. This public is not limited to the precolonial context. Instead, he argues that it is a sustained public that continues to exist in the post-colonial Africa but in ways which have now been reconfigured and modified. On the other hand, Ekeh writes on the civic public realm which is "historically associated with the

colonial administration” (1975: 92). The civic realm is characterised by the expansion of Europe to Africa through the colonial project as an attempt to acquire political power that would be commensurate with, and further consolidate, its power at home” (Ekeh 1975: 95). Therefore, according to Ekeh, the civic public realm is amoral as it is based on the exploitation of colonised countries through the use of “civil structures such as the military, the police, etc.” (1975: 92).

The distinguishing factor of these two publics, as argued by Ekeh, is the economic imperative of each public. Within the primordial public realm, “the economic imperative is bound to the ethnic associations and other different types of obligations to help out with ethnically-owned community programs” (1975: 107). This form of economic organising has been maintained and sustained even in the post-colonial moment, as this duty is viewed as a moral obligation as opposed a profit and expansion driven imperative (Ekeh 1975:107). In contrast to this, the civic realm, both in the pre-and post-colonial, is organised around economic value. The structure of the civic public realm is such that the individual has no moral obligation or duty to give back that which they have gained and thus economic value and duty are based on the ability to accumulate and consolidate power (Ekeh 1975:107). This economic expansion and accumulation spilled over to the post-colonial civic sphere and thus shaped modern (independent) African states and their politics. These two publics, have come to shape the various ways in which Africans navigate publics in post-colonial and democratic African states.

2.4.1 The Bifurcated Apartheid Public Sphere

Although Ekeh (1975) provides a historical understanding of the two publics in Africa in the context of colonial imposition, it is important to pay careful attention to the ways in which the concept of two publics manifests within various contexts. Expanding on the argument presented by Ekeh (1975), Mamdani (1996) analyses the structure of the African state from the point of contact with western imperialism through to post-independent Africa. Although Mamdani offers an expansive account of the continent, this chapter will focus on the bifurcated state in South Africa and its implications for our understanding of the black counterpublic. It is here where Mamdani (1996) offers an in-depth account of the legacy of colonialism and the idea of the *bifurcated power* of racial domination through “tribally organized local authorities, reproducing racial identity in citizens and ethnic identity in subjects” (1996: 33). Mamdani

(1996) contends that the nature of colonial and apartheid South Africa was one of solidifying institutional frameworks in order to ensure minority rule over the indigenous Africans. Two forms of dominance came to characterise the institutional framework for white minority rule, namely direct and indirect rule.

Direct rule was Europe's immediate response to the issue of administratively controlling conquered colonies. This entailed the structuring of unitary systems which would civilise the black Africans (Mamdani 1996:16) and resulted in colonial authorities not legally recognising indigenous institutions due to the belief that those who were civilised were not only racially but culturally different from those deemed to be uncivilised (Mamdani 1996:16). Civilised society then came to represent those who racially and culturally identified with the ideological framework of "civilised policy" (Mamdani 1996:16). This created the citizen and those who were subjects; and those who had the privilege of claiming civil rights and citizenship. However, this form of rule could only thrive in the presence of "settler capitalism" (Mamdani 1996:16) which involved the "comprehensive sway of market institutions: the appropriation of land, the destruction of communal autonomy, and the defeat and dispersal of tribal populations" (Mamdani 1996:16-17). This form of rule meant that "the native was locked into institutional forms of domination in the face of economic and social relations" (Mamdani 1996:19). This form of rule was created primarily for citizens who had the right to freedoms such as "free association and free publicity, and eventually of political representation" (Mamdani 1996:19). The colonial civil state – the urban form of civil power – was formulated with the purpose to exclude natives from "civil freedoms guaranteed to citizen in civil society" (Mamdani 1996:18).

On the other hand, indirect rule focused largely on the "creation of a separate but subordinate structures for natives" (Mamdani 1996:62). This was signified by a rural tribal authority which ensured that rural black people came under the customary rule of "state enforced customary order" (Mamdani 1996:18). This entailed that the rural "native" – the subject– conformed to their own laws and traditions only insofar as these laws were "not repugnant to the general principles of humanity, recognized throughout the whole civilized world" (Mamdani 1996:63). This was done in order to regulate or remake custom in order to make legitimate the colonial civil world (Mamdani 1996:63). This was crystallized through the aggregation of "natives" into rural locations which in turn defined land as customary possession, as opposed to its communal status. Customary land was subject to state appointed customary authorities who

administered the day-to-day activities of those within particular locations (Mamdani 1996:21-22). Through customary authority, the “native” was “containerized as a tribesperson” (Mamdani 1996: 22) and fell under the law of the tribe, thus “civilizing natives as communities” instead of individuals. Therefore, custom came to represent “that which was state ordained and state enforced” (1996:22), this was the “essence of colonial absolutism, rule by decree, rule without judicial or parliamentary restraint” (1996:64).

These two forms of rule, for the rural and urban, (the subject and the citizen) came to be under “one hegemonic authority” (Mamdani 1996:18). Urban power spoke to the language of civil society and civil rights, whilst rural (customary) power spoke to community and the preservation of culture according to the dictates of the colonial authority (1996:18). This is what Mamdani terms the bifurcation of the colonial state – the double sided affair – which on the one hand governed over a “racially defined citizenry” and on the other, “the state which ruled over its [rural] subjects” through coercion (Mamdani 1996:18). Although Mamdani (1996) goes on to trace the rise of the “native” urban middle class, the rural wage worker, migrant worker and the rise of their politicisation, I wish to only use the historical account of the bifurcated state in order to contend that the idea of the counterpublic, as described by Fraser (1990) and Harris-Lacewell (2004) is limited when considering the history of the South African public sphere.

Although literature is scarce on the black counterpublic in South Africa, I would argue that the Manyano can be located within two understandings of ‘publicness’ in post-colonial and post-apartheid: within the bifurcated nature of Africa as a whole (Ekeh 1975:108), and bifurcated South African state (Mamdani 1996:18). I argue that locating the Manyano exclusively within a customary defined black counterpublic, or a civil public sphere of the democratic South Africa, would be a misplaced reading of the nature of the South African state. The nature of the bifurcated state, and the different positions that the Manyano occupy within it, require varied strategies which all need to be explored within their contexts.

The Manyano, and their social position as black, disadvantaged, and women who form part of a religious group whose inception came from missionary contact and have existed into the democratic South African state, hold a multiplicity of identities within various publics. At one level, I would argue that the nature of the Manyano in the bifurcated state could be considered as a dominant public of the ‘customary’ or the primordial public realm as understood by

indigenous people. In the customary, the Manyano form part of the greater society and are considered to be a hegemonic public with its obligations and duties bound morally to their rootedness in communal ideals. I wish to argue that it is important to consider the context in which the Manyano operate; in black communities where their publicness is not rooted in the opposition of the dominant public which has them misrecognised due to racialised constructions of black women. It holds that within the bifurcated sphere, which distinctly isolates the customary from the directly ruled civil society, the Manyano's publicness forms part of the customary within the bifurcated state.

On the other hand, once in interaction with the dominant civil society (the South African public sphere), the Manyano may operate as a counterpublic which is in opposition to dominant public sphere which is exclusionary and highly racialised. However, this is also a momentary part of the Manyano's identity. Particularly in the apartheid moment, the Manyano often collaborated with various activist groups and liberation strategies which rooted them within the black counterpublic where Manyano create moments of resistance, subversion, and the formation of a political identity which contributes to the larger political project of the black counterpublic.

2.5 Gendering the Public Sphere

The above discussion has highlighted the racialised nature of the public sphere and its articulation of a racially qualified right to citizenship and access to the public sphere. Furthermore, I have shown how in the presence of the a racially constituted public sphere, a black counterpublic sphere emerged based on constructing different ideological understandings of the public citizen and who has access to the public sphere. However, the public sphere in Africa, and South Africa to be specific, complicates how the counterpublic can be understood in South Africa and how the Manyano articulate and assert their rights within it.

Apart from racialised qualifications attached to the public sphere as presented by Habermas (1974 and 1989), gendered understandings of publicness are discussed below from both Western and African feminist scholarship in order to understand the publicness of the Manyano in apartheid South Africa and how this is articulated in the advent of democracy.

2.5.1 *The Public Man and the Private Woman*

Western feminist scholarship has criticized the notion of an open and accessible public sphere which is accessible to all. Although writing on the American context, Ryan (1996), suggests that this claim is deeply flawed (1996:262). Ryan (1996) claims that the exclusive nature of the bourgeois public sphere demanded that those excluded, particularly bourgeois women, “found circuitous routes to public influence” (1996: 284). This is not to say that bourgeois women did not find the fundamental ideological underpinning of the public sphere, which was intolerant of “ethnic, racial, and sectional differences” (1996: 262), as a flawed construct. Instead, bourgeois women contested the idea that their class position—which was mitigated by their gender could not fulfill the criteria for entrance into the bourgeois public sphere (Ryan 1996: 263-264). This resulted in the formation of bourgeois woman-specific associations which spoke specifically to the bourgeois women’s political context. This included “sex reformers, women who exposed the fictions of privacy on which the segregation of gender and politics was supposedly based, female run charities built up a private system of meeting the needs that presaged the welfare state” (1996:284). Fraser (1990: 61) supplements Ryan (1996) by arguing that the ideological underpinnings of the exclusive public sphere was undercut by the presence of competing associations and movements which were not only limited to bourgeois women’s movements. She goes on to argue that there “existed a host of competing publics which included nationalist publics, popular publics, elite women’s publics, and working class publics” (Fraser 1990:61). These elite women’s publics were not constituted out of the need to transform a public sphere which excluded the working class or racial minorities. Instead, bourgeois women contested the masculinist nature of the public sphere which could not be mitigated by class.

Eley (1996) traces the gendered and masculine understanding of reason and rationality through Joan B. Landes’ (1988), work on *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution*, and how this formed part of the idea of a ‘rational being’. Eley (1996), in conjunction with Landes, argues that modern political thought in the Enlightenment period and throughout the French Revolution was highly gendered. Thus, the foundational tenets of liberal thought were based on understandings of man and woman and “constituted gendered assumptions on universals of reason” (Landes in Eley 1996: 309). These were based primarily on an “ideologically constructed system of difference in gender” (Eley 1996: 309). The idea of the public man or the virtue of such a public man was based on “a series of oppositions to

femininity, which both mobilized older conceptions of domesticity and women's place and rationalized them into a formal claim concerning women's nature" (Eley 1996:309). This 'irrational' nature of a woman constructed "a new austere style of public speech, and [a] behavior was promoted; a style deemed rational, virtuous, and manly" (1996:310). Fraser adds that the work of Landes (1988) by asserting that the masculinist conception of the private individual with reason and rationality was transferred into the political and public sphere and led to the formal exclusion of women from the political life of the republic" (Fraser 1990:59). It is here where the bourgeois drew on "classical traditions that cast femininity and publicity as oxymorons" (Fraser 1990:59). Therefore, the "absence of women from the political realm has not been by a chance occurrence, nor merely a symptom of the regrettable persistence of archaic patriarchies, but a specific product of the French Revolution" and subsequently, the bourgeois public sphere as conceptualised by Habermas (Eley 1996: 310).

Eley (1996) goes on to argue that the ideological underpinnings of this discrimination were based on the social "ordering of sexual difference" and "women had no autonomous political standing in the prevailing theories of government and representation" (1996: 313). This rested on the belief that the citizen or the individual who accessed the public sphere was propertied and this individual was always masculine (Eley 1996:313). The head of the household represented the household in the public sphere as "the political language of radical democracy was inscribed with definite notions of masculinity and femininity organized around a clear distinction between the *public world* and *domestic-cum-communal sphere*" (Eley 1996:314). Eley (1996) contends women were confined to the private sphere (within the household) and "within this sphere, women's functions of child-bearing, child-rearing, and maintaining the household are deemed to correspond to their unreason, disorderliness, and closeness to nature" (Keane 1988:21 in Eley 1996:310). This is based on the assumption that the domestic sphere is viewed as inferior to the male-dominated public world and its culture, property, social power, reason, and freedom" (1996:310). Fraser (1990) and Eley (1996) conclude by asserting that the classical bourgeois public sphere was partially constituted with various exclusion but the most salient of these being gender.

Despite the Western feminist critique of the public sphere, African feminists have further problematised the notion of the biologically determined public and private sphere demarcations as proposed by Habermas in the bourgeois and broader Western ordering of society. African feminist scholars have challenged and offered a measured critique on the uncritical universal

application of a gendered public and private sphere and the implication it has on African women (Oyèwùmí 1997, Amadiume 1997, Walker 1995, Hassim 2014, and Gasa 2007). In the following section of this chapter, I outline the different arguments made by African feminist scholarship in relation to the Habermasian bourgeois public sphere and its implication for the gendered private sphere.

2.6 African Matriarchal Social Economy and the Public Sphere

2.6.1 African Feminist Critiques on Gendered Social Constructs

Oyèrónké Oyèwùmí (1997) in her seminal text, *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses* argues that the social category of woman and the socialized sexual difference ought not to be assumed to be universal. In the first chapter of this text, Oyèwùmí (1997) traces the implication of biological determinism as an ideology which places bodies into social categories. She argues that in western thought, “the body is the bedrock on which social order is founded, the body is always *in view* and *on view*” ((Oyèwùmí 1997: 2). As such, “it invites a gaze, a gaze of difference, a gaze of differentiation- the most historically constant being the gendered gaze” (Oyèwùmí 1997: 2). Oyèwùmí (1997) agrees with Fraser (1999) and Eley (1996) on the idea that socialised distinctions between the rational man and the irrational unthinking woman are socially constructed through the insistence on sexual difference. Oyèwùmí’s point of contention is the universalisation of the idea that all societies are based on the logic of biological determinism (Oyèwùmí 1997: 9). She argues that “due to Western imperialism, this debate has become universalized to other cultures, and its immediate effect is to inject Western problems where such issues originally did not exist” (Oyèwùmí 1997:9) as biological characteristics do not order social relations in a totalizing manner in other contexts, such as Africa. Oyèwùmí (1997) argues that although gender is socially constructed, “there was a specific time (in different cultural and architectural sites) when it was constructed and therefore a time before it was constructed” (1997:10). With this in mind, Oyèwùmí (1997) makes the assertion that although gender is a social construction, it is also a historical and cultural phenomenon... [and thus it is] logical to assume that in some societies, gender constructions need not have existed at all” (1997: 10). It is important to note that Oyèwùmí does not refute the idea of gendered societies outside of Western discourse, but asserts that due to historical events, (such as Western imperialism and the colonising nature of Western ideology) gendered organisation of societies is immutable.

Oyěwùmí (1997) acknowledges the strides made by Western feminist scholarship in debunking and unravelling the ideological deficiencies of biology as a determining factor of social categorisation. However, she argues that cross-cultural studies of societies outside western discourse ought not fall into the scholarly trap of assuming Western feminist scholarship on gender may have a universal application (Oyěwùmí 1997). She makes the point that:

From a cross-cultural perspective, the more interesting point is the degree to which [Western] feminism, despite its radical local stance exhibits the same ethnocentric and imperialistic characteristics of Western discourse it sought to subvert (Oyěwùmí 1997:13).

Oyěwùmí (1997) then guards against “an uncritical acceptance of Western categories and questions in African studies” (1997: 27). This is an important aspect that needs consideration when attempting to offer a critique on the gendered public sphere in ways that account for contextual particularity of cultures and societies that now carry the weight of colonial baggage which reconfigures the understanding, interpretation, and access to the public sphere. This is why Oyěwùmí (1997) suggests that it is important not to “assume the social organization of one culture (the dominant West included) as universal to the interpretations of the experiences of one culture as explaining the other” (1997: 10).

2.6.2 *African Feminists and the Gendered Public Sphere*

Through a collection of essays in (1997) *Reinventing Africa: Matriarchy, Religion and Culture*, Ifi Amadiume traces African modes of social organising in feudal African states and their transformation under centralised states’ control with the imposition of colonial domination with specific reference to Igbo society in Nigeria. The central argument in this text is that, matriarchy and patriarchy were present in Africa as dual-sex political systems which were seen to be mutually enforcing ideologies and were not based on ideas of gendered domination (Amadiume 1997:85). This meant that women and men, as groups organising society, ensured the autonomy of both, however, these were not centered on the domination but on complementary interdependence between the two. This form of social organisation was “uniformly destroyed by colonial rule” (Mamdani 1996:41) and the crystallisation of the patriarchal colonial state.

In the fourth chapter, *Women's Achievements in African Political Systems: Transforming Culture for 500 Years*, Amadiume (1997) argues that women in African societies were not subject to the same patriarchal domination as women of western societies. Amadiume (1997) argues that the nature of the western patriarchal state sought to “control and rule women-indeed everyone”. (1997:101). She continues to argue that this state “seeks to appropriate everyone’s right to self- determination and to bring everyone under the rule of the male.” (Amadiume 1997:101). She further notes the characteristics of the western patriarchal state as on based on the:

denial of basic right to their women, who were subjugated under the private institution of the patriarchal, monogamous, nuclear family. Women were confined to the home, and did not have either a public role or much power, even during the period when the family was the unit of production (Amadiume 1997:101-102).

In contrast to this, Amadiume (1997) argues that African societies were based primarily on matriarchal social and economic organisation. It follows then that women were the leaders of the home and the keeper of the food as this was central to the economic function of the home (Amadiume 1997:102). This meant that women were at the forefront of agriculture and the markets. These market places marked the ‘public sphere’ and the social relations that underpinned it. Amadiume (1997) notes that although wealthy women were a class which often formed “prestigious associations, Women Councils, and women’s autonomous governing structures” these were accessible to all irrespective of wealth and class status as the market places (which could be loosely described as a public sphere) were common spaces of assembly and debate (1997 301).

This was tied also to “the sacredness of the mother and her unlimited authority, to the extent that this was given expression in the widespread goddess religion” (Amadiume 1997:201) as this encouraged “the matriarchal family, peace and justice, goodness, and social collectivism” (Amadiume 1997:201). This history of matriarchal social organisation enabled the “prominence of women’s political and economic” prowess, which was “not confined to the household and wider kin-corporate units” (Amadiume 1997: 201) as formulated in the western patriarchal state. This point is solidified by the argument that “the democratic principles governing these assemblies meant all social groups were present. Every human being had the right to voice an opinion [as this] system was geared to work by consensus” (Amadiume 1997:103). This is not to suggest that kings and patriarchal organising of society did not exist. However, these were

dual political systems, which were not based on gender discrimination or the gendered understanding of the ‘public sphere’ (Amadiume 1997:103).

This argument presented by Amadiume (1997) shows two diverging understandings of the public and private sphere and their gendered nature as noted by Western feminists. In contrast to Western feminist scholarship on the patriarchal public sphere and its confinement of women to the private sphere, Amadiume (1997) offers an African perspective which does not have a clear separation of the public and private sphere. African women under the matriarchal socio-economic and political system were present in the economy and political debate in their societies. This challenges the role of women in public life and the gendered duties associated with the private sphere. Furthermore, with the destruction of the home and black family life in South Africa under apartheid, for black women, the home and the duties associated with it become spaces where women come together to think through strategies for the survival of black communities (Hassim 1991:19 and Magubane 2010 :1000). This significantly alters the way the private sphere is understood and how motherhood, for black women under apartheid, found its expression at the intersection of state sponsored violence and protection of the home.

This calls into question the rigidity of the gendered public and private sphere as matriarchal foundations in pre-colonial Africa, and apartheid South Africa in particular, informed the publicness of women and their position within society.

2.7 Black Motherhood and Political Activism in South Africa

In South African feminist discourse, a fierce debate has resulted in questioning the legitimacy of ‘traditional understandings’ of womanhood and motherhood (on which matriarchal ideological tenets are based), as a “unifying - and emancipatory- political identity for women” (Walker 1995:418). There seem to be two dominant themes that underpin the literature on motherhood as a legitimate political tool within South African feminist discourse. The first argument rests on the theme that women who use their social identity as mothers, as the basis for their activism or political organising, are seen to be in collusion with patriarchy (Wells 1991). The second theme suggests that the difference in experience of motherhood allows for different interpretations as a basis for political activism and organising, particularly for black women in South Africa (Walker 1995, Hassim 1991, Gasa 2007, and Magubane 2010).

This tension about the political meaning of motherhood shapes the extent to which feminist scholars theorise the role of women who mobilise through the church which, like motherhood, is also understood to be a conservative space for Western feminist liberatory politics. Therefore, the aim of examining the debate on motherism as collusion with patriarchy, is to demonstrate that these framings of women's actions have contributed to the silence by feminist scholars in theorising the meaning of the Manyano in post-apartheid South Africa. In the section below, I argue that this mainly white feminist critique of black women's maternal politics obscures the everyday violence of apartheid on black life in the context of the bifurcated state and the matriarchal foundations of black family life.

2.7.1 Between Blackness and Femininity: Motherism as Collusion with Patriarchy

The debate on motherhood being rooted in black women's activism in South Africa seems to have gained prominence with the claims made in Wells' (1991) paper, *Rise and Fall of Motherism as a Force in Black Women's Resistance Movements* in which Wells traces the women's anti-pass campaign of the early 1950s in South Africa. Although this paper compares the political merits of feminism and motherist movements, the focus for this chapter is on merits of motherism as a legitimate form of political organisation in South Africa. Wells makes the argument that "motherism is clearly not feminism. Women swept up in motherist movements are not fighting for their own rights as women, but for their rights as mothers." (Wells 1991:4). It is argued further that "motherist movements must be recognised as limited in scope, duration, and success in achieving their goals" (Wells 1991: 4-5). This premise is based on the idea that women who endorse motherhood as a mode for political organisation consciously or unconsciously harbor "deep seated conservatism" (Walker 1995:420). Within this theme of literature, it is also argued that the lumping of mothers, wives, and women was regressive and was often used as "patriarchal ploy to limit and control women" (Walker 1995:420). Hassim (2014) adds that this lumping of women and mothers into one category has been used to account for the weaknesses of the ANC Women's League (ANCWL). Hassim argues that within the ANC, "women's political roles were to be defined through the mode of maternalism, acting on behalf of their husbands and children." (Hassim, 2014: 29). Other scholars have argued similarly that although motherhood may be an empowering identity, it should not be forgotten that this empowerment is confined to patriarchal notions and does not seek to destabilise gender oppression (Posel 1991: 22 and Campbell 1990: 12).

2.7.2 *Mothering During Apartheid*

The second theme in literature is based on the difference of the experience of motherhood in South Africa, which is based on racial categories. In this stream of literature Gaitskell and Unterhalter (1989) compare motherhood in African and Afrikaner nationalism. They argue that a universal approach to the understanding of motherhood is one which denies the complex identities in which both groups straddle (Gaitskell and Unterhalter 1989:75). The distinction is made that in *Afrikaner* nationalism, motherhood was confined to the household, in which the Afrikaner mother was to ensure the survival of the *Afrikaner* ideologies through the production of children who would inherit the *Afrikaner* nationalist state (Gaitskell and Unterhalter 1989: 75). The African mother, particularly within the African National Congress (ANC) was positioned in the iconography of the militant mother who was active in liberatory politics (Gaitskell and Unterhalter 1989:76). In the same vein, Miller (2009) argues that the “iconography of militarized motherhood offers a different vision of what it meant to be a political mother rather than reinforce that more narrow understandings of motherhood that were previously described [...] These representations suggest a more a nuanced political role for women” (2009: 70). Magadla (2015) categorises the women who used motherhood as a political tool at the height of the ANC’s call for a “People’s War” in the 1980s as “combative mothers”. She argues that analyses of women’s roles in the national liberation movements “need to reflect the contextual realities of their lives and the ways in which apartheid, as an unconventional war, blurred the distinctions between battlefield and home front, as well as combatant and civilian” (2015: 392).

Writing on the debate on motherism in *Feminisms, Motherism, Patriarchies, and Women’s Voices* in the 1950s, Gasa (2007) suggests that “there is a need for a non-linear, nuanced approach that is informed by the understanding that women straddle many positions. Their [black women] lives defy binaries that are dominant in the South African feminist academic discourse.” (2007:225). This is further supported by Magubane (2010) as she argues that this imagined binary based on a particular understanding of motherhood and mothering does not give nuance nor fully encapsulates the politicised nature of black motherhood (Magubane 2010:1000). Magubane further suggests that an intersectional and contextualised understanding of mothering and motherhood is vital in reading black women’s political agency and involvement in the liberation struggle beyond western conservatism (2004:1010) and Western feminism’s response to it. The juxtaposition made between black women’s rights and

the black liberation movement is limited in that it creates an either/or approach to black women's subjectivity and its constitution (Gasa 2007: 216). The participation of black women in liberation movements from spaces such as the church "may also be a springboard to a broader feminist agenda, although, in some cases, they are powerful in themselves" (2007:255). Hassim (1991) adds that this form of analytical approach may allow for the "possibility [...] for more than one form of feminism to emerge, as women would discover that not all women have identical political interests" (1991: 73).

