

**Understanding the dynamics surrounding women's participation in
traditional leadership among the *Vhavenda*, in Vhembe District, Limpopo
Province, South Africa**

Mulaudzi Tshilidzi Patrecia

9615045

Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for a Doctoral Degree in Gender
Studies (PhDGS)

Institute for Gender and Youth Studies
School of Human and Social Sciences
University of Venda
Thohoyandou, Limpopo Province
South Africa

Promoter: Prof TD Thobejane

Co-Promoter: Dr PE Matshidze

2025

DECLARATION

I, Mulaudzi Tshilidzi Patrecia, hereby declare that this thesis **-UNDERSTANDING THE DYNAMICS OF WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP AMONG THE VHAVENDA, IN VHEMBE DISTRICT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA –** Submitted to the Department of Youth in Development Studies, University of Venda, has not been previously submitted for a degree at this or any other institution of higher learning and that it is my work in design and execution and that all reference materials contained therein, have been fully acknowledged.

Student: 9615045

Signature:

Date: 21 May 2024



DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late parents Mr. Mushaathoni Philmon Mulaudzi and Mrs. Nkhangweni Silvia Mulaudzi.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to thank the Almighty God for giving me strength and courage to complete my studies. I want to thank my colleagues in the Department of Youth in Development Studies, especially Dr. Morwe and Dr. Mukwevho, for their unwavering support and encouragement. I further thank the Postgraduate School (PGS) for the postgraduate workshops, lecturer-replacement costs, editing funds and the NIHSS for their financial support in pursuing this PhD. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Royal Council and Tribal Council of Mauluma village who helped in obtaining the data that was so invaluable for this research. Thanks also to Dr. Kaburise for her professionalism in editing all the chapters of the thesis. I also thank all the people who asked me the depressing yet revitalizing question: How far are you with your PhD Project?

I am grateful to my promoters, Professor TD Thobejane and Advocate Professor P Matshidze, for their excellent academic support, inspirational guidance, knowledge of the subject matter, advice, and invaluable input. My special thanks to my daughter, Mashele Nyeleti, for supporting me throughout my studies; Thanks to my pastors Dr A.R Tsanwani and Dr A.P Tsanwani, for their support throughout my studies, lastly my gratitude goes to all my family members including my sisters, nieces, and nephews for their amazing support and prayers.

GLOSSARY OF VENDA TERMS USED

Because the Venda orthography used here does not have the appropriate diacritical markings affixed, the pronunciations may differ depending on the regional dialect being utilized. Grammatical prefixes have not been used; in English, for example, the word "Venda" works equally well for language, nation, people, and individuals.

Dzekiso is a Tshivenda term that refers to a union of a woman with a king or traditional leader who is a blood relative to give birth to the heirs to the throne who will, in turn, succeed to the kingdom's throne. It also refers to a wife whose *lumalo* has been paid for by the royal family or with the cattle that came into the family from the sister's marriage.

Gota/Magota Headman of the village, or councillor are in charge of (*zwisi*) areas which together constitute land. They operate under the leadership of Mahosi - chiefs.

Khadzi is the senior sister of the family head or chief, who is destined to become a *makhadzi* to his successor. Usually, this person is a daughter of a different mother, but the same father, as chiefs, in most cases, had more than one wife.

Khoro is the traditional court or hearing session of a traditional court.

Khosi khulu are paramount chiefs and they rule territories through authority given by the Mahosi. Their areas are defined by natural boundaries, such as rivers and mountains.

Khotsimunene is the senior brother of the family head or the chief's father, and in this case, seniority is not necessarily due to age. He would have been a *ndumi* to the predecessor chief.

Lumalo is a set amount paid by a prospective husband or his family to the bride's family.

Makhadzi is the elder sister of the head of the family or chief's father; seniority is not based solely on age. The previous chief would have considered her a khadzi.

Mufumakadzi is the chief's wife.

Mukoma is a head man.

Musanda is a meeting place or court under the authority of leader, usually a royal one.

Mutanuni is a chief's young wife (plural – *vhatanuni*).

Muvhuye is a wife whose *lumalo* has been paid (usually in the form of cattle) into the family, when the chief's *khadzi got* married.

Ndumi is a chief's senior brother, usually from a different mother but the same father as the chief in case the late chief had more than one wife.

Nendila is a messenger between families in marriage negotiations, preferably it should be someone not related to either family.

Pfamo or **pfamoni** are chiefs dwelling within the royal compound.

Thovhele are chiefs who are rulers of the land - *mashango*; each piece of land would have its own name and defined by natural boundaries.

Vhakoma is the chief's mother.

Vhavenda are the chiefs' younger brothers, although the term also refers to the Venda people.

Zwifhoni is a ritual site in a *Musanda*; *the place contains two stones* - one representing a man and the other a woman.

Zwitungulo are royal artefacts or insignia.

ABSTRACT

Women's leadership has historically received little attention from academics. Information on male traditional leaders has historically dominated traditional leadership and leadership in general. Among the Vhavenda, women only participate, to a certain extent, in traditional leadership roles, for there have always been obstacles for them to overcome; men dominate in leadership roles, particularly in traditional settings. Patriarchal barriers, which are still regarded as inviolable in many societies on the African continent, could be the cause of this. Minimum research has been conducted about women in traditional leadership roles, therefore, this study examines the processes of selecting traditional leaders among the Vhavenda. selection processes in South Africa, Limpopo Province. A qualitative research approach was used, and data was gathered through semi-structured interviews; eight male and eight female participants were chosen using non-probability purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The data was analysed thematically analysis method. The study indicated that the traditional selection of the heirs to the throne limited women's participation in the positions of headmen, chiefs, and kings. The study concludes that cultural barriers, socialisation, the selection process in conferring chieftaincy, and family and societal support are largely patriarchal. The study suggests that government officials and cultural guardians should properly consult with one another, regardless of gender, to create more inclusive communities.

Keywords: Leadership, Traditional leadership, Patriarchy, Gender and Women

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents	Page
DECLARATION	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
GLOSSARY OF VENDA TERMS USED	iv
ABSTRACT	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
ACRONYMS	xv
CHAPTER ONE:	16
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	16
1.1. Introduction.....	16
1.2. Background of the study	17
1.3. Problem statement	21
1.4. Aim of the study.....	22
1.5 Objectives.....	22
1.6 Research questions	23
1.7 Significance of the study	23
1.8 Definition of operational concepts.....	24
1.10 Chapter arrangements.....	25
Chapter 6 : Conclusion and Recommendations.....	26
1.11 Conclusions.....	27
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	28
2.1. Introduction.....	28
2.2 A Precolonial View of the Origins and Character of Traditional leadership in South Africa	29
2.3. Culture and traditional leadership	33

2.4. Gender inequality and leadership participation	38
2.4.1. Inequalities within traditional leadership.....	38
2.5. Barriers to women’s involvement in traditional leadership.....	43
2.5.1. Socialization.....	43
2.5.2. Gender stereotypes.....	45
2.5.3 Patriarchal beliefs.....	47
2.5.4 Women’s lack of desire and information to advance to senior levels	50
2.5.5 Glass ceiling.....	51
2.6. Gender arrangement and triple oppression in traditional leadership	57
2.7. The institution of marriage and traditional leadership.....	59
2.8 Resistance to change	61
2.9. Customary practices and traditional leadership.....	62
2.10. International and national policies promoting gender equality	63
2.10.1 Beijing Platform for Action	64
2.10.2 The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).....	65
2.11 Southern African Development Community (SADC) Gender Protocol	68
2.12. South Africa’s Constitution of 1996	69
2.13 The Employment Equity Act, No.55of 1998	70
2.13.1 Affirmative action.....	70
2.13.2. The Commission on Gender Equality (CGE)	73
2.13.3. The Office on the Status of Women (OSW).....	73
2.13.4 The Civil Society	74
2.14 Summary of the chapter	74
CHAPTER 3.....	75
3.1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	75

3.1.1 Feminism	75
3.1.2 The role of theory in research.....	76
3.1.3 Feminist Standpoint Theory	77
3.1.4. Radical feminist theory	79
3.1.5. African feminist theory.....	81
3.1.6. Theory of Masculinity	83
3.2 Rationale behind the selection of the above-mentioned theories	86
3.3 Conclusion	87
CHAPTER 4.....	88
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	88
4.1. Introduction.....	88
4.2. Research Paradigm.....	88
4.2.1. Justification of the interpretivism paradigm.....	89
4.3. Research methodology.....	90
4.3.1. Nature of the study.....	90
4.3.2. Unequal power relations.....	91
4.3.3. Positionality.....	91
4.3.4. Epistemic privilege	92
4.3.5. Reciprocity	92
4.4. Research Design	95
4.5. Population of the study	96
4.6. Location of the study	96
4.7. Sampling procedure	98
4.7.1 Sample size.....	99
4.8. Data collection methods	99
4.9. Data analysis.....	100

4.10. Measures to ensure trustworthiness	103
4.11 Four criteria of trustworthiness	104
4.11.1 Credibility	104
4.11.2 Transferability	105
4.11.3 Dependability	105
4.11.4 Confirmability	105
4.12. Ethical considerations.....	106
4.12.1 Voluntary participation.....	106
4.12.2. Informed consent	106
4.12.3. Anonymity	107
4.12.4. Confidentiality	107
4.12.5 Privacy	107
4.13 Conclusion	107
Chapter 5.....	109
Data presentation and analysis	109
5.1 Introduction.....	109
5.2.1. Cross tabulation for age group and gender	109
5.3. Gender Audit on Party Representation	111
5.4 What do you understand by the concept of ‘gender equality’?	111
5.4.1 Understanding Gender Equality	111
5.5 Community perception on women participation in traditional leadership	112
5.6. How are women in leadership perceived by people in the community?	114
5.6.1 Women as emotional beings	114
5.7 Perception of community on women leadership.....	115
5.7.1 Women’s suitability in traditional leadership	115
5.8 Advantages of having women in traditional leadership	117

5.9 Visibility of women and its advantages in traditional leadership	118
5.10 Equal representation of women in traditional leadership positions	120
5.11: The role that culture plays in the participation of women in traditional leadership	121
5.11.1 Culture and the perceived gender roles	121
5.12 Selection of traditional leaders amongst the <i>Vhavenda</i> community.....	124
5.12.1. <i>Makhadzi</i> (Senior sister to the chief) and <i>Khotsimunene</i> (Brother of the chief)	124
5.12.2 <i>Dzekiso</i> Wife.....	125
5.13. Is the selection procedure fair to both male and female potential traditional leaders?	127
5.13.1 Fairness of the selection process for traditional leadership.....	127
5.14: Discrimination in who should give birth to headmen, chief and king	129
5.14.2 Marriage outside the royal family	130
5.15 Challenges faced by women in traditional leadership.....	130
5.15.1: Educational Constraints	130
5.15.2 Low self-esteem as an obstacle.....	131
5.15.3 Lack of confidence.....	133
5.15.4 Biological make up as a barrier.....	133
5.15.5. MULTIPLE ROLES OF WOMEN	134
5.15.6 . MORALS	134
5.16 A response from the Cogta officials	136
5.16.1. The role played by the officials from the Department of Local Government and Traditional Affairs in the selection process of traditional leaders	136
5.19. Attitude of women towards traditional leadership	137
5.20 Is patriarchy (rule by men) the only main contributory factor to the undermining of women for a traditional leadership position?	138
5.23 Marriage as a Factor that Contributes to the undermining of women in traditional leadership.....	139
5.23.1 Women's multiple roles.....	140

5.23.2. Fear of being victimized	140
5.24 SECTION C: QUESTIONS ON POLICY IMPLEMENTATION	141
5.24.1. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)	141
5.24.2. The Beijing Platform for Action (BPA)	142
5.24.3. The Quota System	142
5.24.4 The National Gender Tools	143
5.24.5. The South African Constitution	143
5.24.6. The Employment Equity Act (EEA) no 55 of 1998	144
5.24.7. Traditional Leadership and Khoi -San Act no. 3 of 2019	145
5.26. Conclusion	145
CHAPTER 6	146
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6.1. Introduction	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6.2. Overview of the study	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6.2.1 Findings on Objective 1	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6.2.2 Findings on Objective 2	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6.2.2.1 What role does culture play in the participation of women in traditional leadership?	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6.2.3 Findings on Objective 3	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6.2.3.1 Selection of traditional leaders amongst the <i>Vhavenda</i> people	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6.2.4 Findings on Objective 4	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6.2.5 Finding on Objective 5	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6.2.5.1 Strategies can be used to address the under-representation of women within the institutions of traditional leadership	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6.3. Summary of the chapter	Error! Bookmark not defined.

6.4. Limitations of the study	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6.5. Recommendations.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6.5.1. Suggestions for future researchers	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6.5.2. Recommendations for the institutions of traditional governance.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6.5.3. Suggestions for Female Traditional Leaders.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6.5.4. Suggestions for the policymakers	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6.6. Contributions of the study to the existing literature	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6.7. CONCLUSION.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE	185
SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION.....	186
Ethical clearance certificate.....	198
Turtitin Report.....	199

ACRONYMS

BCEA- Basic Conditions of Employment Act

BPFA- Beijing Platform for Action

BSAC- British South Africa Company

CBO- Community-based organizations

CEDAW- Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women

CGE- Commission of Gender Equality

COGTA- Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs

EEA- Employment Equity Act

MRM- Moral Regeneration Movement

NCC- National Council of Churches

NGO- National Government Organization

OSAGI- Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues

OSW- Office of the Status of Women

SADC- Southern African Development Community

TLAGFA- Traditional Leadership and Khoi-San Leadership

UN- United Nations

UNDAW- United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women

USA- United States of America

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

This chapter details the - introduction, background of the study, problem statement, aim, objectives, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study as well as definitions of key concepts.

Lack of participation of women in traditional leadership warrants an urgent attention, for traditional leadership, especially in rural communities around the world seem to be dominated by men, even in South Africa. The constitution of South Africa (RSA Constitution, 1996) guarantees equality for all, however, it appears that women continue to be under-represented in traditional leadership. The institutions of traditional leadership relies mostly on issues of culture and tradition which are deeply imbedded in patriarchal relations, hence, patriarchy continues to take the lead in determining the selection of an heir to the throne in governance and leadership.

Because of the patriarchal nature of South African society, women are often overlooked during the process of selection of a successor, because traditionally, this process is biased towards men. Usually, women, who by their birth-right deserve to be chosen as successors are denied the opportunity and, although the few women who are currently participating in the institution of traditional leadership have demonstrated competency like men, other women deserving to be selected as heirs are overlooked. For instance, Khosi Vho-Bohwana of Tshaulu in Vhembe District and Hosi Nwamitwa of Kanwamitwa in Mopani District are female leaders who have proven to be capable leaders; even better than some of their male counterparts. Communities led by these female leaders have not shown any dissatisfaction with their leadership. It is in this context that this study, on the participation of women in traditional leadership among *Vhavenda* in Limpopo Province, South Africa, was undertaken.

1.2. Background of the study

The background of this study involves a discussion of global, regional and local information pertaining to participation of women in traditional leadership. Traditional leadership is one of the oldest institutions in South Africa and is recognized by the South African government through the Traditional Leadership and Khoi-San Leadership (TLAGFA) Act No.03 of 2019; traditional leadership positions are determined by custom, and they are inherited.

There are many factors that influence women's right to participate in traditional leadership and inheritance and despite legal pluralism in South Africa, which emphasises equality for all, customary practices impact more on women's rights than the established formal laws. This study attempts to explore the extent to which customary practices continue to be skewed towards men. Low or no formal education is one of the many factors which limit women's access to information and deprive them of their basic human rights. For example, in places like South Asia and South Africa, most women's interactions are limited to the homestead, and sometimes to the villages. According to Bayeh (2016), one's gender is used to determine one's social status and power, therefore, there are tendencies of undermining women's role in traditional leadership as compared to men. The biological make-up of a person, thus, is essential in patriarchal societies as one's sexual or preferred orientation is largely used to determine the role one plays in a community.

Across nations and cultures, masculinities have been used as a yardstick to determine the person's status and power in many circumstances, for example in most institutions of traditional leadership. According to the Muslim Interstate Succession Ordinance No. 10 of 1931 of Islamic law in Sri-Lanka, the issue of inheritance depends on the gender of a person. Unlike in other cultures, Sri-Lankan males and females do inherit property, but a female leader's status is not equal to her male counterparts. In South Africa and in the *Vhavenda* culture, the *Makhadzi's* role is mostly viewed as resolving conflicts arising from the choice of the traditional leader, especially, after the passing of the chief. A *Makhadzi* plays a significant role in fostering peace, harmony and unity in communities. The chieftaincy is regarded as the domain of men and those in the royal blood line (Mafela,

2019). Matshidze (2016) explains that a *makhadzi* is the senior sister of the family head of the chief or headman. Usually, she is the daughter of a different mother but same father with the chief and she does not acquire her senior position because of age.

In Muslim communities, when women get married, the law requires them to return the inherited shares or ancestral property to the male heirs because the males are traditionally deemed to be the rightful heirs (Roy, 2013). This is corroborated by a clause in the Muslim Interstate Succession Ordinance No. 10 of 1931 of the Islamic law in Sri-Lanka. This clause states that the issue of inheritance depends on the sex of a person; females do inherit, but their status is not equal to their male counterparts (Hacker, 2010).

In Pakistan, a traditional law called *purdah/ pudha* is practiced. This practice obligates women to be veiled in public as well as restricting women's movement, recognition, and authority to their homes (Tyagi, 2021). The fact that women in Pakistan are restricted from moving freely outside their homes prevents them from acquiring new skills or learning how to negotiate in the broader contexts. Stamarski and Son Hing (2015) assert that discrimination of women due to gender stereotyping makes it impossible for women to be seen as suitable leaders in society.

According to Matwetwe (2016), in Kenya (in the Pokot pastoral communities) the roles of women are not as significant as those of men. In this community, senior elderly women are the only female group allowed to contribute to proceedings in what is called "*kokwo*" (public meeting), hence, unlike in other African counties, these senior Kenyan women are offered a chance to participate in some public activities. Their roles may include the documentation of the discussions and decisions of the "*kokwo*" for reference in future public meetings, advising the council, and articulating their views when requested to do so. Within patrilineal tribes, a woman may be installed as a village head or group village head in very exceptional cases; this usually happens where there is no man in the royal family to take over the position.

In Nigeria, the women in the Nnobi tribe derive their status and power from their control as well as their successful and effective management of the subsistence economy. Men gain status and control by marrying many wives, having daughters who would bring in many in-laws and owning properties. Similarly, women gain status through owning

livestock, having daughters who would bring in in-laws, presents and many wealthy and influential sons. Both males and females are symbols of wealth although, in principle, men and women do not equitably share the wealth of their families (Amadiume 1987, in Matshidze, 2013). Amadiume (1987) and Matshidze (2013) contend that although sons and daughters are symbols of power, women in the Nnobi tribe do not own the land. This means that the participation of women in different activities and positions within this community is not equal, since the assets are allocated based on the person's gender. The inequality which does not allow females to inherit from the family wealth is worrying because it is based on a condition. The condition is that the eldest daughter can take on the position of the eldest son and inherit property, land and livestock from the father only if there is no son to take that position (Amadiume, 1987 in Matshidze, 2013).

In Botswana, women in the past had a very limited chance to take part in chieftaincy and political activities (Moyo, 2019). According to the Botswana's culture, for one to inherit a traditional leadership position, the person must be the eldest son in the family; this means that inheritance follows the male lineage, hence, when the chief/ruler passes on, the eldest son takes over the throne even if there are older female siblings (Moodley, 2012). Dodo (2013) explains that in Botswana, a woman can only take part in leadership position when acting as a substitute for her male child when the child is still too young to take over the position. The above points illustrate that women are excluded from taking part in leadership structures, in their own right, since they are only allowed to act as a substitute, which is a temporary leadership arrangement. This, however, does not mean that women are totally excluded from traditional leadership as history shows that, in certain societies, women have acted as traditional leaders and have also taken part in customary judicial processes (Aiyedun and Ordor, 2016).

In South Africa, before colonial rule, traditional leaders had their own authority and power based on their cultural principles, norms and expectations. Delius (2020) explicates that traditional authority was the highest decision-making structure within the traditional community on matters regarding succession. Traditional leaders also had their own ways of solving problems around their territories; their positions permitted them control over political functions, in which safety and security were some of their responsibilities

(Serafeim, 2014). They also had control over cultural functions, which included sacred and spiritual activities, customary, traditional as well as general cultural matters. This is a clear indication that traditional leaders executed a wide range of activities in their communities and possessed broad powers (Serafeim, 2014). This means that accepting contemporary developments, such as those related to leadership is problematic for male traditional leaders as this may strip them of their patriarchal powers; introduction of new ideas in this field is like taking away the powers they currently have.