Walker complicates this argument by encouraging feminist scholarship to seek a deeper analytical approach which accounts for multiple oppressive forces experienced by black mothers (1995: 426). Walker (1995) argues that although motherhood may be read as an entry into black mothers' political organising, their social identities in relation to the apartheid state may be contributing factors to such political organising. Social categories occupied by black mothers such as "domestic worker, church member, unemployed black mother, and others" (1995: 426). come to interact with motherhood which may, in particular contexts, be the springboard for political activism (1995: 426). Walker adds that the increase of the black women proletariat in urban areas in apartheid South Africa, found black women negotiating

a whole range of new social identities, involving major shifts in consciousness and new demands on their time and energy. Wage worker, union member, squatter African, etc. impacted on women's consciousness, their self-image as mothers and the shift in the meaning attached to this work (1995: 429).

These interacting identities ought to be considered when approaching motherhood as a springboard for organising for black women.

It is important to note that this theme seeks not to deny the patriarchal elements of motherhood being used to control and subject women to the patriarchal domestic and political sphere. Alternatively, this theme of literature allows us to locate black women – the Manyano specifically– within the complexity of nuance and within a deeper analytical approach to the various social identities which interplay with black motherhood. That is to say, this framework "collapses binary conceptual frameworks that depict women as either victims or victors" (Kihato 2007:397). and considers perspectives which illuminate the depth and varying degrees of subversion undertaken by black mothers and the Manyano within resistance and activism

under apartheid rule (Kihato 2007:397). This polarised debate on the legitimacy of motherhood as a platform for activism is crucial in understanding both the misrecognition and the silence about the meaning of spaces such as the Manyano in the understanding of women's activities during and after apartheid. Motherhood for the Manyano is central to their identity and how they are positioned as mothers of the church and their communities. Therefore, a rigid understanding of motherhood limits the complex and varied ways in which the Manyano navigate this significant aspect of their identity.

2.7.3 Motherhood and The Manyano

Writing on the collective identity of black Christian women in South Africa, particularly the Manyanos, Gaitskell (1991) argues that church based organisations such as this encouraged the centrality of motherhood as a social identity. Early missionaries maintained a discourse of Victorian understandings of womanhood and motherhood in their encounter with black women, which focused largely on patriarchal conceptions of the domestic world and the Christian women's place in it (Gaitskell 1991). Black women converts also came to see the church – the Manyano specifically – as a space in which black women could cope with the stresses of apartheid South Africa which shaped black motherhood as a “burdensome and painful responsibility” (Gaitskell 1991 260). This is what became a dominant force of the Manyano's spirituality. Haddad (2000) argues that motherhood in this understanding created the space for “disguised resistance practices for poor marginalized women” (2000: 174). The divergent uses of motherhood between the Western missionary and black women in the black church are pivotal in recognizing the political gains made and continue to be made by women who have adopted a racialised, gendered, political, and socio-economic theology of survival, based on motherhood being a multifaceted social identity (Haddad 2000:175 and Walker 1995: 434). Following Gaitskell's (1991) argument, Haddad (2004) adds that the Manyano became entrenched in the lives of both rural and urban women from the 1930s as urban women living in white suburban homes as domestic workers used the weekly meetings to deal with the routine racism in the workplace and the psychological challenges of separation from their families. Rural women who also formed Manyano groups saw weekly meetings as a space to deal with the stresses of being “the abandoned wife or partner of the migrant worker” (Walker 1995:429) as influx control laws made access to the city difficult for them. Manyano meetings offered black women across the country “a mutual exploration of the practice of faith within the particular constraints of their lives” (Haddad 2004:10).

The brutal nature of the apartheid state made motherhood, for black women, a political tool which could be used as the springboard for their resistance. The nature of apartheid rule and the difference in experience between white and black women as discussed by Gaitskell and Unterhalter (1989:75), suggest that motherhood is experienced in varied ways which are often context related.

2.8 Conclusion

This theoretical chapter examined the concept of the public sphere in relation to the Manyano and their publicness. It provided the Habermasian understanding of the public sphere and its historical underpinnings from Europe and how this has shaped the ways in which the public sphere has been theorised in relation to democratic states. It was argued in the chapter that the conception of the public sphere as demonstrated by Habermas could not to be read in isolation from the global political climate of the time which allowed for European, and Western states at large, to create and sustain the growth of capitalism in the wake of a growing bourgeois public sphere. Colonial imposition and the depletion of resources in African states created the environment where a bourgeois public sphere could develop and transform. In relation to this, the chapter argued that the idea of the public sphere cannot be assumed to be universal nor understood without the recognition of cultural and historical particularities of colonised states, particularly with the African perspective, where the public sphere differs in formation to the public sphere described by Habermas.

Furthermore, this chapter has provided Western feminist critiques of the gendered public sphere which argue that despite Habermas' claim that the public sphere is accessible to all; Western women are excluded based on the patriarchal ordering of Western societies. In contrast, African feminist approaches to the public sphere showed how gendered understandings of the public sphere do not adequately historicise the formation of the public sphere in Africa and its operation. There has been evident demarcations of the public and private sphere in western societies and these produced sexual divisions of labour and the limitation of women from the public sphere. I have outlined further the contestation provided by African feminist scholars who have presented alternative understandings of the ordering of African states prior to colonial imposition and this did not function in ways which it produced gendered subjects who could not participate in the public sphere. The crucial point made by African feminist literature is the contestation to the universal application of a gendered notion

of society and how this demarcates gendered limitation to the public sphere. The chapter has shown that the Manyano have then been located within this stream of literature which contends the gendered nature of the public sphere. However, this has been complicated by the use of Mamdani's (1996) idea of the bifurcated public sphere in South Africa which is not as cohesive and one dimensional as the public sphere proposed by Habermas. This complex nature of the South African public sphere – the customary and civil society– further complicates the nature of the Manyano's publicness in the apartheid era and their publicness in the post-apartheid era. Finally, in this chapter I have demonstrated how the bifurcation of South Africa and the nature of apartheid violence and the transformation of spaces such as the church and the Manyano incorporated the idea of the black counterpublic sphere where the Manyano can be located but in complex and multiple forms, this further complicates the nature of how we read and understand the Manyano in post-apartheid South Africa.

Chapter Three

In Search of My Grandmother's Garden: A Case for Life Histories

3.1 Introduction

In the living room of our house in Kwa-Zulu Natal sits a portrait. In this portrait, my great grandmother sits on a bench looking out into the vastness of the land of our home in Mthatha. This land is the land that provided for generations of the Ngcobozi family. She and her husband cultivated this land with their hands and toiled the soil which bore fruit for all six of their children. In the portrait, she sits on the bench, legs folded into each other, with a black tattered bible on her lap. She appears too shy to look into the camera but steals a glimpse of it nonetheless. Behind her, stands a tall man. His skin birthed by the sun and hair giving way to the life he has lived. His hands on both her shoulders. I take a closer look at the portrait and I see hands which have held the earth and nurtured the offspring of seeds. He looks directly into the camera; he does not smile. Surrounding them are their six children; three young women and three young men. All the children are smiling, with one of them caught in the moment of joyous laughter. All eight of them dressed in their church uniforms. The children in their Wesley Guild uniform, and the parents in their respective church uniforms; my great grandmother in her Manyano uniform, and her husband in the male equivalent. This portrait sits in the middle of the television stand of our house. On the far left of it sits a photo of the three Ngcobozi daughters in their manyano uniform. My grandmother and her older sister in their Methodist Women's Manyano uniform and the youngest daughter in the Anglican Women's Manyano uniform. All three of them, in a row, speaking at the funeral of their sister in law a few years ago. On the far right of the television stand sits a wooden crucifix placed on top of the tattered bible which belonged to my great grandmother. Placed neatly next to this bible and crucifix is the Women's Manyano Creed which once belonged to my great grandmother but now belongs to all her daughters.

I often wondered why these were the items which my grandmother thought most worthy of being on display. I wondered if these were the memories my grandmother valued most and if this was probably the reason why the photographs of the younger generations of Ngcobozi were neatly packed away in a box underneath my grandmother's bed. I also wondered if being

a Manyano woman was required of all the women in our family and that the displayed photographs stood as a reminder of a purpose I had to honour.

I have always been surrounded by the Manyano. From my earliest memories of childhood, I always knew that being a Manyano woman was a rite of passage that all Ngcobozi women went through. I often wondered why this was so, and why the women in my family were so invested in this 'Manyano thing'. I knew that this was an integral part of our family history and the way in which the women in my family have come to identify themselves. When my cousins and I were younger, we used to go on holiday to our family home in Mthatha, we always knew that church was a central feature of our home. Even our uncles who are unemployed and ravaged by alcohol knew that we all had to respect the time set aside for family prayer and thanksgiving. As we grew up and become wiser, we realised that our great grandmother and her husband were known for their strong Christian values. We would often hear our grandmothers and aunts who were fortunate enough to live through the time of our great grandparents, speak about how our great grandmother was a woman of prayer. It was a known secret that even their children were raised in the church and were devout Christians. Although scattered all around the country, all six of the Ngcobozi children shared this trait which was nurtured by their parents. Throughout the years of their lives; raising their own families, and navigating the harshness of life, the women of my family always came back to this place. This was the place where they found the greatest joy, the greatest fulfillment, and the greatest recognition.

iPasika, what is known as Easter, has always been an event for the women in my family. Whether we were *ekhaya ezilalini* (in our rural home) or in salty scented Durban, my grandmother always made sure that we were ready for the Easter weekend that to me, seemed like any other weekend. Maybe a song or two would make me reconsider some of the reckless life choices I made recently, or maybe I would think about being more in tune with God. In other years, I would feel myself being lifted out of my body and into a realm I never possibly knew existed, or rather, a realm I never knew I had the ability to imagine. *Umfundisi* (the pastor) in his holy robe would always seem to appear to me like a dream, probably one I wished I could live - the way he would know when to up the tempo and when to slow down, or how he managed to squeeze in so many sentences in a breath as thin as a blade of grass. He did it, and I guess in some ways I always wondered whether he had a bit too much of that water Jesus had turned into wine. In other years, I always felt like an outsider, not knowing when to rise to

which chorus of which song, or when to shut the eyes of my own world and open myself up to this moment; this divine meeting, this moment that would change my life from here on out. Nonetheless, whether those things happened or not, all that mattered was that my grandmother saw me being attentive, not laughing too loudly, my skirt or dress not above my knee, my arms not showing, and making sure I presented her in the best way possible. Those things were second nature to me but the things that happened beneath my skin, in that tent, throughout that entire weekend, over the many years, are possibly things my bones and skin reminisce over in their own moments of solitude.

Last year was different. I went into *iPasika* not only as my grandmother's child, but also as this foreign thing people call a researcher. Stranger things have happened, I guess. How was I to research something that I had known and been around all my life? This is my grandmother's world and I have been a part of it many a times over. However, this time, I had to observe and listen instead of thinking about how hungry I am and when we will get to the last person on the program. I had to be there this time, not just physically, but mentally and possibly spiritually too.

This is where I locate my grandmother and the other Manyano just like her; in the space between memory and life. The shared memories between her and me, and those between her and the Manyano she often called her sisters. These memories, not only of my own but of them all, meet at this point. The point where memory, sadness, pain, holiness, and strategies of survival meet. In the midst of such, is the need to document and remember the histories and narratives often written out of history in order to shift the geography of memory, and to enrich the ways in which memory is constructed and remembered.

This chapter focuses on the methodological aspects of the project. A brief outline of the qualitative approach of study is given as this will give the foundational underpinning of study and the techniques used. With reference to relevant literature on qualitative approaches and analytical tools, this chapter focuses on the justification for the use of life histories or narrative inquiry as a methodological tool in this research study. Feminist justifications will be made for the suitability of narrative inquiry and life histories as an imperative when attempting to bring to the fore the experiences and lived realities of black women. Furthermore, this chapter provides an outline of the methods and techniques used in the collection of the data including an overview of the areas of study, the demographics of the participants interviewed as well as

the structure of the interviews conducted. The chapter also provides a discussion on reflections from the field in relation to the process of conducting the study and the justification of the techniques used. Finally, a brief outline of the technique used in the analysis of the data collected will be given, and how the thematic tool of analysis is a useful tool in the process of data analysis.

3.2. The Case for Narrative Inquiry and/or Life Histories

3.2.1 Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry is the “study of the ways humans experience the world” (Connelly and Clandinin 1990:2). Connelly and Clandinin suggest that the term ‘narrative’ “names the structured quality of experience to be studied, and it names the patterns of inquiry for its study (1990:2). Although focusing on the importance of narrative inquiry within the education sector and the research thereof, Connelly and Clandinin (1990: 2) suggest that “narrative inquiry or the inquiry of the narrative” is important as far as it makes the theoretical and philosophical claims that “people, by nature, lead storied lives”. With its focus on the experience and situatedness of the human experience, narrative inquiry may also be sociologically concerned with the formation of groups and the formation of community” (Connelly and Clandinin 1990:2) and the extent to which members of specific communities’ experience kinship through the idea of shared contexts (Carr 1986). Connelly and Clandinin (1990) add that “narrative inquiry in the social sciences is a form empirical narrative in which empirical data is central to the work” (1990: 5). This is to say that although the perception held of narrative inquiry and its interpretation turn narrative into fiction, this is a misguided perception as the process of interpretation takes into account analytical tools used to ensure that the researcher and participants are in a collaborative relationship (Connelly and Clandinin 1990:5). Sandelowski (1991), although interested in the study of health and the experiences of those who provide health care for women and children, argues that narrative inquiry makes the claim that

a life history, or self-story, or any personal account is still a story, a representation of a life at a given moment rather than the life itself. Moreover, these representations do not simply re-present, but rather re-construct lives in every act of telling (Sandelowski 1991:163).

Churchill and Churchill (1982) add that narratives or life-stories are often understood as the “arranging of events, time, and place. In the process of re-telling, the individual may give meaning and signify this particular intersection as a moment which is a representation of a particular experience or feeling” (1982: 75). Connelly and Clandinin (1991) suggest that in the telling and re-constituting of events “entanglements become acute, for it is here that temporal and social, cultural horizons, are set and reset.” (1991: 4). In support of the claim made above, Sandelwoski adds that that in the process of the collection of data in the narrative form, “people are both living their stories in an ongoing experiential text and telling their stories in words as they reflect upon life and explain themselves to others” (Sandelwoski 1991:164). Therefore, narrative forms of inquiry “reveal individuals’ construction of past and future life events at given moments of time” (Sandelwoski 1991:164) and insight can only be drawn from the narrative once it has been lived or experienced. Speaking on the use of narrative inquiry in relation to the study of health care, Sandelwoski concludes in asserting that “narrative inquiry is useful for grabbing fleeting configurations of wholes, for capturing continuity for those attempting to research particular a phenomenon” (1991:164). Although strong arguments have been made on the justification of narrative inquiry as a qualitative tool of research (Sandelwoski 1991, Churchill and Churchill 1982, Connelly and Clandinin 1990, Attridge-Sterling 2001, Vaismoradi et al 2013, and Carr 1986), feminist scholars argue that narrative inquiry is a useful methodological tool for feminist research because narratives can make visible women’s voices, which are often left out of national and global histories. Within feminist scholarship, much emphasis is placed on the notions of the voice, not only as language but as one of the theoretical interventions made by the narrative inquiry approach to research. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) suggest that within narrative inquiry, the “voice is meaning that resides in the individual and enables the individual to participate in a community. The struggle for voice begins when a person attempts to communicate meaning to someone else” (1990: 4). In addition to this, the authors suggest that

finding words, speaking for oneself, and feeling heard by others are all part of the process [as the] voice suggests relationships; the individual’s relationship to the meaning of his or her experience and hence, to language, and the individual’s relationship to the other, since understanding is a social process (Connelly and Clandinin 1990:4).

From a feminist perspective, narrative inquiry is a methodological tool that allows the researcher to “explore various ways in which specific voices and experiences tend to be

relegated to the margins of our social worlds and imagination” (Motsemme 2003:215). This form of inquiry offers the possibility of “directly putting women’s voices at the centre of history and highlighting gender as a category of analysis” (Sangster 1994:6). This method is useful within feminist qualitative research in so far as it opens up the possibility for women who are interviewed to “shape the research agenda by articulating what is important to them [...] and shifts the gaze to overlooked topics” which often sees the erasure of women’s voices in particular disciplines (Sangster 1994:6). In addition to the argument offered by Motsemme (2003), Sangster (1994) argues that the “feminist embrace of oral history emerged from a recognition that traditional sources have often neglected the lives of women, and that oral history offered a means of integrating women into historical scholarship” (1994: 5). Although gender may be viewed as a universal category in feminist scholarship, Motsemme (2003) argues that individuals ought not to be seen through a “single, all-embracing master narrative such as race, class, or gender” as the structures which inform these social categories often dictate the manner in which different individuals experience oppression within the master narratives (2003: 217). The homogenising impulse of master narratives have created much feminist scholarship which “advocates for more inter-related ways of how discourses such as race, class, and gender simultaneously shape individual experiences” (Motsemme 2003:217). Writing on the marginality of black women’s voices and experiences in “our social worlds and imagination”, Motsemme (2003) makes the argument that narrative inquiry which centers the lives, the experiences of black women’s subjectivity and their identities gives room for black women to be able to “give accounts of their lives which have been historically neglected or marginalised” (2003: 215). Furthermore, as Motsemme (2003) argues, this approach allows the researcher to gain deeper insight and trace the complexities of black women’s negotiation of voice and their psychological existences” (2003: 215) as these have often been distorted or marginalised. The battle ground of history, particularly in the historiography of “nationalist narratives of resistance”, has often been at the forefront of the marginalization of black women’s voices and experiences in relation to nationalism and resistance in Africa and the diaspora, and thus the re-imagination of history which takes into account the narratives of black women’s organizing and activism ought to give voice to those excluded experiences of history (Motsemme 2003: 216).

Although the use of narratives is crucial in bringing marginalised voices of black women into dominant discourses of history and their experiences of it, it is important to note how language and the use of translated narratives pose challenges to the voice and the meaning attached to it.

Therefore, “it is crucial to acknowledge the complexities involved in translating people’s stories from one language to another” (Segalo 2013: 136). The translation of voice not only alters the meaning attached to the voice, it also alters the memories attached to the stories attached to the voice; particularly in the case where memory and voice are articulated in languages, meanings, and cultural references which are not expressed in English. This poses a challenge to the researcher in that particularities need to be translated in ways which the voice of the researcher does not overpower the voices of the participants (Segalo 2013: 138).

Therefore,

Language is not a by-the-way-issue... Neither is it a side issue in any communication. Language is not simply a tool that is transparent and through which feelings and ideas and truths pass unchanged. Language changes reality; it constructs what counts as effective or failed communications, what is true, what we see and fail to see, our identities, the universe itself. Language shapes us and our world (Krog, Mpolweni, and Ratele, 2009: 31).

For the Manyano, whose voices and meaning were articulated in isiZulu and isiXhosa, language constructed their reality and how they shape their world. However, even in the midst of meaning and complexities being missed in the translation process, “having some context and background of the speaker offered some insight and understanding that assist with the translation” (Segalo 2013: 138). Secondly, my situatedness and understandings of the Manyano through my grandmother and the participants—some of whom I have known prior to the study—gave me insider knowledge into the cultural nuances of the Manyano, thus making the process of maintaining the voices of the Manyano significantly easier. Most importantly, my grandmother, as an immediate source of information, clarity, and repository of knowledge on the Manyano, proved to be an invaluable source in being able to capture the essence of the voices of the Manyano. This not only ensured that the voices of the Manyano was maintained, it also ensured that the power dynamics associated with translation and altered meanings was reduced despite the challenges translation poses for the authenticity of the voice.

Therefore, memory understood not only as the ability to make meaning of events and stories, but also as a collective and collaborative effort between my grandmother’s world and my own, proved crucial in ensuring that the translation process did not further marginalise the voices of the Manyano. This is important then in the understanding of how memory is constructed and articulated for the Manyano.

3.2.2 Memory and the Re-configuration of (Her)Story.

In the paper, *Tanganyikan Nationalisms as 'Women's Work': Life Histories, Collective Biographies and Changing Historiography*, Geiger (1996) traces the historiography of Tanzanian nationalist resistance where she argues that:

Tanzanian nationalist historians and earlier histories of its nationalist movement have been criticized, few historians have attempted to look into nationalism in Tanzania anew, whether to reinterpret aspects of nationalist narrative, or to offer new insights, based on different data (Geiger 1996:465).

Geiger (1996) asserts that the historiography and the master narrative of the Tanzanian nationalist movement has emphasised exclusively “the lives, actions, and contributions of a few good men” (1996:466) and much biographical attention has been given to these ‘good men’ based on the assumption that they are exceptional or important to the building of the nationalist movement (1996: 466). In other words, biographical history in Tanzanian scholarship of nationalism has been concerned mostly with “men of action, men of importance, and public men” (Geiger 1996:466). Geiger goes further on to argue that historiography of African nationalism has been “characteristically male, while the normative gender identity of nationalists has likewise been male” (1996: 467). This idea is problematised by Geiger in so far as she argues that the life works and life narratives offered by women involved in the Tanzanian nationalist movement offer the reconstruction of Tanzanian nationalist historiography (1996: 468). Geiger argues that the life histories of women activists who constituted a large number of the movement identified with the nationalist ethos through various social and cultural communities (1996: 470). The use of ‘women’s spaces’ such as dance groups “were transformed into highly politicized networks for the exchange of information, the announcement of marches, and the raising of money for the party” (Geiger 1996:470). The unconventional spaces of activism were often ignored and not seen as “vehicles of nationalist mobilization” (Geiger 1996:470). This re-ordering of national history through the use of narrative inquiry as a feminist tool of research gives “greater attention to the narrative presence, actions and voices and challenges our understanding of the relative importance of western nationalist ideology” (Geiger 1996:477). In relation to the argument made by Motsemme (2003), Geiger emphasises the importance of questioning master narratives and makes the claim that “feminist approaches to narrative inquiry ought to trace the complexities of experience through careful attention being paid to the situatedness of women in various

social and cultural contexts in order to gain richer accounts of history and experience” (1996: 477).

In the text, *What Is Slavery to Me?*, Gqola (2010), writing on the retracing of memory of slavery in contemporary South Africa, argues that the concept of memory in South Africa became most prominent with the TRC which saw the “valuation of narrative [and the inauguration] of South Africa’s memory industry” (2010: 3). Gqola argues further that the process of telling stories, which are based on the memory of history, is an important element of narrative inquiry as “memory resists erasure and is important for the symbols through which each community invents itself” (2010: 8). The argument is made that memory provides scholars with a wider range of narratives that go beyond that which has been recorded, and thus allows for the disjunctures between memory and historiography to be problematised (Gqola 2010:8). This understanding of memory and its ability to transform and shift meanings and experiences of history allows for the opening of memory and remembering that allows for a multiplicity of voices which are often outside of dominant national history. In this regard, the use of life histories for the Manyano allows for the opening up of how the Manyano imagine and experience this group outside of dominant literature which has focused largely on the historiography of the group in relation to colonial and missionary contact (Gaitskell 1990 and 1991). The use of this form of inquiry allows for the Manyano to provide alternative forms of memory and how they locate the Manyano within their lived realities and experiences.

Therefore, this study makes the case for life histories as an important tool in moving away from discourses which center the voices of elite scholars and their interpretation of the Manyano in South Africa. Furthermore, life histories proved to be a useful tool in this study as the voices, memories, and meanings attached to such memories give insight into how the Manyano define and make meaning of their own contexts; in their own terms and how these meanings may provide alternative and counter narrative to how women make sense of the Manyano. The Manyano life histories and their experiences also tend to destabilise masculinist nationalist history in the sense that we are able to explore the ways in which women organised, responded, and situated themselves within liberation movements in South Africa. This methodological openness places women’s actions within the historiography of nationalist movements, and how their strategies of survival often formed the bedrock for the sustenance of black communities under the violent apartheid regime. In her seminal presentation, *The Site of Memory*, Toni Morrison argues that the ability of “re-membering gives site to what remains were left behind

and to reconstruct the world that these remains imply” (Morrison 1987: 112). The site of memory then becomes the journey researchers and participants take as a measure to reconstitute truth and the reality of such memory as it is often relocated outside of dominant historiography (Morrison 1987:112). In addition to the arguments presented by Gqola (2010) and Morrison (1987), Sangster (1994) adds that feminist research, which makes use of narrative inquiry as a methodological tool ought to “explore the reconstruction of women’s historical memory” (2010: 6). That is, through the use of narrative inquiry, researchers ought to:

ask why and how women explain, rationalise, and make sense of their past [as this] offers insight into the social and material framework they operated, the perceived choices and cultural choices and cultural patterns they faced, and the complex relationship between individual consciousness and culture (Sangster 1994:6).

Therefore, feminist approaches to narrative inquiry which seek to work through the inter-relatedness of social categories such as gender and race ought to reflect that these social categories have often influenced and “shaped the construction of historical memory” (Sangster 1994:7). Therefore, research which makes use of the oral histories of women must “incorporate gender as a defining category of analysis, for women often remember the past in different ways in comparison to men” (Sangster 1994:7). Race, as an ideological structure has shown to create disparities in the manner in which women construct their identities and how they remember history and thus have a direct impact on the manner in which marginalised women recall and remember social history or the events they prioritise in the narration of their lives (Sangster 1994:7). Motsemme (2003) strengthens this argument by stating that within the South African context, the master narrative of gender marginalisation faced by women within the confines of the patriarchal apartheid state has privileged the voices of white women and their narratives in relation to oppression. The argument is extended by asserting that the racial categories enforced power relations between white and black women in South African discourse and thus the memory and narratives shared by these two group differ significantly (Motsemme 2003). A narrative inquiry which seeks to locate women’s narratives and historiography of events and time, ought to be situated within these intra-relations. This is crucial in being able to gain greater insight into the lived realities of black women’s identity and the complexity of memory and history. The researcher ought to locate such narratives within the power dimensions of which bodies and voices are marginalised even within intra-relations of marginalised groups (Motsemme 2003). This then cements the assertion made by Boyce-Davies (1994) in her essay, *Other Tongues*, in which she argues that meaning and memory are “constructed out of a

multiplicity of voices and positions” and thus homogenization of memory and narrative further marginalize those voices which have been relegated to the periphery of history (1994: 162).

This is where I locate this use of narrative inquiry in the study of the Manyano in post-apartheid South Africa. The use of narrative inquiry as a methodological tool is used in order to gain insight into the complexities of the identity of black women interviewed. In line with the arguments presented above, this form of methodological tool is useful in so far as it reconstitutes current memories of what the Manyano have come to represent in scholarship and within the historiography of national memory in South Africa. A collaborative relationship with the participants in the process of listening and sharing of narratives is useful in attempting to give credence to the marginalised voices of the Manyano in Manyano historiography.

3.3 Data Collection:

3.3.1 The Case for Two Research Sites

The study was conducted in two research sites, one which was for observational purposes, and the other for both observations and the interview process. The Malukazi Circuit in Kwa-Zulu Natal was the site where I observed the Good Friday service in 2016, and the Lamontville Circuit was where I observed the induction of on trial Manyano women to full members of the Manyano, and this is where the interviews were conducted.

3.3.2 Malukazi Circuit: Overview and Observations

The Malukazi Circuit in Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa, houses Methodist Churches from the Umlazi and Isipingo townships and suburbs. Each church within the demarcated zones falls under the banner and authority of the Pastor of the flagship church of the circuit. The Manyano, which fall within the specified zones from the Umlazi and Isipingo township and suburbs, fall under the Malukazi circuit which is under the leadership of the President of the Manyano of the Malukazi circuit. During the Easter Weekend, all the zoned Methodist Churches, which fall within the Malukazi Circuit, attend the Easter Weekend which begins with the opening service, on Thursday evening, called *Ukuvulwa Kwetende* (The Opening of the Tent).

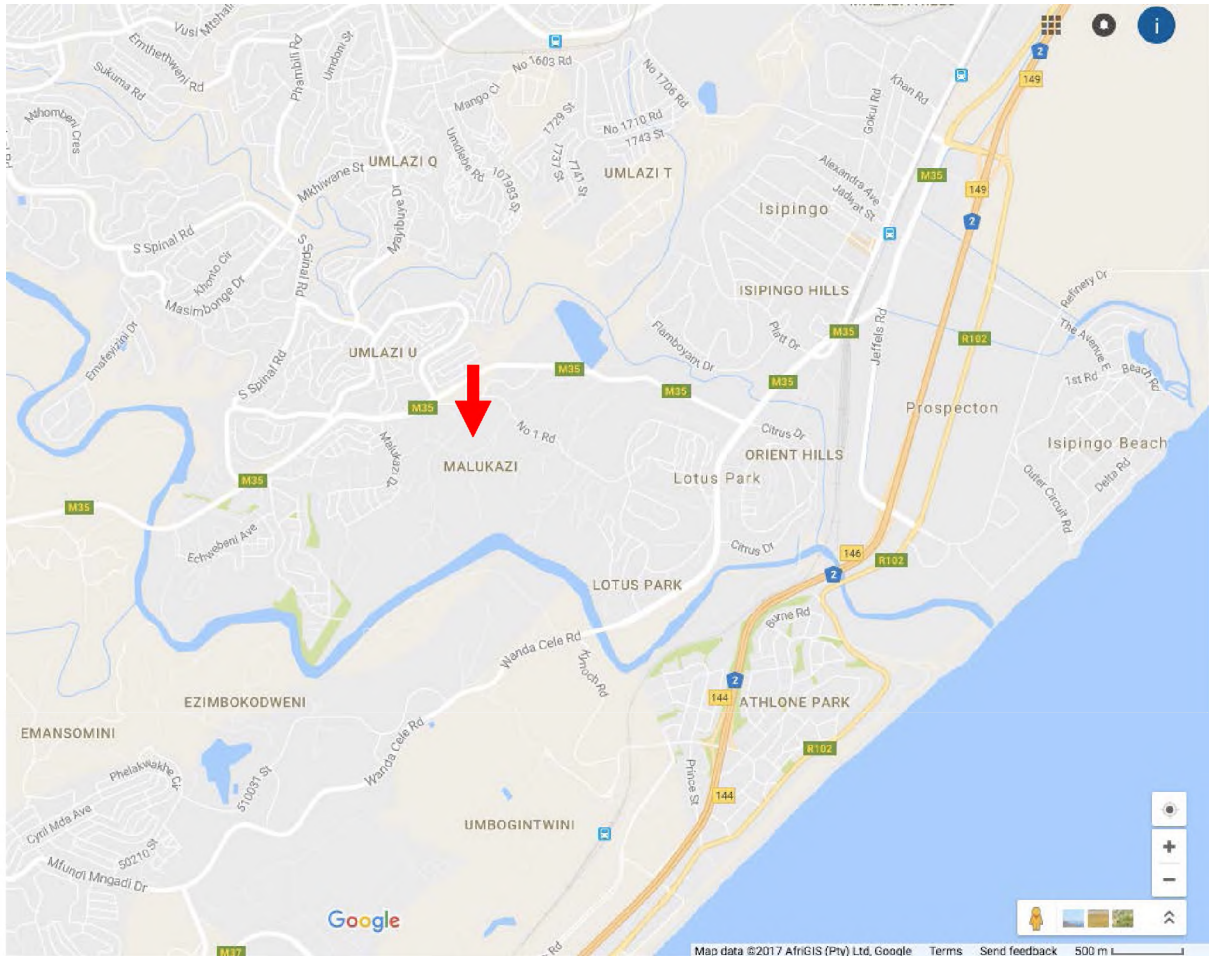


Figure 1: Map of the Malukazi Methodist Church Circuit

To set the scene; a school is normally hired out for the weekend and in that weekend, people choose whether to be at the school throughout. If you live close to the area, there's probably no need to stay the weekend. If you stay far, you would then have to bring all of your bedding, your church uniform, and whatever else you feel you will need while you are at the school. Mattresses neatly placed next to each other and church uniforms pressed and crisp hang on the walls- the most sacred of things. As you walk down the stairs, what was once known as a school field has become *'indawo engcwele nobuKhosi'* (The Holy and Godly Place) where the six stand tent stands so high that even the lost need look up and see where their help will come from.

3.3.3. Observations: *"Ndiyakhala kuwe, Nkosi"* (I cry to you, oh Lord)

The opening of the tent is the second most important service of the weekend; this is where *Umfundisi* tells us that this is the most important time of the year for all Christians. This is the service where the theme of the weekend is given and where we get the opening sermon. This is where we are told to prepare our hearts and to look deep into ourselves and consider the goodness of God. The congregation seems to be just under 5000 people. The seating arrangement is as I've always known it to be; the Manyano take up most of the tent on the left of the pulpit and of the middle section. A smaller portion of the tent has *Amadodana*, (which is the male equivalent of the Women's Manyano) who take up a couple of rows, and scattered behind the Manyano, are the Wesley Guilders who are the youth of the church. Those members of the congregation without uniform slot ourselves anywhere. I never questioned this arrangement but I'm guessing it is just the way things go, no one seems to emphasise this seating arrangement but everyone seems to know where they fit into this multi-coloured portrait of God's family.

I always knew that the Manyano were always a much more sizeable bunch in church and I always knew that because of this, they took up most of the space. This time I noted how, even in their silence, the Manyano knew that the church was their space, that this was the space that they owned without fear or the need to explain why it was so. It was interesting to note that although the men of the church were present, the first group to be greeted by *umfundisi* were the Manyano. Whilst busy with the long winded procedural greetings of Methodist Church, *umfundisi* noted that:

“ngomama aba. Ngomama bomthandazo. Lecawa le, yicawa engaphalala xa omama bengathandazi. Ngabantu abangwele aba. Kunjalo nje, ndithi molweni zithandwa zezulu.”

(These are mothers, and they are others of prayer. Without these mothers, the church would not survive as they are the ones who pray. These mothers are holy and with that said, I greet you, darlings of heaven).

Umfundisi then gave the theme song of *iPasika* which was Hymn number 206, *Ndiyakhala kuwe Nkosi*. *Umfundisi* proceeded to let the congregation know that this is '*iculo lomama eli*'. He added that this is a song where "*sicenga uYesu*". *Abekho abantu abakwazi ucenga uYesu*

njengomama”. Translated, the Pastor made the point that this is the song which the Manyano are known for, and it with this song that the Manyano plead with God. The congregation seemed to be in agreement and it was then decided that the Manyano would start the song. There are two verses which I noted resonated with the Manyano mostly, the first and the last verses:

Verse one:

Ndiyakhala kuwe, Nkosi! (I cry to you, oh Lord)
Bawo oyiNgcwele, ndive (Heavenly father, hear me)
Kubo bugxwayimba, ndive (In this mess, hear me)
Ekweneni kweli lizwe (in my sin, in this world, hear me)

Verse two:

Ngoko ndinga ndingahamba (I wish I to always walk....)
Nawe, Nkosi enofefe; (with You, Oh God of Mercy)
Ndiwanyuke amaqhina (and climb through the hills...)
Neentsunguzi ezimnyama (and walk through thickness of darkness)

Both of these verses seemed to capture the true essence of what church has meant for many women. One woman I had interviewed, Mrs. Stella Shumbe, when speaking about the church, god and her life, she says

“mandibona omama bomanyano... ndibabona ngamehlo inhlungu,nosizi, nothando. Akaphumi kimi umama lomanyano. Umanyano luyinitshumayelo kumi kakhulu.Liyavuselela umanyano kakhulu... lundisizile ntanam umanyano ngoba ndibonile ukuba sisikhali esinzima ukubangumanyano.”

Translated into English, Shumbe says when she sees woman who are part of the Manyano, she sees the pain, the despair, and the love they have. She continues to say that a woman who is part of the Manyano will always be a part of her. Being a part of the Manyano restores her and it preaches over her life. It has helped her in so many ways as she has seen it is a very heavy weapon being part of this group. This song not only signifies the relationship women have with the church and God, but one should also not take lightly that this song is a song that has been

associated with the Manyano. How “in their vulnerability, black women have wholeheartedly embraced God as a partner in their struggles” (Harris-Perry 2011:218).

On my last day at this circuit, I attended *Amazwi Asixhenxe* (The Seven Words) or what is known as the Good Friday service. This is the most attended service of the Easter Weekend as people come to hear the last seven words or moments of Jesus before His crucifixion.

On Friday morning, my grandmother and I took the trip together to Malukazi where the service was to be held. As if to signify the arduous nature of the road to *emmqamlezwi* (the cross), the road leading up to the church was dusty and laden with sewage and dogs rummaging through the bin in search of scraps of dinner from the night before. A wide sea of women cloaked in the hope of the world made their way through the sewage with grandchildren they would offer to their God. In red, white, and black, the Manyano carrying *imiqamlezo yabo* (cross-symbolising their own burdens) seemed to know that once they reached *indawo engcwele* (the holy place), they would find salvation and meet the One who has the power to save. As my grandmother and I drove up the winding hill complaining about the traffic, I spotted an elderly woman with her grandchild who was roughly seven years old. I went back to the time where I was that grandchild; although my grandmother was much younger and in a less precarious economic situation, I remembered the days where my grandmother took me to church so I would not miss out on the blessings God was giving that day. I wondered, what was it about grandmothers, their grandchildren, and God that always brought us to this moment. What was it about *izizukulwana* (grandchildren)? Maybe God had promised that what He couldn't be and do for them, he would be and do for their grandchildren. Maybe there was a long standing secret between God and our grandmothers that was kept in our chests that only God and our grandmothers knew. I wondered if my grandmother also knew this secret, maybe I also carried it, and that is why year after year, my grandmother would insist on taking me along with her. Or perhaps, she did not want to be at church alone. I'm not sure, but I keep wondering why this is so. Once my wondering drifted into thinking about whether or not we had packed enough ice for the juice that was already sweating from the heat, the elderly woman and her grandchild were in the car with us. My grandmother and the other grandmother spoke as long lost sisters, as if in another world, they had met and held each other in prayer. Maybe it was that secret that they both knew that made it seem as if they knew each other. They laughed and shared in great detail who they were and how faithful God has been in keeping them alive to see this day. The little grandchild sat next to her grandmother, with her hair plaited in neat rows as if seeds of

God's love could grow there if He had wished to plant them. She looked and acted like I did at that age. I could see how much she loved her grandmother, and hung onto every word she said. I thought to myself; this was our secret. Grandchildren of praying grandmothers also shared a secret, a secret built on the prayers that have raised us and created spiritual force fields that shielded us from the harshness of the world.

3.3.4 Concluding Remarks on the Malukazi Circuit

Although the intention was to make the Manyano of the Malukazi Circuit the participants of the study, it proved to be difficult to gain access to the women as this was not a circuit familiar to me and thus no relationship of trust has been established with the Manyano of the circuit. The process of gaining access was not fruitful due to the sheer magnitude of the number of the women in the group although permission has been granted by the Pastor of flagship church to conduct the research. Observations made over the two days spent in this circuit proved to be extremely useful to be the study. The authorization granted to research, although only as an observer, yielded fruitful results and provided data which was useful to the study, especially in understanding the positionality of the Manyano in the church and their roles within it. However, due to the difficulties expressed above, the study was able to continue when I moved to the second site in the Lamontville Circuit as I had been part of the circuit and church throughout my childhood and early adult years. The relationship established with the Manyano of the Lamontville Circuit prior to the research made the process of entry less difficult, greater detail of the process will be given below.

3.3.5 The Lamontville Circuit

3.3.5.1 An Overview of the Lamontville Circuit

The Lamontville Circuit is situated in Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa. The circuit consists of all of the Methodist Churches within the Durban South zone. The churches which fall within this zone fall under authority of the Pastor of the flagship church of the circuit which is the Lamontville Methodist Church. Within the South Durban zone, each church which falls under this zone is referred to as a society. the Manyano of each society of the Lamontville Circuit fall under the authority of the Women's Manyano President who is a member of the flagship church

of the circuit. This is the circuit which was the research site and this is the where participants of the study were interviewed.

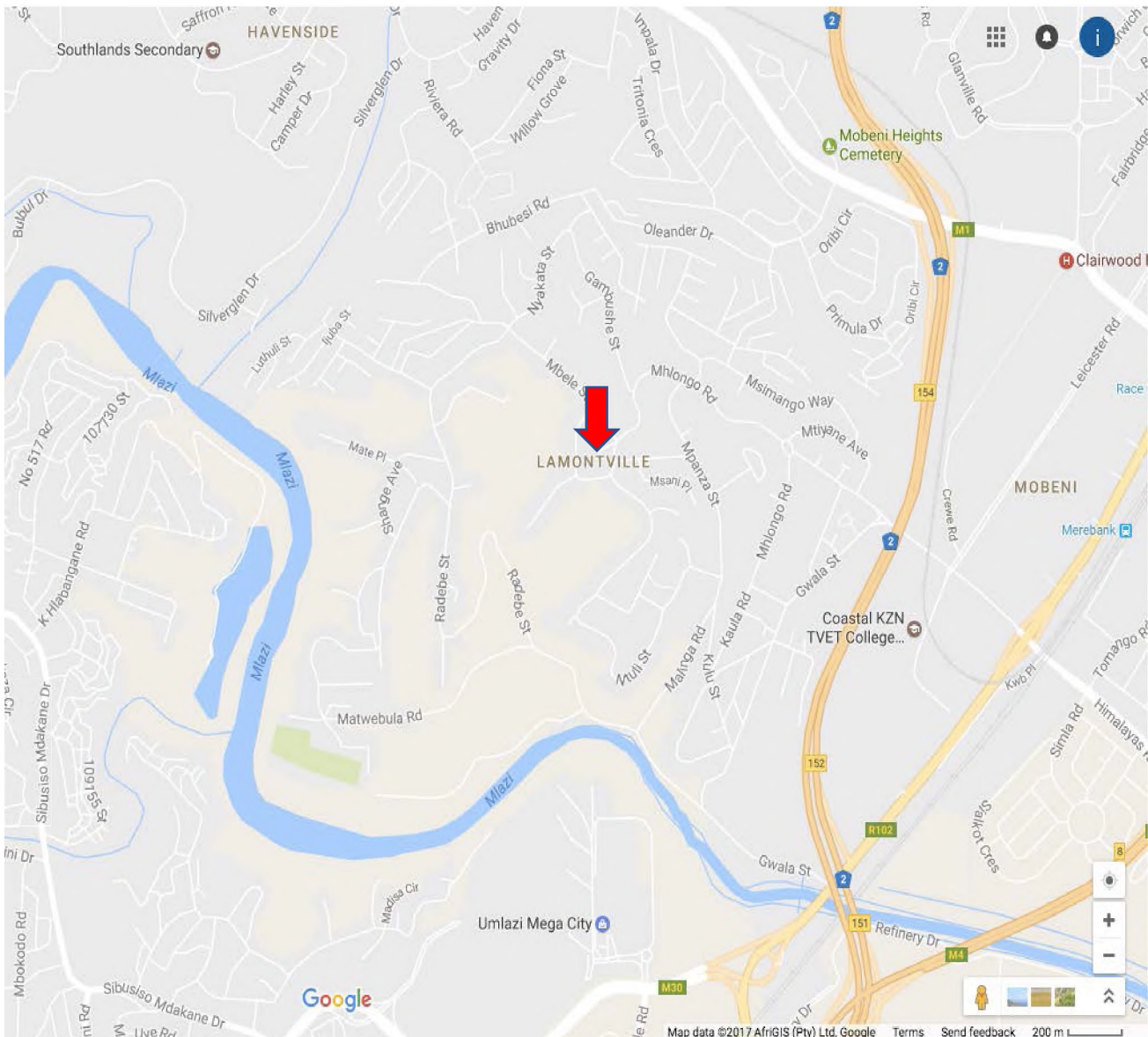


Figure 2: Map of the Lamontville Circuit

3.3.5.2 Ethical Clearance and Authorisation to Conduct the Study

The Lamontville Circuit required strict adherence to protocol and procedure within the Church and the Manyano at large in gaining permission to conduct research in the area. Upon meeting with the executive leadership of the Manyano of the Lamontville Circuit, I was advised to send

the following documents; the research proposal of the study; the ethical clearance from Rhodes University's Political and International Studies department, a copy of the interview questions (Appendix One,) and the consent for to be signed by the participants of the study (Appendix Two) all to be forwarded to the President of the Manyano in the Lamontville Circuit for consideration of access. The signed documents reflect the initial title of the thesis which has since changed due to the findings reflected in the data. After these documents were submitted to the President of the Manyano in Lamontville, she seemed satisfied with details about the objective of the study and the areas of focus of the study. These documents had to be submitted to the presiding Bishop of the District, to which Lamontville Circuit reported to the Natal Coastal District. The Bishop went through the documents and emailed to say access was granted to conduct the research in Lamontville. After a few weeks of correspondence, and the authorisation by the Bishop, the study commenced with relative ease in the middle of Winter-June 2016.

3.3.5.3 Access to the Manyano Participants

The access to the Manyano participants for interview purposes was relatively easier than that of the Malukazi Circuit. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, my closeness to the women of the Lamontville circuit enabled me to conduct interviews because I had been part of the church from a young age. The trust that already existed between myself and the women in my formative years and having grown up in the church and the kinship which existed between myself and the participants made the interview process easier. The long established trust between myself and participants made the interview process organic, and thus eliminating the insider-outsider tensions that researchers experience with their participants in the absence of such trust. Secondly, my grandmother, Mrs Nosiselo Ndlovu, has been in the executive leadership of the church society where her Manyano group falls under for over fifteen years. The trust that the women shared between themselves and my grandmother allowed granted me access into the lives and personal testimonies of the women that I would not have been able to document although I had been part of the church.

The memories and events often shared between my grandmother and the participants often bridged the gap in instances where I could have missed the significance of particular events or memories. Being accompanied by my grandmother, who has known these participants for a number of years, made the interview process easier so the participants were comfortable and

trusting enough to share their stories. This insider knowledge of the Manyano interviewed in conjunction with the insider access gained through being the granddaughter of my grandmother, Mrs. Ndlovu, proved to be valuable to me as the researcher. I noted how this allowed for the interview process to seem less as an opportunity to pry into the lives of the participants, but rather an opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations as opposed to the stiffness of interviews between strangers.

3.3.5.4 Observations from the Lamontville Circuit

On the Friday after having observed the Good Friday service at the Malukazi Circuit, the Lamontville circuit was conducting the Women's Manyano's service which is known as the service where *igqokisa omama*. This is the service where women who were on trial to become full members of the Manyano were to be presented in front of the church and would exchange their on trial uniform for the full uniform.



Figure 3: An on trial member being inducted as a full member of the Manyano

My grandmother and I arrived at another high school-turned-Church in Lamontville just as dinner had been served. Women in pinafores and head wraps were washing dishes under a dimly lit light on the far left of field which was now known as holy ground because of the white tent that stood erect. Although smaller than the tent at Malukazi, everything else looked similar. We were still in the township, only this time the dogs were lucky enough to be feasting on fresh leftovers. Shoes that once shone like mirrors now had dusty veneers, and sparse groups of women sat in huddled circles speaking on the events of the day whilst others laughed as children ran around playing catch on this holy ground. My grandmother, who has been in church leadership for as long as I can remember, always had to prepare her on trial women; checking whether each red blouse was neatly pressed, each white hat showing all seven of its panels, black skirts not too short, she always used to tell them that their shoes has to be so shiny that she could see her teeth when she looked into them. I was always so bored as a child when

I had to sit through this tedious and drawn out wait while my grandmother sorted things out and the on trial woman fussed over each other making sure they looked nothing less than perfect. However, this time was different. I observed everything. I saw how nervous these women were, one even said “I thought getting married was the happiest day of my life. Clearly I did not know about this day”. For most of them it did feel like a wedding, and to an outsider, I was beside myself with excitement, I guess the energy in the room was contagious. All seventeen of us bunched up in a classroom getting ready to witness these women being presented to their groom, God. I had even forgotten that I was there as a researcher, instead I became that child again, the child that watched her grandmother get ready for church while she whispered a prayer as light as breath while putting on her armour. The white, red, and black all having a meaning that I had not known then. All I knew was this was my grandmother’s favourite outfit and she was the happiest when she wore it. I could see the same thing in these women, all radiant with joy and expectant. They all looked beautiful, some already with eyes that glistened in the light, others holding hands in prayer before the big event.

These services are always full. Family members, friends, and church members all come to witness the moment. Not only on trial the Manyano are presented in the service; *Amadodana* (the male equivalent of the Women’s Manyano) as well as *Izintombi Zesiphika* (The Young Women’s Manyano) on trial participants are given full membership into their respective groups. However, the Manyano are always the most anticipated and celebrated presentation of them all. After all, they are “*izithandwa zezulu*” (The darlings of heaven) as *umfundisi* of Malukazi had said earlier in the day. The Manyano are the first to be presented. Each one is called by their full name and the congregation is told which church society they belong to. Each one walking down the aisle to meet her groom at the altar with her bible, hymn book, a candle, and the white items she will now wear as she hands over her black head wrap she wore as an on trial member. When each person is called up, the congregation claps and lets out a loud ‘amen’ in celebration of the woman walking down the aisle. All of them stand in one long row with the candles now lit and awaiting the message from the Manyano President of the Lamontville, Mrs. Nobuntu Madwe, gives the message of the evening. This is a message of encouragement or what she called ‘*iziyalo*’ (words of wisdom).