Traditional leaders also controlled the modus operandi of their village policies and principles; for example, they are in charge of the allocation of land, natural resources, communal labour practices as well as law and order (Serafeim, 2014). This is an indication that traditional leaders had wide-ranging powers to control and or give the final word on significant matters; they could also decide on who could inherit the property or take over, after the death of parents. South African women are generally not allowed to take up traditional leadership positions in their communities except in very few cases, such as in the case of Khosi Bohwana, Hosi Nwamitwa, and Kgosi Motjatji in Limpopo Province (Moyo, 2019). Mmusinyane (2009) states that, although South Africa has passed many pieces of legislation that protect the rights of women in general, the process of transforming other sectors seems to be advancing too slowly, particularly with regard to the advancement of the rights of women to inherit traditional leadership positions.

An exception to this is the custom of the Tshaulu and Modjadji community in Limpopo, South Africa which dictates that only women may ascend to the leadership of their community. Unfortunately, these two communities' customs can be challenged based on gender discrimination as their practice also denies the claims of any rightful male heir on the grounds of his gender.

The few scenarios cited above pertaining to countries like South Africa, Botswana and Kenya do not necessarily apply globally. American Indian women, for example, occupy leadership positions and participate in decisions affecting their families and communities. These women also play a role in preserving their communities' values and culture, as well as caring for their families (Ruiz, 2010). The practice by the Chewa ethnic group in Malawi is another example, because, unlike in other African countries, women in this

group occupy traditional leadership positions, such as village and group heads (Mtelera, 2013). The background outlined above highlights the various traditional systems and practices across the world which may be oppressive by excluding to women from participating in, for example, different community religious activities and leadership positions (Pankhurst, 2012).

South African customary laws carry some patriarchal nuances that suggest that women may be discriminated against and excluded in family and inheritance matters. Chabaya *et al.* (2009) expounds that there are factors that limit women from acting in customary and religious leadership structures, thus, it might be difficult for women from such communities to take up leadership positions. Failure to appoint women as heads of families and communities' results in the marginalization of women from traditional leadership positions. It is against this background that this study, seeks to probe traditional leadership, especially amongst the Vhavenda communities, situated in the Vhembe District in Limpopo Province, South Africa.

1.3. Problem statement

Traditional leadership remains controversial, in many countries, including South Africa, especially, since it manifests itself in patriarchal ways. The constitution of South Africa (RSA Constitution, 1996) propagates for gender-equality, however, many communities in the country are still very far from achieving this goal.

South Africa, like many other countries in the world, is patriarchal in nature. Traditional leadership is one area where culture and tradition are embodied, and patriarchy has a huge influence in deciding on various aspects of traditional leadership. The patriarchal nature of traditional leadership is evidenced by the fact that most heirs to thrones are mainly men. Sometimes even when the family does not have a male heir in that lineage, efforts are made to secure an alternative male successor, thus overlooking other masculinities. This suggests that traditional leadership may be skewed towards patriarchy, therefore, one gender may use its dominant position in society to expropriate another gender's rights to participate in positions of power. In this way, some feminine masculinities may be undermined and given positions of lower status in traditional leadership.

There are numerous legislations since 1994, to uplift the status of women, however, the position of women in traditional leadership is still worrying in South Africa; this disturbing situation affects women's entitlement to inheritance. Whatever rights women may inherit; these are negatively impacted by customary practices that govern family and social relationships. The unequal power relations between men and women in South Africa and in the Vhembe region, where this study was conducted, undermine the role and participation of women in decision-making, in traditional leadership. This is the result of the socialization process that is embedded in the community of Mauluma Ha-Ravele village, where the data regarding the topic was collected. This community's practices are in contradiction of the RSA Constitution, because it denies women opportunities to participate in traditional leadership positions. Consequently, in Mauluma Ha-Ravele village, women are only assigned to the positions of - mothers, wives, sisters, daughters and *Makhadzi* (Matshidze and Nemitandani (2017)); these are positions of lower status in traditional communities as compared to those of - kings, chiefs and headmen.

Amongst the VhaVenda, situated in the Vhembe district in Limpopo, South Africa, men are mostly the ones who are considered for the position of traditional leaders. Women are often overlooked for positions of power except for a few women who are culturally accepted to inherit such positions. The disregard for women in traditional leadership goes against gender equality, as stated in the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), the constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) and other forms of legislation regarding gender equality. Because of this persistent marginalization, this study sought to probe traditional leadership among the Venda people in the Vhembe region, Limpopo Province, South Africa.

1.4. Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to probe the dynamics of women's participation in traditional leadership among the *Vhavenda* in Limpopo Province, South Africa.

1.5 Objectives

Objectives of this study are as follows:

- To explore people's perceptions of traditional leadership practiced amongst the VhaVenda in Mauluma, Limpopo Province, South Africa
- To assess the cultural nuances that may be salient in limiting women's participation in leadership roles,
- To probe the role of culture in women's non-participation in traditional leadership.
- To examine the processes of selecting traditional leaders among the Vhavenda.
- To propose strategies that will encourage equal participation in leadership roles amongst genders.

1.6 Research questions

Below are the major research questions of this study:

- How are women leaders perceived in Mauluma village?
- What role does culture play in the participation of women in traditional leadership?
- How do the *Vhavenda* select their traditional leaders?
- What are the challenges faced by women in traditional leadership?
- What are the strategies that could encourage equal participation in leadership amongst genders.

1.7 Significance of the study

Findings from this research will add to the existing body of knowledge on issues about unequal access to positions of leadership by women in traditional governance structures. To women who aspire to take part in traditional leadership and leadership at large, this study will be a platform for adding their voices, experiences, and challenges so that these are taken seriously and addressed. Most studies have not focused on the dynamics of women's participation in traditional leadership; hence, this study will come up with possible innovative strategies that will assist in making sure that women form part of traditional leadership.

This research, therefore, aims to add gender perspective, which has been neglected in the existing body of knowledge. The study will also come up with comprehensive strategies aimed at reducing gender inequality in traditional leadership. Thus, the results will motivate governments to implement policies that deal with gender equity and gender mainstreaming in the designation of leadership roles.

1.8 Definition of operational concepts

Gender

Gender is a cross-cutting socio-cultural variable that cuts across race, class, age, and ethnic group (Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues (OSAGI), 2010). In the context of this study, gender will mean all the attributes designated to both men and women, which are socially constructed. Gender differences in this study show how unequal power relations between men and women prevent women from accessing certain positions which are strictly meant for a particular gender.

Class

Class refers to a large group of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social classification, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated by law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organisations of labour, and, consequently, by the dimensions of people's share of the social wealth which they dispose of and their mode of acquiring it (Worster, 2013). In this study, class will also denote the segments of society that benefit differently from each other, both materially and socially.

Masculinity

Morrell (1998). define masculinity as a socially constructed, fluid gender identity that is not a biological trait. Masculinity in this study will mean those generally acceptable hegemonic traits that are viewed to be acceptable and normal in a patriarchal community.

Femininity

Mehta and Dementieva (2017) refer to a group of socialised psychological characteristics, traits, and attributes that are associated with femininity, including dependency,

understanding, helpfulness, compassion, gentleness, warmth, and passivity which are most closely associated with those whose birth-assigned gender category is female. In this study femininity will mean those feminine masculinities that are regarded as unsuitable for leadership. Traditional leadership looks for machismo traits for a person to lead.

Socialization

Socialisation is how people learn the norms and beliefs of their society. From their earliest family and play experiences, people are made aware of societal values and expectations (Perre, Wauters & Richard-Yarris, 2002). Socialisation in this study means how people (male and female) should conduct themselves, which differentiates even the roles that they are expected to perform in their communities.

Patriarchy

Patriarchy is a political and social system originating from the family, which insists that males are inherently superior and dominant in everything and women are deemed to be weak (Ahmad, Mahmood, Saud & Mas' udah, 2019). Patriarchy in the context of this study will mean the traditional roles that are given to men, in as far as leadership is concern and how positions are given to people within the system that differentiates males from female. The system is socially constructed and gives more powers to men.

1.9 Delimitation of the study

This study was limited to Mauluma village in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, South Africa. As a result, the findings of the study cannot be generalized to other rural villages.

1.10 Chapter arrangements

Chapter 1: Background to the study

This study's introduction, background, problem statement, and significance are all covered in length in this first chapter. The objectives and research questions of the study

were also outlined, along with the essential terms that will be employed all during the investigation.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter explains the conceptual framework adopted in this study: Radical feminist theory, black feminism, standpoint feminist theory, and theory of masculinity.

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework

The literature reviewed will focus on - women and leadership, leadership in general, as well as challenges faced by women in traditional leadership.

Chapter 4: Research methodology and design

This chapter provides a summary and justifications for the choice of methodology exploited in this study. A brief report on the tools that enabled the researcher to engage with participants is provided throughout various sections of the chapter. Details on the study area, population, sampling, data collecting and analysis, methods used to ensure trustworthiness, and adherence to ethical norms are covered under these chapter.

Chapter 5: Presentation of findings

The results and their analysis from the data collected from participants are presented in this chapter.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter will present an overview of the findings. It will further bring out contributions from the results and offer suggestions based on them. The suggestions will aid in addressing the dynamics surrounding women's involvement in traditional leadership roles among the *Vhavenda* in the village of Mauluma. The study's overview, a synopsis of the findings, their scholarly contribution, recommendations, and a conclusion will be detailed in this chapter. Below are the study questions which guided this research.

1.11 Conclusions

In this chapter, the introduction and background of the study, problem statement, significance of the study and literature that supported the topic were discussed. The aim of the study and objectives, delimitation of the study, definition of working terms and study layout were further explained in this chapter. In the next chapter the literature that guided this study will be discussed.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This section provides a review of literature from authoritative sources on the same or related phenomena being investigated. The chapter reviews relevant and recent articles, journals, previous studies, and books on the gendered nature of traditional leadership, women in leadership in general, in local and international contexts.

A literature review, according to Du Plooy-Cilliers Davies and Bezuidenhout (2021), establishes the framework or background of a study and provides researchers and other scholars with the knowledge they need to comprehend and conduct a study. Hart, 1998 & Du Plooy-Cilliers Davies and Bezuidenhout, (2021) argue that a literature review also assists readers in knowing what has been written in their subject of interest and the existing information gaps. Probing the literature introduces the researcher to many worldviews that other researchers have adopted and the rationale for holding these worldviews.

The literature review for this study will help provide information on the dynamics of the participation of women in traditional leadership. It will, therefore, provide the researcher and readers with information which will assist in interrogating and explicating whether women were being given an equal chance to assume influential positions as is afforded to men. Discriminatory and gender-biased practices that work against the promotion of one gender at the behest of another in leadership at the local government level are also discussed in this section. A study by Owuor (2015) shows that in many parts of the world, women are on the margins when it comes to leadership positions; hence, women's participation in influential societal structures remains low. This is substantiated by a report from Misafi (2014), which acknowledged the negative cultural norms combined with a lack of funds, a lack of education, restricted access to information, and a lack of family rights and responsibility have resulted in fewer chances for women's development.

2.2 A Precolonial View of the Origins and Character of Traditional Leadership in South Africa

“Traditional leadership” refers to a governance system deeply entrenched in a particular community or society's cultural heritage and historical practices (Alabia, Bamideleb, & Mohammed, 2023; & Mamdani, 1996). In the context of women's participation in traditional leadership, it is essential to recognize that conventional leadership systems have historically been male dominated. Alwedini (2017) notes that patriarchal norms and practices often characterize these systems; traditionally, leadership roles were reserved for men, and women's participation was often limited or non-existent. In countries like India, traditional leadership manifests through systems like village councils (panchayats), where local leaders manage community affairs based on customary practices Dabhi, Bharati, and Vartha, (2023).

Contemporary discussions on gender equality and social change, however, have led to a focus on the dynamics within traditional leadership. According to Kabeer (2021), there is a rising recognition of the need to address gender disparities and promote inclusivity in all our lives. In some communities, therefore, efforts are being made to challenge traditional gender roles and provide avenues for women to participate in leadership roles (Hassim, 2009). It is crucial, however, to approach traditional leadership and women's participation with a nuanced perspective, acknowledging both the historical context and the ongoing transformations within these systems. The dynamics of women's involvement in traditional leadership are influenced by a complex interplay of cultural, social, and political factors, reflecting the evolving nature of these systems in contemporary societies (Graham, 2016).

Customary chieftainship hierarchy and conserved cultural antiques have greatly enhanced traditional leadership governance (Plowman, Solansky, Beck, Baker, Kulkarni, and Travis, 2007). It has endured for centuries in the face of opposing forces and modernist ideologies that sought to weaken its authority and wrest control from its domain. Just as the opposers had predicted, traditional leadership institutions are acknowledged and looked upon by people in their communities as the only trustworthy source of governance. The opposers and colonizers had expected the mode of

pessimism to weaken the institution if it was not subject to their control. In Africa, traditional leadership institutions have endured colonization for centuries, which had inadvertently bolstered their position in governance before African countries gained their freedom from colonizers and nations that attempted to dominate them (Chigwata,2018). Colonial rule in numerous African nations has warped traditional political structures and imposed an oppressive modern administration on the native population (Keulder,1998). Certain structures were protected, meaning that colonization did not affect them; instead, different approaches were taken into account to implement the intended governance model, creating an entirely new system. Various colonial acts and policies forced Black Africans into reserves or Tribal Trust Lands. In order to further its goals, the British South Africa Company (BSAC) looked for ways to undermine the institution of traditional leadership and distort traditional authority (Chigwata, 2018). In the majority of African nations prior to independence, traditional leaders played significant roles that led to more complex and antagonistic power dynamics between the traditional institution and the incoming local authority institutions. Africans lost faith in their indigenous traditional leaders' knowledge of their fundamental beliefs and traditions as oppression and intimidation spread throughout the continent. The land issue was the most contentious overlapping factor that gave rise to ongoing conflicts between traditional leadership and the colonizers that continue to this day.

Examining traditional leadership's beginnings and nature from a precolonial perspective in South Africa reveals a rich historical tapestry that was woven by various communities long before the colonial period. It is clear from comprehending the complex dynamics of indigenous governance systems that these institutions were essential in forming an area's social, political, and cultural fabric. According to Hall (2010), indigenous communities throughout South Africa developed distinctive and complex leadership styles firmly ingrained in their cultures, traditions, and worldviews. This current investigation will also explore the historical foundations of traditional leadership, providing light on the intricate and resilient pre-colonial governance systems that still shape modern debates about authority, identity, and cultural heritage preservation.

The history of traditional leadership in the Vhembe District reflects its patriarchal nature that has persisted for many years; its roots are in the pre-colonial era when indigenous communities had well-established governance systems. These systems were typically characterized by hierarchical structures, with chiefs (*Vho Thovhele*) or kings (*Khotsikhulu*) at the top and various levels of sub-chiefs, elders, and councilors. These leaders were predominantly male, and leadership positions were usually inherited through patrilineal succession. According to Nethengwe (2005), males have held traditional leadership positions among the Vhavenda since 1700, although some traditional leaders also have matrilineal kingship, they maintained patriarchal leadership roles. Before the colonial era, traditional leaders had control of their people's lives, proving that they possessed the highest offices in their communities. Ntsebeza (2001: 33) asserts that a chief is not just the most important and most powerful member of the tribe but also an excellent community leader. People learn from him as he symbolizes aspects like tribal unity, and he strengthens the institution of traditional leadership. Traditional leaders should project attitudes, values and emotions that ensure solidarity.

While Ntsebeza's statement highlights the significance of the chief within the tribe, it is also essential to recognize that the functioning of a tribal community typically involves collaboration and support from various members, not solely on the chief. A critical examination of traditional leadership illustrates how other tribe members play vital roles and support the chief; for instance, many tribal communities have a council of elders who advise and support the chief. Nethengwe (2005) indicated that the chief cannot and should not make decisions alone; other members of the council should also be consulted. This means that it is not only the *makhadzi*; decision-making involves all members of his council. These elders often possess valuable knowledge, wisdom, and experience that complement the leadership of the chief; they contribute to decision-making processes and guide on matters affecting the community. Within the tribe, individuals may specialize in specific tasks or areas of expertise, such as *Makhadzi*, *Ndumi* and other community members who may guide in other issues, such as spiritual practices. These individuals contribute to the community's well-being through their skills and knowledge, enhancing the chief's ability to lead effectively. Hence, while a chief holds a prominent position within the tribe, his effectiveness as a leader often depends on the support, collaboration, and

contributions of other members within the community. Tribal societies typically operate as collective entities, where various individuals play vital roles in supporting the chief and ensuring the communities' well-being.

During the colonial period, European powers, particularly the British and the Boers, exercised their influence over provinces. They implemented the indirect-rule systems by recognizing and co-opting existing traditional leadership structures. George and Binza (2011, 6) explain the indirect rule's viewpoint: "The underlying belief that every system of government, if it is to be permanent and progressive, must have its roots in the framework of the Indigenous society." Spear (2017) posits that the British (colonizers) realized that to govern the indigenous African people successfully, traditional leaders should also be part of their government because they (the British) were foreign to the African people; hence, the former would be difficult to accept. That, therefore, was a reason why the British considered traditional leadership to be an essential channel between the people and themselves.

These colonial powers, however, often supported the patriarchal nature of these systems, thereby continuing the marginalization of women from leadership roles and preserving male dominance.

The apartheid government in South Africa further entrenched the patriarchal nature of traditional leadership. Kelly (2015) concluded that the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 formalized the system of separate development, where black communities were grouped into tribal homelands or Bantustans. Traditional leaders were appointed chiefs (*vho Thovele*), *Mahosi* and headmen (*Magota*) in these homelands, and the apartheid government closely monitored these leaders' power and authority. Once again, women were largely excluded from these leadership positions during this era.

With the dawn of democracy in South Africa, the role of traditional leadership was still recognized and protected under the post-apartheid Constitution. The Traditional Leadership and Khoisan Leadership Act no 3 of 2019 provided a legal framework for conventional leadership institutions. However, concerns were raised about the continued patriarchal nature of these structures, as women remain primarily marginalized from

leadership positions. A few women who have currently ascended to the position of traditional leadership got it after a tough fight with their families and communities.

2.3. Culture and traditional leadership

According to Matsumoto (2007) & Odame (2014), culture represents the ways in which people or groups behave, think and feel and consists of traditional ideas and values; it is 'that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by human beings' In other words, it can be seen as the ways in which people think and react which are interconnected with the systems and processes of leadership as well as the values which regulate people's interactions and behavior. Culture is pivotal as it plays a major role in determining leadership and the selection process of a leader in a particular community. This means that community leaders are chosen or selected based on the cultural practices of a particular community (Baldwin, 2016).

Martiskainen (2017) proffers that a community leader is an individual with a vision intended to transform people and is guided by the community's cultural practices. A leader defines the purpose of the community and instils a sense of belonging and identity in community members based on the community's identified purpose and direction that is to be followed. Leaders organize, align and manage the established structures and resources for the benefit of the community, hence, ensuring that every member participates in activities and practices towards a common goal. In a traditional setting, culture and traditional leadership are intertwined, meaning that leadership in a traditional context is determined and defined in terms of the culture of the members of a community (Dodo, 2013). With this background, leadership in a patriarchal society is likely to be biased toward male lineage since culture in such a context is patriarchal.

In a traditional setting, leadership is often constructed based on the gender of a person rather than on a person's skill, competency and entitlement (inheritance). This then renders null and void the notion that leadership position is masculine. Countries with similar values, in most cases, are expected to have similar kinds of leadership. Stamarski *et al.* (2015) support this postulation that women leaders from patriarchal societies emphasize their feminine values to the satisfaction of their own culture and socialization.

The researcher concurs with the view expressed by Stamarski (2015) that women tend not to oppose their culture when it comes to male leadership as they were oriented that males are born leaders, therefore, usually, even when there is a potential female leader both men and women often support the idea of a man as a leader instead of a female candidate. It is not surprising that many traditional leaders use these communities' mentalities to defend the value of their traditional way of doing things (Odame, 2014).

Traditional leadership is a system of governance where an individual is chosen to a leadership position through the established customary rules and practices within the community (Odame, 2014; Rugege, 2016). In most rural communities in South Africa, the acceptance of women to ascend to positions of traditional leadership is still usually vehemently opposed. Few women who rightfully deserve to fill traditional leadership positions still experience extreme opposition in their attempts to occupy such positions. Dodo (2013) acknowledged that culturally, women are not accepted to take up traditional leadership roles, which is mostly common in patriarchal communities. This practice is also common among *Vhavenda*, who are very apprehensive when it comes to females taking leadership roles.

According to Sossou (2006), in northern Ghana, most traditional institutions are controlled and dominated by men. Thus, significant decisions regarding women are made in their absence, although such affect their lives. The author continues that many years after international conferences and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women have passed pro-women regulations, Ghanaian women still face discrimination and inequality in their society; this simply means that the international stands, decisions and regulations meant to change the situation of women in all aspect of their lives have not brought any changes as planned. The appointment of a person into traditional leadership amongst the *Vhavenda* and many other communities in Sub-Saharan African communities is determined by their beliefs, values and norms shared by members of a community, one of which is that women are not allowed to take part in traditional leadership positions. People seem to believe that women are not only physically weaker than male members but are also deficient, intellectually and ability-

wise. Another misconception is that women cannot function or succeed unless they have men at their sides (Biri & Mutambwa, 2013; Tatira, 2000).

Blom & Alvesson (2015) postulate that certain procedures discriminate and exclude women in leadership positions; for instance, for one to participate in traditional leadership, the person must be a man from a royal family with the mother also coming from a royal family. Women continue to be faced with these conditions due to culture and gender socialization, irrespective of the new South African policies and legislation on the issue of gender equality. For example, the Traditional Leadership and Khoisan Act no 3 of 2019 and many national and international policies advocate for gender equality, therefore calling for both males and females to participate equally in all aspects that affect their lives. The equal-gender representation is also encouraged in all the communities within traditional and Khoisan Leadership Act 3 of 2019, however, little has been done about the under-representation of women in the institution of traditional community leadership. Seo, Huang, and Han (2017) believe that the problem of underrepresentation of women is primarily due to stereotyped roles attached to women - one of which is the culturally displaced view that women lack the capacity to hold leadership positions. Measuring gender equality in various institutions should involve more than counting the number of women in positions of authority. It should also address whether their representation adds value; if not, a plan for advancing women's equality as well as empowerment should be implemented in order to address the disparities around authority that exist within the traditional leadership institution.

In the views of Kalekye, Koome, and Gichuhi (2020), women do hold some leadership positions. They are not entirely shut out of the leadership pipeline worldwide. However, in contrast to their male counterparts, they lack full participation in the processes that lead to policy and decision-making, which deprives them of power and authority (Pharoah, 1999; Kalekye et al. 2020). This deprives women of the chance to participate and contribute significantly to the institution of traditional leadership and other systems that uphold it. Men in society represent their entire family; therefore, women find it difficult to participate equally, contributing to the dominance of the traditional leadership institution (Bloom, 2006).

Institutions of traditional leadership, in various sectors, support patriarchal ways of governance (Nethengwe, 2005). Compared to men, women are still considered inept, especially for traditional leadership positions, for they are portrayed as soft and ineffective. This stance overlooks the role women play in maintaining the structures of traditional leadership through their contributions, support and practices in other sectors, such as in family life; despite their significant contributions, women are hardly acknowledged or credited (Bortolot, 2003). Contrary to what the constitution of South Africa says, most people still perceive the issue of women's participation in leadership differently.

Martin and Barnard (2013) contend that women can hold leadership positions, but this should be restricted and limited to certain domains as traditionally expected. This view, therefore, supports the notion shared by many scholars that the position of women is in the private place, meaning at home, which implies that the traditional role of a woman revolves around nurturing children (Martin & Barnard, 2013). Contrary to the socialization in many patriarchal African countries, Queen Nzinga from Angola was seen by her people as a warrior and the best politician in the country (Bortolot, 2003). Ironically, to achieve all that, she used to dress in men's clothing, as she knew that many people would not take her seriously as the tasks she was undertaking in her community were supposedly meant for men.

The social positions a person has in the community or family depend on the status he or she occupies or is seen to occupy and how those positions are valued in society (Becker, 1999). In the case of Queen Nzinga, her stance was not accepted by her community as well as her closest allies with whom she partnered after her father's death. In his anger at what he perceived as unorthodox behaviour, her brother ordered that she be sterilized and that her son be killed as a way of weakening her. However, after he suffered many defeats by the Portuguese, he later pleaded with his sister for help, and Nzinga agreed to assist him in liberating her people from Portuguese rule (Bortolot, 2003). The role she played in her community won her some favours, and she was able to ascend the leadership position after the passing away of her brother (Sahgal, 2011),

although not all the chiefs from the area accepted her position, only because she was a woman. This supports the idea that women are not preferred in traditional leadership and other managerial positions in patriarchal communities, even if their performance is exceptional.

For most women to succeed, they must adapt to the institutional culture that imposes andragogy and other patriarchal value systems on them (Carli & Eagly, 2001). Lockwood (2004) contends that corporate policies and practices also subtly maintain the “machismo” status quo by keeping men in positions of corporate power this is also the case with traditional leadership. Sczesny (2003) also argues that holding leadership roles could be problematic for women because the strategies people expect of leaders are different from those of women. In addition to being underrepresented in many societal structures, rural women face extreme marginalization when it comes to decision-making, which men are traditionally entrusted with. Marchena (2016) and Lame et al. (2017), state that in situations where women are granted positions in society, men, in the background, continue to hold positions of authority and make decisions; women in such situations are just tokens representatives in efforts to affirm women in traditional leadership (Lmama et al., 2017).

Rural women's interests and rights are not protected when they are not given a voice in what happens within leadership structures (Moyo, 2013). Inglehart & Norris (2003) asserts that a female leader showing feminine behaviour is considered to be unacceptable in traditional leadership, while on the other hand, a male authoritarian behaviour in the area of traditional leadership is admired, although, this brings in additional pressure for women. This shows how there still exists wide differences in gender expectations when it comes to the representation of men women in traditional leadership. It is critical for policymakers and other stakeholders within the institution of traditional leadership in South Africa to be provided with a roadmap to eradicate this unwarranted and unconstitutional conduct. This means that increased and meaningful participation for women within decision-making structures should be in line with the democratic nature of the country's constitution, its policies and overall desire to achieve equitable development.

2.4. Gender inequality and leadership participation

Below follows a comprehensive view of the issues of gender inequality and women's participation in leadership roles. In other words, by including these elements, the reader will have enough background information on the place and role of women in leadership in general and traditional leadership. It is in this vein that we are now engaging with inequalities within traditional leadership.

2.4.1. Inequalities within traditional leadership

Institutions of traditional leadership, like many other institutions of power, are controlled by men due to the patriarchal system; in general, patriarchal institutions like these uphold male bias and power (Jaiyeola, 2020). Low status, cultural influences, and non-participation in decision-making are the main causes of women's experience of inequality in societies. Traditional leadership is an institution that has inherited patriarchal values and norms. Men are expected to be strong, while women are expected to be soft and weak; this creates a division of authority, with women being accorded less authority compared to men (Kabeer & Natali, 2013). The biggest obstacles to women's participation in leadership roles or decision-making in their communities are still societal and cultural. Odame (2014) proffers that the patriarchal nature of leadership in most African societies leads to women playing complementary or subordinate roles to their male counterparts. In most countries, men are seen as having a vital position that serves as a link between family life and society at large, whereas women are thought to have a more expressive and nurturing role that is focused on the home and family. This has resulted in women's participation in leadership being allowed when there are no men or the male leader is still young (Spark & Corbett, 2018). According to the United Nations, Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. There has been progress over the last decades, but the world is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030.

Africa has made some progress in trying to address the problem of gender inequalities, especially in South Africa and a few other African communities, due to the 1976 UN

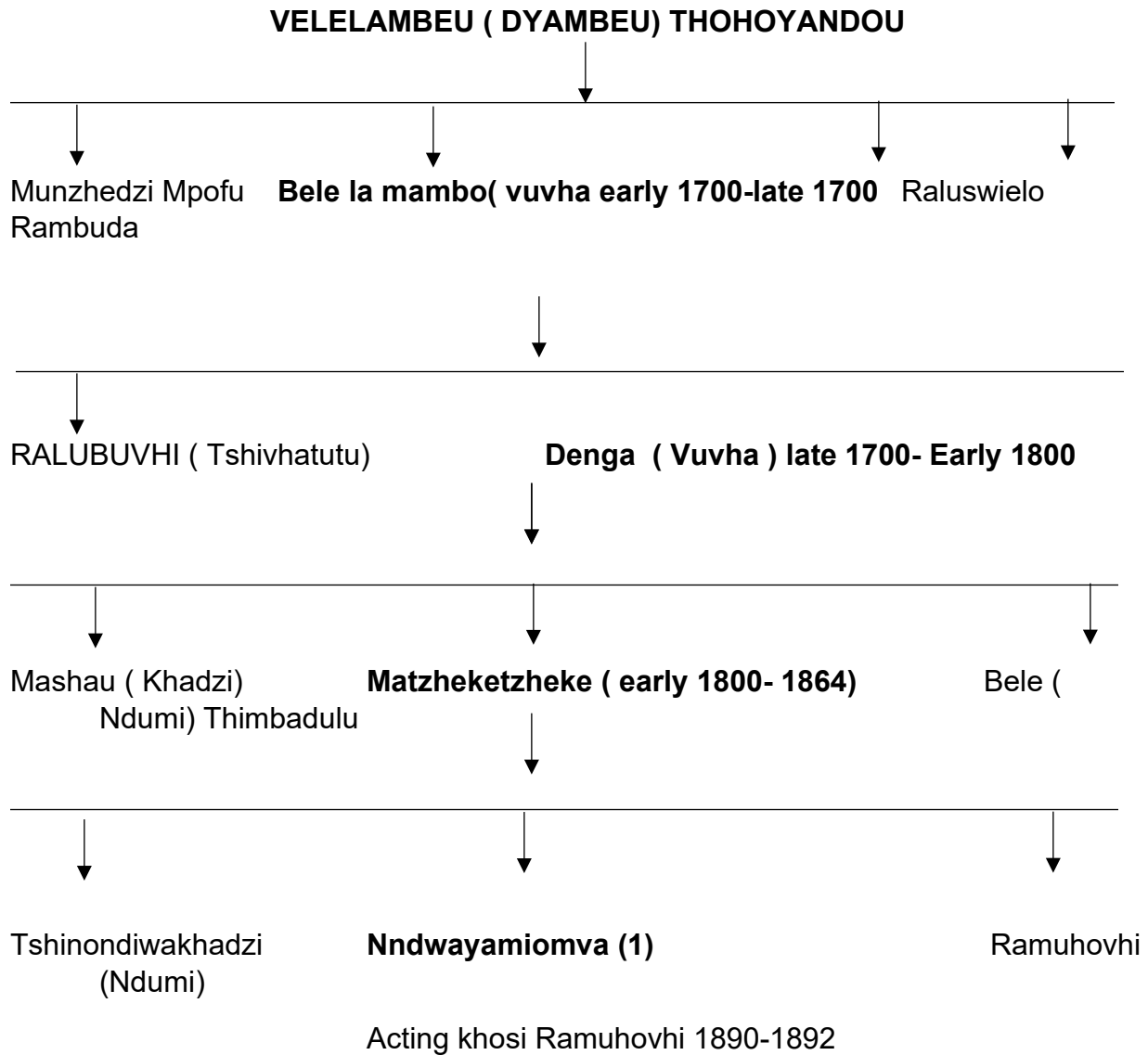
Conference on Women that tackled gender inequality. There have been a series of interventions - the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women – despite these regulations, cultural practices continue to undermine women’s contributions to traditional leadership thereby negating their authority (Odame, 2014). South Africa also has policies in place to support women's involvement in their communities on an equal footing with men (Maluleke, 2012) yet men continue to be reluctant to accept women in leadership roles because they perceive it as going against the norms (Sultana, 2010).

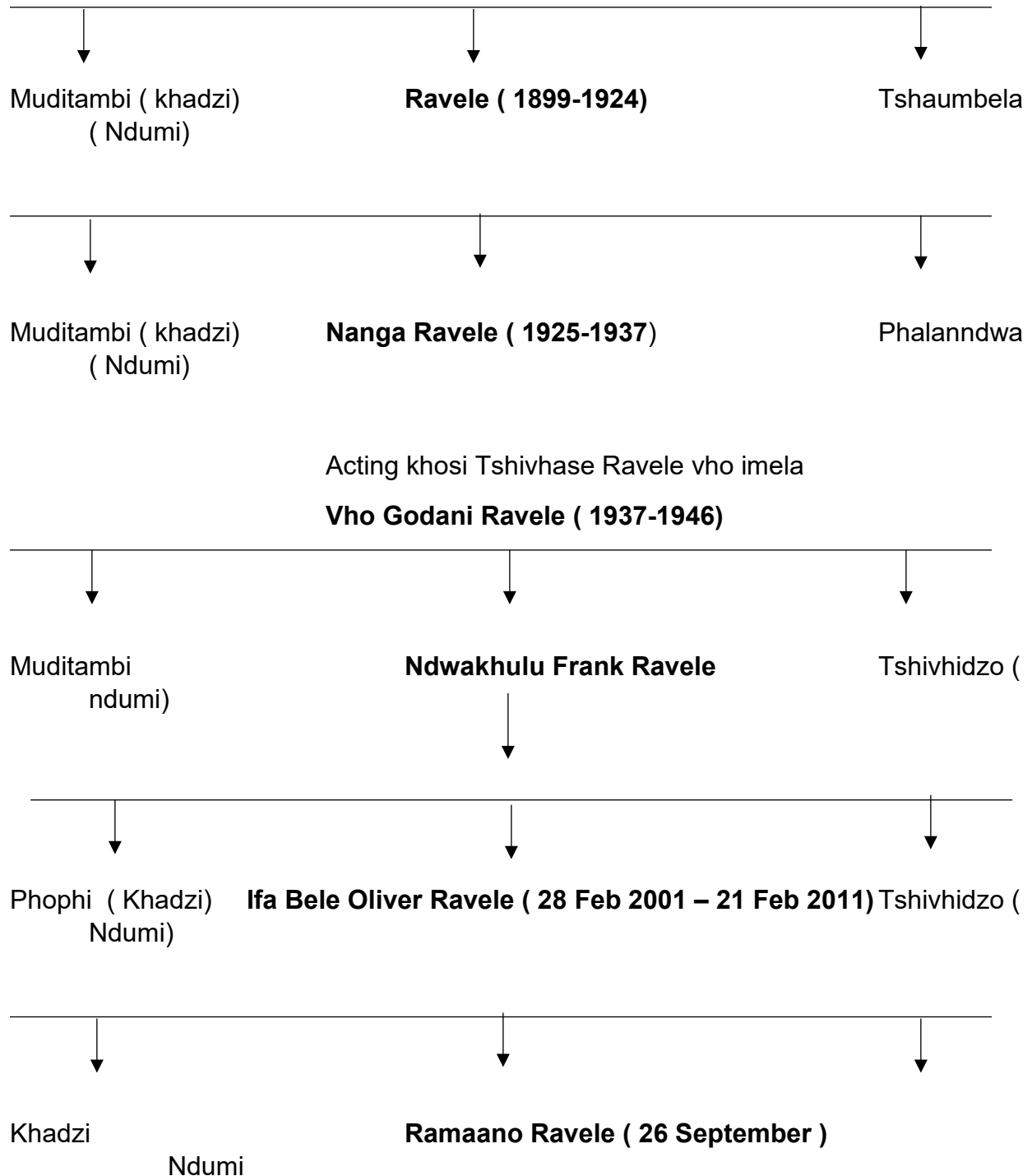
Discrimination of women in traditional leadership continues irrespective of the many legislations and the NGOs that advocate for gender equality in South Africa and other African countries. Johnson (2005) is of the view that gender inequality emanates from the socialization process as this situation is not because women are not capable of leading or do not have leadership qualities; rather, it is because traditional leadership institutions resist efforts to promote gender equality and diversity, as they are often deeply entrenched in traditional beliefs and practices that prioritize male authority. This resistance is impeding progress toward more inclusive and equitable leadership structures. Thus, women are undermined and denied positions of leadership because of cultural beliefs, norms, and practices premised on patriarchy. Meij (1976), Mbalcogu (2004) and Nethengwe (2005) posit that culture resembles a chain of networks that one can learn as one interacts regularly with others from different cultures. In the process of interacting with fellow community members, people may unknowingly learn attitudes, values, goals and behaviours embedded in patriarchal relations (Mbalcogu, 2004).

Hassim (1991) argues that patriarchy separates the participation of women in public and private spheres. In patriarchal societies, women are generally defined by where they are in the private sphere at home, while males are primarily defined by the role that the community expects them to play in public. This clear-cut separation, marginalizes women in terms of acquiring powerful and decision-making positions in traditional leadership, for since women are culturally more confined to the private sphere, there is no way they can be on equal footing with the men in the public sphere.

The table below shows the history (genealogical tree of Ha Ravele(Mauluma village) from 1700 to date.

Ravele genealogical tree





In this research, however, empowering women and giving them a voice has the potential to tip the scales in favor of a more just and inclusive leadership structure. Men have traditionally held positions of authority and decision-making power in the *VhaVenda*

society, which traditionally adheres to a male-dominated leadership structure. This male dominance has been sustained by deeply ingrained cultural norms and beliefs, frequently relegating women to supportive roles within the family and community. Historically, women have had few opportunities to participate in traditional leadership roles, and their voices and perspectives have been marginalized. Women's experiences, worries, and needs have frequently been disregarded or ignored as a result of the predominance of men in leadership positions.

Traditional gender roles may be reinforced by historical roles that have been assigned to men and women, with men assuming leadership roles and women confined to domestic or supporting roles. A patriarchal society sets parameters for women's structurally-unequal position in families and markets by condoning gender-differential terms in inheritance rights and legal adulthood; this situation tacitly condones domestic and sexual violence, and the sanctioning differential wages for equal or comparable work (Ademuson, 2016).

The village of Mauluma's genealogical history amply demonstrates how customary cultural norms and values have frequently influenced the community's dynamics. These norms contribute to a patriarchal atmosphere as they place a strong emphasis on male dominance and authority. According to the genealogical history of the aforementioned village, women have been allowed to hold traditional leadership positions in Mauluma since 1700. A *Makhadzi* is given the same opportunity to hold this position as *Ndumi*, the chief's brother, although, this restricts the involvement of women in conventional leadership roles. This point conflicts with that of Matshidze (2013), whose research indicates that the *Makhadzi* holds the greatest authority in traditional leadership. Gender stereotypes and expectations are ingrained in society, supporting the idea that some jobs and responsibilities are only appropriate for men. Social norms that establish what constitutes appropriate behavior for men and women may, therefore, perpetuate gender roles, deterring women from assuming leadership positions. Stereotype ideas regarding the skills of women or their alleged unfitness for positions of leadership can further marginalize them.

The genealogical tree above indicates that there may be a systematic exclusion of women from positions of power due to the underrepresentation of women in all leadership positions and decision-making bodies within the village. This genealogical tree also demonstrates how only a few female leaders have been recognized, which confirms the idea that women are undervalued and are seen as incapable of taking on leadership roles. A patriarchal bias can be detected in some historical or contemporary practices that discriminate against women in terms of inheritance, property rights, or resource access; a community marginalizes women if resources or opportunities are distributed unequally based on a person's gender.

A more inclusive leadership structure makes sure that all members of the community, regardless of gender, have their needs and concerns met. Women in positions of leadership can act as role models for younger generations and can challenge conventional gender roles. In addition to promoting gender equality, empowering women and giving them a voice in the male-dominated world of traditional leadership among the *VhaVenda* in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province will allow for the untapped potential of the community to grow and develop. A step towards a more equitable and thriving society is shifting the scales in favor of greater gender inclusivity.

2.5. Barriers to women's involvement in traditional leadership

This section provides a discourse of the barriers impeding women's involvement in traditional leadership.

2.5.1. Socialization

Socialisation is one of the principal contributory factors to gender division of labour. This is the case because it is during the process of social interaction that people acquire behavior's essential for effective participation in society (Mbabvu, 2017). De Winter (2012) explicates that an individual and society are mutually dependent on socialisation which is essential for the renewal of culture and the perpetuation of society. This means that this process - socialization - is used to perpetuate subjugation and marginalization of women; patriarchal values and norms have been designed to serve the interest of hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 2013).

The cultural system has been designed to advance the interests of men, to the extent that individuals' actions and choices are subconsciously tailored in male andragogical relations (Sagala, Destriani, Putri & Kumar, 2014). Traditional leadership systems frequently lack adequate representation of women in positions of power. Women are often underrepresented or entirely excluded from leadership roles, further entrenching patriarchal norms and limiting opportunities for female leadership. According to Mwale and Dodo (2017) socialization in patriarchal societies play a crucial part in the undervaluing of women when / if they are allowed to participate in traditional leadership. This is the main reason there are fewer women accessing leadership positions, as the platform is reserved for men only. Abolade (2014) backed up this claim by claiming that women are bound by cultural norms to remain in the kitchen and bedroom and by the patriarchal authority of men in the community.

Society expects different attitudes and behaviours from boys and girls. Knowledge and skills can be learned through interacting with a group or individuals holding certain beliefs on how one should behave or how one should conduct himself or herself (Stamarski *et al.*, 2015; (Dike, 2013). In certain societies, puberty rites include attending an initiation school, which involves seclusion for more than a month and being taught about manhood and womanhood. Initiation schools are regarded as powerful socialization agents and they serve as powerful sites for the construction and acquisition of femininities, hegemonic, and masculine identities. Mavundla *et al.* (2010: 1), explain pubertal rites as "prolonged ceremonies during which the transition to adulthood is achieved." In areas where they are practiced, they are regarded as the only path to adulthood (Milubi, 2001; Lesejane, 2006; Vincent, 2008; Mavundla *et al.*, 2010).