Figure 4: Lamontville Circuit On Trial Members inducted as full members of the Methodist Women's Manyano

3.3.6 Interviews and Participant Information

3.3.6.1 Overview of Participants Interviewed

The table below provides general information of the participants of the study. Seventeen (17) women of the Manyano of the Lamontville Circuit were interviewed. Of the pool of participants, the participants range from the ages of fifty-five to eighty-five. The pool of women who were part of the Manyano group in the Lamontville Circuit were experienced and long standing members of not only the Manyano group but also of the church. The age range of the women interviewed was due to the need to gain multiple experiences of the women who joined the group at various stages of their lives. The older member, in terms of the longest standing member of the Manyano group, Mrs. Lilian Gxumisa joined in 1962 and the youngest, in

relation to membership years joined in 2001. The disparities and wide range of years of membership of the women interviewed was premised on the idea that a plurality of narratives from different moments of the Manyano group, is important in so far as it allows for richer analysis of the meaning and understanding of the Manyanos in the post-apartheid era. This was also made as an effort to provide a broader historiography of the Manyano organisation which does not privilege a particular moment or time. A plurality of ages, and years of membership allowed for a denser and enriched study into the Manyano as a whole.

A significant number of the women interviewed, although now based in Durban, Kwa-Zulu Natal, are originally from various parts of the Eastern Cape. This makes for an interesting observation as a majority of those who moved to Kwa-Zulu Natal in the height of apartheid or moved with their husbands or partners who were in search of employment in the urban areas. The majority of the women who moved from the Eastern Cape had no formal education and were domestic workers in white households and subsequently became vendors once they became too old to work or as a form to subsidise the income earned from their domestic employment. These observations are important in that they signal how the migrant labour system and its impact in South Africa has often privileged the black male mineworker. The use of narrative inquiry in this study in relation to the complex lives and social contexts these women found themselves in disrupts the centering of the black man in the narrative of South Africa's migrant labour narrative. A few outliers were part of the formal employment sector; such as teachers, nurses, or part of corporate South Africa, this signals the varied class and social positions which exist within the Manyano group of the Lamontville Circuit.

It is also important to note that the majority of the women interviewed were either widows or separated from their partners for various reasons. The data suggested that a majority of the women interviewed were the only breadwinners in the family, which in most instances signaled the precarious nature of women's economic position.

Figure 5: Information of Participants of the Study

<u>Name</u>	<u>Marital Status</u>	<u>Place of Birth</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Year of Joining</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
Anna Mthethwa	Separated	Eastern Cape	55	1994	Domestic Worker
Ellen Yeni	Widow	KZN	60	2001	Pensioner
Nosicelo Ndlovu	Widow	Eastern Cape	68	2000	Retired (Financial Advisor)
Stella Shumbe	Widow	Eastern Cape	80	1960	Pensioner(Domestic Worker)
Rose Hlongwane	Widow	KZN	62	1972	Domestic Worker
Emily Myeni	Married	Eastern Cape	82	1971	Pensioner (Domestic Worker)
Monica Ngcaka	Widow	Eastern Cape	53	1999	Vendor
Thandeka Manange	Widow	Eastern Cape	55	1996	Vendor
Thembeni Phungula	Widow	KZN	63	1992	Retired (Nurse)
Thoko Vezi	Unmarried	KZN	59	1990	Retired (Teacher)
Thoko Xaba	Unmarried	KZN	70	1978	Retired Nurse)
Thenjiwe Jojo	Widow	Eastern Cape	60	1996	Vendor /Domestic Worker
Gugu Sithole	Married	KZN	63	1991	Retired (Nurse)
Nobuntu Madwe	Married	Eastern Cape	58	1988	Teacher
Zanele Nxazonke	Separated	Eastern Cape	52	1997	Vendor/ Domestic Worker
Senzeni Ngcobo	Married	KZN	51	1994	Retired (Nurse)
Lillian Gxumisa	Widow	KZN	85	1962	Pensioner (Domestic Worker)



Figure 6: The Methodist Women's Manyano of Lamontville Circuit at The Montclair Methodist Church

3.3.7 The Interview Process

The interview process resulted in seventeen women being interviewed from the Lamontville Circuit. The interviews were semi-structured which often resulted in the biographical information being the entry point to the interview. Questions ranged from the biographical information of the participants; where they were born and, their age, and their history. Furthermore, the participants were asked about their understanding of the role of the Manyano in apartheid South Africa and how they view their role in the democratic dispensation. Moreover, the participants narrated how they understand their role in their respective communities and how they see their role as mothers as a crucial part of their identity.

I noted that once women felt comfortable, often after the biographical questions were asked, the interview tended to rely less on the prepared questions but rather on the re-telling of how they came to be part of the Manyano group. This allowed for the participants to share in great detail their journey not only to joining the Manyano but also the social circumstances which brought them to the Manyano and the church at large. Each interview ranged between forty-five minutes to two hours. Those interviews which were shorter was due to the fact that as the researcher, I had not fully grasped the rhythm of the interview, thus not being able to probe as sufficiently as I could towards the end of the interview process. Each interview was conducted either in the homes of the participants or at the women's place of work. Those who were interviewed in the comfort of their own home were at ease, which allowed for the interview to flow naturally, whereas those interviewed in their place of work were often preoccupied with the interruption of their employers and often could not speak freely of their experiences of their employment and the hardship they endured.

The interview process was concluded with relative ease as a large majority of the participants seemed to be taken aback by the fact that someone was willing to listen to their life stories. This gave the women the opportunity to center themselves in their own lives and to remember the importance and impact of the Manyano group on their lives. In no uncertain terms, all the participants expressed their gratitude for the study and hoped to receive feedback once the study was completed.

Furthermore, the participants of the study interviewed gave permission to be named in the study. All participants expressed how the use of their real names in the study was important to them as this project was reflective of their history and a significant part of their lives and they wished to not disguise themselves, unless stated for certain parts of the interview they wished to be referred to as anonymous. In addition to this, the participants gave consent (Appendix One) to their photographs being used in the study. At the beginning of each interview, the study and its aims were made known to the participants, stressing the option to opt out of the interview, to withhold information they were not willing to share, and to choose which parts of the interview they wished to be confidential. Each participant signed the consent (Appendix Two) form which was explained in great detail so as to ensure that the participants were aware of their contribution to the study.

3.3.7.1 Understanding Collaborative Research

I notice that it is only when my mother is working in her flowers that she is radiant, almost to the point of being invisible – except as Creator: hand and eye. She is involved in work her soul must have. Ordering the universe in the image of her personal conception of Beauty.- Alice Walker (1983: 241)

An important aspect of the methods of this study is the collaborative efforts between my grandmother and myself in the process of data collection and being able to gain access to the leadership of the Manyano in the Lamontville Circuit. Although this is the church that I have grown up in and I am familiar with the women of the Manyano group, my grandmother's position as the leader of the Manyano in her church, gave me the proximity to not only the participants of the group through the networks she has established over the years. The friendship and kinship she shared with the women gave legitimacy to the study and gave me an entry into the group due to the trust she had established with the over the years; the Manyano were not only friends of my grandmother, these were the women she had journeyed with throughout her time as an on trial member till the point of her leadership. Like Walker (1983) above, who speaks of her mother and how creating beauty in her garden is “the work her soul must have” 1983: 241), the Manyano is my grandmother's garden. Not only for the spiritual support and teachings being a Manyano have provided her, but this is the space where, even as children, we all knew that this is where she was most fulfilled. This was the space where her soul was refreshed and bones nourished.

My grandmother's collaborative efforts not only signify her rootedness in the Manyano, but it also signifies how black women within their various communities and the positions they occupy within them, are able to provide knowledge and knowledge systems which are not captured within dominant academic discourse. This also signifies the need for black feminist research to move from rigid approaches which focus solely on formally recognised voices in positions of authority and towards broad based approaches which attempt to place black women directly within discourses of community organising and the maintenance thereof.

In *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, Hill-Collins (2000) writes on the importance of the recognition of black women's leadership in their communities which are often invisibilised in literature as these structures do not fall within dominant frameworks of work and leadership . Hill-Collins (2000) argues that due to

the social position in society and the misguided interpretations of cultural formation within black communities, black women's role as community leaders and people who often provide for the foundational operation of these communities, are often left out of discourses which theoretically analyse women's roles in leadership and in resistance approaches. Moreover, the argument is made that black feminist epistemology ought to be reflective of "Black women's community work [and how its duality] of internal and external efforts, also incorporates these independent dimensions of Black women's activism" (Hill-Collins 2000:217) as these efforts are often overlooked and less visible within dominant literature on black women's political activity (Hill-Collins 2000:217). Therefore, work which attempts to make sense of black women's social networks and organising within black communities ought to reflect how black women "lay the foundations for political activism of diverse ideological persuasion, black women's political struggles" to not only transform their societies, but also to maintain their functionality and survival (Hill-Collins 2000: 222).

3.3.8 Reflections on the Field

Being in the field was an enriching and life changing experience. It was interesting to see how the Manyano interacted with each other in the services and how the church was a space for them to be free and forget the hardships of life. For as long as I could remember, as a child I always wondered what was it about the red blouse that my grandmother wore that made her so happy, at peace, and fulfilled. I used to think of the red blouse my grandmother wore as a cape that many superheroes wore on television as she always appeared stronger after having met with the Manyano women. However, once in the field and interacting with the participants, seeing the difference in their smiles as they leave the church service or the Women's Manyano meetings, I realised that this was the space where my grandmother was seen in her fullness, unmitigated, and with no pretence. I realised that what may be seen as *just* church was not *just* church for many of the women I interacted with throughout my time in the field. Church meant something more, and probably something I could ever fully capture in this study. Nevertheless, I have learnt that the Manyano is central to the existence of the women I interviewed and how this structure goes beyond religious support. The Manyano provides the space for healing, the space to deal with the psychological challenges black women face, a space for economic support, and the space for recognition. Each woman, affirming and kind, allowed me to have a peek into their lives without asking for anything in return. All of them excited about the fact that someone had taken the time to listen to them, to think of them as important and worth

researching. Each woman shared with me their inner secrets and their thoughts on their history and how they had gotten to where they were. Each of them eager to help 'their child', proved not only to be of personal benefit but each commented on how therapeutic the interview was and the importance of recording their history as people would not know or appreciate the need for the Manyano in the world.

On the other hand, the poverty that many of the Manyano women were experiencing was challenging in so far as it highlighted the stark difference between myself and the participants. More often than not, I felt a sense of shame when the women I interviewed expressed their desire for their children to attain the level of education that I had. The shame I felt was mostly due to the fact that I had nothing to offer my participants and that in real terms, this study will not contribute to the betterment of the precarious nature of their lives. This proved to be the most challenging aspect of the study irrespective of the Manyano's willingness to contribute to the study.

3.3.8.1 Limitations of the Study

The study sought to examine the role of the Manyano in post-apartheid South Africa through the use of life histories provided by the participants. Although the Manyano women interviewed provided great insight into the objectives of the study, the study could have interviewed younger Manyano women who now experience the shift of the Manyano's identity in post-apartheid South Africa. This would have been useful in providing more representation of how younger Manyanos navigate the identity of the Manyano in post-apartheid South Africa. Furthermore, the use of English as an institutionally recognised form of academic writing limits the participants' voices as the process of translation and interpretation of terms inadequately captures the true sentiment of the views expressed. In this study, language and the cultural reference attached to it have been challenging and as a result, it is important to not make universal the cultural inferences made by the Manyano involved in this study on other Manyanos of a different cultural and linguistic context.

3.4 Data Analysis Technique: Thematic analysis

The use of qualitative methods of study or research require the use of adequate tools of analysis in order to yield meaningful results (Attridge-Sterling 2001: 387 and Vaismoradi et al 2013: 401). The data which has been collected through qualitative methods ought to be interpreted and analysed through the use adequate analytical tools in order to extract a significant amount of information from the data to be able to provide the answers to the questions proposed in the study (Vaismoradi 2013: 399). Therefore, this study makes use of thematic analysis in capturing the key finding presented by the data.

Thematic analysis has been described as a “way of organizing a thematic analysis of qualitative data” (Attridge-Sterling 2001:387). It is a way of organizing a body of data through various themes which may be reoccurring or a theme which is important to the subject of research (Braun and Clarke 2006: 7). Expanding on the definition proposed by Attridge-Sterling (2001), Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that thematic analysis is an analytical tool and method of “identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within data” and seeks to “organize and describe the data set in (rich) detail” (2006: 6) through the interpretation of different aspects of the research topic. This approach requires the researcher to play “an active role in identifying patterns and themes and thereafter selecting which are of interest” (2006:7). A key feature of thematic analysis is the ability of the researcher to sift through the “*data corpus*” at various moments of analysis in order to note pattern or trend. Vaismoradi defines a theme as “a coherent integration of the disparate pieces of data that constitute the findings” (Sandelwoski and Leneman quoted in Vaismoradi 2013:402). In addition to this, Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that a theme captures an important element of the data which gives light to the research topic at hand (2006: 389). Attridge-Sterling (2001) offers in detail the process of thematic analysis, namely the initial phase of the breaking down of the data corpus or the raw data which maybe be transcribed interviews or written narratives, secondly, the researcher ought to explore the broken down text, and finally, the researcher ought to explore and interrogate the broken data into key themes which may be useful to the research topic with each step requiring constant engagement and interpretation with the data.

The significance of thematic analysis is that the themes ought to portray a story which has been extracted from the data, this requires the themes to be coherent and connected (Vaismoradi 2016:107). This suggests that the movement from one theme to the next ought not be disjointed or isolated from the data as whole, each theme ought to outline a story which sees the seaming

together of these themes with the relevant literature which adds to the theoretical depth of the project (Vaismoradi 2016:107).

This is where I locate the analysis of the data collected for the project. One of the imperatives of thematic analysis is to “make meaning of the data, themes, and patterns identified by the researcher” (Vaismoradi 2016:107). The making of meaning of the narratives shared by the participants of the research through thematic analysis offers the researcher as well as the reader, the opportunity “to gain a deeper understanding of the human experience” (Vaismoradi 2016:108), through the joining of themes and literature which strengthen the narratives offered by the participants.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodological approach that this study will undertake. A case has been made on the applicability of the qualitative approach to the study which privileges the personal accounts of the lived realities and social contexts the Manyano are situated in. Furthermore, this chapter has made a justification for the use of narrative inquiry as methodological tool in the collection of data for the study. In addition to this, this chapter has situated the study within the feminist approach of narrative inquiry in relation to memory, historiography of resistance, and the problematising of homogenising social categories such as gender and race as analytical social categories.

This chapter further outlined the process of data collection, providing an overview of the research sites as well as the process of interviewing participants. An overview of the demographics of the pool of participants interviewed was provided along with some implications of the disparities found in the range of participants interviewed. The analytical tool of thematic analysis was discussed to show suitability to the research study. In the next chapter, I report on the findings of this study.

Chapter Four

Till Death: *Ubufazi*, Motherhood, Spirituality, and Endurance

4.1 Introduction

Narratives and life histories allow us to gain insight into the lives of people and their interpretations and meanings of such narratives. In the previous chapter, a case has been made for the importance of life histories being used as a feminist approach in bringing to voices which are perceived to be marginal and are often left out of the larger narratives of history. For Manyano women particularly, it is important to re-configure the way Manyano women have been characterised in literature and how they have come to own and make meaning of their social identity as manyano women. Gaitskell (1979, 1981, 1893, 1999, and 2000) has extensively documented the history of the Manyanos in South Africa. These include the historiography of missionary contact between missionaries and new Manyano converts, the use of Christianity as a passage to Victorian womanhood and devout domesticity, and the use of Methodism to enforce the patriarchal ordering of gender roles of women in society. This thesis argues that although Gaitskell's work is important in giving context for the establishment of such an important group in South African history, it is important to broaden the ways in which we come to see the significance of Manyano women's groups outside of dominant academic discourse. Haddad (2000) and others (Hassim 2014, Walker 1995, and Holness 1997) have broadened the discussion on the complexity of the Manyano women through tracing their history, as well as considering their political, social, emotional, and spiritual identity. These studies also consider the meaning of Manyano mobilisation in terms of the support structure that this group provides for the women who form part of this group. This thesis then aims to contribute to this body of work, which attempts to enrich and amplify the voices of Manyano women and how they perceive their participation in the group from a narrative/life history standpoint.

This chapter provides the personal accounts of Manyano women of the Lamontville Circuit in Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa. The participants, through semi-structured interviews, have shared their experiences of being part of the Manyano, and how this has come to form a crucial part of their identity. The interview process was designed to critically examine the role

Manyano play in post-apartheid South Africa, to evaluate how women in the Manyano understand, navigate and negotiate their relationship between the church and their society, and to evaluate how Manyano groups offer a space for the public performance of citizenship by black women. The purpose of the chapter is to identify the significant themes presented in the data in order to shed light on the above-mentioned objectives. The themes vary from those which appeared most frequently to those which are of significance to the project at large. The themes which have emerged in the data include *ubufazi* (which could be loosely translated into womanhood), motherhood, the spirituality of Manyano women, *ukubekezela* (endurance), the relevance of the Manyano women's uniform, and the class dimensions within the Manyano. These themes emerged from accounts as given and described by the women themselves.

The theme of *ubufazi*/womanhood provides a complex understanding of womanhood which has different political and cultural meanings. As the narratives will show, Manyano women's political meaning of womanhood acknowledges the patriarchal nature of the conception of womanhood and how this has come to determine women's role in society and sometimes within the church. In addition to this, Manyano women also understand womanhood through a cultural meaning that is based not on social markers of womanhood, such as marriage and the biological production of children. The cultural meaning Manyano women associated with womanhood is one which privileges seniority as opposed to socially constructed signifiers of womanhood. Although Manyano women provided these two understandings of womanhood, it is important to note the dialectical nature of the two contexts provided. This showed how womanhood can be used by Manyano women in various contexts for particular gains.

The theme of motherhood also fundamentally challenges the understanding of motherhood as grounded in women being biological mothers. Instead, motherhood is defined by Manyano women as socially constructed in that they are not mothers to their own children, but mothers to all children. This open definition of motherhood then means that the women who are not biological mothers are also mothers. In a sense, what Bonnin (2000) defines as a character of mothering during apartheid for black women, where "'mother' became socially rather than biologically defined, since, in situations of conflict, any boy became the son of any woman", (2000:309) is shown in the study to be the dominant social understanding of mothering whether in the context of crisis or not.

The theme on the spiritual nature of Manyano women located Manyano women in society, and within the church, as mothers of prayer and peace, as spirituality is a central feature in the Manyano group and their identity. There are a number of aspects of spirituality which were highlighted in relation to their spirituality. Of these was the situatedness of their spirituality and how prayer proved to show their partnership with God in their lives. Furthermore, this theme highlighted how the spiritual work of Manyano women is crucial to the functioning of the church as a whole.

The theme on *ukubekezela* (endurance) showed diverging views on how Manyano women understand the idea of the strong black woman and what strength and endurance mean. Black feminist scholars have debunked the racialised and gendered image of the strong black woman and have provided alternative theorisations on how strength and silence are a tool of resistance for black women (Motsemme 2004 and Harris-Perry 2011). Manyano women not only use strength as resistance in crafting alternative images for black womanhood, strength and endurance are situated within their faith and their partnership with God who provides them with the faith and ability to endure. This alternative understanding of strength and endurance disrupts long standing images of the strong black woman and provides us with a reading of strength which is reflexive of the recognition Manyano women find in their faith.

The next theme from the findings is the significance of the Manyano uniform. Manyano women are visibly recognised by their uniform. The Methodist Women's Manyano in particular are known for their red blouse and the white bib and hat. Manyano women went on to describe the relevance of each element of the uniform from on trial members to the uniform of the full members. The symbolism of the uniform is reflected in the narratives with specific mention on the parallels drawn between the uniform and death, and the uniform as a recognition of the work Manyano women are called to fulfill while on earth.

Finally, the presence of class stratification within the Manyano was revealed in the narratives. Although the uniform attempted to equalise and give the illusion of a united body of women, the difference in social class and positions and the tension which it presented for Manyano women, was made evident.

The narratives and the discussion to follow, show how Manyano women still remain a prominent structure in South Africa and how they still remain visible within their communities.

A crucial point the narratives will show is that the shift in the political climate in South Africa from one of routine violence on black communities and the black citizenry at large to the advent of democracy in 1994, also saw the shift in the nature of Manyano women's publicness in the post-democratic moment. Furthermore, the emergent themes present a combination of varied experiences which encompass the complexity of Manyano women's identity. These themes inform the ways in which Manyano women have come to understand the crucial role this group has played in their lives. Although the interviews were conducted in Zulu and Xhosa, I will provide the English translation. However, in moments where the Zulu and Xhosa term illuminates a greater meaning, I shall use it in conjunction with an explanation which attempts not to take away from the idea and meaning conveyed by the Zulu or Xhosa term used.

4.2 “*uMama woManyano Ngumfazi.*” (A Mother of the Manyano is a Woman)

One of the most prominent themes that came out of the interviews was the emphasis the women placed on their identity as *umfazi*. The term *umfazi* could be read as the English equivalent of *woman*. However, it appears as if the English term does not adequately capture the ways in which the Manyano woman make sense of this identity and category. For the purposes of this chapter, the distinction between *umfazi* and women will not be discussed as it shall be engaged at a deeper level in Chapter Five. I shall limit the discussion in this chapter to the theme of *umfazi* and what it means to the participants of the study. An indication of the importance Manyano women placed on womanhood was made evident by the President of the Women's Manyano group of the Lamontville Circuit. At the annual service where women who were on trial members were inducted as full members Manyano organisation, the President stressed that a woman who is part of the Manyano ought to take pride in her identity of being *umfazi*. She pleaded with the congregation not to take the term '*umfazi*' as political. Ms. Nobuntu Madwe says:

These are women. We are dressing women. I would like you not to take this term 'umfazi' politically. I would like you to take it or understand it in the cultural sense... because culturally when we say this is a woman, we are praising and appreciating her as a woman. These are women that we are dressing. Irrespective of what you think, but now, these are women.

When asked what she meant by this, the response was:

I was referring to the term. You know as a learned person every word has its own connotation and meaning. Uhm... and also, depending on the context of the time. So,

some group of feminists... the strong ones and the mild ones, we are different because I belong there in that group. As long as you know you have rights, I take it you are a feminist. When the patriarchy or the patriarchal set up... which at time was exploited by men in the church, you would hear them say “*asino pathwa ngumfazi*”... we will not be led by a woman. This was said in a derogative manner, *umfazi, umfazi okwazi ukwenzani?* What can a woman do? [laughs] A woman? As a result, the strong feminists in the 80s were against that word *mfazi* because once *kuthiwe mfazi, wawudonsethwa ezantsi*, they would look down on you. *Kwantu* or culturally, the term *mfazi* in the rural area... *umama wekhaya* or the wife of so and so from the house of so and so, people would say “*ngumfazi wakokwethu lo!*”... [laughs] “This is the wife or woman of our home” that is said with pride.

So, I was saying when you look at *umama*, because what is happening here... because *indaba yokutshatha* [marriage], marriage is just a gift from God. There are women who have not been blessed with the gift of marriage but will join *umanyano lomama*, but when they are here, *bangabafazi*, they are still women. Meaning that as *umfazi*, there are expectations that you must meet. For example, the way you dress, the way you carry yourself, the way you are *nje*. You see? So, I was elevating the word and saying that some things are not the same and even if you would love them to be the same, they never will be. When you listen to Christ, or read the word... He never said mama or mother, he said *mfazi* or woman. That was said with respect to the power in the woman. So, I was instilling that *kotata abakhoyo*, the men in the room. That when you look at these women, look at women of caliber, *ngabafazi aba!*

Madwe makes several points in relation to the identity of a woman who is of the Manyano group. Madwe starts by making a clear distinction between the term *umfazi* as a political term and one which is a cultural term. By virtue of the distinction made, Madwe might have us believe there is a disjuncture in the political and cultural or traditional understandings of *umfazi*. There are two ways in which, I believe, Madwe challenges us think through *ubufazi*. On the one hand, Madwe explains how:

“When the patriarchy or the patriarchal set up... which at time was exploited by men in the church, you would hear them say “*asino pathwa ngumfazi*”... we will not be led by a woman. This was said in a derogative manner, *umfazi, umfazi okwazi ukwenzani?* What can a woman do? [laughs] A woman?”