A boy and a girl achieve the status of man and woman after completing the initiation process, according to certain societies. These groups believe that to achieve adulthood, men must be hardened, and women must be softened. The transition to manhood is associated with bravery and pain endurance, whereas the transition to womanhood is associated with teaching caring, softness, and subservience. Therefore, some of the main aspects of the ritual for boys include intense pain and suffering during the circumcision procedure; exposure to severe hypothermia as initiates are required to sleep

without blankets during winter; a bath in ice-cold water; and severe beatings for minor transgressions. (Vincent, 2010; Mavundla et al, 2010).

Ndabeni (2016) narrates that, in the *Vhavenda* custom and culture, there has never been a girl / woman who has claimed kingship. In explaining the recent case between the Mphephu royal family and Masindi Mphephu, the latter's action of disputing the rule of the kingdom in offering the throne to King Mphephu, in a court was unheard of in the royal family. Council members, together with selected members of the royals are the only people to debate and decide on a case of a potential successor (Maponya, 2019), and this is done in a special closed meeting.

The communal nature of some societies means that the behavior of one person can have a negative or positive impact on the lives of others. This implies that because of socialization, women in traditional leadership learn and acquire values and beliefs that add up to a specific type of leadership style. The unfortunate part of this is that the very same norms, values and beliefs always shackle women to roles of servitude. Verma, et al. (2011), in support of this notion, maintain that women are socialized to be emotional, caring and nurturing of others and not to lead them. This is then exploited by elders who use it to deprive women of any leadership role, instead, women are expected to play supportive roles, whereas men are assigned leadership roles. Women in positions of power are underrepresented or completely excluded from leadership positions serves to reinforce patriarchal norms and restrict the prospects of females. This situation is attributed to the socialization process whereby boys and girls are raised to conform to the established male and female gender roles (Blankestijn 2015). Every culture has its own norms, values and practices which are used to determine the roles deemed as appropriate for men and women and this leads to both boys and girls being raised differently.

2.5.2. Gender stereotypes

Crispi (2003) defines stereotype as "a similar form or pattern, specifically a fixed or conventional view or conception of a person, group, or idea held by a number of people that allows for no individuality or critical judgment." Cultural stereotypes and beliefs about

the characteristics of men and women are widespread and, usually, resistant to change (Blankestijn, 2015).

The disapproval of women occupying leadership positions is becoming higher due to perceived gender role violation (Paustian-Underdahl *et al.*, 2014) More women are presuming traditional leadership today than before, although, the view of women as leaders is still frowned upon by many individuals, both male and female similarly (Paustian- Underdahl *et al.*, 2014; Chauke, 2016).

Men generally are characterized as being aggressive, forceful, independent, and decisive, whereas women are seen as being kind, helpful, sympathetic, and concerned about others (Blankestijn, 2015). According to Bortolot (2003), Queen Nzinga of Angola and Queen Yaa Asantewaa of Ghana challenged this mischaracterization and became good leaders with good negotiation, leadership skills that were even much better than those of men. There is evidence that traditional stereotypes of women and men are dominant in both work and non-work settings; women in the workplace are depicted as managers who are less animistic than men, however, according to Perilleux & Szafarz, (2013) some women managers were described as more competent, active, and potent than women in general. This assertion by Perilleux and Szafarz (2013) is contrary to what is generally held in a patriarchal community, where women are regarded as more deficient than men, in the same attributes. It was only when women managers are highly successful that this gender difference in trait characterizations is ignored, however, the increased presence of women in the workplace and their successful assumption of new roles do not appear to have changed gender-stereotypical perceptions (Perilleux & Szafarz, 2013). To support the above statement, Paustian-Underdahl *et al.*, (2014) contend that these kinds of stereotypes, still have powerful effects and are at least, partly, to blame both women's difficulty in accomplishing leadership positions in traditional and workplace settings. Communities struggle to accept them in traditional leadership positions.

Watts (2016) argues that the issue of gender equality is something that needs to start from home; this according to Watts, will make it easier for gender equality to be achieved. Teaching our children from a tender age that both genders are equal can also make the

acceptance of the concept easy, later, for people in all spheres of life. The author urges that deconstructing myths and fallacies that hold gender stereotyping and male andragogy alive would result in a positive connotation around womanhood; this will uphold gender parity in all sectors of human interactions.

According to Kriekhaus, Son, Bellinger, and Wells (2014), the fact that majority of men occupy positions of power, more than women, highlights the endemic nature of gender inequality. These scholars argue that involving women in positions of power may reduce gender inequality and gender stereotyping. The process can also create networks for women which can help in abolishing stereotyping which provides men with an advantage (Kriekhaus, Son, Bellinger, and Wells, 2014). Similar to this, Jung (1981) had previously claimed that although psychoanalytic theory holds that men should take action to prevent younger generations from becoming psychologically permanently integrated into gender ascriptions known as "psychotic symbiosis," they are hesitant because they hold onto patriarchal ideas. This is a sign that traditional values are still present in modern societies, however, they are being questioned and disputed more. As put forward by Marshall and Rossman (1995), a female leader displaying feminine behavior is unacceptable in traditional leadership, while on the other hand, male dependability inherent to the field of traditional leadership creates additional pressure for women. This indicates how there is still large differences when it comes to representation of men and women in traditional leadership women in positions of power are typically underrepresented in traditional leadership systems. The underrepresentation or complete exclusion of women from leadership positions serves to reinforce patriarchal norms and restrict the prospects for female leadership.

2.5.3 Patriarchal beliefs

The underrepresentation of women in traditional leadership in most societies arises because of patriarchal norms. Thobejane (2016) defines patriarchy as an ideological and political system in which men, through ritual, tradition, law, language, customs, etiquette, education, culture, and division of labor -dictate what role a woman has to play in shaping of her family or social structure. Thobejane (2016) further opines that patriarchy impedes

the agenda of building an equal society. South Africa is one of the countries that is highly patriarchal, therefore, its institutions are largely shaped by men. This is in spite of the fact that women have a very essential role to play in the country.

In male-dominated families, patriarchy means "rule of the father" (Morrell & Clowes, 2016). Moore (2012) asserts that traditional religious notions of women as inferior to males are part of patriarchy. In the field of traditional leadership amongst the *VhaVenda*, there are issues of religion that go hand-in-hand with the entire process of selection. These include introducing the selected heir to the throne to the ancestors; for those who are Christians this will involve the priest and other church members. Nyeko (2005) contends that the use of culture is one of the most "dangerous" means by which women are marginalized, subjugated, silenced, brutalized, and controlled on the African continent; however, individuals in high positions within communities, regardless of gender, can also utilize their status to oppress the weaker groups. Vulnerable groups, in the case of this study, are men and women who are unable to take part in traditional leadership because of ethnicity, class, and status within the family and community at large. According to Becker (1999:26), how much privilege a person has depends on the social positions the person occupies and how those positions are valued in society. Culture is a social and ideological construct which regards women as inferior to men, as such, patriarchy grants more power to men in traditional leadership circles (Morrell & Clowes, 2016).

In a patriarchal setting, the male dominates, for the norms, practices, and activities are structured to suit the interests of men. This is confirmed by Morrell and Clowes (2016) who expounds that patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women. Men in these communities are given influential roles acting as a bridge between family life and the community life at large, while women have a more expressive and caring role concerned with the home and family. Patriarchy is a system within a social group and differentiates people based on sex which gives more advantages to men while at the same time placing severe constraints on the roles and activities of women (Adiiluka, 2018). For a long time, societal structures have created

discriminatory practices in the selection of women into leadership positions, and taboos that encouraged these practices (Mwale et al., 2017).

The term “patriarchy”, in this study, applies to a society which is characterized by current and historical unequal power relations between women and men, whereby, women are systematically disadvantaged. The under-representation of women in many institutions, like traditional leadership, clearly shows the oppression and marginalisation of women even in a society with a democratic system, like South Africa. The issue of inheritance in many societies also reveals the patriarchal nature of that society; hence, in many instances, if a man dies, male lineage is mainly preferred for inheritance and daughters can only inherit if there is no son in the family (Adiiluka, 2018), in addition, depending on the practice of a clan, in a situation where there are no children, the family considers male relatives, not the females. This, therefore, means that in line with culture women are being disadvantaged due to their biological makeup (Heide, 2018).

The contribution of women in a society, beyond the home, is determined by social attitudes and usually, their contributions are generally viewed as being inessential (Van Der Watt, 2007). In a patriarchal society, women have no legal identity; they are generally perceived as dependent and inferior to men. Siguroardottir (2013) supports this viewpoint by claiming that, from the 18th century, a woman's post-marriage legal identity has been suspended or consolidated inside that of her husband, who is considered to be her guardian; women in South Africa and other parts of the world change their surnames to that of their husbands. Patriarchy recognizes males in society as more significant than females. This inevitably encourages discrimination against women, therefore, no matter how vehemently gender equality is advocated, male prioritization in public and private spheres makes the transition to an equal society difficult, if not impossible. Patriarchy is the root cause of the limited participation of women in traditional leadership and leadership in general. The perpetuation of male domination by patriarchy leaves women vulnerable and in subordinate positions. According to Kadaga (2013) and Thobejane (2019), patriarchal thinking restricts women's chances, particularly in the leadership domain because it views women as inferior and unfit for positions of authority. Bari (2005)

spells out that the gender-role ideology is used as a moral tool by patriarchy to place women within the private arena of the home as mothers and wives and men in the public sphere.

2.5.4 Women's lack of desire and information to advance to senior levels

Lack of desire and information to advance to higher levels is a barrier to women's empowerment. Wellington, Kropf and Gerkovich (2003) noted that lack of information on who to ascend a leadership position may result in women not aspiring to these roles because they are not aware that these positions are also open to them. In traditional leadership, it is still a secret to the family as to who should occupy the throne when the father dies. Only very few members of the family know, and they continue to keep it a secret until the chief or the king dies. Due to the patriarchal set up of our communities, women who are supposed to be heirs become demotivated and demoralized to even think of occupying any leadership position. Heillman (2001), Hentschel and Peus (2019) support the above by saying - "Stereotypical assumptions about the gender differences between men and women make conditions difficult for women to obtain the opportunity to be placed in senior leadership positions." This means that, females who qualify to take over the position of a traditional leader may feel discouraged from pursuing this role.

Manuella (2017) posits that low level of education and training amongst women impede their access to leadership positions, as they have little or less opportunity to access information. This argument highlights the fact that those who have information can challenge these societal inequalities, if given such a chance. Majority of women in rural areas are poor and do not have resources to fight for their rights, therefore, even though the constitution of South Africa encourages equity and equality, women and minorities continue to be underrepresented in sectors which affect their everyday lives. Tripp (2016) acknowledges that women are excluded from the positions of power even in contemporary South Africa. This reveals that authority, and influential positions are accessed by men as culture and tradition support them, as will be shown in explaining the concept of the "glass ceiling" below.

2.5.5 Glass ceiling

“Glass ceiling” is a concept that focuses on continuous failure of women to ascend the position of leadership (Johns, 2013); the idea behind the expression was that a transparent barrier, a glass ceiling, is blocking them. Johns (2013), Glass and Cook (2018) define a ‘glass ceiling’ as the invisible barriers that block the growth of women or their promotion to higher positions. The “unseen, yet inaccessible barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements” is what the Glass Ceiling Commission (1995) defined as the glass ceiling. Traditional leadership structures have long been dominated by men, perpetuating a gender imbalance in these structures. Traditional leadership often adheres to established norms, values, and cultural practices that may marginalize women and limit their opportunities to assume leadership positions. This creates a challenging environment for women who aspire to break through the glass ceiling and reach influential leadership positions within traditional contexts.

In institutions like traditional councils, these barriers mirror the line that separates those who prosper and those left behind. In most cases in traditional leadership, women are prevented from taking positions at the highest level. For women, the highest and uncontested position in traditional leadership is that of *Makhadzi* or *Ndumi*. The two positions according to the *VhaVenda* culture are positions that come after that of a king or chief. The term ‘glass ceiling’ symbolizes a variety of barriers faced by women and minorities as they seek to improve both their employment and social statuses. Understanding the challenges that women are facing in attempting to occupy traditional leadership positions are crucial as these can assist those who want to empower themselves to that level. Most women are aware of the unfavourable positions they are in, but they are either blocked by culture and or lack of knowledge as to how to challenge the system.

This untenable position is more visible in traditional leadership, where women are only allowed to participate up to a certain level, for example, as *makhadzi* among the *Vhavhenda*. For them to ascend the position of chief is a challenge in most communities, especially in patriarchal communities where women cannot advance to the highest levels

of power. This is a system in which women are not empowered simply because they are women and because of cultural stereotyping and beliefs.

Busch and Holst (2011) maintain that occupational segregation is a major cause of women being subjected to the glass ceiling phenomenon. Gender segregation in executive and decision-making positions still exists in the labour market and although some women do occupy executive positions, they seldom reach the most powerful positions in many institutions, like that of traditional leadership. In executive management structures, positions of women remain unimportant (Busch & Holst, 2011). The above situation can be clearly seen in the institution of traditional leadership where women in most cases are second in command or invisible and although there are good policies on gender quality and women empowerment in South Africa, there is a lot of work that needs to be done to close the gender gap in different spheres of life.

According to the Glass Ceiling Commission (2003), qualified people are kept from advancing within businesses and realizing their full potential by a combination of artificial and invisible impediments. The idea that the notion of glass ceiling contributes to women experiencing many challenges in choosing careers in their early lives is also supported by Phillips & Imhoff (1997). This is also the case with traditional leadership because women, due to culture and tradition among the *Vhavenda* find it extremely hard to take up traditional leadership position. The South African constitution supports the issue of gender equality, however, patriarchy puts barriers when it comes to female rule. Lyness and Thompson (2000) were curious about whether women and men executives followed similar routes in climbing the corporate ladder, hence, they embarked on research which in fact, established that women face more barriers than men. The researchers identified three classes of barriers that affect women and people of color in top-level management, namely, societal, internal, and governmental barriers. The social barriers centered on the quantity and quality of educated Black and female candidates for leadership roles, as well as the distinctions that may be made between these groups of people in terms of the qualities that are needed in a leader. Internal structural issues include a lack of outreach efforts on behalf of businesses to underrepresented populations, corporate climates that may not be tolerant of difference, and a resistance to training and mentoring members of

underrepresented groups for future promotions. Governmental barriers reflect the failure that comes with a lack of monitoring and law enforcement from the side of government, poor research, and inadequate reporting on the existence of a glass ceiling.

The notion of 'glass ceiling' is a controversial subject. Morrison (1991) indicated that the glass-ceiling barrier is transparent and women can see their chances of being promoted but are unable to rise above a certain level. Within the institution of traditional leadership, similarly, women can see the prospects of promotion but patriarchy and socialization prevent them from ascending such positions. Belgihiti and Kartochian (2008:491) in support, assert - "women start to come across some barriers especially when they are to ascend to executive positions". For Powell and Butterfield (2003), "glass ceiling could exist in different forms, levels in different organizations or institutions; the term is typically used to suggest a barrier to entry into top management positions".

2.5.6 Lack of role models and mentors for women entering traditional leadership

Mentoring and sponsorship programs can play a vital role in career advancement, however, women often encounter limited access to such opportunities, particularly when there is a scarcity of female role models and sponsors within organizations. Klenke (1996) argues that without guidance and support from mentors and sponsors, women may struggle to navigate the complexities of organizational politics and gain visibility for career advancement. The author continues that many women exercise leadership in informal roles, from being mothers, and head of the extended family to warrior queens whose leadership are not formally recognized. It is only in recent times that females are starting to move into the limelight of public interest. Even though legislation has advanced gender equality, women's ascent to leadership positions is a relatively new development. Traditional leadership structures, however, continue to present obstacles for women looking to rise to higher positions of authority, even in the face of supportive legislation. There is no doubt that in recent years, legislation supporting diversity in leadership roles and gender equality has advanced. Nevertheless, the mere fact that these laws exist does not ensure that they will be implemented successfully or that ingrained prejudices in conventional leadership structures will be eliminated. Gender stereotypes that are deeply ingrained in traditional leadership models continue to exist despite legal measures

(Karau & Eagly, 2020). Stereotypically, masculine traits are frequently favored in preconceived notions about leadership qualities; these create a biased environment that is detrimental to women. Effective leaders are expected to be forceful and dominant, which can impede women who are perceived to possess alternatives, yet equally valuable leadership qualities may be ignored due to this perception. Conventional leadership models frequently encourage an unconscious gender-biased corporate culture; these biases can affect decision-making processes in a variety of contexts, including hiring procedures and performance reviews, which can impede the advancement of women into leadership positions. These prejudices fuel a kind of discrimination that is subtle but widespread and still a major barrier for women in leadership roles.

Established networks and mentorship opportunities are crucial for career advancement, and women have historically faced challenges in accessing these support-giving avenues. Male-dominated leadership circles may be less inclined to extend mentorship opportunities to their female counterparts, limiting aspiring female leaders' professional development and visibility. In conclusion, while legislative efforts have been made to support gender equality in leadership, the persistence of gender stereotypes, unconscious bias, and a lack of mentorship opportunities within traditional leadership structures continue to impede the progress of women. It is essential to recognize these challenges towards promoting inclusive leadership environments that truly embrace diversity. Klente (1996) argues that giving women access to - education, attending of meeting, and leading discussions - can give them an edge to challenge ingrained biases which will be instrumental in dismantling the barriers that hinder the full participation of women in leadership roles, creating a more equitable and diverse landscape for future female generations.

According to Peters, Morgenroth & Michelle, (2015), fewer women in leadership positions reduce the interest of women for such positions, because there are no women to motivate, inspire, and monitor them, as role models, at work. Definition of mentoring employed in this study, mentoring is the process by which a person with expertise and experience in traditional leadership can actively assist and advise others who wish to

pursue or are currently in such roles to promote their learning or growth. In traditional leadership, as a male-dominated institution, few women are interested or motivated to take up traditional leadership positions since they are generally male-dominated. Most women who are entitled to such positions by birth are often scared as there are no other women to guide and support them once they have taken up such leadership positions. For Inman (2019), this arrangement involves a person who has the know-how of an institution and a position to provide guidance and assistance to an individual in a more junior position. Career advancement requires access to established networks and mentorship opportunities, which have historically been difficult for women to obtain. Aspiring female leaders' professional growth and visibility may be restricted by male-dominated leadership circles' reluctance to provide mentorship opportunities to their female colleagues. In conclusion, despite legislative initiatives to promote gender equality in leadership, women's advancement is still hampered by enduring gender stereotypes, unconscious prejudice, and a dearth of mentorship opportunities in conventional leadership structures. To promote inclusive leadership environments that genuinely embrace diversity, it is imperative to acknowledge these challenges. According to Klente (1996), granting women access to education, enabling them to participate in meetings, and empowering them to start and lead conversations can help them confront deeply ingrained biases and be confident.

For this study, this will mean that such positions will need women who are already in traditional leadership and other people holding the same position to give guidance and share their experiences in the field. The availability of female role models and mentors would assist in attracting other women and curtailing gender stereotyping in this field. This is supported by Inman (2019), who contends that the absence of a sufficient number of senior or observably successful female mentors and role models is another obstacle for women to pursue careers in leadership. Similarly, Peters et al. (2015) put emphasis on the importance of encouragement by other women as something that can motivate them to be involved in this male-dominated institution. Bringing in women who already have experience in traditional leadership can help in bridging the knowledge gap in this field. According To Peters et al., (2015), this shows the need for strong role models for young women early in their careers - female professionals who have successfully broken

through gender barriers and are influential. The example of Hosi Nwamitwa, a woman who fought for her position, as chief, until she finally got it can be an empowerment to other women in patriarchal societies, thus, women's upbringing and grooming, in the role of traditional leaders, there is a need to start with women themselves, breaking through the patriarchal barricades that have been placed, in most societies.

The scenario sketched above is worrying as it shows that there are still few women to act as role models. This means that the lack of motivation for women in traditional leadership is a challenge to those who want to take up those positions as they assume that they are preserved for men. Within the institution of traditional leadership, men generally occupy the highest positions like kings, chiefs, and headmen. Having enough women in traditional leadership can also assist in them fighting each other's battle as they know each other's experience; this, not being the case, is a significant barrier to women's advancement. Since part of the basis for patriarchy has been organized through men's relationships with other men, a similar unity among women will be an effective means by which to combat institutional forms and norms that largely exclude women (Jakobsh, 2004). The few women in leadership positions supporting other women who are unable to take the position of traditional leadership because of gender can assist, tremendously. In this instance, the incoming group will have role models to assist them on how to fight their battles.

Career advancement requires access to established networks and mentorship opportunities, which have historically been difficult for women to obtain. Aspiring female leaders' professional growth and visibility may be restricted by male-dominated leadership circles' reluctance to provide mentorship opportunities to their female colleagues. This explains why, despite legislative initiatives to promote gender equality in leadership, women's advancement is still hampered by enduring gender stereotypes, unconscious prejudice, and a dearth of mentorship opportunities in conventional leadership structures. In order to promote inclusive leadership environments that genuinely embrace diversity, it is imperative to acknowledge these challenges. According to Klente (1996), granting women access to education, enabling them to participate in meetings, and empowering them to lead conversations can help them confront deeply

ingrained biases; these developments will be instrumental in dismantling the barriers that hinder the full participation of women in leadership roles, creating a more equitable and diverse landscape for future generations.

2.6. Gender arrangement and triple oppression in traditional leadership

Fraser (2007) contends that a lack of recognition of one's gender can be done in the name of preserving culture and tradition. For instance, in traditional council meetings, sitting arrangements are determined by one's sexual orientation, in other words, one's masculinity and feminine traits (Stern, 2013); this arrangement shows how women are discriminated against. Men and women in traditional leadership meetings are made to sit in different positions; for example, men sit on chairs, on stones or anything that will elevate them, whereas women are made to sit on the floor or carpet. This sitting arrangement clearly shows the gender division that is constructed by traditional institutions, like tribal councils. This can sometimes even be seen at school assemblies or where students queue for food; boys and girls line up separately, and their dishes are usually different from those of boys. Some teachers raise their own cultural beliefs that naturalize the division between men and women to justify these children's sitting or queueing patterns. Some teachers invoke the Setswana cultural belief that men who associate with women are weaklings (*ke bo phara mesese*). In this way, teachers use, for example, Setswana culture and religion to justify perpetuating gender inequality.

Gender inequality is also premised on the division of labour between men and women wherein certain tasks are exclusively designated for the dominant gender (male). Women are assigned tasks that keep them mainly in the households. Gender, as mentioned earlier, comprises a range of differences between men and women, extending from the biological to the social; discrimination is defined as treating people differently because of their sex or race (Stamarski, and Son Hing, 2015). Based on the above definitions, we can conclude that gender discrimination is the preference of one gender over the other. According to Bradley (2015) argues that gender discrimination may exist in various dimensions. These could include discrimination in hiring, pay and salary disparities, discrimination in promotions, and unfair treatment of different genders in relation to goods and facilities. Gender discrimination has an impact on employee productivity, as

employees are the foundation of an organisation and carry out essential duties for its existence (Bradley, 2015). All the above also applies within the institution of traditional leadership.

Decision-makers may decide to discriminate, according to Stamarski et al. (2015), if they think that their superiors or other influential people expect or desire it. In defence of the aforementioned claim, Pothier (2018) contends that inefficiencies result from errors in the distribution of talent. The notion that imbalances in the distribution of talent among occupations or professions have a detrimental effect on growth is not new. Gender discrimination may consist of not allowing women to have access to managerial positions or to become workers. This can be understood as a social norm that is upheld by the stigma that exists in society, which discourages women from entering the workforce (Pothier, 2018). Some studies indicate that most women leaders have experienced exclusion, isolation, dismissal, communication challenges, being taken advantage of, and doing something and not receiving credit for it (Jeonghyun, Lee, Kyungmin, Minah & Jongkyeong, 2015). In traditional leadership, most women who are or want to inherit the traditional leadership position suffer disapproval, either by family, culture or tradition in their communities.

According to Jeonghyun et al. (2015), women of color would have achieved more success if they had not been hindered by national and organizational systems and procedures from progressing professionally in line with their growing numbers and educational attainment. The advancement of decent work depends on gender equality. Because they have fewer opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills, women typically face larger barriers to attaining quality occupations. If women are underrepresented in the workforce, businesses should be urged to offer preference to female candidates during the recruitment process in case of equal qualifications, if women are under-represented among the company's workers (Wadham, Robinson & Ruebain, 2010). Similarly, in traditional settings, women's potential to lead should also be recognized so that they can have an opportunity to take up leadership positions in their communities.

2.7. The institution of marriage and traditional leadership

Marriage according to Tshifhumulo and Ramaite (2021) is a legal union between men and women. Location, culture, and religion bring diversity to marriage; for example, African culture allows men to have as many wives as possible, but that is not the case with women. Malesana (2016) considers marriage a personal union between two spouses and a biological relationship for mating and reproduction. A similar practice is also visible in traditional contexts where a man can marry many wives, knowing that from all the wives, only one wife will give birth to a son who will take over after him. Phaswana (2000) asserts that marriage is a very important process in the lives of men and women; it brings together and cements two families through the process of *lumalo* negotiation which might be in the form of money or cattle to the bride's family. It is through this process that a contract is entered into through a formal ceremony, and a conjugal union is formed (Noyland, 2017). Within the institution of traditional leadership, a chief can marry as many wives, but not all qualify to bear the heir to the throne. Only the *Mufumakadzi wa dzekiso* (a wife from a selected royal family) qualifies (Ntlama, 2019; Mutshotsho, 2015). These women were married to the *Vhamusanda* with the bride-wealth (*lumalo*) which was used to marry his sister. According to Netshirembe (2015) these women are treated with high respect as compared to the other wives; this selected wife qualifies irrespective of her number and position in the family.

In patriarchal communities, societies are arranged in a way that oppresses women in many ways, for example, girls are forbidden to inherit traditional leadership. Dod and Rahunzi (2016) postulate that women do not benefit from their families because as they grow older, they get married and change their identities when they join a new family. This in the traditional system marks a crucial change in the lives of some women. The institution of marriage to many women complicates their participation as they become semi-permanent and not belong to any of the two families (Dod & Rahunzi, 2016).

Patriarchy is also seen through the process of *lobola*, during which a man is expected to pay a bride price for his wife. The *lobola* practice is infused with patriarchal beliefs that promote male supremacy. Patriarchy ultimately is a gendered power system - a network of social, political, and economic relationships through which men dominate and control

female labour and reproduction (Chiweshe 2016:3). The process of lobola may be abused by some people who think that by paying lobola, they are entitled to own and turn their women into property. Ferguson (1999) and Chiwewe (2016) give an explanation of patriarchal society as a society where men hold positions of power in different institutional spheres, such as heads of the family unit, leaders of social groups, bosses in the workplace and the elites of government. Some men may develop control over their wife, making women the property of their husbands. Giving women just an advisory position shows how the institution of marriage feeds into the system of oppression and gender bias, as this position can be given to both males and females. Furthermore, the fact that the elder sister to the king/chief has the power to challenge some of the decisions taken by the king can also be challenging as this, according to many African cultures, as decisions are taken by people like royal council members such as the uncles and aunts (*dzikhadzi na makhotsimunene*). According to Tshifhumulo and Ramaite (2021) these selected *Makhadzi* and *Ndumi* are seen to be trusted by the family in keeping the secret on who will take over when the chief passes on. The decision is taken by the royal family as it is believed that commoners are ignorant of the roles of *thondo* (royal court). According to the *Vhavenda* customs a (*Makhadzi*) is the one who is given the powers to identify a king, and the identification had to be supported by all *Makhotsimunene* and other *Khadzi*. In the eyes of the outsiders, she might be seen as having all the decision-making son who ascends the throne. The fact that her final say rests on the support from other members of the royal family also upsurges her position.

The construction of gender and the division of roles between males and females caused society to conclude that the relevant roles for females are that of caring and nurturing the whole family. Enyew and Mihrete (2018) expound that women share the same rational human nature as men do and so should be given the same opportunities and rights as men are given. This can assist in freeing women from oppressive activities that are established by societies, giving women the same access to education, which would allow them to know their rights.

2.8. Family Responsibilities and the participation of women in traditional leadership

Lombardo and Meier (2008) found that family-related matters are interwoven with labour market issues. To promote gender equality, the South African government has introduced many policies aimed at bringing about fair participation of both men and women in private and public spheres. The Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1997 is one of such policies which were introduced to bridge the gender inequality gap. According to this Act, women are not homogenous; meaning that women should be treated differently as the causes of their discrimination are also not the same. Women are discriminated against based on factors such as their - gender, class, race, and ethnicity. Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1997 states that women at the workplace should be given at least 6-month full paid maternity leave with men only getting three (3) days paternity leave.

From the onset, South Africa has sought, although in a very limited way, to assist not only women and men as well to reconcile their work-family demands and to assist their wives while they are on maternity leave. This brings a lot of burden to these pregnant women as they are supposed to juggle their condition with the needs of their children at home. Policies such as employment equity and many more are put in place to uplift the status of women, focus more on the public domain, and leave out household challenges for these women. Men in most cases are also looked after at home, in fulfillment of their domestic and/or family needs. The challenges these women face make it difficult for them to even consider running for public offices or in this case, traditional leadership.

2.8 Resistance to change

Chauke (2015) derides the resistance and hostile attitudes displayed by other royal members who have powers to select the heirs to a throne. Such people often display negative attitudes towards females who are contesting for the traditional leadership positions; this is because of their cultural stereotypical ideas regarding women and leadership. Chauke (2015) further argues that the lack of support for women to take up some traditional responsibilities is also impeding their participation in traditional leadership. The patriarchal nature of society makes it difficult for both men and women to accept women 's participation in leadership roles. This highlights the hostility and resistance which Chauke (2015) argues, is displayed by the people who have the power to elect women to positions of power. These people with stereotypical ideas also frustrate the

efforts of government and NGOs pushing for gender mainstreaming. The resistance is said to be stronger in most royal families that are responsible for choosing successors either for chieftaincy or kingship. Most of these royal families ensure that certain traditional leadership positions are exclusively preserved for men. This resonates with Walby (2005) who alluded to the fact that gender mainstreaming is likely to be met with great resistance and hostility as attempts are made to integrate new gender norms into state and societal institutions. Friedman (1999), Meer (1999), Cock and Bernstein (2001) and Walker (2003) show that women are treated as minors by traditional leaders who are also in control of land distribution. To Walker (2003), this attitude reveals that when the opportunity for issues, like land ownership are being debated upon, women were not likely to be considered for land ownership.

Friedman (1999) explains that women who seek the position of traditional leadership are likely to suffer hostility and exclusion from their families and other people occupying significant positions. This serves to highlight the fact that patriarchy runs deep in our societies as this is evidenced by the widespread reluctance of women to operate autonomously (Chauke, 2015; Solomon, 2014). The power to select the heirs to the throne lies with *Makhotsimunene* and *Vhomakhadzi* (uncles and aunts), hence, in the current patriarchal communities, the situation for women remains dire (Poloko, 2019).

2.9. Customary practices and traditional leadership

Customary practices are behaviors learned from the past that members of a community respect, therefore, they accept these customary laws without questioning them, even though, some of these practices are discriminative and oppressive in nature. According to Mmusinyane (2009), some pieces of legislation have been promulgated to address injustices and to create an equal and democratic society. The scholar further explains that despite numerous objections to women as leaders in their respective communities, a few cases indicate progress that the Constitution and other pieces of legislation have made so far, by allowing women to occupy and participate in traditional leadership positions.

Despite improvements in the promotion and strengthening of women's rights, gender discrimination and the oppression of women is still rampant in South African society. As

indicated by Inglehart and Norris (2003), a female leader showcasing feminine behavior is unacceptable in leadership positions, while on the other hand, the male dependability characteristic to the field of traditional leadership creates additional pressure for women. This, therefore, creates a huge gender gap when it comes to the representation of men and women in traditional leadership. Little has changed in the lives of women as many women are still subject to customary law, tradition, and other patriarchal social and cultural practices (Owuor, 2015). This shows reluctance on the part of those who advocate customary law to embrace and make constitutionally driven changes in traditional leadership. Gender bias and discriminatory practices work against the promotion of women's leadership in local in many other spheres of life, traditional leadership included. This requires that the selection of an heir to a leadership position should be in line with newly-promulgated regulations, which requires communities to bring their customs in line with the norms and values of the Constitution. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) emphasises that all people are equal in the eyes of the law, irrespective of their race, class, and gender. This implies that men and women should enjoy equal rights regardless of their culture, status, and gender.

2.10. International and national policies promoting gender equality

The exclusion, discrimination and non-representation of women forced the international community to come up with policies and legislative instruments that can assist in redressing gender imbalances in different spheres of life. Many communities in Africa have always made it difficult for women to access positions of power (Chauke, 2015). The adoption of the Beijing Platform of Action and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was to assist in the recognition of the status of women. However, inequalities in many communities' structures continue, and this restricts the free performance, practices and interactions of women and girls. These above-mentioned instruments were put in place to advance the goals of equality, thus, are regarded as breakthroughs in affirming the principles of human rights and equality for women globally and are discussed below in detail. In the institution of traditional leadership this instrument will assist the discussions as their focus is to make sure that women and the disadvantaged are also treated with dignity and respect. These

declarations in challenging the patriarchal form of traditional leadership will give women voice and support whenever they are being challenged by societal structures, including family and traditional norms.

2.10.1 Beijing Platform for Action

The Beijing Platform for Action was put in place to address the critical need for women's empowerment. With the support of other international tools, it was used as strategies for the advancement of women (Advocacy Aid, 2014). "It aims to remove all obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in the economic, social, cultural and political decision-making (Sambo, A.R., 2020)" This shows that the Beijing Platform for Action leverages the status of women in all spheres of lives by acknowledging the voices of all women and girls in all structures (General Assembly Resolution, 1995). It further emphasizes that equality between men and women should be taken as a human rights issue.

In addition, the Beijing Platform for Action emphasizes that equal access to education is crucial as it is an essential tool in achieving equality. Gender inequality is a result of reducing women's and girls' access to civil rights and equal allocation of social resources such as education and employment (Giddens, 2001; Enyew and Mihrete (2018). Despite the exclusion of women that still occurs in traditional leadership, the South African government is dedicated to fighting for women's equality, which is one of the basic principles of the Constitution of the country (Enyew and Mihrete, 2018). The government of South Africa calls for the empowerment of women and advocates equality of treatment for men and women in private and public spheres.

The uneven power relation is a concern that can only be addressed by men and women working together towards a common goal of gender equality, all over the world. The Constitution also respects and values, the full diversity of women's situations and conditions and recognizes that some women face barriers to their empowerment; it encourages indigenous women to participate in decision-making at all levels. This, therefore, means that the participation of women in traditional leadership is one aspect that is also supported by the Beijing Platform of Action. The latter further promotes women's economic freedom, including jobs, so as to eradicate the persistent burden of

poverty on women. This should be done by addressing the systemic causes of poverty through changes in economic structures, ensuring equitable access to productive capital, opportunities and public services for all women, including those in rural areas, who should be seen as vital agents of growth (General Assembly Resolution, 1995).

In as much as the Beijing Platform of Action tries to come up with ways and strategies to reduce gender inequalities between men and women, it also has some shortcomings. According to the UN Women (2000) report, there hasn't been any progress made toward achieving equal participation in decision-making in political structures at the national and international levels, according to a review of reports from around the world on the Beijing Platform for Action's implementation. It adds that even in nations where a "critical mass" of women holds positions of decision-making in the public sector, women's representation is still low in the majority of the world's nations. There are few women on boards of directors of major business corporations, therefore, this indicates a need for more careful monitoring of progress in ensuring women's equal participation in these positions of economic and political power.

Abubakar and Ahmad (2014) agree that the Beijing conference in 1995 thoroughly discussed the discriminatory attitude, practices and unequal power relations that led to the underrepresentation and marginalization of women in many spheres of lives. According to Kauzya (2008), the causes and consequences of underrepresentation and marginalization of women may vary from country to country. These factors and results focus also on cultural and institutional bottlenecks to women's leadership participation, such as - socioeconomic status of women, political violence, and an unwillingness of women to take part in male-dominated activities.

2.10.2 The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

The General Assembly of the United Nations (UNGA) adopted CEDAW on 18 December 1979 and came into force in 1981. CEDAW was ratified by many countries, and South Africa is among those countries. CEDAW aims at achieving change for women and girls in various regions (Abubakar, & Ahmad, 2014). All the countries that have ratified the

Convention are required to submit national reports at least every four years on measures they have taken to comply with their agreement obligations.

It has been implemented as a historic agreement that affirms the principles of fundamental human rights and women's equality around the world - "States and parties shall take all appropriate steps, including legislation, in all areas, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, to ensure the full growth and advancement of women to guarantee their exercise and the enjoyment of human rights and basic freedoms based on equality between men and women" (Weiss, 2003: 43). This implies that it is the duty of the country to make sure that women and men can engage equally in all practices, such as, traditional leadership. Bari, (2005), in Manuella (2016) stresses that quotas are an effective tool for resolving women's exclusion from the public and private spheres, which can also be used as a mechanism for empowering women, increasing their participation, and including them in the redistribution of socio-economic capital within society. For Bari (2005), equitable distribution of resources, therefore, makes it easier for women to achieve social and economic redistributive justice in society. Ensuring equitable distribution of resources would help to give women a voice, as they are still economically dependent. The Convention is opposed to the discrimination of women based on biological make-up, thus calling for countries to create a national action plan to end such discrimination against women. This can assist in paving the way for women not to be denied an opportunity to contest for traditional leadership positions. Reporting procedures guarantee that nations honor their commitment to shielding women from discrimination in public and legal spheres. States that ratify the Convention pledge to eliminate all discriminatory laws and integrate the ideals of equality between men and women into their legal framework. States are monitored by ensuring that they review the effectiveness of their laws on women's lives, amending certain laws that discriminate against women, and sending quarterly reports on their progress to the UN Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) (Weiss, 2003).

CEDAW also ensures the removal by individuals, organisations, or businesses of all acts of violence against women. This simply means that any persons or groups that prevent the empowerment of women, such as preventing women from participation in traditional

leadership or in any other activities, should be dealt with by law. This gives protection to women who have the right to take over certain positions but are blocked by their biological make-up. The Convention aims at elevating the status of women by ensuring that there is equality between men and women, fair access to resources even for women and equal opportunities for both men and women in political and public life. The proper implementation of these policies can assist states in achieving gender equality and allowing women to participate in all activities and institutions without any fear.

The convention was ratified by South African government in 1995. Advocacy Aid (2014) notes that the South African state submitted a report covering the period 1998 to 2008 in 2010 and the report adhered to the framework reporting guideline. Monitoring all the activities within the country can assist in ensuring that there is equality between men and women through fair access to resources and equal opportunities for both men and women in private and public life, including the institution of traditional leadership. This means that this instrument must have had an influence on South Africa's drafting of policies. According to Abubakar and Ahmad (2014), CEDAW plays a significant role in increasing women's participation worldwide; it ensures that there is inclusion and fair representation of women in the private and public sectors worldwide. It can be argued that CEDAW can also be used to push for equality, even in traditional leadership positions. Civil society organizations then developed a report which was submitted in response to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in January 2011. This shadow report noted that, despite the determination of the State to change social and cultural behavior patterns, it was difficult as these were focused on stereotyped conceptions of the roles of men and women.

For the quotas system to work effectively, there is an urgent need for the South African government to alleviate some of the present structural challenges in various sectors of the country. This means that the challenges against the participation of women in traditional leadership positions also need to be explored.

2.11 Southern African Development Community (SADC) Gender Protocol

For the people of Southern Africa, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) envisions and strives for enduring peace, freedom, and social justice as well as fair development and steady economic success. Article 6(2) of the SADC Gender Protocol (2015) committed member states to refrain from discriminating against individuals based solely on their sex.

All of the promises made in other instruments that support gender equality are covered under the mandate of the SADC Gender Protocol. Among these are the Beijing Declaration and associated Platform of Action, as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The protocol can be used to combat discrimination and gender inequality that still remain in conventional leadership even today since it attempts to fill in the gaps and set goals where gender equality does not exist. The SADC Gender Protocol (2015) provides a relatively comprehensive framework for promoting gender-responsive governance in the SADC region, covering representation and participation. This can include the call for full participation of both men and women in traditional leadership, thus, ensuring that there is equality between men and women in both the public and the private sectors. Looking at the institution of traditional leadership in SADC countries like Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa South Africa, however, it is clear that women are still finding it hard to take part in the sector of traditional leadership.

Chauke (2015) states that, in South Africa, Hosi Shiluvane's decision to contest the traditional leadership position after the passing away of Hosi Fofosa without a male successor was not taken well by community members. Their opposition to women contesting for traditional leadership was because it is unthinkable, in a patriarchal society, for a woman to be a leader, although there are a few exceptions in other clans. Members of the Shiluvane community, however, were not ready for a female traditional leader (Chauke, 2015). This situation clearly showed the patriarchal tendency that traditional leadership is deeply embedded within the norms of these institutions that are heavily equipped with gender norms. Although Hosi Nwamitwa was appointed as the leader, many people doubted and undermined her capabilities as a traditional leader. This

incident indicated that proper monitoring of the SADC protocols is crucial for equality to be reached. States should stop undermining women in leadership positions and embrace their capabilities like men.

A similar situation is taking place with the *Vhavenda* traditional leadership, where there is an ongoing fight within the Mphephu family. Mukololo Masindi Mphephu is facing opposition as those who espouse the patriarchal system continue to openly dispute her efforts to claim her rightful role as a leader. The reasons given for the opposition include the fact that she was born out of wedlock and is a female, and in terms of the Venda culture, women are not allowed to occupy positions of leadership (Poloko, 2019). This shows that patriarchy continues to impede the realization of gender equality among the *VhaVenda* people of South Africa. This is because for women to ascend to traditional leadership positions, there seem to be many challenges, some of which, ironically, are sometimes overlooked when the situation concerns men. The two scenarios cited above pertaining to Shiluvane and Mphephu in Limpopo, South Africa - do not necessarily apply globally.