This means, in the political sense, the idea of *umfazi* is one which was based on the idea that *umfazi* is a person who is not in the same social position as a man. The idea that *umfazi* was used in a derogatory manner to signify someone who did not have the ability to lead or preside over men in the church is read as a political interpretation of *ubufazi*. One can therefore assume that the ideological underpinnings of *ubufazi* informed the way women were located socially and politically— as inferior to the men in the church. Therefore, when Madwe asks the

congregation to not take *umfazi* as one who is regarded as politically inferior in the church, due to its 'patriarchal set up', she is pleading with the congregation to consider alternative understandings of what *umfazi* is and what she comes to signify in the church and within the Manyano.

Alternatively, Madwe speaks of *umfazi kwantu*. From a cultural/ traditional understanding, Madwe suggests that *umfazi* was respected and the power of *umfazi* was acknowledged. In addition to this, Madwe makes a note of *umfazi* and the home and how it intersects with the general rural/cultural understanding of *umfazi*. The point is made that in the general cultural or rural society Madwe speak of how *umfazi* married into a particular home was celebrated not only by the home she was married into, but by the community of that particular home. This brings us to the point where one might have to consider the shared values and understandings of what *ubufazi* and the home signify in the cultural community Madwe speaks of. This could bring us to believe that *umfazi* in the home was something which was celebrated and considered to hold a particular position which was not seen as inferior nor was this the only place in which *umfazi* received recognition. However, this is not to say that Madwe denies the existence of patriarchal ordering of the home, and how *umfazi* ought to carry herself nor can one conclude that these forms of conduct and expectations of *umfazi* as explained by Madwe are not subjected to patriarchy and the 'patriarchal set up'. However, it would be wise to consider the varied ways in which Manyano women come into *ubufazi* even within a patriarchal context. It would be unfortunate for one to assume that all women come into their 'womanhood' in universal ways. Madwe stresses this point by expressing:

some things are not the same, even if you would love them to be, they never will.

Anna Mthethwa supports the claim made by Madwe by expressing:

As *umfazi*, my child. There are things that *abanye abafazi* (other women) will never go through that *we* go through. So *nje*, being *umfazi* is very different from other people and the way they see it.

Mthethwa's understanding of being *umfazi* holds a strong belief that being *umfazi*, the way that Manyano women view and live it, is not as what outsiders would perceive it to be. There is a difference in the manner in which Manyano women make meaning of their social identity as *abafazi* which appears not to translate into broader society or outside of the Manyano group. The insistence on difference in experience which Madwe and Mthethwa speak of suggest that understandings of *ubufazi* outside of this group do not adequately capture the essence of their

understanding of *ubufazi*. However, both women do not go on to categorise these experiential differences nor do they attribute this difference to any other social identity or categories they might belong to. Be that as it may, this disjuncture ought to be recognised and interrogated.

Secondly, Madwe and Mthethwa make the distinction between married and unmarried women who are part of the Manyano group. Both Madwe and Mthethwa make the claim that *ubufazi*, particularly for Manyano women, is not inextricably linked to marriage. This signals that within the cultural sense –for Manyano women specifically– *ubufazi* is not tied to the idea of marriage and *ubufazi* is not solidified, nor recognised only through marriage. Instead, *umfazi* could be read as a social position which the Manyano hold by virtue of being *abafazi*, and it need not be qualified by marital status. Mthethwa, speaking on her divorce from an abusive husband, makes the point that her status as a divorced woman does not take away from her identity as *umfazi*:

Whether you have a husband or not- *I am still umfazi*.

Mthethwa and Madwe make this distinction to signify a moment, time, or spaces where *ubufazi* and marriage do not exist in isolation. This distinction, and insistence thereof, seems important enough to Manyano women insofar as it alerts us to how they construct and understand their social identity as *abafazi* and Manyano women.

The distinctions made by Madwe and Mthethwa requires one to make sense of the ways Manyano women come to form their identity within the group. On the one hand, one can consider the discussion on *marriage and ubufazi* and how these social categories appear not to be interchangeable characteristics which may come to define one of the varied representations of Manyano women in South Africa. Alongside this distinction, it is important to consider the contrasting nature of *ubufazi* from a political and cultural interpretation made by Madwe particularly in the context in which this distinction was made. Madwe would have us believe that the political conception of *umfazi* did not fully capture the essence of how Manyano women choose to identify themselves. This is not to suggest that Manyano women are not aware of the ideological and structural ways in which women have been conceived of in the political world. Instead, Madwe insists that the political understanding of *ubufazi* is not one which adequately captures the identity of manyano women. However, Madwe appears to make note of both perspectives and how these may intersect due to the ‘patriarchal set up’ of the

church. Based on Madwe's points, one can assume that there are moments where Manyano women may be politicised and resist this patriarchal set up of the church and broader society. However, this political turn is not the essence of the Manyano women. A binary understanding of Manyano women's identity as *abafazi* of being either traditional or political would be a shallow interpretation of the remarks made by Madwe. Alternatively, a complicated approach can prove most useful. This approach acknowledges how Manyano women come to understand *ubufazi* as constantly shaping and adapting to the context which Manyano women are exposed to. This means the cultural may be suspended for the political, the political suspended for the cultural, and in other cases, these varied understandings of *ubufazi* may intersect and provide a combination of ways in which *ubufazi* within this group is understood and expressed.

4.3 “Ndingumama woManyano” (I am a Mother of the Manyano)

Motherhood is a central feature in the manner in which the church as a whole characterised the Manyano group and the position they occupied within it. At the Good Friday Easter service, the pastor of the church opened the service by noting that the Manyano women were the mothers of the church and that without this structure, the church would not hold such a prominent position in the broader community. Although Manyano women have come to be characterised as mothers of prayer, peace, and spirituality; a number of the women interviewed attributed their understanding of motherhood within the Manyano to their own mothers and grandmothers' involvement within the organisation. Thoko Xaba expressed:

When I was younger, I always saw my grandmother getting ready for church. She always used to wear the Manyano women's uniform and I wondered why she always said being a mother is a gift from God. Now, I see how being a Manyano woman and a mother are things we cannot separate. You see, how are you a Manyano woman when you are not a mother. This doesn't mean that you have to have your own children... You see me, as I am... *Eish*. I never had children when I joined. I was young and I was not ready to be a mother, but when I joined and saw how the Manyano women were and the things that they did; how they raised and cared for children in the church, I realised that I am a mother. I used to hear the little girls and boys say “hello, Ma Xaba. Hello Ma. You are our mother and you take care of us”. That is when I saw that being a mother and a Manyano woman are the same. It is like that, my child.

Gugulethu Sithole who has no children and has been part of the Manyano expressed the following:

My mother was always a strong Manyano woman. Everyday she would have her own time to pray and we all knew not to disturb her when she was praying. Some days we

would hear her praying loudly and we would sneak up to the door to hear what she was saying. She would always pray for us– my brothers and I. She would say our names and have a special prayer item for all of us and she would cry when she prayed for us. It was strange to me, but when I joined the Manyano group and I did not have children, I still knew that because I was an older woman in the church, all the children there were mine and I had to pray for them the way my mother prayed for us. You see, it is not about having children of your own. God has not blessed us all with children but whenever I am in church or when I have my uniform on, the children of my community, even the drunk boys who sit by the corner always say “mama” to me. They always say, “Mama, pray for us. Even though we do not go to church and we do bad things, please pray for us, mama”. So, everyone knows that we are mothers and we love all the children of God. Even in church, everyone knows that Manyano women are mothers and they respect us. Any child, man, person – even the pastor– knows that they must respect and honour Manyano women because they are the mothers of the church. *We give the church life and we are the ones who make it work.* [emphasis added]

Madwe speaking on her grandmother as a Manyano woman during the Apartheid era says:

When I was young, you see how old I am now? So, when I was much younger than this, my grandmother had a son, his name was Boy. He left before I was born to go work in the city of Joburg. When he left, he never wrote to my grandmother and we never knew if he was alive, and the violence was very serious back then. Boy never came home and my grandmother and her friends who were part of the Manyanos always used to have a prayer item at their Thursday meetings where they would pray for all the mothers who had children in the city that never came back. I always remember the song they sang, *Ndiyakhala kuwe Nkosi* (I cry out to you, God). This song was them crying out to God for their children and praying to God that He would bring them back home. Even the women who were not mothers would join in because... I don't know. I think they saw the pain of mothers not knowing where their children were. That is where I picked up how important being a mother was and how they (Manyano women) always wanted to protect their children. I don't know, Lihle. We are mothers and God has put us all together to protect His children. It is just a thing like that.

Nosicelo Ndlovu added that:

You see, Lihle. My mother was very poor. She used to travel a lot of kilometers when she used to go to church and she would wake us up early in the morning. We would cook and take lunch because church was far in the rural areas. She always used to say, “what kind of a Manyano woman would I be if I went to church and I left my children sleeping? As a mother, I can pray for your blessings but you, as children, must also go and fetch the blessings on your own”. Sometimes, after church, all the Manyano women would come to our house and they would all pray for their children who had left the rural areas and went to work in the city. They would cry and pray to God asking him to protect their children from the evil in the city. That's how I learnt that I needed to be a Manyano woman who cared about the gift of motherhood and prayed not only for my children but for all the children of God. That is what we do, God has called us to be mothers to his children here on earth until He returns. You know, when you read the bible and Jesus says to Mary; “Mary here is your son and son, here is your mother.”, this is what we all do; we love and pray for all the children in our community and we protect them from all the drugs and all the evil things of the world. You see this photo?

This is a photo of my mother at the big march during apartheid, and this was my little brother on her back. That day her madam had told her that if she went to the march she would lose her job, so my mother took my brother and went to the march because the way that Apartheid was set up, the future of our children was wasted and God wanted us as mothers to protect all the children even the ones that were not ours. We had to be mothers as God had written it in the Bible. So, I am saying, a Manyano woman is a mother, there is no blah blah about it. It is what God wants. We have to obey that.

The above participants locate their understanding of motherhood and its connection to the Manyano to their mothers or grandmothers who were part of the Manyano. The heavy emphasis placed on motherhood is a central organising focus for the Manyano women. Madwe and Ndlovu speak of the nature of South Africa's political climate during apartheid and that Manyano women saw motherhood as a central feature of their organising. Motherhood propelled black women to protect their children from the nature of apartheid violence, particularly from the standpoint of Manyano women's experiences shown in the above narratives. This is the intersection of politics, religion, and motherhood for black women and how they navigate this intersection as Manyano women.

In addition to this, it is important to note that resistance against state sponsored violence for black women is understood as a combination of strategies, some of which may not be read as resistance, particularly within dominant discourses on maternal activism. Motherhood for Ndlovu's mother was expressed in the resistance to the skewed power dynamics between her and her employer and the imminent threat to the livelihood imposed on her by the pass laws, which led to the Women's March of 1956. The threat to the future of her child and those of others like her required not only the spiritual form of resistance they used through prayer, but also the use of physical forms of resistance in the form of protest. This makes visible that the protection of the future of her children was not only a political act, but also a spiritual imperative which comes from her association with the Manyano organisation. Motherhood, read in this manner, shows that that Manyano women locate themselves within the spiritual call from God to protect His children, which may be expressed in political ways.

Madwe also shows us how, (through the Thursday meetings her grandmother's Manyano group used to hold), prayer became infused with the political climate of the time. The political climate of apartheid South Africa contributed to the precarious nature of the lives of their children. This makes us consider how Manyano women's identity as mothers could be read as the entry point into their varied forms of resistance against the destabilizing nature of the violent

apartheid state. However, due to the broad-based nature of Manyano groups, the focus shifted also to the praying for children in the general sense; this included children which were not their own. Children of the community in which these Manyano women were based all fell under the God given imperative to “protect all of His children”. This is not only limited to the experience of the grandmothers and mothers of the participants.

In the post-apartheid era, the participants shared how they have come to be identified as mothers within their respective communities. Xaba and Sithole note how they are referred to as ‘Mama’ and how they are often asked to pray for these children (or people who are younger than them), as they are seen to occupy a motherly position within their communities. This shows that, as noted by the participants who had no children prior to joining the Manyano group or those who had no children of their own, motherhood for these women is not necessarily based on biological reproduction. This challenges us to question the basis in which Manyano women come to motherhood. Furthermore, this challenges dominant understandings of motherhood which value the biological conceptions of motherhood and opens a space where alternative conceptions of motherhood may be explored. Sithole suggests that due to her age, or her being an older woman within the church, she is considered to be a mother within the church, the Manyano, and to those who are outside her church community. In this regard, it is possible for us to understand that, in this social context, there is a disjuncture between how Manyano women described themselves as mothers and other conceptions of how women come to motherhood. What could possibly be a crucial aspect to how women come to, and access motherhood in other contexts, is not a crucial and totalising factor for Manyano women who think of motherhood in a combination of ways.

The data suggests that there were cultural differences in how one would initially think of the term *mama* and the term mother. Within the Manyano women’s space, *mama* can be read as having a double play, a cultural and biological reference. Manyano women suggest that *umama* (a mother) of the Manyano organisation need not have children to be recognised as a mother. Their identity as *oomama* (mothers) of peace, prayer, and spirituality signify that *umama* is considered as a woman of seniority, and this seniority is acknowledged and respected irrespective of one’s claim to a child of their own. This requires deeper analysis into the linguistic, political, and theoretical understanding of mother and *mama* in relation to how Manyano women identify themselves as *oomama* (mothers). It will be argued in Chapter Five that Oyewumi’s (2016) concept of “seniority” as a framework to understand social relations is

useful in that it allows us to understand that the entry to motherhood is really an entry to seniority which does not depend on biological developments. However, there are women in the Manyano group who are biological mothers who speak of how being part of the Manyano has contributed to the ways in which they navigate motherhood. Monica Ngaka noted:

I have four children. When I am sitting down with them and I see how they have turned out, I do not think I would have been able to raise them without the grace of God as well as the teaching and preaching of *omama bomanyano* (the mothers of the Manyano). The Manyano has worked a great deal for my children, it has given them a better mother. When I wake up and pray at midnight, the first thing I pray for are my children. Although it is tough because the world is very tough, but my heart is softer. I have learnt to have a calmer spirit for my children and that has been because of the word of God and *omama bomanyano* (the mothers of the Manyano). You know, we all come together and pray for our children. I think to myself, if I had to die, where would my children go because I have nothing? As I am selling these little things here, this is all I have for them but if the only thing I do is to make sure that they love and follow God, that will be good for them. The Manyano has helped me a lot, my child. I am a good mother because of it even though my life is hard.

Thandeka Manange expressed:

They [my children] are always happy when they see me go to church. It was something I always taught them. Even though our life is tough and we have no money, God will always make a way. Even now that they are older, they do not go to church but they still pray, that is because as *umama womanyano* (a mother of the Manyano) you always have to teach your children how to pray. In the toughness of life, the only thing that will help them in life is God. I am their mother but they do not belong to me, they belong to God and it is Him that they must praise. I will not be the one that will take them to heaven. I can pray for them; they are my children but they must also know God. The Manyano then, my child, helps me be a good example for my children. Being a good mother is what God wants from *umama womanyano* (a mother of the Manyano). You can pray all you want, and look beautiful on the outside with your uniform on, but if you are not a good mother, that is not a Manyano woman. One day my children will go to church again, but for now all I can do is pray.

When speaking on her children and how she has been able to raise them on her own, with no husband, Thenjiwe Jojo says:

I thank God so much. When I look at how far they have come and how they have grown, it was only through His strength that He has given me. I only to have this strength because I was with *omama* (mothers) who are strong and always prayed for me and my children. The Lord said he is the father of the fatherless. It was only through him that my children have changed

The above participants attribute their ability to be good mothers to the support structure found within the Manyano. The Manyano provides them with the tools to be able to raise their children even in the difficult circumstances. The focus on motherhood by Manyano women

also signifies the intersection of their spirituality and the values they place on their role as mothers in their respective homes. All the participants expressed, in varied terms, how their understanding of motherhood and the work of mothering was situated within the spirituality of Manyano women. All members of the group that were interviewed emphasised the partnership they had with God when raising their children. Motherhood and the way that Manyano women raise and interact with their children cannot be separated from their devotion to God and the values of the Manyano.

4.4 “*Izulu Liyasetshenzelwa*”: *When We Are Praying, We Are Working*

Omama bomanyano (the mothers of the Manyano) believe that their spirituality is the central focus of their organising and the way they conduct themselves. They believe that their religion and belief in God is the reason why this organisation has sustained itself over the years. When asked about what makes this group so distinct from other women’s groups and organisations, all participants spoke of their relationship with God and Him being the focal point of their organisation. They all spoke of their devotion to God and their identity as praying women. Spirituality was not only confined to the church and their meetings, it was a central feature of their lives and how they organised as a group.

Gugulethu Sithole expressed:

We are praying women. That is the most important thing we do. Above all else, that is what we are. We do other things like visit the elderly, raise funds for the needy, we visit the sick, we clean the church, we cook for people- a lot of things but the most important of these is prayer. Without prayer, I do not think the Manyano would have lasted as long as it has. It is only through prayer that we have lasted so long.

Stella Shumbe adds:

Lihle, there is nothing that beats prayer. There is nothing greater than the power of prayer. When you watch the TV and you see all of us dressed in red; all you hear is women praying. We pray heavy prayers, prayers that make your body tremble. You feel it in your body that this prayer is the only weapon I have in this world. Manyano women are women of prayer. You can go to all the Methodist churches and you will always have a Manyano woman opening the service with a prayer. Why is that? We are people who pray. When I was a leader of Manyano women in my church, the one thing I always told those women was if you as a Manyano woman do not know how to pray, you are not being a true Manyano woman. You must always have time set apart to pray, no matter the weather. The world is very bad, my child. Everything is upside down and people do not know whether they are coming or going- that is where you need the power of Manyano women. We pray and pray and pray. We never stop

praying. What will be of a Manyano woman who does not pray? The little that is good in the world is only because of the power of prayer. Prayer is a weapon every Manyano woman must have.

Senzeni Ngcobo highlights the intergenerational power of prayer by stating that:

Manyano women know that prayer is not just a thing you do for yourself, you are also doing it for generations that will come after you. We are praying for *ugcobo*... what is it? It's anointing, if I am not lying. That is what we are praying for; we pray for the anointing of God to fall on each generation and the generations that will come after us. My child, there is a passage in the bible, you must also read it yourself, where Jacob would not let go of his father until he gave him the anointing of God. Jacob did not want to miss out on the favour of God when his father died. That is what we are doing; we as mothers want to make sure that the people of this world will receive the anointing of God even if the Manyano no longer exist. You see, my mother was a strong Manyano woman and she was the lead prayer woman of her group, and I believe that it is because of her prayers that I have the same anointing and I have the power to pray and to see the favour of God in my life and in the lives of all the people I pray for. Manyano women are very special and have been given the gift of prayer and they must use it to make sure that the world does not fall into sin and not receive the anointing of God.

Stella Shumbe adds to this by saying:

Umama womanyano (a mother of the Manyano) is one of the greatest weapons this world has against Satan. Prayer is a big thing. Whenever I see a Manyano woman, I see a woman who has the world in her hands and has the power to make things change because of the power that is prayer. You know, at my church, we pray for people as young as you, who are struggling to get jobs. They come to us and say "Mama, please pray for me. I cannot find a job". Just yesterday, I was on the phone with one of the young girls we prayed for and she said "Thank you, Mama. It is because of your prayers that I got the job I had applied for. It was because of your prayers". You see, people might think this is a joke and we are just praying for no reason but a Manyano woman... *when she prays... things move* [emphasis added], I'm telling you. Sometimes, things do not work out the way we plan and God does not answer our prayers the way we would like Him to, but God hears us when we pray and He makes a plan according to His will. All we have to do as *omama bomanyano* (mothers of the Manyano is to pray. *Just keep praying, you will see.* [Emphasis added])

Madwe adds to this by highlighting how prayer sometimes does not provide the answers they need and how Manyano women navigate this:

As a Manyano, you listen to painful journeys and experiences of people and people air [...] and those with those painful experiences talk about abuse at home, unemployment, children who are reckless and all the sensitive things you can think of. We cry there, it's painful to be there but you listen to them and think, "I cannot help this person. Why do I listen to this? Why do I make this person share this?". But this person always comes with the hope that if I am in God's space, God is going to help me. But as somebody who has journeyed with God, we know that God does help, but at times His help does not come the way we want it to happen, or it is delayed at times. Sometimes we see that this woman's situation is a forever situation and it will never go away, but you are not

able to say that. You have to encourage them and say 'God will'. As the Methodists, we are not the type of church that promises things that are not there. We cannot promise that tomorrow you will find a job or that tomorrow you will get the money to send your child to school. That all depends on God. But when we are together, what we share biblically, we try to be real so that the person can see that what you are asking from God you may not get it yourself, or you may not see it with your own eye, you may not even experience it in your lifetime. God might choose to give it to your children or your grandchildren. That's the encouragement we give each other so that a person can hold on.

However, in addition to the importance Manyano women place on prayer, the spirituality of Manyano women is also understood through the work that they do. Manyano women characterised themselves as women who work for the kingdom of God and this is the guiding principle for the work they do within the church and within their communities.

Thoko Vezi expressed:

You know we do a lot of things, *siyasebenza*, we work. That work is only done through the spirit of God. Everything we do is spiritual. We do not work for no reason. Everything has Jesus in it. The Bible says faith without works is dead. Another thing in the Bible that shows us this is the story of Mary Magdalene. She was in the kitchen preparing for the visit of Jesus, everyone else was sitting and waiting till He arrived. If she had not done that, what were the people going to eat? You see, that's what we do. While we wait for Jesus to come back, we have to make sure that He arrives and everything is in order and everyone is taken care of. That is only possible because of us being able to listen to God and to read His word. Church women who are lazy scare me. Have you ever heard of such? A woman of God who does not work? What an embarrassment. We have to work for the kingdom of God, if we do not work, who is going to be able to see God? We must set the way so that when God comes, people will be able to see Him. Imagine He comes and it is only then that we start moving? We must work, that is part of who we are. We must not take work as a burden, it is our way of giving thanks to God. That thing is spiritual; it is not a play thing. *Omama bomanyano* (mothers of the Manyano) work. Manyano women work.

Emily Yeni expressed:

when we are praying, we are working [emphasis added]. When we are singing, we are working. When we go visit the sick, we are working. There is nothing about this that does not need you to work. Everything is work. I see the new and young women who join the Manyano group who are lazy to work. In my time, we used to go to church on Sunday and clean it. From roof to floor. These days, people would say you are making them slaves but we did it because we knew that that is what *umama womanyano* (a mother of the Manyano) does. *Izulu liyasetshenzelwa* [you have to work to get to heaven], my child. You work to get to heaven.

Remarks made by Vezi and Yeni show that for Manyano women, the work of the church is central to the character of the Manyano women's organisation. This work, according them, is

not work which is secondary to the main work of the church. The work that they do is central to the functioning of the church and works in conjunction with the work done by the pastor and the central leadership of the church. This demystifies the idea that that within the church, there is a division of labour where some work is considered as crucial and other forms of work are considered as secondary work. Manyano women acknowledge that all forms of work in the church are important and it is only through the combination of work from themselves and other structures of the church, that the church can survive. Manyano women locate themselves and the work that they do within a combination of work which the church is called to do.

4.5 “uMama woManyano Uyabekezela” [A Woman of Endurance]

Manyano women celebrated their ability to endure in difficult circumstances. The idea of “*ukubekezela*” signaled the ability of a Manyano woman to endure and hold on in adversity and this ability to endure is attributed to God but also to the unity of the group in sharing testimonies of their hardship and their ability to share these hardships. Madwe explains:

The Manyano is a union for women who are troubled and go through unspeakable pain. They carry this in their spirit and even in their homes. Therefore, this is a place where mothers come to share their struggles. It is a place where women get the chance to unburden their pain and relieve their spirit, even if it is only for that time. So, as a member, you must learn how to keep the secrets and the pain that someone else has shared with you. When a mother comes to you to share the burden of their pain, you have to keep that to yourself and know that you and that person must endure that pain together through prayer. Until God makes a plan. It is not an easy thing to keep holding on when the things of this world make you weak and you see that you do not have the strength to deal with this thing. This is why I always say not everyone knows how to endure. Manyano women know pain, they know struggle, and they know how to endure. These are strong women.

When speaking on how she learnt how to be strong and endure in adverse times, Nosicelo Ndlovu spoke of her mother who was a Manyano woman and how she endured:

When I used to see my mother [...] she was also a Manyano woman. I used to see my mother praying. Even when life was tough and tough things came her way, I used to see her go pray in her corner. You could see that even though it was tough, she held on and endured whatever it was that was going on because God would answer her prayers, her hope was in the Lord. Even with me now, I have learnt that nothing will ever come right if I don't hold on. I need to persevere because the Lord will always test you. That is the point of being a Manyano. You are tested. Even you, when you are studying for an exam, do you enjoy it? No! But you hold on because you know that when you pass, you will be happy and everything will be okay. That is what Manyano woman must do. She must learn to hold on, to endure, to pray, and not to complain. Jesus does not like a woman who complains, that shows that you do not have faith. You have to endure;

have faith, pray, and hold on. A Manyano woman will not survive this world if she does not hold on.