Female traditional leaders and the queen mothers In Ghana play very significant roles in the traditional setup of the Akan society (Mensah et al., 2014: 207). These scholars explain that a queen mother in this society is recognized as the co-ruler in the traditional political system and has joint responsibility with the kings or chiefs to run the affairs of their communities.

2.12. South Africa's Constitution of 1996

The Constitutional Court approved the constitution of the Republic of South Africa on the 4th of December 1996. It became effective on the 4th of February 1997 and is taken as the country's highest law. The foundation of South Africa's democracy, the Bill of Rights, is discussed in detail in Chapter Two of the Constitution. This Bill enshrines the rights of all South African citizens while upholding the democratic values of freedom, equality and human dignity

This provision promotes the idea that everyone should be treated equally, which is why this study aims to explore, from a South African viewpoint, how the Constitution interacts

with the understudied topic of women's presence in conventional leadership posts. According to The SA Information Reporter (2014), detailed and inclusive talks with a keen understanding of the injustices of the nation's pre-democratic past preceded the implementation of South Africa's Constitution. This process necessitated that people from all spheres of life, cultures and genders be extensively consulted. Myakayaka-Manzini (2002), Manuella, (2016); Seidman, 1993) confirm this by noting that women also played an important role in drafting the South African Constitution and influenced clauses that affected their rights. By including different women structures in the drafting of the constitution assisted them in making sure that women voiced out their problems as a group who are directly affected by different structures of the country. There was, therefore, extensive inclusion of women in the national anti-apartheid campaigns and the drawing up of the "Women's Charter" (Manuella, 2016; Seidman, 1993).

2.13 The Employment Equity Act, No.55 of 1998

One strategy that the South African government allowed to establish an environment where men and women are treated equally is the Equity Act. The Act emphasizes the fact that to eliminate unfair treatment at the work place all employers should take part in fighting unfair discrimination. For this study, this will mean that all the people who form part of the selection processes of traditional leadership should also promote equality within the institution. The Act stresses the fact that no practice, whether traditional, customary or national, should trample on women's dignity or undermine equality for men and women in any form. This means that no law or policy should be implemented that unjustly prevents women from pursuing careers or positions they want to hold. As a result, the Equity Act on the Prohibition of Unfair Discrimination Act No. 55 of 1998 concurs that eliminating social and economic inequality is necessary to strengthen democracy in the nation. This research also looks at what prompted the government to come up with the Affirmative Action Act in order to address inequality in the country, as explained below.

2.13.1 Affirmative action

According to Naidoo & Kongolo (2004), affirmative action refers to policies, plans, or initiatives aimed at correcting historical injustices and improving the circumstances of people and groups that have suffered because of their race, color, gender, or handicap.

The Act also specified which three groups, women and individuals with disabilities, would get the most affirmative action benefits. Mclean & McMillan (2009:4) said that the goal of affirmative action is to make up for previous instances of prejudice against women, people with disabilities, racial minorities, and other historically underprivileged groups. The purpose of this policy, therefore, is to affirm those who were previously marginalized or discriminated by the apartheid system in South Africa; however, women were the most victimized as they were extensively excluded from the employment sectors and leadership positions. The Act has been the subject of debate, as it has not been conclusively established as having made any meaningful inroads when it comes to traditional leadership roles.

The idea of affirmative action (not the practice) originated in the United States in 1961 when the country's then-president issued an executive order requiring private contractors to treat job applicants equally regardless of their race, creed, color, or national origin. A lengthy legal and ethical dispute surrounded the policy, leading to revisions and rules that included further affirmative action measures beyond merely encouraging non-discrimination. By setting targets and deadlines to address the underrepresentation of minorities in the workforce, the Act made guaranteed that they were fairly represented. To create an equitable and non-discriminatory workforce, many countries have implemented Affirmative Action (Onsander, 2006). South Africa, like many other countries, adopted the policy from the USA as a tool to empower black South Africans who were previously deprived by the Apartheid system, especially black women.

According to Onsander (2006), the issue of addressing national policies in its quest to swiftly, progressively, and morally overcome the legacy of inequality and injustice created by colonialism and apartheid was ranked second on the list of ANC policy objectives adopted at its National Conference in May 1992. As a result, the Republic of South Africa (1996) established the new Constitution, which allowed for the formulation of laws and policies aimed at correcting historical injustices. The discussion gained direction and concentration in the middle of the 1990s thanks to the work of the Labour Market Commission and the Green Paper on Employment, which eventually produced the first

component of the Black Economic Empowerment Contract., The Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998).

This was a developmental policy developed by liberals soon after the government of South Africa had achieved its freedom in 1994 (Onsander, 2006). The policy was mainly aimed at emancipating the previously disadvantaged groups from the apartheid era, who were mainly blacks, Indians and coloureds. However, it was mainly targeting black South African women as their situation had been dire, pre-independence.

Affirmative action was mainly aimed at empowering the previously marginalized groups, mainly black South African women, although this has yet to happen; men are still dominating most employment sectors. It seems difficult to implement affirmative action in traditional leadership positions as the positions are determined by consanguinity and cultural norms. This is partially because the selection process requires certain people from the ruling family, and this, in most instances, is in accordance with patriarchal norms. The administrative part in traditional leadership is usually monitored and implemented by government, however, the process of selecting a successor is more private.

The concept of gender in South Africa is influenced by race and culture; apartheid-era traits give it an uneven playing field for white and black women, with black women continuing to be the most disadvantaged. With a high unemployment rate, it is evident from the employment statistics that black South African women are the least fortunate (Commission on Gender Equality, 2001). There aren't many women in traditional leadership roles, which is another institution that reflects the aforementioned image. Mathur-Helm (2006) emphasized that in South Africa, it is only recently that attention has been paid to problems faced by women in the workplace and management positions, but this is not the case with traditional leadership positions as these are decided based on patriarchal and cultural lines. Examples of intentional Acts and Policies on Women's Affairs include the National Women's Empowerment Policy, the signing of multiple UN Conventions on Women, the Commission on Gender Equality, the Women's Charter for Effective Equality (1993), the Interim Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1993), the Reconstruction and Development Programme (1994), the National Report of the Status of Women in South Africa prepared for the World Conference on Women held in

Beijing in 1995, and South African Women on the Road to Development, Equality and Peace (Beijing Conference Plan of Action, 1995). These actions demonstrate the focus of efforts, but not traditional leadership.

Although women are still underrepresented in traditional leadership roles and corporate boardrooms, these various initiatives show the tremendous progress South Africa has made in recent years to promote and advance women in other sectors (Catalyst, 2004). Patriarchy, therefore, is a major factor that affects women's development. Onsander (2006) is of the view that the new democratic South Africa inherited a deeply divided society, illustrated by inequalities - in the distribution of wealth, access to land, education, and health. Women as a group, both black and white, were excluded from most types of formal employment except secretarial and clerical work. Black and white men worked together in keeping black women in the rural areas under the surveillance and control of older patriarchal males, as most black men were forced to sell their labor power as migrant workers in the urban and mining areas. The Commission on Gender Equality came closer to addressing these inequities as will be shown below.

2.13.2. The Commission on Gender Equality (CGE)

The Commission on Gender Equality Act 39 is a constitutional body established in 1996 to support the development and implementation of gender equality in South Africa. The Commission has a commitment to create a society free from gender discrimination and all other forms of oppression; a society where people will have the opportunities and means to realize their potential regardless of gender, race, class, religion, disability, or geographic location. Part of its mandate involves a countrywide men's program to advance gender equality in all the nine provinces, therefore, together with - the South African Men's Forum, the Moral Regeneration Movement (MRM) and the National Council of Churches (NCC) - the CGE launched a series of dialogues entitled 'Unmasking Patriarchy' which explored men's roles and responsibilities in achieving gender equality.

2.13.3. The Office on the Status of Women (OSW)

OSW is one of the multiple efforts of the South African Government to reduce issues of gender inequalities. This Office has played a crucial role in promoting men's active and

constructive involvement in the fight against women's oppression. In the year 2004, the OSW brought together senior representatives from national departments and civil societies to discuss the formation and mandate of the National Gender Machinery (NGM) Coordinating Committee on Men and Gender Equality (Richter and Morrell, 2006); the was to support and advocate for women empowerment and advancing women in leadership is one of its mandates. This office paves a way for women to participate in leadership positions from their homes, communities, and workspaces.

2.13.4 The Civil Society

Civil society organizations in South Africa work to promote constructive male involvement in gender matters through awareness programs. These programs are done - at local organizational levels, within House of Traditional Leadership, Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Richter and Morrell, 2006); organizations, like the House of Traditional Leaders also focus on men and gender equality as they are significant in influencing many people, especially, in rural areas.

2.14 Summary of the chapter

The empowerment of women can assist in their skilling for leadership purposes, which can bring about development in households, communities, and society. This chapter isolated the fact that it is patriarchal cultural norms that disempower women from being equally considered when they are supposed to be elected to positions of power.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter is discussed the theories that underpinned the study. Creswell (2019) indicates that a theory is used by scholars to interpret and critique information or data, as well as to guide the enterprise of discovering new information for generalization. Thobejane (2019) further indicated that in patriarchal societies, theories are male-oriented and such theories are more andragogical such that anything that valorizes the voices of women is not tolerated.

It is in this vein that this work is premised on the theories of feminism whose deliberations are for the total emancipation of women, or the self-actualization and freedom of women. This section draws on these theories' strength and weaknesses in pursuit of gender equality. The chapter explores the following - standpoint theory, radical feminist theory, masculinity theory, as well as the African feminist theory – in an attempt to locate them within the broader explications of gender equality.

A male-centered theory approach leaves out essential issues that affect, negatively, the lives of women. Adawo et al., (2011) define “feminism” as a concept that compete and often oppose other theories that are mainly androcentric. Feminist scholars challenge these theories and have proposed new theories and approaches to interrogate, explicate, understand, and change human conditions for the better. It is in this vein that we now turn to the general discussions of feminism. Feminist theories were chosen because they offer gender studies a balanced stance. Radical feminism, black feminist theory, and the feminist standpoint paradigms are well defined in the context of the topic of this study which sought to examine the dynamics of women's participation in traditional leadership.

3.1.1 Feminism

According to Birmer and Alemeneh (2018), feminism is a broad, competing, and often opposing group of social ideas, political movements, and moral philosophies that are primarily inspired by or address the experiences of women, particularly with regard to

their social and economic inequalities. In patriarchal societies, women's rights are usually ignored; Bimer and Alemeneh (2020) further assert that patriarchy and socialization make women view such oppression as something inescapable, thereby, making women to feel hopeless in challenging power structures that control the day-to-day running of communities. Feminist theories bring a robust discourse of women's oppression within their specific experiences; these describe women's oppression, explains the cause and consequences of their oppression, and suggests strategies that can be used to liberate women. These theories posit that peoples' understanding of their social world is shaped by their own material conditions and their lived experiences (Chinyakata, 2018). In this study, the feminist theory will help in understanding gender inequality within the institution of traditional leadership, in contexts, such as the royal, tribal and council setups.

Feminist groups appeared in different epochs, and they address women's plight; they have one main goal - to achieve gender equality. This study uses feminist theories as they are vehicles through which we can understand patriarchal influences on people and societies. Feminist theorists view institutions as the main sites of women's oppression and see them as platforms created to reserve privilege, power, and dominance for men. More men, in these institutions, have exclusive privileges to leadership positions in community structures, as decision-makers and heads of these institutions, while relegating women to the periphery of society (Anderson & Miles, 2015). Feminist theories focus on the oppression of women in all spheres of life; for this study participation of women in traditional leadership as an area that is male dominated will be looked at (Hooks, 1992; Eisenstein, 2004). According to Thojane, (2020), Feminism as a movement has come about precisely because many women have rejected men's interpretation of their lives and it is in this vein that we now focus on the feminist standpoint theory.

3.1.2 The role of theory in research

A theory that aids in the discovery, explanation, and prediction of commonplace experiences and phenomena around us is needed to comprehend and explain the world around us, as well as the behavior of all living things (Craib, 2015) This clarifies and

justifies the variety of concepts that surround us, including those related to the social, biological, psychological, and natural aspects of humanity.

3.1.3 Feminist Standpoint Theory

In response to traditional social science methodologies that frequently ignored or marginalized the perspectives and experiences of women, the alternative - feminist standpoint theory - first appeared in the late 1970s (Harding, 2004). Sociologist Dorothy Smith and philosopher Nancy Hartsock created the fundamental concepts of feminist standpoint theory in the 1970s, and early 1980s. The feminist standpoint theories first appeared in a variety of social sciences' disciplines because of the Marxist feminist and feminist critical theoretical approaches. As a result, they provided methodological and epistemological approaches that are particular to different disciplinary frameworks, but they all share a dedication to recognizing, evaluating, and utilizing the relationships between power and knowledge as affecting change that leads to more equitable societies. Numerous feminist academics - Dorothy Smith, Nancy Hartsock, Hilary Rose, Sandra Harding, Patricia Hill Collins, Alison Jaggar, and Donna Haraway - have argued that scientific inquiry should start with women's lived experiences, particularly those of their caring work. The feminist analyses and critiques of the relationships between power, materialism, and epistemology are at the heart of all these standpoint theories.

Harding, (2004) contends that no one's viewpoint or knowledge should be given a higher status than that of others, thereby, acknowledging that people's perspectives and knowledge are shaped by their social positions and experiences. By using this theory to examine how women participate in traditional leadership among the *VhaVenda*, it becomes clear who historically had their perspectives and experiences valued and who has been marginalized. The standpoint feminism theory explores how gender processes affect both sexes as well as the roles and experiences of men and women

Baily (2012) argues that before the dawn of feminism, society favored male interests, knowledge and experience and spread masculine notions. To comprehend the nature of gender inequality, feminism looks at the interests, experiences, and social roles of women and although feminist theory primarily critiques social relations, it also analyzes gender inequality and advances the interests of women. Hekeman (1997) supported this

viewpoint by saying that men in most communities hold all power because decision-making in society is primarily reserved for and carried out by men. This is also the case with traditional leadership, where only the male perspective is viewed as superior and dominant, while women's perspective was always excluded, marginalized, and belittled. In the *Vhavenda* culture, it is crucial to realize that power structures and cultural norms can differ greatly amongst various groups and societies; therefore, the *Makhadzi*, or female leader, has a great deal of power in the family and community structures of some traditional societies, like the *Vhavenda*. Social norms, historical roles, and cultural traditions may all contribute to this power, although, this position is not the highest when looking at the hierarchy of traditional leaderships. For the feminists, the exclusion of women from the knowledge production is an unfair practice as it leaves out women's interests and experiences. Women through feminist theory can integrate their experiences and their social difficulties (Davis & Maldonado, 2015; Hooks, 1992).

In addition, it is imperative to note that, it is only when women understand their social setting, can they start to consider challenging the male super-structure, in a bid for their liberty. Advocates of the feminist standpoint theory argue that for women to act against oppression they need to be knowledgeable of what is going on (Luyts, 2016); against this backdrop, feminists consider developing knowledge grounded on women's experiences.

Early feminists had deliberately ignored experiences in knowledge production that they deemed conflicting to their own in order to prevent the theory from collapsing. As a result, they excluded the experiences of women of color from their arguments by presenting them in a uniform manner. Consequently, women's varied experiences of oppression in various cultures and contexts were absent from the knowledge produced. However, according to standpoint feminist theory, these contradictory and varied experiences are important because women's culturally diverse collectivises seek to produce knowledge that deals with their particular issues. The feminist point of view disagrees with the definition of truth and knowledge as a whole. It is in favor of a situated, local, and communal definition of knowledge, as opposed to a universal one (Guiffrida, Lynch, Wall & Abel, 2013).

According to feminist standpoint theory, no one's perspective or level of knowledge is superior to another's. According to this theory, knowledge ought to incorporate information that has been suppressed, marginalized, silenced, or discarded in order to make the experiences of women and other oppressed groups a valuable source of critical understanding. According to Kivai (2010), this kind of knowledge offers a more accurate, long-lasting, impartial, and revolutionary picture of the world. Feminist theorists contend that "objective knowledge" ought to include contentious, contradictory, or even overlapping experiences and interests of women since this implies a variety of viewpoints, which, according to Guiffrida et al. (2013), adds new insights to the theory of feminist standpoints. Feminist theorists contend that "objective knowledge" ought to include controversial, contradictory, or even overlapping experiences and interests of women since this implies a variety of viewpoints, which, according to Guiffrida et al. (2013), adds new insights to the theory of feminist standpoints.

The dynamics of women's participation in traditional leadership among the *VhaVenda* can, thus, be better understood and addressed using the feminist standpoint theory. Using this approach, there is a better chance to advance greater gender equality and inclusivity in conventional leadership structures while also honoring and preserving the cultural heritage of the *Vha Venda* people; this can be done by recognizing the diversity of opinions within the community and challenging the historical privilege of male leaders.

3.1.4. Radical feminist theory

Radical feminist theory emerged from western countries in response to challenges faces by women working in the civil rights movement (Atkinson, 2014); these were women whose view point where not taken seriously by men . How women are oppressed has always been the central question for feminists and unlike all other feminist theories, Radical feminism is the only theory developed by women for women. Rowland and Klein (1996) argue that all the oppressed people, many of which are women do not want to accept that they are part of an oppressed group.

This theory was influenced by social and progressive movements around the 1960s. Radical feminists view sexuality as the main cause of women's oppression; they focus on how men can control women's activities by restricting their movement within their

homes. Radical feminism places a strong emphasis on the necessity of grassroots activism and structural change in order to oppose and alter oppressive systems. For them equality on male terms is not enough, rather the inclusion of women's experiences and voice is very crucial as that makes them able to take part in all aspects of the improvement of their lives and community activities. Magadla (2023), believes that women-led grassroots movements have played a significant role in promoting increased representation of women in traditional leadership positions within the *Vhavenda* community. In most societies, women play a more emotional and nurturing role focused on the home and family, while men are seen as having an influential function serving as a link between family life and the life of the community at large. Holsstrom (2011) opines that patriarchy is a socially constructed concept that subordinates women. To support the above, Bryon (1999) states that the way in which males and females relate to each other depends on male power and that this is more innate than the power based on race and or class. The process of socialization supports the naturalization of male power within the family through education and religion. According to Rowland & Klein (1996) men's control of knowledge production further makes women invisible in producing knowledge. The patriarchal system in our societies imposes the superior roles of men, and the submissive role women play in many societies. Submissive roles are those that are linked to the reproductive roles such as childbearing. Traditional leadership structures are part of the rich cultural heritage of the *VhaVenda* people. This system has historically been dominated by men, with few opportunities for women to hold leadership positions, however, within the conventional leadership structures, there has been an increase in interest, in recent years, in promoting gender equality.

Gender roles and expectations are frequently deeply ingrained in patriarchal societies, such as that experienced in the *VhaVenda* culture. The traditional roles that women are expected to play, such as domestic duties and caregiving, can restrict their opportunities for leadership and decision-making. Radical feminists contend that these gender roles are socially constructed and should not limit anyone's ability to take on leadership roles or participate in them. Examining the dynamics of women's participation through the lens of feminist standpoint theory is a useful strategy for this study. Radical feminists explicate that women are marginalized, and are given less powers in many sphere of lives. They

aim to abolish traditional gender roles by making women aware of the challenges they are facing; for example, women who aspire or who come from royal families are barred from participating in positions of power as our societies make sure that they strengthen the patriarchal order that is presently dominating.

In this vein, Bessong and Ekanen (2014) acknowledged that re-arrangement of societal order can be a solution to women's oppression. This can be achieved through an arrangement that treats all the gender in traditional leadership, equally without any form of discrimination. Ridgway & Correl (2004) contend that oppression comes about when one group of people (such as men) dominates the other group (such as women). Radical feminists, unlike liberal feminists, believe in the radical arrangement of the current social order which restricts women's movement. "Women should exercise all the privilege and responsibility in truly equal partnership with men (Bryson 1999)," . Adding that women should embrace that they are able beings like men. Empowering women and making sure they have equal access to leadership roles, education, and decision-making processes are two of radical feminism's main objectives. In the context of this study, this would entail giving women the chance to take part in traditional leadership roles, thereby, challenging the long-standing male dominance. Patriarchal societies have normalized the domination of women for so long, and radical feminists argue that this must come to an end.

The norms of many societies, where men held positions of power and decision-making authority, while women were relegated to subordinate roles, have been perpetuated by the patriarchal system – a situation existing in the *VhaVenda's* leadership structures. Radical feminists contend that this historical imbalance reflects a larger pattern of systemic gender oppression. The main goal of this theory is to condemn the societal traditional gender roles and bring about women empowerment. In the context of this study radical feminism will help to address the issues of gender roles as they contribute to the dire positions of women, in traditional leadership, especially, in the context of the *Vhavhenda* culture.

3.1.5. African feminist theory

The underrepresentation or absence of women in society leadership structures is a concern of the feminist movement and Thobejane (2019) argues that feminism

(especially African feminist theory) gives African women's voices a platform and authenticity. The objective of African feminism is to fairly represent African women and to oppose anything that undermines their positions in all aspects of our cultures. Feminism is seen as "a movement to end sexist exploitation, and oppression Lamothe (2005), cited in Hooks, (2000). African feminism frequently challenges patriarchal and colonial systems that silence the voices and experiences of women; therefore, it is imperative to investigate these legacies that have shaped gender dynamics within the *Vhavenda* community to fully understand women's lack of participation in traditional leadership roles. This process will assist in determining how external forces have shaped traditional leadership systems and how they support gender inequality. Women must recover from the 'psychological wounds' left behind by subjugation, particularly, African women who have been culturally blocked from taking part in positions such as, kings, chiefs and headmen; rather, in the *Vhavenda* communities women's leadership positions within the family are that of *Makhadzi* (an adviser). Her leadership role is in all the rituals that happen during royal celebrations or insignia (*Zwitungulo*) and only in making sure that all women-related activities within the community run smoothly. African feminism, however, asserts that Africa as a continent has had stronger women warriors and queens who had fought colonialism, and that the oppression of women is the direct result of colonialism and cultural imperialism that brought about patriarchal relations (Thobejane, 2020). African feminist theory (which intersects with Black feminist epistemology) seeks to give voice to black and African women's experiences by reflecting on the various forms of suppression they have faced.

African gender scholars and activists have sought for a kind of feminism that would make a difference in the lives of Africans by engaging ordinary black women as partners in improving their conditions and positions in knowledge production, theory-making and positionality (Maqubela, 2020). Overall, African feminist theory was developed to challenge patriarchal norms, address African women's specific experiences and challenges, and to promote gender equality within the African context. It seeks, thus, to empower African women, amplify their voices, and advocate for their rights and well-being (Thobejane, 2019).

Feminism is a fight against the patriarchal subjugation of women, to demonstrate, through critical consciousness, that patriarchy promotes pathological behavior in both genders, and our wounded psyches (have) to be attended to.

3.1.6. Theory of Masculinity

Masculinity theory plays a significant role in understanding the dynamics of women's non-participation in traditional leadership. According to Connell's 1995 theory of masculinity, gender is a social construction that creates and reinforces power hierarchies between men and women. Traditional leadership, often characterized by patriarchal norms and expectations, perpetuates masculine ideals and marginalizes women's participation.

Although few women may want to participate in women's leadership, traditional leadership continues to be 'naturalized as a masculine area', as hegemonic masculinities and requiring masculine biological traits; this has made traditional leadership an obvious place of work for men only (Pérez-Martínez, V., Marcos-Marcos, Cerdán-Torregrosa, Briones-Vozmediano, Sanz-Barbero, Davó-Blanes, Daoud, Edwards, Salazar, La Parra-Casado, & Vives-Cases, 2021). Connell's theory of 1995 contends that hegemonic masculinity, or the dominant form of masculinity in a given society, is inextricably linked to positions of power and authority. The traits and behaviors associated with hegemonic masculinity are frequently prioritized in traditional leadership structures where patriarchal values prevail. Assertiveness, decisiveness, aggression, and competitiveness are all traits associated with male leaders.

In these spaces, "hegemonic masculinities" are constructed and accepted as natural and desirable (Morrell, 2001). However, advocates of the theory posit that masculinity is rooted in social rather than biological traits (Ratele, 2016). The supporters of masculinities explain the multiplicity and fluidity of masculinities - that masculinities change with time and differ from one place to another (Connell, 1997; Morrell, 2001; Ratele, 2016 and Maqubele 2020). Hegemonic masculinities are defined as those that exercise power and dominance over other forms of masculinities such as complicit, subordinated, and marginalized, as well as women. Such masculinities are idealized, respected, and given a superior status by societies, including women, men, and young boys (Dowd, 2010). Hegemonic masculinities are those masculinities that dominate,

marginalize or oppress other masculinities that belong to the category of non-hegemonic masculinities (for example, complicit and marginalized masculinities). Those who operate within power zones, according to Messerschmidt and Messner, (2018) are people who are in powerful positions whites, rich people, people in strategic positions, and the working group. In rural areas, hegemonic masculinities, whether men or women, tend to use their power to emotionally, physically, and economically oppress other people who are less powerful than they are. For this study, these are people in influential positions within the institution of traditional leadership, for example, members of the royal family and their advisors; these individuals tend to use powers they have to abuse and oppress the gender that is not allowed by culture to take part in traditional leadership. Women who aspire to participate in traditional leadership face significant challenges due to the clash between societal expectations of femininity and leadership requirements. These challenges are rooted in emphasized femininity - a set of gender norms and expectations that prioritize qualities such as nurturing, submissiveness, and emotional sensitivity. Emphasized femininity is often seen as incompatible with traditional leadership roles, making it difficult for women to be accepted and respected as leaders.

The nature of traditional leadership works with the 'naturalized' characteristics of a 'real' man in the larger society. In many cultural groups, the male child, especially among Black royal families, through gender-role socialization, gets to be prepared for such engagements. According to Maqubela (2013), Steward & Zaaiman (2014) and Ferrante (2015) and in line with masculinities and feminist theories, masculine and feminine development begins in the family, where parents pass on societal heteropatriarchal norms, such as gender roles characterized by sexual and gender inequality and an ideology of masculine superiority. Maqubela (2020) argues that rural communities teach boys and men to be fearless, dominant, strong, and adventurous while girls and women are socialized to be soft, kind, subservient, and patient. In the Limpopo Province, amongst the *VhaVenda*, cultural practices, such as, boys' and girls' initiation practices, are meant to improve the boy child's physical and psychological strength, endurance, and fearlessness while inculcating opposite traits in the girls (Milubi, 2001; 2010 and Maqubela, 2020).

Fearlessness is the main characteristic of masculinities and what defines a real man in many African cultures in South Africa. Showing fear is perceived as a sign of weakness and Ratele (2016:50) argues that “fearlessness is a convincing pose of manhood that many boys and men grow up to internalize”. This is a bit different within the institution of traditional leadership, as the heirs to a throne are not known until the leader passes away. This means that the institution of traditional leadership prefers men to women because they believe that men are fearless, a desirable quality for such a position.

The negative impact of masculinity theory on women's participation in traditional leadership is further reinforced by the concept of intersectionality, as proposed by Crenshaw (1991). Intersectionality recognizes that individuals experience multiple forms of oppression and discrimination simultaneously, based on intersecting social identities such as gender, race, and class. For this study, intersectionality highlights how women from marginalized communities face compounded challenges due to the intersection of gender and other forms of characteristics.

The institution of traditional leadership is a rich site for the portrayal of masculinities since it provides various ways and opportunities for men to acquire and display their masculinities. Men's ability to maintain hegemony in traditional leadership demonstrates that dominant masculinities may translate and justify their superiority and power over women. This is also relevant in the *Vhavenda* leadership choices, where men are preferred over women.

The theory of masculinity, according to Crenshaw (1991) provides a framework to understand how societal expectations of gender roles and norms affect women's ability to access and thrive in traditional leadership positions. This implies that acknowledging and challenging the hegemonic masculinity embedded in these structures, society can create more inclusive leadership environments that value diverse perspectives and recognize the leadership potential of women. Implementing policies and practices that promote gender equality and challenge traditional gender stereotypes, hence, is crucial for facilitating women's meaningful participation in traditional leadership.

3.1.7 Transformational Leadership Theory

Leadership theory provides a framework for understanding how individuals assume leadership roles, exercise influence, and navigate power structures. When examining the dynamics of women's participation in traditional leadership, several leadership theories offer insights, particularly Transformational Leadership Theory and Role Congruity Theory. The theory was Developed by James MacGregor Burns (1978) and later expanded by Bernard Bass (1985). Burns introduced transformational leadership to differentiate between transactional and transformational leadership styles. It was developed to explain how leaders inspire, motivate, and transform their followers by fostering commitment to shared values and higher goals. In the context of women in traditional leadership, transformational leadership is relevant because women leaders often adopt participatory, collaborative, and community-oriented approaches—key traits of transformational leaders. However, in many traditional societies, leadership is historically male-dominated, and women's styles may not align with the prevailing patriarchal norms, leading to resistance.

3.1.6.1 Role Congruity Theory

It was developed by Alice H. Eagly and Steven J. Karau (2002). This theory was developed to explain the prejudice women face in leadership roles due to societal expectations of gender roles. It argues that leadership traits (such as assertiveness and dominance) are often associated with masculinity, while communal traits (such as nurturing and cooperation) are associated with femininity.

When applied to women in traditional leadership, this theory explains why women may face scepticism or resistance when assuming leadership positions. Traditional societies often expect women to fulfill caregiving and supportive roles, rather than decision-making and governance roles. This mismatch between gender stereotypes and leadership expectations creates barriers to women's full participation in traditional leadership structures. Both Transformational Leadership Theory and Role Congruity Theory help

explain the challenges and opportunities for women in traditional leadership. Transformational leadership highlights the strengths women bring to leadership roles, while Role Congruity Theory sheds light on the biases they face. Understanding these theories allows for a deeper analysis of how to promote gender inclusivity in traditional leadership settings.

3.2 Rationale behind the selection of the above-mentioned theories

The theories of - masculinity, African feminist, and Radical feminist are fundamental to any research on women's participation in different aspects of everyday life in communities, including traditional leadership in the *Vhavenda* community. They supplement the broad frameworks of standpoint feminist theory. This study draws attention to the dynamics of women's participation in traditional leadership in the *Vhavenda* community while shedding light on the complicated interactions between gender, culture, and power dynamics within conventional leadership structures. These theories, hence, were selected in order to provide contrasting viewpoints that enhance the examination of women's involvement in traditional leadership roles within the *Vhavenda* community while accounting for the intricacies of gender, culture, power, and intersectional identities.

3.3 Conclusion

The chapter discussed various theories which are radical standpoint, black feminist theory, and African feminism masculinity. Among the selected theories, standpoint theory was used to guide this study. The standpoint theory was used for the strong ability to bring out the experiences and other social factors that block the participation of women in traditional leadership. This helps in explaining the dynamics of women in this situation. The above argument saw a need to develop a model or theory to make sure that the issues of gender equality are also discussed. In conclusion, these theories were selected to enable a thorough understanding of the dynamics influencing women's roles and experiences within conventional leadership structures by integrating these theoretical frameworks.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

In this section, the researcher explains how this study was conducted by focusing on various aspects undergone in the process. The section covers - the nature of the study, research design, the purpose of the study, population and location of the study, sampling procedure, data collection methods, data analysis instruments and ethical principles adhered to.

4.2. Research Paradigm

A paradigm is the basic belief system or worldview that guides researchers to study, understand, and report on a phenomenon (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Babbie and Mouton (2015) state that paradigm refers to an accepted tradition and set of beliefs or values that guide research. Similarly, Cresswell and Zhang (2009) posit that research paradigms are basic belief systems or worldviews that guide researchers' inquiry. According to Sobh and Perry (2006), there are different types of research paradigms such as - positivism, realism, constructivism, interpretivism and critical theory.

Positivism may be regarded as a research strategy and approach that is rooted in the principle that truth and reality are free and independent of the viewer and observer (Karasi, Shambare & Nkondo, 2017). This paradigm asserts that real events can be observed empirically and explained with logical analysis (Kaboub, 2008). Positivists hold the view that the world conforms to permanent, unchanging laws or rules of causation and happenings (Pollack, 2006). Positivism, however, according to Stahl (2007), appears to be a weak or deficient foundation for research and investigation in drawing nuanced or in-depth conclusions; for instance, there are several problems regarding induction, initiation, and general applicability within positivism. Realism is defined as the view that entities exist independently of being perceived, or independently of our theories about them (Philips, 1987). Krauss (2005) explains the aim of a realist paradigm as being able to generalize a research study finding about people's perceptions of their settings, while

Kazi (2003) is of the view that the desire and purpose of realism research is to develop a family of answers from an exploration of several contingent contexts and different reflective perceptions of participants. Critical theory researchers assume social reality to be historically and socially constituted and to be produced and reproduced by people (Myers, Montgomery & Anderson-Cook, 2009). The aim of a critical researcher is to openly critique the status quo and to focus on the conflicts and constraints in society (Karasi, Shambare & Nkondo, 2017). The critical theory paradigm, therefore, encourages evaluators to question and evaluate the cultural, political, social and gender -assumptions underlying a phenomenon being investigated (Reeves & Hedberg, 2003). Constructivist researchers focus on the specific contexts in which people live and work, in order to come to an understanding of the historical, cultural, and social settings of the participants (Thomas, Menon, Boruff, Rodriguez & Ahmed, 2014).

4.2.1. Justification of the interpretivism paradigm

The research paradigm used in this study is interpretivism. The interpretivist paradigm is used in this study as it contends that reality is 'constructed' by the researcher and places more emphasis on the existence of multiple worldviews that result from the interaction, contact, and communication among people (Bailey, 2006). This implies that to understand the reality of the dynamics of the participation of women in traditional leadership, there is need to interact, contact and communicate with the participants to get comprehensive pictures. This paradigm allows a researcher to view the world through the perceptions and experiences of the participants.

The central endeavour of the interpretivist paradigm is to understand the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2013; Guba & Lincoln, 1989) and its key principle is that reality is socially constructed (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). This approach tries to 'get into the head' of the subjects being studied, hence, a researcher will depend on the participants view to understand and interpret the meaning of the context and the phenomenon; emphasis is placed on understanding the individual and their interpretation of the world around them.

The assumption of subjectivist epistemology means that the researcher makes meaning of their data through their own thinking and cognitive processing informed by their interactions with the participants. There is an assumption that a researcher will construct

knowledge socially because of his or her personal experiences of the life within the natural settings investigated (Creswell, 2013). Researchers obtain knowledge by engaging in interactive processes in which they intermingle, dialogue, question, listen, read, write, and record research data these assist the researcher to react to information comprehensively.

Researchers prescribing to the interpretivism school of thought often talk about the processes of interaction among individuals, about social interaction and engagement. They also focus on the specific contexts in which people live and work, to come to a full understanding of the historical, cultural, and social settings of the participants (Thomas, Menon, Boruff, Rodriguez & Ahmed, 2014). For this study, the interpretivist paradigm will be used since it involves an understanding of multiple participants' meanings and allows for theory generation.

4.3. Research methodology

The methodology is the strategies engaged in undertaking the different processes in research. This chapter, therefore, details the type of research and the data collection techniques employed to execute the aim and objectives, thereby, resolving the research problem (Brynard, Hanekom, and Brynard, 2014).

4.3.1. Nature of the study

This study is guided by the qualitative research approach because it takes its departure point from an insider's perspective on social reality. Qualitative research, according to Bhandari (2023), promotes dialogue and offers greater flexibility as it exploits a range of methods to record and interrogate the reality of the phenomenon being investigated (Vosloo, 2014). The qualitative research approach is preferred for this study as it is extremely helpful in obtaining first-hand and in-depth information from the respondents on the phenomenon being investigated (Creswell, 2014), namely, the respondents' views on the participation of women in traditional leadership.

The principles of the feminist standpoint theory were applied to boost the qualitative research approach. The reason behind this is the qualitative approach is enabled to fully

capture certain aspects of a research. This assertion is made since most of the early research methodologies were developed in a male-dominated society and mostly by men and were based primarily on male perspective. In other words, such research methodologies favoured and focused more on knowledge, experiences and interests of men. Due to this patriarchal nature of our research methodologies, these types of research helped in spreading masculine notions by non-emphasis on the situations, experiences, and interests of women (Hekmanan, 2004; Harding, 2004).

The elements of the feminist standpoint theory, such as unequal power relations, positionality, epistemic privilege, and reciprocity will be borrowed and applied to enhance the qualitative research approach which will be used in this study.

4.3.2. Unequal power relations

The advocates of the feminist standpoint theory are concerned about the existence of unequal power relations between the researcher and the researched (Luyts, 2016). To the advocates of the feminist standpoint theory, these unequal power relations lead to the undermining of the knowledge of the researched. The powerlessness of the researched renders them voiceless. In response to this, the proponents of the feminist standpoint call for the recognition of the researched and for their knowledge to be valued and appreciated; this will subsequently give the researched power and recognition. This means that women as researched in this study should also be recognized and appreciated as they are the source of information that is desperately needed to probe traditional leadership, vis-à-vis gender relations. The *VhaVenda* people's participation in traditional leadership has historically reflected a strongly male-dominated field.

4.3.3. Positionality

Positionality is an element of the feminist standpoint theory often overlooked in qualitative research. Positionality focuses on the researcher's position to that of her or his participants (Maqubela, 2013; Manuella, 2017). The outsider's perspective is also valued in that those who research from an outsider's position may be able to do critical reflection and to give feedback. For instance, aspects that may be taken for granted by insiders may be essential to the study. Misra, Curington, and Green, (2021). For most feminist

scholars, the researcher's social background, beliefs, and values are important as these help in shaping the methodology and analysis.

4.3.4. Epistemic privilege

In as far as the feminist standpoint theory is concerned, the researched are privileged because of the knowledge they possess which the researcher may need to access, therefore, epistemic privilege implies that the researched possess better knowledge of a situation. This gives them an advantage which should be respected and recognised by the researchers. This is essential because the researched have more critical insights into the conditions of their own situation than those who live outside the conditions under which the researched live. The researched, therefore, have privileged knowledge because they are the ones who understand the complexities of their living conditions better than the researchers (Narayan, 2004; Wylie, 2000).

The proponents of the feminist standpoint theory also address the status of the researched in knowledge production - they are considered a critical part of knowledge production. Creswell (2013) maintains that the involvement of the researched in knowledge production is done through their participation and sharing of their views on the phenomenon being investigated when they are, for example, being interviewed by the researcher. The researched are viewed as subjects rather than objects of research, hence, the researched should be regarded as knowledge holders and actors in knowledge production.

4.3.5. Reciprocity

Feminist researchers are concerned about lowering the hierarchy between the researcher and the researched. They emphasize that both the researcher and participant should start at the same point (Narayan, 2004), although for this study, that is not a problem as the researcher comes from a royal family, thus, it will not be difficult to establish reciprocity and rapport with the researched. Feminism allows an element of reciprocity during interviews through sharing, enabling the researcher to develop trust with participants. This development is crucial as it helps the researcher to obtain knowledge from the researched and give voice to the marginalized and the voiceless, in this case, women. The fact that the researched know or have 'epistemic privilege' puts

them in a significant position in terms of knowledge production and it can be argued that this position is almost similar to that of the researcher. The addition of these elements of the feminist standpoint theory is crucial for this study as it emphasizes the maintenance of an equal relationship between the researcher and the researched - the interviewee and the interviewer - (Hodkinson, 2005; De Vault & Gross, 2007).

Hodkinson (2005) points to two key factors that determine the level of proximity between the interviewer and the interviewee: the socio-cultural locations of the researcher and the researched as well as the level of importance of those researched, to the research. This may imply differing levels of proximities in terms of the different groups of those researched and the researcher. To support the above, Creswell (2013) asserts that qualitative study requires a researcher to derive research questions that will explore the meaning of the experiences of individuals by asking them to describe their everyday life experiences.

As outlined by Zohrabi (2013), the qualitative research method is a method which investigates the quality of relationship of activities, situations or materials. This method studies the genuine universal situation as it spontaneously unravels, hence, it is non-manipulative, unobtrusive, non-controlling and open to what transpires. Zohrabi (2013) further indicated that the qualitative approach enhances the parties' immersion in the details and specifics of the data, to unearth significant categories, angles, and interrelationship while probing, authentically, open-ended questions instead of testing theoretically-derived (deductive) hypotheses.

One of the reasons the researcher applied the qualitative research approach is because it is effective at bringing out the experiences and perceptions of individuals from their own perspective (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). In a qualitative study, the researcher must be observant when the participants explain their daily experiences related to the phenomenon being studied. As proffered by Leedy and Ormrod (2010), the researcher should be alert for subtle yet meaningful cues in participant's expressions, questions and occasional sidetracks. The role of the investigator in this research will be to create opportunities for women in selected areas of the study to narrate their experiences, the

challenges they had faced with traditional leadership and the strategies that they can adopt to overcome them.

Given the sensitivity of the topic, the qualitative method on its own may not elicit sufficient data regarding the researched, hence the researcher supported the approach with some of the principles or elements borrowed from the feminist standpoint theory. In other words, the elements of the feminist standpoint theory were used to strengthen the qualitative research approach so that the importance of the experiences of the researcher and the researched are not downplayed (Hesse-Biber, 2014). For Deutsch, (2004) Elements of the feminist standpoint theory were infused into the qualitative research approach because they emphasized “the researcher’s awareness of his or her own subjective experience in relation to that of her or his participants”. Hodkinson (2005) uses the phrase ‘initial subjective proximity’ instead of ‘positionality’, although still arguing that subjective proximity or positionality is extremely vital in research because an understanding of the phenomenon being investigated relies on the researcher’s position or proximity to the respondents. This means the strength or impact of the study is mainly dependent on the researcher’s position or proximity to the respondents.