Ndlovu also explains how adversity ought to be considered as a test from God and that strength and endurance are part of the journey one must go through as a Manyano woman. These narratives of Manyano women show that endurance is not a trait that is outside of the spiritual nature of the Manyano organisation. Strength is associated with spiritual growth and the testing of one's faith in God. Manyano women do not separate their strength and ability to endure from their spirituality. These come to intersect through the union shared within the group.

Stella Shumbe explains this further:

I also remembered my grandmother who was part of the Manyano. I saw that the history of grandmothers and the Manyano is very long. My grandmother was strong, she never wanted us to see her as a weak person [...] I do not know. I think maybe it was because she thought we would think she had lost faith in God. So, it was like that. Whenever we did see her cry, she would say to us "My children, I am not crying because I have lost faith or because I am not strong. Sometimes things happen and the only thing you can do is cry. When Jesus was on the cross, He cried to His father and ask Him why He had been forsaken. Do you know why He was crying? It was because He had lost faith and when you lose your faith, you lose your strength. Never lose your faith because you will be weak and you will not be able to deal with the things of this world". So, we need to be strong. People think I am saying you are never going to cry, but you must cry with faith. Crying in faith is a different thing. That is what Manyano women do, they cry in faith because they are strong and they know how to endure. They know how to endure.

Both Ndlovu and Shumbe locate their strength and the ability to endure within their faith. However, Shumbe does not negate the fact that there are times where one is in doubt or does not believe in their strength and their ability to endure. However, she attributes this doubt to the lack of faith as opposed to one not being able to endure.

When asked on the changes she sees in the Manyano women of the past and those she encounters now, Thembeni Phungula says:

The Manyano has changed a lot since the time of our grandmothers. Our grandmothers were strong. They were very strong. Even when they used to sing, you could feel something move in your spirit because you could tell that this was someone who has been through a lot. Everyone in the room would have tears in their eyes when our grandmothers sang. We are not as strong. When one tiny thing happens, we want to give up. We don't have the strength to hold on. I do not know whether we do not pray hard enough or maybe we do not have that time for God but it is no longer the same. It is unfortunate because this world is tough, tougher than that time, and it really needs a

strong praying woman who knows how to hold on. This world needs women who are strong in prayer, I do not think Manyano women of our generation are as strong as our grandmothers. But we can only trust God and have faith that He will give us strength.

However, when Lillian Gxumisa spoke on this, as a woman who has been part of the Manyano group for over thirty years, she expressed;

You know my child, the Manyano has changed a lot. Maybe it is because of this thing you young people call the new generation or whatever, but Manyano women are very different from when I joined. During my time, we were under apartheid and the white people hated us, if you were black you were hated- you know this. So, as Manyano women who had white madams, we used to go pray for each other. Now, white people would not allow us to go see our people and they would let the dog out for it to bite you because you were not allowed to take their girl from work. So, what did we do? we met anyway. We would go meet under a tree and in the streets. We didn't care- we knew that God gave us the strength to fight and do the right thing. Prayer made us strong. White people would always ask us where did we get the strength to meet in their areas and we said "Our strength comes from God. The same God you say thinks we are evil and dirty. That is the God that gives us strength to do this". But now, I think our new Manyano women are tired. They are still doing the things we did. They are still kitchen girls in the white madam's house, they still have to fight for housing like we did, they still have to travel from the township to the city, their children are still hungry, their husbands are still dying or missing, and you know now this thing of HIV/Aids is killing everyone. It is very tough for them and I think they are tired and have given up hope. I do not blame them because life is not nice if you are a black woman and you are poor, and you are trying but nothing is adding. One plus one does not give you two. It gives you something you never expected and you become dizzy and you do not know what to do. That is what a lot of these new Manyano women are going through. I think they need time to get used to the hardship and its only through God and the support you get from Manyano women that you will be strong and you will endure. You will be strong and you will endure. Maybe as the older women we are hard on the younger ones because we went through the pain of seeing... [pauses]... We saw and all we could do is be strong and push, and endure, and endure even more when you wanted to give up. You would look at the situation and think to yourself; "I am the only one who can carry this. There is no one else but me, God, and these women. God gave me this to carry and I will try my best to carry it but also push and push". *Hayi* [pause], I do not blame the young ones. We have not taught them well and they tire quickly. It is because of us. As the older women, we were strong and then we got tired and forgot to teach these new ones how to be strong. But all we can do is pray for God to teach them where we have failed. Because a Manyano woman who is not strong will not survive this world. I have seen too many things, my child. All I know is that a Manyano woman must be strong. Otherwise... Life will show you.

Both Gxumisa and Phungula speak on the change in the Manyano women from their perspectives. Both agree that strength and the ability of younger Manyano to endure has changed. However, Gxumisa speaks on the continued structural issues faced by black women

which has left them tired and without hope. She does not attribute this to a lack of faith, but she locates this within the post apartheid structural inequalities young Manyano women now have to grapple with. This is important in that it does not position young Manyano women in ways which portray them as lazy but acknowledges how strength and endurance continue to be tested by socio-economic realities black women have to grapple with. Therefore, the tiredness they experience is attributed to external factors as opposed to their lack of faith.

While Phungula speaks of lack of faith and how younger Manyano women do not make time to pray and commune with God in order to cultivate the strength needed to endure, she acknowledges the adversity Gxumisa speaks of. It is also important to note that the ability for Manyano women to endure is not one which is without action. Instead, both women acknowledge the need for one to endure, have faith, whilst still being able to “push”. When Gxumisa speaks of pushing, she is alerting us to action based faith and active strength, as opposed to strength without action. Gxumisa further highlights how the situatedness of Manyano women in poverty, HIV/Aids, housing problems, and ‘one plus one not adding to two’ does not –in some instances– allow for black Manyano women to give up. The reality of their circumstances is seen as a burden they have to carry while they ‘push’ in an attempt to create sustainable realities for themselves and their families. The emphasis Gxumisa places on the intergenerational nature of strength for Manyano women is an important point she makes. This would make us consider how and why systemic oppression and the harshness of life have remained intact to the point which requires older Manyano women to teach younger Manyano women to be strong. The following chapter shall extend on the idea of strength and endurance in relation of black womanhood and how this stereotype has been theorised. It will be argued black women provide alternative narratives on how they use strength and endurance as a tool for resistance.

4.6 Till Death: “*iUniform Yi-overall Yakho*” [*Your Uniform is Your Overall*]

In South Africa’s public imagination and within various literature (Gaitskell 1990 and 1991, Haddad 2000 and 2004 and Holness 1997) on the Women’s Manyano, these women are mostly recognised by the uniform they wear when at church, their Thursday meetings, and when they are attending the funeral of one of their members. This uniform has come to signify one of the longest standing structures in the black church, particularly within the Methodist Church. However, many do not know the symbolism associated with this uniform. When asked about

the uniform, all the participants spoke of the red blouse, the white bib and hat, and the black skirt, stockings, and shoes. However, Manyano women have two uniforms which distinguish the women who are full members and those who are on trial to become full members. When asked about the uniform of the on-trial members, Nobuntu Madwe spoke of the process of being an on-trial member and the significance of the separate uniform. She expressed the following:

Constitutionally, for someone to be a member of the Women's Manyano, they must first be a member in good standing of the Methodist of Southern Africa. What do we mean by good standing? We mean that a person must satisfy all the dues expected of a member of the church. And then when one is confirmed as a fully-fledged member of the church. Then, that person, if she so wishes to join, because you are not forced, it is supposed to be a conviction, something must happen in you to wish to be a member, then you will attend the first-time meeting and introduce yourself and explain why you are here. A person will be given a chance to introduce herself and tell us who she is and the reason for being here. This when the person will ask to join the Manyano, and will then be an on-trial member. Because we are a uniformed organisation, this person has to wear a different colour, which is white opposed to the red blouse. That person must travel six months, unbroken. When we say six months it sounds like a long period but it is very short. In those six months, we say you must make sure that your presence is noted. While you are an on trial, your presence should not be less than twenty-four days of the Manyano meetings. We are very strict about that because we promote compliance. The intention there is to promote compliance. You comply with the rules of this because the Manyano unlike all other organisations in the church, is a very strict organisation. You will be told about the dues expected. This person must be told that now you have joined the Manyano, there is a moral character expected of you. And, you have to make sure that you don't break that. Moral character- I think it says it all. When you are an on trial, you cannot participate in the discussions of the Manyano but you must be there; to listen and watch because we believe by so doing you are learning through observation. That also intends to mould you in terms of humility, accepting whatever that is said to you as an on trial. You cannot refuse, you can't object to anything that your leadership says you must do. It's a kind of discipline. We also look at how you respond in the society; how you conduct yourself in the society because we believe that whether you are in uniform or not you are representative of the church.

Sometimes people find the Manyano to be outdated, as if it gets into the private space of a person. Manyano is not about your public or private. There is no public or private here. You come as a person. We look at everything because when you come to church you are not a private or a public person, you come as the full person that you are. In reality, when you are on-trial we are building a woman who is trustworthy, a woman who is a praying woman, a woman who knows what to say and when to say it, a woman who knows how to respect authority regardless of age or education. We are grooming a woman of stature.

So, during this time you take instructions from us, you don't ask [...] it's obey and ask later. I think that is what has kept the Manyano strong— that discipline has kept us very strong as a structure, to a point if you are too much of a feminist you would see it as

oppressive. But if you understand the culture of black people and how we set up women and their authority, you will understand why we build this type of woman. One who knows that she is powerful and must be strong not only at church, but also at home. As Manyano women, we train you to be a mother that your children would be proud of. You cannot be one thing at home and then be something else at church, your private life is your public life, and your public life is your private life. It is the same thing. So, after having travelled six months and fulfilled everything, *niyahlolwa* (tested). It is a kind of examination where we see if you are fit to be a full member. You have to tell us what has brought you here- what is your conviction? After you have been tested and we see that you have fulfilled the requirements, you become a full member.

Madwe went on to explain the difference in uniform and the exchange which takes place on the Good Friday service where the on-trial members receive the full membership uniform:

The Manyano uniform is red, black, and white. So, the full uniform is the one that everyone sees and loves- the red one. But because you are an on-trial member, you need to be differentiated from the full members. And because everything we do is spiritual, every part of the uniform has a spiritual meaning, it's not just a play thing. Starting from the shoes, stockings, and skirt- which are black- symbolise the darkness and the sin we were in before we accepted Jesus into our lives as our Lord and Saviour. The red blouse symbolises the blood of Christ that was shed for our sins on the cross. The blouse has five buttons; the four buttons of the actual blouse that run from the lower chest area to the waist symbolise the scars that Jesus had on His body when He was crucified. The fifth button, which is used for the belt that goes around the waist symbolizes the stab wound Jesus had on his side. The white, which is the hat and the bib which goes on our shoulders on top of the blouse symbolise the light and the purity that we the Manyano have now that we have been cleansed from sin by the blood of Christ. The bib makes a crisscross on the chest and is pinned together by the Women's Manyano pin. This pin symbolises the confidentiality shared by the Manyano women. Because we come together to share our pain and struggles, as a Manyano woman you are sworn to secrecy. This is the way we build trust between us as somethings we cannot share with people outside of the group. When you look at the hat, it used to have seven panels which came up to form a crown like structure on the woman's head. But now, it is a flat round like structure with five panels which come together to form a flat top. Each panel has a meaning; prayer, humility, forgiveness, trustworthiness, and motherliness. The hat symbolises the crown- we exchanged the crown of thorns Jesus wore on His crucifixion and for a crown of purity and holiness. This crown means we have defeated the grave by the blood of Jesus Christ. But if you are an on-trial member, you wear a black doek, a white blouse, a black skirt, black shoes, and black stockings. I am not sure what this symbolises as this is a new thing that was based on the need to differentiate the on-trial member from the full members.

But what is important is the exchange that happens on the Good Friday service where the on-trial woman exchange their white blouses for the red one and the rest of the uniform. This day is chosen because it symbolises how on the day of the crucifixion of Christ, one of the thieves who hung on the cross with Him chose to believe in Christ and asked to be remembered in paradise. So, when the on-trial women get the full

membership uniform, they are also declaring that they want to be counted in Paradise as they believe in Christ.

An important aspect of the Women's Manyano service are the moments of preparation prior to the presentation of the on-trial women to the congregation. The seventeen women to be presented to the congregation expressed their excitement for the service, with one of the women expressing:

I thought getting married was the happiest day of my life. Clearly I did not know about this day.

The service is an important element of the journey to becoming a full member of the Manyano group. The women appeared expectant and ready to enter this new journey in their faith and spirituality. Nosiselo Ndlovu explained the process of the service and highlighted the following:

I have been a leader of the Women's Manyano for a very long time, and part of my job is to make sure that my girls are prepared for the service where they make a life-long commitment to God and the Manyano in front of their family and friends. You see, it is like getting married [laughs]. It is even better than that because this is a life thing and you will not be left by someone who likes somebody else [laughs]. What was I saying? Oh, that day is like your wedding day. You see how as a bride you have gone through that long wait where you and your husband are engaged and you wait and wait and wait. You go to counselling to see if really, really, really, this is what you want. It is the same here; the new Manyanos have gone six months being tested and all of those things. And we all come together to then witness the wedding between the new Manyanos and God. It is an emotional thing, because it is there where you think about how far you have gone. You think about all that God has done for you- you think about everything. Then when you walk down that long passage and your name gets called, you take off the white blouse for the red one- that is your wedding dress. That is the most beautiful dress you will ever wear and it will never get out of fashion. What I am saying is that the Bible says the church is the bride and God is the bridegroom. So, you see what all of this means? It is wedding and the women are so happy because that is the one day where everything is about them and we are all celebrating their wedding and them coming home to the bridegroom.

In addition to this, Ndlovu also speaks on the significance of Manyano women choosing to be buried in their manyano uniform:

So, you see I spoke about the wedding in the beginning? There is also death, because we all die and you have to wear something to your funeral even if you are dead. You cannot just arrive at a place looking anyhow. So, we choose to get buried in our uniform because even then we are going to meet our bridegroom- the husband of the church.

So, this uniform is not a play thing, sisi. It is very serious. You see how sometimes your uncle and his friends who were in the army wear that [uniform] when they are going to go fight? Or when you see the very big, big top police people? All of the police come to the funeral in uniform and they stand around the box to walk their friend to heaven? It is like that with us. But people think we are just doing a play thing, but we know what we are doing there. Firstly, we must all go to that funeral wearing our uniforms because we are saying goodbye to one of our sisters. Before I forget, on the day a Manyano woman dies, we go and put up the Manyano flag at the house so people can see that a Manyano woman has died in this house. This is also done so that people can see that this was a Christian home and this is a house of a praying woman. So, that flag stays there from the day we hear of the death until the following week after everything has been done and she has been buried and the family has come back to order. Then we all come back as the Manyano group and have a service where we fetch the flag. We do this because we are telling the family that even if your mother is gone, we are still here for you. Oh, we also take the flag to the funeral and put it on the box or it stands just next to the box. It depends. People do different things and that's fine. So [...] there are different ways people do this. Some churches in the Eastern Cape bury the Manyano woman in her uniform and then the other uniform is given to the oldest daughter because she now has to take the role of the mother because mothers and daughters always go to church together so the mother has taught the daughter the right thing. That is what happened to us; when my mother died, we got the uniform but we shared it because all of us went to church with her so it would have been unfair for only the one of us to get. But it doesn't matter now. Other churches, this is the thing I saw here in KZN, the Manyano woman is buried in her full uniform with the flag next to her. We sing and dance around the box, we carry the flag around the box, we even get tired going up and down but we must do it because people must see that this is our sister. Also, God must know that a Manyano woman is coming to meet Him. We must do all of that.

When asked why it was important for Manyano women to be buried in their uniform, Ndlovu answered with the following:

It shows that you are leaving earth in your overall and it also shows the work you have been doing. It shows the world what you were. All your time on earth was spent doing the work of God, so people must see that. That is not just anybody-it is someone who was doing the work of God. The Manyano uniform is our overall, we do all of our work in it. When people leave Earth, they leave it the way they were and that is how they will always be remembered. You don't get into heaven as something else. What you were on Earth, you will be in heaven. We will always be *omama bomanyano* (mother of the Manyano) even if we leave this Earth. That is what we want the people to know. "*Kuthiwa okunqiniweyo emhlabeni kunqiniwe ezulwini*" (What is agreed to on Earth, it will also be so in heaven).

The analogy Ndlovu makes on the significance of the uniform in two different contexts is interesting in that she offers us two images of the Manyano woman. On the one hand, the Manyano woman is the bride, where she is presented to the congregation on the day where she exchanges her on-trial uniform for the full membership uniform which Ndlovu describes as the

wedding dress. On the other hand, in death, the Manyano uniform is compared to the uniform of the policeman and to those who are in the military. To Ndlovu, there is no distinction in the symbolisms of these uniforms. The Manyano uniform, the police uniform, as well the military uniform symbolise the work that has been done by those who wear that particular uniform. To Ndlovu, the celebration of the work done by those in the military and the police service is not greater than the work Manyano women do. Therefore, to Ndlovu, these uniforms symbolise work and service in their varied forms. However, Ndlovu does appear to be frustrated at the idea that people think what they do is a “play thing” and that what they do does not seem to hold the same symbolic prominence as those she compared the Manyano women to i.e. the military and the police service.

Ndlovu invites us to think deeper about which forms of work translate into South Africa’s conception of symbolic recognition. Symbols like the flag and uniforms form part of the claiming of a particular identity and are a form of memory for those who use such symbols. However, through the use of the Manyano women’s uniform, Manyano women show that we ought to think deeper about symbolic recognition and how we come to attach meaning to particular acts of service and what is perceived as work worthy of symbolic recognition.

Two of the participants spoke on the sacredness of the uniform and the process one goes through whilst putting it on. Gugulethu Sithole expressed:

When you are wearing this uniform... Firstly even when you wash it, this uniform should not be washed just by anyone. You must wash it yourself. Even when you wash it, you have to sing and praise God. As you wash it, you remember the day you chose to be part of the Manyano. You start to think what this uniform means to you and what it has done in your life. The Manyano uniform is an overall to do the work for the Lord.

Another participant, Jojo said:

When I wake up on Sunday morning or when I’m going to a funeral, I start with a prayer before I even put it on. When I’m ironing it, I’m still praying. Then when I am putting it on, I sing my song, I only sing one verse of my song. That is what I do, my child. After that I feel that I have strength and I am ready to do the work of God. It’s not about seeing me looking beautiful in the uniform, but it’s about what I feel in my spirit.

Manyano women have come to be recognised for their uniform, with the red blouse being the most recognised part of their uniform. The uniform has come to symbolise the journey one takes from being an on-trial member, a full member and the final day of Manyano women.

4.7 Akukho Madam kuManyano Lomama [There is no Madam in Women's Manyano]

The Manyano is stratified across class lines. A majority of the participants involved in the study were domestic workers or pensioners who were once domestic workers who now rely on the state for their income. To be precise, of the seventeen Manyano women interviews, six of the Manyano women were domestic workers. Of the six, four were now received the governments social grant for pensioners. Four participants were vendors, with two out of four using this to subsidise their income from their domestic work. A further five of the participants were now retired civil servants, with four being former nurses and one a former teacher. Only one of the participants from the Manyano women was formally employed as a civil servant in the education sector. Finally, only one participant, who is now retired, worked in the private sector. This overview of class dynamic with the Manyano group shows how this group is made up predominantly of women who are of the working class, with a few outliers who may be considered as middle class. When asked about the class dynamics within the Manyano group, Madwe said the following:

I like saying this for what it is worth, to remind people that the inception of the Manyano comes from the non-professionals. *Lumanyano lamaqaba eli* (this is the Manyano of the uneducated). The first Manyano women who met had no formal education, people who are seen as nothing in the greater scheme of our society. It is the Manyano of women who were poor, uneducated, and had nothing but God. These were the women who during the week, were Mavis and Beauty. But on Thursday when they were in their Manyano uniform and they were addressed as *Mam' Sihlalo* (Chair Lady). This was because other women knew that God put her on another level, irrespective of who she was during the week. Unfortunately, it is still the same with us. Many of the Manyano women are unemployed or they are Mavis and Beauty during the week but on Sunday or when we meet, they are the chairladies, the secretary generals, the treasurers, and so on. So, we try not to let that thing be a big issue with us. Also, I, personally, I am guided by my background and by my political conscience and my personality. I will never preside and be part of a group where there is class system. I think the good thing of the uniform is that we all look the same. This is why we are strict with the uniform. We don't want nail polish, or manicured nails- we don't want that setup of your work that sets you apart from others. We don't want lipstick, make-up or jewelry because I believe, and maybe others believe, that once we say we are the same but we do things differently, we bring in class. Because what happens? When we are set apart and people wear lipstick and those things with their uniform, people get uncomfortable and those who cannot afford start seeing their madams at church, and that is not a good thing. We are a same- whether you are the president or you are unemployed, we are all the same. There is no madam here in the Manyano. So, we try to be simple. In fact, we do try as the demand of the Manyano to be simple, even your material [of your blouse]- choose

the simple, beautiful material. We don't go for gorgeous stuff, because we want everyone to be equal.

This is where we see the importance of the uniform as an equaliser for Manyano women. Apart from the spiritualisation of the uniform, it also acts as a buffer and discourages differentiation among the women who are of the Manyano. However, be that as it may, the class disparities were distinct as those who were in better economic positions felt uncomfortable and they could sense that they were treated differently by the women who were less economically privileged. A participant who wished to be anonymous for this part of the interview stated:

Sometimes I feel guilty that I have been blessed with a good family, I had a husband who was principal of a high school. All my children finished high school and one is a doctor and the other one works overseas as an architect. I feel bad because I see how some of the women treat me. So, I try not be in leadership positions because I do not want that thing, you know? But it is tough. Unfortunately, our blessings are not the same. On the other hand, I am able to help those who need my help. Every month I take groceries for a few of the women who I know have nothing. In January, I buy school uniforms for their children and all of that. I try to help where I can.

Another participant who wished to be anonymous says:

You know, my son had bought me a car for my fiftieth birthday, and it is a nice car, shame. It was a car I had always wanted but when I got it, I could not drive it to church because I felt bad. I hid the car for a long time and only drove it to work and on Saturday. I did not want them to see that I was having all of these things when some of the women I was with did not have enough money to come to church. It is that funny thing.

Another participant who wished not to disclose her identity for this section of the interview says:

I have nothing. We are sitting here doing this interview and I'm thinking about the customers I am losing. Because my day is very touch and go. It is worse when the seasons change because the money changes too. In Summer, I make a lot of money because people want to buy this thing I'm selling. But when it is Winter, people want warm food but it is expensive to stock up, so I have to make a plan. All of my children cannot go to school because I have no money. Even now we are sitting here and you have nice clothes, you stay in a nice house, your grandmother is doing well, you go to a good university. I am thinking of my own children who will never get that and I am sad, very, very sad but I try not to blame God or to hate people who have good things because I pray that my chance will come. Maybe not for me but God will bless my daughter with a good man with a good job. I am just praying for that.

It was interesting to note that the above participants chose to be anonymous for this section of the interview. When asked if they felt uncomfortable with the question, all of the above

participants said they felt guilty that they were speaking this way and they wished not to be named. On both sides of the spectrum, working class or middle class, there was a sense of shame amongst the participants. With two participants feeling guilty for being better off, and the other two feeling ashamed of their poverty. This shows how even in the efforts of equalising the Manyano women through the uniform and having leadership open and accessible to all, class still seemed to distinguish the women in other ways.

However, Thandeka Manage expressed how Manyano women have often assisted her in her time of need. As a vendor, she stated how being part of the Manyano has helped her as the women get together and fundraise for members who are not able to afford to buy food due to the instability of their jobs. She narrates a story where:

One time I had nothing and it was Christmas. Business was slow because a lot of the people I usually sell to had gone home for the holidays. I was surprised by one of the women who were from my church when she came to my shack with a car filled with groceries for my children and I. I was so happy because I had no idea what these kids were going to eat and how we would survive until all my customers had returned. It helps that there are women like that in the Manyano group. I always know that my children will always have something to eat because of these women. God always makes a plan.

4.8 Conclusion

The narratives provided by the Manyano women in this chapter show varied accounts of how they have come to conceive of the Manyano group and how this has formed an integral part of their lives. In various ways, the participants have highlighted the nature of the Manyano in apartheid South Africa. They showed how this group, in some instances, used the group as a platform for their political activism and how they resisted the apartheid regime through using prayer with a combination of other forms of protest as their weapon. The Manyano women have also highlighted how they have infused their spiritual identity as mothers and Manyano women with political action such as protest. However, within civil society of the post-apartheid South African state, the assumption is made that Manyano women no longer overtly present themselves within the political arena. The assumption is made that Manyano women have retreated into the 'private sphere' and confine their movement within themselves or the church. However, the above participants have shown us how the intergenerational nature of the apartheid social structure has in fact demanded that Manyano women gather to deal with

inherited apartheid inequalities. Lillian Gxumisa informs us of how young women of the Manyano still deal with issues of housing, the ravages of poverty and being domestic workers in white households. Gxumisa also alerts us to the township- city and rural-urban divides which have remained intact as many of the Manyano women see themselves move in between these two points. This assumed shift in the publicness of the Manyano women to their retreat from the post-apartheid public sphere should signal the move from the routine violence of the apartheid state which required Manyano women to be present in the public sphere through a coalition of various liberation groups using a combination of resistance strategies.

In post-apartheid South Africa, and in the absence of the need for Manyano women to meet under a tree, or where movement is not restricted by state sanctioned laws; Manyano women now deal with the aftermath of the apartheid regime in far more intimate ways which focus on the interpersonal relations of the women and the communities they are located. This is made clear by the participants' explanation of the work that they do, which include praying for the youth of the church who are seeking employment, to feeding the poor, praying for the brokenness of their homes in the aftermath of the apartheid regime. The state seems not to be an entity which Manyano women are preoccupied with. All the participants did not make mention of the post- apartheid state, nor did they make mention of their relation to the state in the post-apartheid moment. However, it would not be wise to assume that this means that Manyano women are dismissive of the post-apartheid state. Instead, as explained by Mamdani (1996), the nature of the bifurcated state of South Africa is such that those who are located within the customary do not necessarily look to the civil society state as the focal point of their organising and moving. Instead, Manyano women who exist in the customary, locate themselves in the situatedness of their spirituality and not necessarily within the state. This means that religion and spirituality help Manyano women to navigate the post-apartheid terrain with tools they find within the organisation. However, the nature of the bifurcated state requires much movement and interaction between those who are of the custom and those of civil society.

Manyano women navigate the bifurcated nature of their lives in various ways. As Nobuntu Madwe has stated, during the week a large number of manyano women are "Mavis or Beauty" (these are the generic names Madwe gives to black women who are domestic workers in white households), however, they are church leaders in the Manyano group. This means we have to consider how Manyano women navigate their relationship within the two distinct spaces they

occupy, namely the customary (the Manyano group and their communities) and the civil society (democratic South Africa where they are Mary and Beauty).

In addition to this, the bifurcated nature of the lives of a majority of Manyano women requires us to consider how this impacts their understanding of citizenship and whether it is accurate to characterise this group as a counterpublic. In the previous chapter, I provided the theoretical foundation of the counterpublic and its formation. Manyano women seem to present themselves in a combination of ways, which do not allow for a binary interpretation of their identity. On the one hand, I argue that in the customary, Manyano women are a hegemonic public which does not necessarily consider ideas of citizenship as this does not impact the manner in which they organise as they are already recognised as citizens in the counterpublic. However, in the apartheid era, Manyano women who organised in the city due to the migrant labour economy, formed part of a greater black counterpublic which agitated for the overhaul of the apartheid state. In this instance, it is a fair judgement to make to locate Manyano women within the black counterpublic. On the other hand, within civil society as explained by Ekeh (1975) and later extended by Mamdani (1996), the interaction of individuals who are of the customary with the structures of civil society, required the fight for the recognition of citizenship as this directly impacted the economic, social, and political ordering of black life. In this instance, the black counterpublic – which Manyano women were a part of- organised for citizenship to be recognised. However, once this has been achieved, citizenship for Manyano women seems not to be located within the post-apartheid state, but within their spirituality. This is where Manyano women look to God and religion for the recognition of their humanity and for Him to provide where the state has failed. The spiritualisation of citizenship, in some instances, allows for the Manyano women to trust God to provide them with the strength and resources required for them to create sustainable lives for their children and families.

Therefore, the role of Manyano women in post-apartheid South Africa is complex and it requires multiple approaches in order to gain insight into what this group now signifies. I argue that Manyano women have retreated further into the customary, as this is where they devise strategies of survival as they now deal with the intimate and interpersonal socio- economic circumstances many of the Manyano women are subjected to. I would not go as far as to assume that this retreat renders Manyano women as invisible. Instead, I wish to argue that within civil society of the democratic South African state, Manyano women do not find it imperative to

present themselves as a part of a strong black counterpublic as they now function as their own entity in the customary and are considered to be hegemonic public within their communities. The structure of the Manyano women's group still holds great historical meaning in South Africa but they seem to occupy a different position from that of the apartheid era as expressed by the participants of the study. The following chapter will provide the discussion where these arguments are extended further.

Chapter Five

Sinelizwi LikaThixo (We Have the Word of God): Publicness, Endurance, Ubufazi, and Motherhood.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the various themes presented in Chapter Four and how these themes provide insight into the Manyano's identity and their role in post-apartheid South Africa. This chapter will discuss the publicness of the Manyano within two political dispensations—apartheid and democratic South Africa. This will be done with the focus on the public sphere and the bifurcated South African public sphere. Secondly, *ubufazi* and its meaning for the Manyano who move between the bifurcated public spheres, will be discussed in an attempt to show the complexity of *ubufazi* and how it cannot be confined to rigid understandings of the public sphere as proposed by Habermas' thesis on the bourgeois public sphere. I contend that *ubufazi*, as expressed by the Manyano, offers a dynamic and broader understanding of how they move in the public sphere and their position within the bifurcated South African context. Thirdly, I will discuss the nature of motherhood for the Manyano and how their expression and understanding of it is located outside of dominant biological determinants. I will show how the Manyano enable us to explore how a combination of their church identities interact with their identity as mothers which oftentimes is the propelling identity for their activism and organisation. Finally, I will discuss how the study has shown how the Manyano understand strength, silence, and endurance in post-apartheid South Africa. These varied understandings of strength, silence, and endurance in conjunction with spirituality and faith offer the Manyano the ability to subvert racialised and gendered tropes of black womanhood and strength.

5.2 "*Hayi, mntanam. Sisekhona*": We Are Here, Still.

The prominence of Manyano women in my family and its long-standing position in South African history makes me question the varied ways in which this group has come to maintain this structure. Particularly with the advent of the democratic South African state, in what ways has this organisation of women shaped and reconfigured their identity and their significance in South Africa's public imagination? Through the narratives provided in the previous chapter,

the Manyano have indicated a shift in their publicness from the apartheid era to the democratic moment in South Africa. In many ways, the Manyano have signaled how and why this shift has been attributed to the shift in the political climate of South Africa. However, with the recognition of this shift, the Manyano have maintained their identity whilst reconsidering their overt publicness in the democratic state.

In the previous chapter, the Manyano shared the nature of this group and the ways in which they organised in the apartheid era and the grounds for their political activism. However, many of the women expressed how, with the advent of democracy, the Manyano encounter the intergenerational legacy of systemic poverty and how the intimacy of their socio-economic positions now shape the ways in which the Manyano now organise. The shift in South Africa's political climate from one of state sponsored violence under the tyranny of the apartheid regime to one of democracy has also shifted the ways in which the Manyano organise in post-apartheid South Africa. Where the Manyano focused their initiatives and organising on the survival of black communities within the black counterpublic sphere, the Manyano now focus their efforts on coping with the precarity of their material circumstances in the aftermath of apartheid. These shifts have also repositioned the Manyano's publicness and the socio-political role they hold in post-apartheid South Africa. As alluded to in the concluding remarks of the previous chapter, the assumption is made that the Manyano have retreated into the 'private sphere' and no longer present themselves in overtly political ways. This retreat has been attributed to the idea that the Manyano are now apolitical and their organising is now Christian orientated. Although at first glance this may be true, it is important to complicate this reading of the Manyano in post-apartheid South Africa.

In Chapter Two, I examined the idea of the bifurcated South African public sphere presented by Mamdani (1996) and the implication this has for the publicness of the Manyano. As Mamdani explains the historical formations of the bifurcated public sphere in South Africa, he offers us the ideas of the custom and civil society (1996:16). I argue that the publicness of the Manyano in post-apartheid South Africa can be explained through the recognition that the Manyano now operate at the intersection of these two points of the public sphere. This is where I will think through the idea that the Manyano have retreated to the 'private sphere' (read as customary).

In the gendered bourgeois public sphere as explained by Habermas (1989), where there is a distinct public and private sphere, the Manyano may be seen to be located within the private sphere as they do not form part of or contribute to the economic and political functioning of the patriarchal bourgeois public sphere. However, with Mamdani's (1996) expansion on the idea of the public sphere in South Africa and its bifurcated nature, it allows us to see how the Manyano occupy two distinct forms of publicness which have been reconfigured with the change in South Africa's political climate. The first form of publicness I refer to is the publicness of the Manyano in the apartheid and post-apartheid moment in relation to civil society, and the second form of publicness for the Manyano I refer to is their publicness within the customary with a focus on the post-apartheid moment.

The publicness of the Manyano in South Africa, particularly under the apartheid regime, or what we can call 'civil society', was based primarily as a response to structured violence enacted on black communities and the black South African citizenry at large. This required the overt politicisation of the Manyano based on their identity as mothers and community builders. However, within the civil society which Mamdani has referred to as a patriarchal colonial state (1996: 19), there are distinctions made between the gendered public and private spheres and this is where the Manyano would be ordinarily positioned. However, with the all-encompassing nature of apartheid violence which invited violence in the private sphere of black life and the threat it posed to the functionality of the home and family life where black women were most affected, the Manyano entered civil society (the public sphere) through the liberation efforts of the black counterpublic sphere. In this moment, the Manyano's publicness and their interaction with the public sphere challenged the idea of the private and public sphere divide as they used their social position as mothers to resist the oppressive state. This politicisation through maternal activism contests the Habermasian idea that the private and public sphere are two distinct spheres which operate on fundamentally different terms. The Manyano, through their interaction with the public sphere in apartheid destabilises the myth that those within the private sphere do not contribute to the working of the public sphere. Furthermore, the publicness of the Manyano in the apartheid era exposes the flawed nature of the private/public divide as they show us how both of these spheres are intimately connected and interact in various ways. In addition this, in the presence of a violent state which compromises the work and functioning of the home, further highlights how maternal work has the capacity to reconstitute the relationship between the private and public sphere. It is then not surprising that with the transition to democracy, and the Manyano no longer being overtly political, the argument of

gendered private and public sphere still persists. However, Mamdani's idea of the bifurcated public sphere in South Africa urges us to reconsider what the Manyano's retreat from civil society means in the post-apartheid moment. This assumed retreat into the private sphere of civil society places the Manyano outside of the public sphere and does not recognise their organising and various ways in which they construct their activism in the democratic dispensation.

The nature of the patriarchal colonial state, which has spilled over into the democratic state, is such that activism, organising, or political work which falls outside of its masculinist understanding of work is misrecognised and relegated to the private sphere. Therefore, retreat of the Manyano from the public sphere is read in this way. In the absence of a strong black counterpublic in the post-apartheid moment, where the Manyano organised through a combination of collaborative resistance movements, it is assumed that the work of the Manyano no longer contributes to black public life. However, this assessment lacks the complexity of the historical formation of the South African state. Therefore, I find usefulness in the incorporation of the customary as explained by Mamdani (1996) and how this could provide a richer analysis of the Manyano and their publicness in post-apartheid South Africa.

The publicness of the Manyano in the post-apartheid moment could be explained through their location within the customary. In the customary, which is not structurally and politically organised by the dictates of civil society, the Manyano take on an overt and public role in their communities through various of ways. With the demise of the apartheid regime, Manyano woman have indeed retreated from civil society and no longer find it necessary to direct their activism and organising to an oppressive state. Instead, the Manyano have retreated further into the customary which allows them to focus on a number of strategies of survival.

In the text, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*, bell hooks writes of the home being a place of recovery for African American women who encounter various forms of violence as they work in white households as domestic workers (1990: 49). For hooks, although the black household is not one which is romanticised or without critique, she offers the idea that in the absence of white supremacy and the tyranny of white employers, the home offers black women the opportunity to gather and focus on the wellbeing of their children, the space to create new strategies of survival and resistance, and the ability to affirm and offer recognition to themselves outside of the gaze of white supremacy and the violence they experience. (1990:

48). hooks suggests that the idea of the homeplace provides for African American women a place of retreat and temporary rest (1990: 47). This is where I locate the Manyano and their retreat from civil society to the customary which is misguidingly read as the private sphere. For the Manyano, the homeplace of the customary allows for them to form a union of black *abafazi* and mothers to strategise and devise “theologies of survival” (Hadaad 2000:175) from the aftermath of their publicness in apartheid South Africa and the violence they experienced. Furthermore, this retreat into the homeplace of the customary allows for the Manyano to deal with the now intimate and interpersonal legacy of structural inequality and poverty that they face in the post-apartheid moment. As the participants expressed in the previous chapter, the Manyano now focus their energy not only on the spiritual nature of the group, but also on the issues faced by the communities they are part of. Issues such as unemployment, HIV/Aids, gender based violence, and the class divisions within the group are the primary focus of the group which all contributes to the public life and functioning of customary. Therefore, in the home place of the customary, the Manyano form part of the hegemonic public which in some instances may be subjected to patriarchal order as with the civil society described by Mamdani. However, the divide of the gendered public and private sphere of civil society does not fully translate into the home place of the customary as the foundations of the customary are not solely reliant on the sustenance of patriarchal domination. This is the distinction between civil society and the customary and the position the Manyano occupy within the bifurcated state. In civil society, the Manyano form part of the gendered private sphere and are not considered to form part of the work or contribute to the hegemonic public and are thus misrecognized. Alternatively, in the customary, where patriarchal domination does not overarchingly dictate the functionality of the Manyano, the Manyano form part of the hegemonic public in which they are recognised and inextricably linked to various forms of work within the hegemonic public which aims to cope and deal with the structural poverty inherited from the apartheid regime. Reading the Manyano this way allows us to see how their retreat into the customary does not suggest that the Manyano are no longer visible in the post-apartheid moment. This reading places the Manyano within the complexity of the bifurcated public sphere in South Africa and recognises the multifaceted nature of their publicness in the post-apartheid moment.

However, it must be noted that this retreat to the customary does not signal the complete removal of the Manyano from civil society in post-apartheid South Africa. Instead, it signals how the Manyano do not place much importance in the post-apartheid state for their organising. The Manyano interact with post-apartheid South African civil society from various standpoints.

These include– but are limited to – their reliance on the state for economic opportunities such as domestic work, social grants, and varied forms of social welfare. This would have us believe that in their individual capacities, the Manyano move through the bifurcated nature of their lives through constant processes of negotiation for the purposes of their economic wellbeing. However, for the purposes of their recognition and citizenship, the Manyano have maintained their rootedness in the customary as this is the space where they are recognised in their fullness as *abafazi*, mothers, leaders, and people who are dedicated to their communities through the situatedness of their spirituality. This is how Stella Shumbe comes to strongly alert us “*hayi, mntanam. Sisekhona*” (No, my child, we are still here!). Shumbe reminds us that although the Manyano may not be seen in post- apartheid civil society, they are still here and they are still present. But due to the bifurcated nature of the South African state, those who occupy different positions within it do not have the tools to recognise the visibility of this group.

5.3 Ubufazi Subuthata Political: Womanhood and Mothering

The Manyano have emphasised their identity as *abafazi* and mothers. In both cases, the Manyano have insisted that they hold very particular understandings of these aspects of their identity. On the one hand, there is a distinction made between the political and the traditional understandings of *ubufazi*. While on the other hand, the Manyano insist their identity as mothers is based not on biological reproduction but on the social position they occupy by virtue of being a Manyano. The distinctions made by the Manyano indicate the possible disjuncture between how they come to shape these identities and the dominantly held understandings of how these identities are constructed. These distinctions made require us to interrogate how the Manyano understand these two elements of their identity.

5.3.1 Manyano Woman and Ubufazi

In Chapter Four, Ms. Nobuntu Madwe spoke on the political and cultural understanding of *ubufazi* for the Manyano. In the political understanding of *ubufazi*, Madwe explains the ideological foundations of patriarchy and the belief that the biology of a woman indicates her inferiority and her social position in society. In addition to this, Madwe suggests that elements of the politically motivated understanding of *ubufazi* are also present in the church as the ‘patriarchal set up’ of the church still assumes that women are under developed versions of the male anatomy. However, Madwe offers us an alternative understanding of *ubufazi* which relies

heavily on culture and tradition. From this perspective, *ubufazi* is not based on the belief that women are inferior to men. Instead, women are recognised and their position in society is well respected. As part of the cultural understanding of *ubufazi*, the participants suggested *ubufazi* is not based on marriage and that women who are not married are considered to be *abafazi*. Therefore, *ubufazi* and marriage are not mutually exclusive identities held by the Manyano. Instead, the Manyano understand *ubufazi* through a combination of ways such as seniority and the position they hold within the church. This would mean that within the Manyano, womanhood is not dependent on marriage. The Manyano come to *ubufazi* in ways which are recognised and respected within the cultural context Madwe speak of.

With the two understandings of *ubufazi* as described by Madwe, it is crucial to explore this further in relation to the above discussion on the different identities the Manyano straddle in the customary and civil society in post-apartheid South Africa. The most contested debate in relation to *ubufazi* and traditional governance in post-apartheid South Africa has been centered on the Traditional Courts Bill (TCB), which aimed to restore indigenous forms of judicial governance, belief and knowledge systems (Gasa 2011:24) in South Africa as a means to remedy its erasure in the wake of colonial and apartheid imposition. Furthermore, what has proven to be at the pinnacle of the debate, is the TCB's proposal to confer on traditional leaders the same rights and judicial powers as judges within particular traditional jurisdictions. This move has been contested by feminist scholar, Gasa (2011), who argues that the TCB limits the access women have to trials which focus on issues on gender based violence. "The glaring absence of crimes committed against women, including those that are already identified in national legislation" (2011: 27) are limited in the TCB and thus place women under the subjection of a patriarchal customary legal system. As a result, the process of participation and leadership is limited to traditional leaders which often "prohibits women from the direct participation in decision making and even direct representation as complainants, defendants, and advisors in complex issues" (2011:26). This compels us to question how *ubufazi*, in the traditional sense as explained by Madwe, is compromised due to the failure of the TCB to recognise the rights of *abafazi* under this system. This is where we see the dialectical nature of women's place in the customary and within civil society.

The element of choice and mobility between the custom and the civil give *abafazi* the opportunity to forgo the customary in moments where *abafazi* are misrecognised within the customary. Therefore, although the Manyano may hold values of *ubufazi* within the traditional

and customary sense, in some instances *abafazi* may opt out of the customary for reasons where they may find more recognition within the civil society structures. This may have us question, to what end and what gains do *abafazi* find in the recognition of the customary and how has this changed within the post-apartheid moment. For the Manyano, the customary offers various spaces for recognition. These may vary from being recognised as community leaders and organisers, mothers of the church, women of prayer, and women who are the bedrock of their various societies. Within the hegemonic public which they form part of, the Manyano prove to be a long standing and well respected structure. However, by virtue of the overarching nature of patriarchy and patriarchal sensibilities in conjunction with colonial impurities infused into the customary and traditional beliefs and knowledge systems, the custom can often pose a threat to *abafazi*, and thus there is a need for *abafazi* to seek alternative spaces of recognition outside the customary. With tradition and customary being manipulated in ways which are often beneficial to those higher up the ranks of the patriarchal order, customary and tradition in South Africa have “largely symbolised the sordid legitimisation of violence in women's intimate lives, effectively undermining the formal rights that women experience in the public sphere” (Magadla and Chitando 2014: 181). This can mean that women, like the Manyano, often seek recognition within the post-apartheid civil public sphere. Within this public sphere, where the supremacy of the constitution affords women access to justice and the recognition of violation committed against them, women have the ability to choose parts of the customary or the traditional for the benefits of civil society. This is important aspect in that it shows how the two spaces are not mutually exclusive, nor do they exist as spaces in constant conflict for women. Where the customary may not be affirming in some aspects, the civil public sphere may offer *abafazi* a space for recognition and vice versa. This then complicates the rigid understanding of the public sphere and how the Manyano may navigate it in the post-apartheid moment. With the Manyano occupying various publics within varied contexts; from hegemonic public in the customary, the black counterpublic in the apartheid moment, their movement in and out of the post-apartheid public sphere; the public sphere is an open and fluid space in which the Manyano choose which is most valuable in particular moments. This contends with dominant Western feminist discourse which sees women within one public sphere with limited options in the event that they wish to opt out. Therefore, *ubufazi* as expressed by the Manyano, is a fluid and open understanding of how the Manyano construct their womanhood in relation to the context within which they find themselves in.

This fluid interpretation which moves between the traditional and the political, and the customary and civil society, allows for the Manyano to navigate post-apartheid South Africa in unique and diverse ways which are not limited to static and unchanging understandings of customary. This also allows for the Manyano to negotiate the terms of their resistance without looking solely to the customary for their recognition.

5.3.2 *The Manyano and Motherhood*

Motherhood is central to identity of the Manyano and this is recognised by the church at large and within the communities the Manyano are located. Participants expressed how motherhood is a partnership with God and how God provides them with the tools and knowledge to be able to raise children according to His will. However, the Manyano expressed how motherhood is not rooted in biological reproduction. Motherhood for the Manyano is based on the understanding that they occupy a particular position within the church and their communities. Motherhood understood this way focuses largely on the work of mothering as opposed to the reproduction of human life. Motherhood is then the interaction of seniority, which is gained through being part of the Manyano, as well as the work which is associated with the group. In *Family Matters: Feminist Concepts in African Philosophy of Culture*, Nzegwu suggests that the nuclear family as understood through Western feminist scholarship is one which creates relations which “are destructive of women’s equality both within the family and in all spheres of life” (2006:7). These unequal relations create oppressive structures for Western women which are often unchallenged due to the public and private divide (2006:7). This is based primarily on the gendered and patriarchal ordering of the Western family and Western life at large. Motherhood understood in this way, as an outcome of gendered and patriarchal ordering, offers Western women within the nuclear family little to no room to negotiate and construct their own expressions of motherhood and the work associated with mothering (2006:8). Although Western feminists have gone to great lengths to argue against this form of understanding of motherhood and the nuclear family through the use of gender as an analytical category, Nzegwu argues that in the absence of the universal applicability of gender as the basis for understanding the ordering the world and the family, Western feminist tools used to demystify and deconstruct gender are limited (2006:9). It is important to note that Nzegwu does not argue that from the African perspective, particularly within the Yoruba context from which she writes, that Africa has not succumb to this form of social organising. Instead, Nzegwu suggests that the coloniality of knowledge systems require us to trace through the

history of cultural perspectives which would create a rupture in universal arrogance of knowledge (2006:13). In the same vein as Oyěwùmí (1997) discussed in Chapter Two, Nzegwu argues for the interrogation of universal knowledge and how through colonial imposition, indigenous knowledge has been disregarded. This requires the centering of experiential difference and cultural variance in order to deuniversalise Western conceptions of motherhood and the family (2006:9). Although writing on the specificities of Yoruba culture, Nzegwu and Oyěwùmí argue that hierarchies within the Yoruba family were based on the seniority as opposed to a gendered reading which prioritises androcentricism.

In *What Gender is Motherhood? Changing Yoruba Ideals of Power, Procreation, and Identity in the Age of Modernity*, Oyěwùmí (2016) argues that seniority based social organising in relation to motherhood provides a different construction of motherhood which does not rely heavily on the logic that motherhood relies on the biological (2016: 2). Motherhood from this standpoint allows us to unpack the cultures and institutions which inform motherhood that do not prioritise the logic of biology. This requires us to move away from the ethos of gender based understandings of motherhood and focus on indigenous conceptions of motherhood and how this divergent view deconstructs the patriarchal baggage attached to motherhood and the work associated with motherhood. In a similar fashion, the Manyano position their understanding of motherhood within this literature. Motherhood is not seen through the gendered lens which sees motherhood as a patriarchal and oppressive institution. Motherhood for the Manyano is a social position they hold and is solidified by their spiritual connectedness they have with God. Motherhood is not confined to the nuclear family but is a recognition of the divine in conjunction with the work they do for their children and the children of the church and community. This places the work of mothering as the focal point of motherhood instead of the biological imperative associated with western perspectives of motherhood. Therefore, if motherhood for the Manyano is associated with the work of mothering as opposed to the act of giving birth to life, it is imperative to consider how motherhood and mothering function for the Manyano.

In *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, Hill-Collins (2000) writes on the nature of black motherhood from the African American context. Hill-Collins contends that the nature of motherhood for African American women is a series of relationships and networks built between women within the individual biological family and those who form part of the greater African American community (2000:190).

Therefore, “black motherhood as an institution is both dynamic and dialectical” in the sense that it is maintained and preserved through a series of “renegotiated relationships” (2000:190) with support networks of biological mothers and other mothers. It is argued that within African American communities, black mothers occupy a position which is often aggravated by their socio-economic and political context which often makes the process of mothering challenging. As such, a network of biological mothers and other mothers (women who care for children where biological mother cannot) is created from the recognition that “vesting one person with the full responsibility of mothering a child may not be wise or possible” (2000:192). Therefore, “shared mothering responsibilities are central to the institution of black motherhood” (2000:192). These networks of biological mothers and other mothers reflect how the lives of black mothers are an intersection of race, class, and gender which make the work of mothering a communal effort as opposed to an individualistic effort which is restricted to the biological home.

This understanding of black motherhood can be applied to the ways in which the Manyano see their role as mothers within the church and within their communities. the Manyano often find themselves mothering children who are in precarious economic situations, children or members of the church who are or have biological mothers who do not have the ability to do the work of mothering. The Manyano are seen as other mothers particularly within the church and their work of mothering is central to the working and functioning of the church. In addition to this, the spirituality the Manyano attach to motherhood and mothering makes the Manyano a structure for emotional and spiritual support not only for children and members of the church but also for biological mothers who require the support provided by the network of biological and other mothers.

This conception of motherhood for black women and for the Manyano disputes Wells’ (1991) argument that motherhood and maternal politics cannot be seen as legitimate platforms for activism or any form of organising. For the Manyano, motherhood and the work of mothering are a constant interaction with their circumstances and their proximity to disadvantage due to their socio-economic positions. Therefore, black motherhood and motherhood for the Manyano has constantly been aggravated by their socio-political and economic situatedness. Maternal activism is a central feature for black motherhood as it is a form of resistance which is supported by various women-centered networks which enable black mothers to be able to fulfill their duty as mothers.

Motherhood for the Manyano is thus a political and spiritual vocation where the Manyano are in partnership with God and the networks of support they create within the structure of the Manyano. The Manyano and their expression of motherhood and the work of mothering is located within the strand of literature which disputes the long held idea that motherhood is explicitly located within biological understandings of mothering. The Manyano, like Walker (1995), see motherhood as a social identity which intersects with other identities women straddle. This means rigid understandings of motherhood restricted to biology do not adequately capture the complex nature of how women come to motherhood in the South African context and further decentralises the ways in which apartheid shaped black women's ability to do the work of mothering in the presence of ongoing violence.

These understandings of *ubufazi* and motherhood give us varied interpretations of how the Manyano form their identity. In both cases, the Manyano insist on motherhood and *ubufazi* being seen as social identities which intersect with a multiplicity of identities they hold. Suspending the logic of biology attached to social identities allows for the Manyano to construct and make meaning of their identities and how these are negotiated. This allows for a dialectical approach where the Manyano, in their individual capacities are able to be agents in their lives and have the ability to make meaning of their lives outside of the gendered and racialised images which seek to dictate their identity.

5.4 *Andiwanaki Amanxeba Ami: God Will Soothe the Pain*

In post-apartheid South Africa, the Manyano have expressed how in the aftermath of apartheid, they now deal with the realities of poverty, unemployed children, and the scourge of HIV/Aids. In the narratives provided, the Manyano have traced the challenges they faced in the apartheid era and how the intergenerational nature of structural inequality has spilled over into their lives and the lives of their children. The Manyano have also expressed that although their lives are ones of struggle and survival, they have found the ability to endure through the unity of the group. The women spoke of how they use their spirituality and faith as an invaluable resource which helps them to endure and hold on. This ability to endure was attributed to their faith and the strength they receive from God through prayer and the unity of the Manyano. However, it is important to complicate this insistence on endurance and how this affects the identity of the Manyano. On one level, the precarity of life for the post-apartheid Manyano woman requires

her to be strong and endure in order for her to be able to continue. On another level, because of the situatedness of the Manyano in their communities and within their homes, the Manyano endure in order to be able to fulfill their social roles as mothers.

There are two main points we can consider when we think through the longstanding trope of black womanhood and strength. On the one hand, the Manyano require us to think through how and why strength and endurance remain a prominent feature in the lives of black women even with the advent of democracy. Secondly, the Manyano require us to complicate how spirituality allows for the Manyano to commit to the trope of the strong black woman. These points will be discussed respectively.

5.4.1 Black Womanhood and Endurance

There is a longstanding trope of black women being naturally strong and having the ability to overcome harsh circumstances. The image of the strong, unrelenting, and stoic black woman who silently carries her burdens has often been used as a controlling image of black woman and black womanhood. Motsemme (2004) and Harris-Perry (2011) complicate this image by providing alternative meanings to how black women understand and use strength as forms of resistance and survival.

In *The Mute Always Speak: On Women's Silences at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, Motsemme (2004) explores the varied ways in which silence is used by black women, and how silence was used particularly during the apartheid era as a tool for resistance and survival. Motsemme makes the claim that silence as a political tactic has been used by women to “withhold information to protect loved ones to constitute an act of conscious resistance” (2004:919). Under circumstances where routine violence is meted out on black communities where black women are in the forefront, “silence as used in this manner also became a way of critiquing apartheid power” (2004:919). The image of the silent mother or black woman in the aftermath of the invasion of the home during apartheid rule indicates not the ignorance or denial of the current circumstances. Instead, silence used by black mothers, black women community leaders, and mothering networks formed by black women in such “political atmospheres may be seen as a form of recognition, rather than ignorance about their precarious position” (2004:919) they find themselves in. Further, this silence in the face of invasive apartheid security forces in black communities, could be seen as an act of resistance; the refusal to submit

and garner information about “the whereabouts of sons and husbands, ordinary women were simultaneously voicing their awareness of their sociopolitical situations” (2004:919). Therefore, “women show us how the very domains and institutions that act to oppress them can also become the very sites from which they remap enabling forms of power for themselves” (2004:919).

Although the above speaks directly to the use of silence in the wake of an oppressive political regime, the Manyano women’s use of silence also invite us to explore how they make sense of their use of silence. In the previous chapter, the Manyano spoke on how their grandmothers and mothers, in adverse times, used to be silent and have a time for prayer which was secluded from the rest of the family. These adverse times were mostly attributed to the instability and precarity of their lives as women who were the head of the household. Silence used by the Manyano also provides for what Motsemme refers to as the “illusion of stability” (2004: 920). It is argued that the work that mothers do, particularly in maintaining the stability of the home, is often done to “create illusions of stability, of constancy, and of matter-of-factness particularly for their children to maintain some kind of order in their homes” (2004: 920-921). Here, silence was used a means to shield children and the family from apartheid violence, but also from the intimacy of poverty that the Manyano now face in the post-apartheid moment. Therefore, motherhood for the Manyano also means the incorporation of “projecting protective silence” (2004:922) which “articulates women’s demand for safer [and stable] living for their families and communities in their lives” (2004:922). This reading of silence used by women, and the Manyano in particular, provides an alternative reading of how silence, which is an element of endurance, is used to create an environment of normalcy and stability. In the presence of a violent apartheid state and the inherited legacy which has structured post-apartheid South Africa, Motsemme (2004) and the Manyano provide a complex understanding of how they navigate strength and how they craft it as an oppositional tool in relation to the instability of their lives.

In the previous chapter, Lillian Gxumisa expressed how she felt as if the older Manyano have failed in the teaching of the younger Manyano to be strong. She adds that this could be because the older Manyano are tired and no longer have the energy to teach younger woman how to be strong and how to endure. For Gxumisa, there is a strong sense that among the Manyano, strength is an intergenerational trait which ought to be passed down to younger women in order for them to be able to deal with the challenges they face. This would have us question why

strength and endurance are still required for the Manyano in post-apartheid South Africa. With the shift in the political climate and the sustained resourcefulness of the Manyano, why do strength and endurance remain a prominent feature in the lives of the Manyano?

Strength and endurance have long been associated with black womanhood. In South Africa, from the fight against apartheid and the everyday violence and within their various communities where black women are located, black women have often been read as being able to “endure in the midst of daily family, community, and state violence because they are resilient” (Motsemme 2004:924). This image is not only limited to black women in South Africa. Writing on the African American context, Harris-Perry (2011) argues that the image of the black women as “motivated, hardworking, and resourceful people” (2011: 198) has been a longstanding trope from the time of slavery and the Civil Rights Movement in the United States of America. This image of black women has created the expectation that African American women should be autonomously responsible and self-denying caregivers in their homes and communities. This means that “they are validated, admired, and praised based on how they behave, and not on who they are” (2011: 226). Motsemme adds that “it is through the perpetuation of such myths that our insights of women’s notion of pain, suffering, humiliation, and joy remain limited within the social sciences” (2004:924). Motsemme complicates this reading of strength through the use of silence as:

an alternative sanctuary for women to retreat to and reclaim their sense of self. This retreat into one’s inner world could then, be viewed as opening up the possibilities for women to inhabit a different imaginary [where] the invention of the self can go beyond the limits of available oppressive representations (2004:924).

For the Manyano, strength and silence are the interaction of the divine and the personal in the natural world. This interaction is based not on the fear of failure and the shame of not being able to provide for the communities and their families. Instead, the intersection of the divine and the personal challenges the trope black women do possess an inherent ability to endure or to be strong. The Manyano recognise that their proximity to vulnerability is based not on the failure of their efforts, but on the inherited legacies of apartheid.

However, with the gendered and racialised gaze black women are scrutinised under, a reading of their strength which denies their vulnerability and proximity to disadvantage reflects the racialised baggage attached to black women’s identity. For Gxumisa and many of the Manyano

like her, the teaching of the younger Manyano is both a recognition of the overarching structural issues but also an insistence on strength and silence as resistance. It is at the intersection of these two points that Gxumisa finds it imperative for the Manyano to be taught that strength and endurance are required. The combination of individual resourcefulness alongside the need to resist gendered and racialised stereotypes associated with black women is required when one thinks of the Manyano and their strength. However, individual resourcefulness for Gxumisa rests not on the women's 'natural ability to endure'. Instead, this individual resourcefulness is located within the divine; within the situatedness of their spirituality. This reading of individual resourcefulness recognises that the Manyano are vulnerable, disadvantaged, and do not rely on a long standing historically racialised and gendered idea that for black women, "strength is foundational to who they are. As long as they can present themselves as self-sacrificial and independent, their identities feel firmly rooted." (Harris Perry 2011: 227). Instead, Gxumisa and others insist on their strength being rooted in their faith and partnership with God. Therefore, doubt, failure and vulnerability are read not as an inherent failure of their personhood but an interplay between the natural and divine. This requires us to interrogate ideas of strength, endurance and misrecognition and what it means in the presence of the Manyano's spirituality.

5.4.2 The Manyano and Divine Strength

The Manyano who spoke on strength, silence, and endurance spoke not of their strength as an inbuilt trait they possessed. They spoke of how their strength came from God and their faith. For the Manyano, the interplay between their socio-economic world and their spirituality work together to provide strength and the possibility to endure. As opposed to the historically gendered and racialised stereotype of the strong black woman which does not allow for black women to be recognised as vulnerable and disadvantaged and thus misrecognises them; strength, silence, and endurance for the Manyano is as an interaction with the divine. In the divine, the Manyano are not misrecognised, nor are they subjected to racialised and gendered images which seek to control them and their identity. The Manyano believe that God is an active participant in their lives and He provides for their needs and is situated in the lives of the dispossessed and those whose lives are placed under strain due to the pervasive nature of structural marginalisation faced by black women. Therefore, strength and endurance are a result of divine partnership. Embracing their partnership with the divine in their struggles offers the Manyano the ability to be vulnerable, to see failure not as an outcome of their individual

choices, but failure is seen as a part of life which is mitigated by faith. Faith allows for the Manyano to deal with failure and allows them to experience the fullness of their humanity. The divine offers strength and endurance, but it also offers Manyano the possibility of forgiveness. The forgiveness of failure, doubt, and disappointment gives the Manyano the ability to heal and to soothe the pain of disappointment and adversity. Forgiveness also gives the Manyano the assurance that vulnerability is a human trait which they have full claim to. Furthermore, the knowledge of God's forgiveness provides the Manyano with "an alternate measuring stick for judging their human worth" (Harris-Perry 2011: 269). In addition to this, silence expressed through moments of prayer and faith allow for the Manyano the possibility to "encounter an inner world governed by imagination" (Motsemme 2004:924) which is propelled by faith and the divine. Therefore, silence communicated through faith and prayer offers the Manyano an alternative language to construct a reality for themselves which is not "confined to narrow racist and sexist forms of validation" (Motsemme 2004:924). The connection between the imaginary world offered by the divine in interaction with the lived realities faced by the Manyano allows for the possibility to "reimagine, refashion, and thus accrue resources to act in an openly unjust social world" (2004:925). This alternative image is linked to idea that the Manyano strive to be in the likeness of God and to walk in the ways of the Lord through faith. This image offers a resistance strategy which also affirms the personhood of the Manyano. Therefore, with the partnership they have with God and the strength they receive from Him, the Manyano are provided with alternative images of themselves which allow for a range of interpretations and understandings of their strength as the divine offers the Manyano the possibility to see themselves in their fullness.

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the main themes presented in Chapter Four and how these themes help us understand how the Manyano view their position and role in post-apartheid South Africa. I have discussed how the shift from apartheid to democracy has also reconfigured The Manyano's publicness in the post-apartheid moment. In the apartheid era, the Manyano challenged and resisted their exclusion from apartheid civil society through the liberation movement of the black counterpublic sphere. I have argued that this politicisation and publicness of the Manyano challenged gendered views of the public as they formed a crucial part of the black counterpublic sphere and its agitation for the recognition of citizenship. The use of maternal activism as an entry into the political domain showed how the idea of a

gendered private/public sphere does not account for the ways in which apartheid violence blurred these distinctions due to the overarching nature of apartheid violence in black families and communities.

In addition to this, I have argued that in the post-apartheid moment where the Manyano are believed to have retreated from the public to the private sphere, the Manyano are still visible and form part of the hegemonic public sphere within the 'customary' of the bifurcated public sphere. This retreat into the customary does not signal the complete withdrawal of the Manyano from the democratic civil society/public. Instead, I contend that the publicness of the Manyano is constantly refashioned within this bifurcation for various purposes. This dialectical understanding of the Manyano's publicness in both the customary and civil society offers a diverse understanding of how the Manyano navigate post-apartheid South Africa. Although the Manyano's publicness is fluid- they value the customary and civil society from different standpoints- the Manyano still remain rooted within the customary, as this is the sphere where they are recognised as full citizens and are not subjected to racial and gendered conception of black womanhood.

Furthermore, I have argued that with the bifurcation of their lives, the Manyano challenge how we understand motherhood in post-apartheid moment. This is to say, The Manyano still view motherhood as an interaction of other identities they hold and thus use motherhood as an organising tool in coping with poverty, unemployment, HIV/Aids, and their proximity to disadvantage.

Finally, I have argued that this proximity to disadvantage and the precarious nature of the lives of the Manyano in post-apartheid South Africa sees the persistence of the image of the strong black woman who is resilient and resourceful. However, in this chapter, I have shown how The Manyano situate their strength and endurance with the divine. This is to say, the Manyano resist racialised and gendered stereotypes of strength through the recognition their partnership with God allows for vulnerability, disappointment and failure. It is through this partnership with God that the Manyano found full recognition of their humanity.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

The aim of the study was to examine the role of the Manyano in post-apartheid South Africa. Specifically, the study aimed to examine how the Manyano offers women the space for the performance of citizenship. From their initial founding as a missionary project within the church, the Manyano have evolved to be part of the daily fabric of life in black communities. The thesis has shown that the pressures of apartheid violence consolidated this coming together of women and became a space where black women coped and resisted violence meted on their families and communities. The thesis has shown that the “joining together of women”- *ukumanya* – formed part of a bifurcated counterpublic during apartheid, and has continued to play a profound role in the lives of black women after apartheid.

Through the use of the idea of the public sphere as proposed by Habermas (1989), the study argued that the concept understood in these terms limits the complex and varied understandings of the public sphere within various contexts, and how women come to access the public sphere within these varied contexts. Although Western feminists have offered measured critiques of the public sphere and its patriarchal foundations, the study has argued that the universal application of these critiques further marginalises the subjectivities of African women and how they navigate the public sphere within their particular locations. For the Manyano, the presentation of a uniform and rigid public sphere which distinctly demarcates the public and private spheres and how women are positioned with them, does not create room for the opening up of the combination of ways the Manyano have positioned themselves in the South African public sphere. This rigid and closed understanding of the public sphere does not take into consideration how identities of the Manyano have shifted and become reconfigured from their publicness in the apartheid moment to their publicness in the post-apartheid moment. These shifts and reconfigurations have shaped the ways in which the Manyano have come to think through their identity as *abafazi* and how they understand motherhood and the work of mothering.

The study has shown further that the nature of the South African public sphere and its bifurcation places the Manyano within two positions; namely the customary and within the civil society. In the customary, the Manyano operate as an integral part of the public sphere

and contribute to the functionality and structure of this public sphere. As opposed to the Habermasian public sphere which has specific gendered roles and marginalises women from the operation of the public sphere, the customary offers the Manyano the space to construct their identity and how they navigate their role as *abafazi* and mothers. In addition to this, the customary offers the Manyano the possibility to self-define and constitute themselves on their own terms without racialised and gendered understandings of womanhood being imposed on them. This ability to self-define within the customary has allowed for the Manyano to move away from dominant understandings of *ubufazi* and motherhood, and to open up the rigidity of the logic of biology which confines motherhood and womanhood as categories which are determined by patriarchal views of how women come to motherhood and womanhood. Therefore, the Manyano offer us the possibility to imagine motherhood anew; to see motherhood and the activism adjoined to it as not a collusion with patriarchy and conservatism. Instead, the Manyano locate motherhood and *ubufazi* and social categories which intersect with other held identities such as seniority and their position within the church. Motherhood understood through this lens enables us to understand how apartheid and state sponsored violence shifted the ways in which ordinary social categories are understood and the means and tools used to defend them. However, this is not only limited to the apartheid moment in South Africa. The study argues that the Manyano within the customary continue to value their identity as mothers and how this, in conjunction with their spirituality, provides the possibility to imagine and refashion their identity as mothers in the post-apartheid moment where they confront the legacy of structural poverty and ravaging nature of HIV/Aids.

Furthermore, the study has shown that although the Manyano still see themselves as operating within the customary as a hegemonic public, the Manyano have demonstrated their publicness within civil society in varied ways. With the routine violence experienced by black communities in the apartheid era and the constant shift of spaces which are defined as the 'private sphere' as an arena for the spectacle of state sponsored violence, the Manyano in collaboration with various liberation movements came to create the black counterpublic sphere which opposed and resisted such violence and the marginalisation of the black citizenry from civil society and the dominant public sphere. This black counterpublic with the Manyano and liberation movements transformed conventional spaces such as the church into spaces to craft alternative images and realities for the black citizenry in order to contend their marginalisation. Within this counterpublic, the Manyano contributed largely to liberation and the strategies of resistance in black communities. It is within this point of the study where it is argued that the

claim to citizenship for the Manyano is located within the black counterpublic sphere in the resistance of the apartheid regime and the liberation of the black citizenry at large. However, in the post-apartheid moment, where citizenship and recognition is not located within the democratic South African state, the Manyano seek and find recognition within the hegemonic public of the customary. This is where the Manyano use their spirituality as the site for the recognition of their humanity as opposed to seeking this from the democratic state. The study then suggests that the Manyano have indeed retreated from democratic civil society and have concentrated their efforts to the customary where they now confront the socio-economic legacy of apartheid. However, this does not assume that the Manyano do not move within both custom and civil society in ways which reflect the complex nature of black women's place and identity in post-apartheid South Africa. This shows how the Manyano understand that there are moments where the custom and the workings of it are not static and unchanging. Instead, the Manyano recognise that they constantly interact with these publics in instances where one public does not offer the desired outcomes for the survival nor the recognition they seek. However, it is important to note that the Manyano see their spirituality as the utmost form of recognition and use the hegemonic public of the customary in conjunction with civil society as a means to claim this recognition in the natural world.

Therefore, the study has shown that the Manyano occupy various complex identities in the post-apartheid moment, and continue to maintain a presence in South Africa's public imagination. Their dualistic nature and their ability to move between the hegemonic public of the customary and civil society in post-apartheid South Africa signal multifaceted understandings of citizenship and their identity as mothers and *abafazi*. Finally, the study has shown how this duality has provided alternative images of how we can think through motherhood and *ubufazi* in post-apartheid South Africa. These alternative images provided by the Manyano, located within both custom and civil society, have seen the Manyano widen the terrain on how we come to read their expression and understanding of their identity as mothers and women from various cultural and political standpoints in post-apartheid South Africa.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE

CONSENT FORM

My name is Lihle Ngcobozi and I am a student in the Political and International Studies Department at Rhodes University, and Principal Investigator of this project, entitled, **“Lizalise Idinga Lakho (Honour Your Promise): Manyano Women, Claiming Spaces, Changing Places”**

This study is being done in order to understand what the Manyano group offers us in being able to understand their socio-political role in post apartheid South Africa, and what the Manyano group offers you as a black women in post- apartheid South Africa.

This study aims to understand your experiences as a black woman who is participating in Manyano group and to examine how the Manyano provide a space for the performance and expression of citizenship by black women.

I wish to interview you in order to understand what your interaction with women in the Manyano has meant to you.

The researcher will ask you how to recall how you came to joining uManyano, your experiences of uManyano, what does the Manyano do for you and your faith, and what are your opinions on what the role of the Manyano is in post apartheid South Africa.

With your permission, I would like to audio-record and (or) video record this interview so I can capture the details accurately. The tapes will only be heard by me, my supervisor and the person who will transcribe the interviews. All information gathered will be kept strictly confidential, and will be stored in a locked file cabinet, to which only I, and my advisor, will have access. At any time you can refuse to answer any questions or end this interview.

The risk involved in this study is that you may feel uncomfortable discussing some of your experiences during the interview, and should this happen, please know that you can stop at any time. The benefit of your participation is that what you share with me might help us understand better what the oManyano meant to you and how can they be better understood.

I may publish results of the study, if you wish for your identity to be anonymous, your names or any identifying characteristics, will not be used in any of the publications unless you do not have a problem with identifying yourself. If you would like a copy of the study, please provide me with your address and I will send you a copy in the future.

If you have any questions about this research, you can contact me at 0622875703 [g10n2868@campus.ru.ac.za/](mailto:g10n2868@campus.ru.ac.za) ngcobozi@yahoo.com ,or my advisor Ms Siphokazi Magadla, S.Magadla@ru.ac.za.

Thank you for your participation in the study. I will give you a copy of this form to take with you.

I agree to have this interview audio-recorded and (or) video recorded please [circle one]:

Yes No

By signing below, you are agreeing that:

- you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered
- you have been informed of potential risks and they have been explained to your satisfaction.
- you understand Rhodes University has no funds set aside for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this study
- you are 18 years of age or older
- your participation in this research is completely voluntary
- you may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature_____ Date_____

Printed Name_____

APPENDIX TWO

Semi-structured interview questions

Biographical

1. Please tell me your name, where and when you were born
2. When you were growing up, were you brought up in the Methodist church?
3. Were you active in church activities from a young age?
4. What are some of your memories of church as a child?
5. As you got older, were you a member of the youth groups, such as the Guild?
6. If you were active in these youth church groups, what kinds of activities did you do?

Becoming a Manyano

7. Did being a member of the Guild motivate you to become a member of Manyano as you got older?
8. Before joining the Manyano, how did you view the women who are the Manyano?
9. How would you describe Manyano to someone who has never been part of it?
10. Why did you want to join?
11. What was the process of becoming part of Manyano? Can any woman become a member of the Manyano?
12. How long have you been a member of the Manyano?
13. How would you explain the Manyano uniform to those who do not understand it?
14. How does dressing up in Manyano uniform make you feel as a woman within the church?
15. What activities do you do in the group?
16. What does the Manyano mean to your life?

Manyano and community/society

17. Has being a member of the Manyano changed now that South Africa is no longer under apartheid?
18. If you were a member then, how was it to be a member of Manyano in those days?
19. What role did Manyano play in the community at the time?
20. What role does the Manyano play in church and community today?
21. What makes Manyano different from any other women social group in society?

22. In your own view, what would the community say about the Manyano within Lamontville?
23. As a Manyano, what do you think are the key issues that connect the Manyano to the Lamontville community?

Death

24. Many women who are members of Manyano choose to wear their uniform when they are buried. I have seen this at a number of burials within my family. Why do women choose to wear their uniform in their last day on earth?
25. Would you wish to wear your uniform in your final day?

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