A qualitative study focuses on the life experiences, perceptions, and feelings of the respondents. This research approach allows the researcher to observe and probe respondents’ behavior during the interview. It also helps the researcher to gain in-depth information by getting close to the respondents (Welman, 2007; Maree, 2016). The researcher had an inside view as she spent some time with the respondents to understand their experiences on the topic. Creswell (2013) asserts that a qualitative study requires a researcher to derive research questions that will explore the meaning of the experiences of individuals by asking them to describe their everyday life experiences.

As outlined by Zohrabi (2013), the qualitative research method is an investigative approach into the quality of the relationship of activities, situations, or materials; it unravels the genuine universal situation in a spontaneous, non-manipulative, unobtrusive, non-controlling and open manner.

Feminist standpoint also addresses the status of the researched in knowledge production; here the researched are regarded as an important part of knowledge

production (Creswell, 2013). This is done through interviews with individuals who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). The basic assumption of the qualitative research is that there is importance in sharing experience. Feminist standpoint researchers emphasize the need to acknowledge the presence of the subjects as knowers and as actors. This recognition can be linked to the notion of ‘epistemic privilege’ and ‘double vision’. According to Nples ,(2018), epistemic privilege implies that the researched are seen to possess better knowledge of their situation, and therefore possess more critical insights into the conditions of their own oppression than those who live outside these conditions.

4.4. Research Design

A research design, according to Mcombes (2023), and Vosloo (2014), a research design is a plan or strategy which moves from the underlying ethical assumptions to specifying the selection of respondents, the data gathering techniques to be used and the data analysis to be done. In addition, a research design is a plan or structured framework of how one intends to conduct the research process to solve the research problem (Babbie & Mouton, 2010). It is thought to be a logical strategy to ask the series of questions in accordance with the goal, purpose, and objectives of the research. The choices a researcher makes regarding - data collection methods, sources, sampling, measurement concerns, and data analysis - strategies are referred to as the ‘research design’ (Krueger and Neuman, 2006; Maree, 2016).

This study is exploratory in nature. Exploratory research is large-scale social research which is conducted to explore a topic or to provide basic familiarity with a topic (Babbie & Mouton, 2010). Exploratory research investigates a certain phenomenon with the primary aim of formulating more specific questions or hypothesis relating to that phenomenon (Engel & Schutt, 2013).

Marshall and Rossman (1995) argue that qualitative exploratory research is used when we do not know what to expect, to define a problem or develop an approach to a problem. It is also used to delve deeper into issues of interest and explore nuances related to a problem at hand (Maree *et al.*, 2016). Qualitative research is conducted in a natural setting and involves a process of building a complex and holistic picture of the

phenomenon of interest. In the case of this study, the aim is to explore the dynamics of participation of women in traditional leadership. The study was also aimed at exploring the reasons women are not given the same status as men in traditional leadership; it also focuses - on women's socio-economic status, the interpersonal relationship between women and men in traditional leadership positions and the personal feelings of those who are said to be the rightful owners of kingships (or the throne as the position is traditionally called) because of their gender.

4.5. Population of the study

Gerald (2014) describes a population as the entire group from which the data is drawn; Bhandari (2022); De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2013) also define it as a set from which the individuals or units of the study are chosen. Population is also referred to as a set of elements that research focuses on and to which the obtained results may be generalized. Population in research, hence, refers to an aggregation of elements from which a sample is selected (Babbie, 2013). The population for this study consists of men and women from royal families ranging from 18 to 70 years of age, community members who form part of the royal council and an official from the Department of Local Government and Traditional Affairs. Participants from 18-35 years will be selected to cover transformation issues in the research, while 36–59-year-olds will cover issues on transformation and experience and those who are 60 years and above for experience and knowledge.

4.6. Location of the study

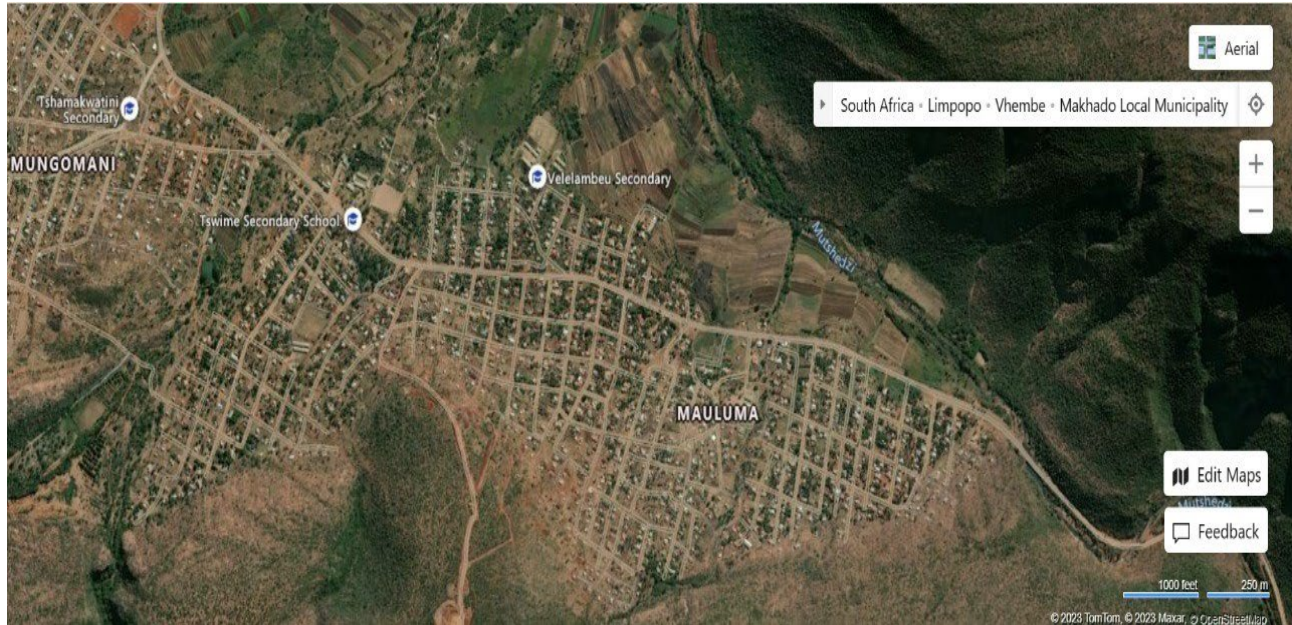


Figure 1 above show the map of Mauluma village which is the selected location for this study.

In research, a location is defined as a place where the study is being conducted (Royse, 2011; Babie, 2013). This study was conducted at Nzhelele Mauluma Ha Ravele in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, South Africa. The map above shows the selected location is within the Vhembe District and can be considered representative of many rural communities in the region. By studying this community, researchers can gain insights into the broader dynamics of women's participation in traditional leadership among the *VhaVenda* people in similar rural contexts.

The historical background of Mauluma, is characterized by a long-standing tradition of male leadership, thereby, it can provide valuable historical context for understanding the roots of gender dynamics among the *VhaVenda*; this historical perspective is crucial in comprehending contemporary challenges. Understanding the dynamics within a specific community like Mauluma can inform the development of context-specific interventions and strategies to enhance women's participation. It allows for the exploration of community-based solutions to gender-related challenges.

4.7. Sampling procedure

Sampling is the process of selecting a representative set of cases from a much larger set; in other words, it is the selection of specific research participants from the entire population (Welman, Kruger & Mitchel, 2007; Bezuidenhout, 2013). Scholars' like (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, and Delport (2015) expound the notion of sampling as a process of selecting a subset of a population that is representative of the entire population or has similar characteristics. A non-probability sampling method was used for this study; this is a procedure in which all the persons, events, objects in the population frame have an unknown probability of being included in the sampling (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016; Monette, Sullivan & Dejong, 2011). This type of sampling is used in studies where the features or characteristics of the people investigated occur so rarely in the selected population that it becomes impractical to use a random selection process (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). Non-probability sampling is suitable for this study because the participation of women in traditional leadership is not a common occurrence hence, few people would qualify in terms of the inclusion criteria.

In this study two sub-types of non-probability sampling were adopted namely, snowballing and judgmental sampling since the researcher realized that it will be quite difficult to get qualifying participants, hence, the adoption of snowball sampling techniques. The researcher approached one or two individuals for information on the phenomenon being investigated; these individuals then identified other possible participants (Mitchel, 2007). Kircherr & Charles (2018) and De Vos et al. (2013) define snowball sampling as a process of selecting a sample using networks; with this approach, the relevant individuals in a group can be selected and the required information is collected from them, thereafter, the individuals will be requested to identify more people who could make up the sample (Duplooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). The crucial feature is that each person involved relates to the others through direct or indirect linkage. The characteristics or features which participants possess determine their selection (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014). The selection of research participants is mainly influenced by the type of research questions and the population of the study.

In addition to the snowball sampling technique, the purposive sampling technique was also used. Maree (2016) and Welman, Kruger, and Mitchel (2002) clarify that purposive sampling is applied in a situation where a sample is selected with a specific purpose in mind. For this study, the characteristics of the participants are very crucial in selecting members. This allowed the researcher to screen, judgmentally, whether the selected participants could provide the required information.

4.7.1 Sample size

The sample size is the total number of participants in a research study, according to Kibuacha (2021). The study utilized eighteen participants - 12 participants (6 women and 6 men) were from selected royal families; 2 officials from the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) as well as 4 (two men and 2 women) from the traditional council. Administration Policy for Mental Health (2015) states that it is essential in research to identify and select individuals or groups of individuals who are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest. This study's participants have extensive knowledge of traditional leadership and the royal family issues. The chosen sample had specific features or characteristics that were shared by members of the population from which the sample was drawn. This is to ensure that the sample is representative of the entire population (Pascoe, 2014). These features of interest were - two women whose leadership positions were taken away because of their gender, members of the royal family, members of the tribal council and women who are occupying traditional leadership positions.

4.8. Data collection methods

The process of obtaining information for a study is known as data collection (Kabir 2016). Data collection methods are procedures to be employed when collecting the data on the phenomenon being investigated, thus, involves the gathering of information for a research project through a variety of data sources (Grinnell & Unrau, 2008; Vosloo, 2014).

Semi-structured interviews were used as the data collection instrument. An interview is based on a series of questions relating to the research topic, to be answered by research

participants (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012). In addition, Babbie & Mouton (2010) state that an interview is a data collection tool in which the researcher asks the respondents questions. Interviews are most effective when the researcher needs to learn something new or obtain specific, in-depth information from a small number of individuals for a research project, according to Driscoll (2011) and Creswell (2014). Interviewees during the sessions are expected to provide answers to the questions posed, thereby creating a platform for interpersonal conversation. In this study, an interview schedule was utilized which comprises of pre-determined questions that guided the researcher during the sessions so that the researcher does not forget essential questions nor the order in which they appear.

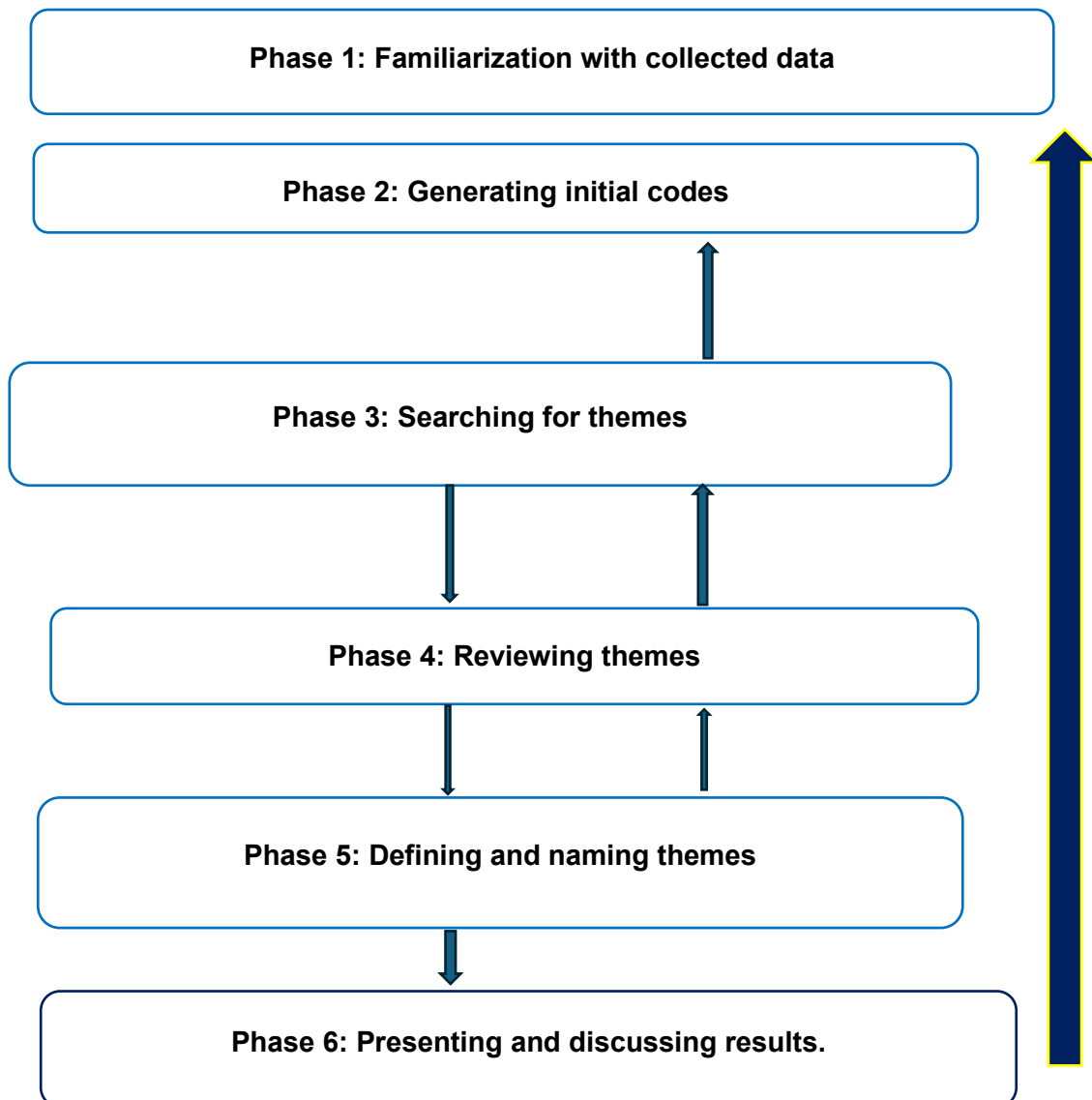
An interview guide containing open-ended questions was used to collect data during the interviews; this is a tool designed and used by qualitative researchers to collect data during a formal interview (Neuman, 2011; Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). Those who was interviewed offered their views freely on the topic as they were, sometimes, asked to elaborate on any aspect that emerged during the interviews. The researcher was able to probe and ask for clarification, so that the respondents provided as much information as possible when interviewed (Babbie & Mouton, 2010; Neuman, 2011; Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). Probing is critical as it helps the researcher to understand opinions and experiences of the participants in relation to the phenomenon of traditional leadership. Through the extensive engagement and comprehensive responses received, saturation of data was achieved by respondent eighteen (18).

4.9. Data analysis

Data analysis serves the purpose of interpreting and drawing conclusions from the mass of collected data. It fulfils the objective of relevance, comprehensiveness and avoidance of redundancy (Tustin *et al.*, 2005). Bertram and Christiansen (2014) went on to say that data analysis is a process of transforming, cleaning, and processing raw data in order to extract relevant, actionable information that aids in the understanding of the phenomenon being studied and enables well-informed recommendations to be made. In this study, the researcher employed the thematic analysis method which is often used in qualitative research to identify, analyse and report on the patterns or themes emerging from the data

and to interpret various aspects of the research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis was used for its advantage in breaking down interview information into clear sections which makes the research process easier, thus, making the most out of the data collected. Themes captured the most important aspects of the data in relation to the research questions. The obtained data was analysed using the following steps: data preparation, defining the coding unit to be analysed, developing categories and a coding scheme; the coding scheme was tested on a sample text before being used for the main analysis (Du-Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, & Bezuidenhout, 2014). All the texts were coded, and the consistency of the coding was also assessed.

Steps for data analysis



Data analysis has six phases (Clarke & Braun, 2017). These phases are briefly discussed hereunder.

Phase 1: Familiarisation with the data

To the extent that she was aware of the depth and scope of the material, the researcher first immersed herself in it. Continuous reading of the material, noting any underlying investigative views, and looking for examples and implications are all components of immersion (Clarke & Braun, 2017). Before beginning the data coding process, it was essential for the researcher to read through the entire data set at least once, with an eye toward identifying patterns.

Phase 2: Generating initial codes

This step involves putting together related coding units to form categories of themes or codes. Themes are patterns of shared meaning supported or bound together by a central idea, according to Clarke (2019). This entails leading the investigation and creating succinct labels for important data qualities that are pertinent to the study issue (Clarke & Braun, 2017). Coding is more than just a data reduction technique. It is an analytical procedure as well. Thus, the researcher coded every data item and concluded this step by compiling all the codes and significant data extracts since coding captures both a semantic and reasonable data reading.

Phase 3: Searching for themes

A theme is an insightful and noteworthy pattern in the data related to the research topic. When all of the data has been first coded and compiled, and the researcher has a lengthy list of distinct codes that have been found throughout the data set, this step starts. The researcher grouped various codes into prospective themes and compiled all pertinent coded data extracts under the themes that have been determined (Clarke & Braun, 2017). The researcher analysed the codes and considered how different codes may combine to

form an all-embracing theme. The themes were then arranged into themes and sub-themes.

Phase 4: Reviewing themes

This phase involves checking that the themes work in relation to both the coded extracts and the full data set. The researcher had to consider whether the themes tell a convincing and compelling anecdote about the data and start to characterize the idea of every individual theme and the connection between themes (Clarke & Braun, 2017). This involves the breakdown of themes, splitting a theme into two more themes, or to dispose the themes altogether and starting all over with the theme development process.

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

The researcher must lead and write a thorough analysis of each theme in this phase, identifying its substance and creating a clear, informative label for each subject (Clarke & Braun, 2017). The themes were defined and further refined the themes that will be presented for analysis. This was done to identify the essence of what each theme is about and determine what aspect of data each theme captures.

Phase 6: Writing up the report

This process necessitates contextualising data in relation to prior research and integrating analytical narratives with data extracts to present the reader with a coherent and compelling account of the findings (Clarke & Braun, 2017). Whether drafting a thematic analysis for publication, undertaking a research project, or composing a dissertation, the objective is to elucidate the intricate narrative of the data in a manner that effectively demonstrates the significance and rigour of the analysis. It is essential for the investigation to provide a succinct, clear, insightful, and engaging representation of the narrative inherent in the data.

4.10. Measures to ensure trustworthiness

Validity in research is concerned with the accuracy and truthfulness of the findings. According to Ridenour and Newman (2008) and De Vos (1998), validity refers to the degree to which an instrument is doing what it is intended to do. Babbie (2011), postulated

that validity is the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the phenomenon under consideration. Babbie (2013) indicated that reliability is a matter of whether a technique, applied repeatedly to the same object, would yield the same result each time. In qualitative research validity and reliability apply to trustworthiness. In this study techniques that were used to ensure trustworthiness were prolonged fieldwork, multi-method strategies and multiple researchers. Content validity is defined as the accuracy and suitability of the questions on a test or questionnaire. The evaluation of a test's content validity determines if it accurately captures every facet of the concept. A test, survey, or measurement method's content must cover every pertinent aspect of the subject it is intended to measure, in order to yield valid results (Babbie and Mouton: 2015).

To adhere to prolonged fieldwork, this study was conducted over a long period so that participants could be observed constantly in their natural setting. A pilot study was conducted to check whether the questions well-phrased and unambiguous so that participants can answer without any difficulties. Clear, simple and well-structured interview questions make it easier for participants to understand and to provide accurate information about the phenomenon being investigated.

4.11 Four criteria of trustworthiness

4.11.1 Credibility

The degree to which the researcher accurately translates the data into meaning that the research participants intended or that the interpretation truly meant, as determined by their responses, is called credibility. This means that participant words should also be reflected in the gathered data (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2021). Credibility evaluates the degree of accuracy and veracity of the study's conclusions and it largely relies on researchers' level of credibility and the methodology they used. The researcher permitted participants to speak in their mother tongue to accommodate those who were unable to understand English. Participants were informed that the research report would be shared for their verification, thereby, enhancing the credibility of the findings. Additionally, methodological triangulation was employed to guarantee the validity of the results.

4.11.2 Transferability

The test of transferability determines whether the findings can be applied to a larger population or another population with similar characteristics. According to Tuval-Mashiach, (2021), transferability relates to the extent to which findings from a qualitative research can be applied to different situations or contexts involving different participants. Through detailed explanation, the researcher helps a potential user to make transferability judgment. By ensuring that best practices were followed for data collection and analysis, the researcher ensured that the results could be applied to the another community. The criteria for inclusion were also followed in the participant-selection process.

4.11.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to reliability and is the measure of the extent to which a research study could be repeated by a separate researcher and reveal the same findings(Tuval-Mashiach, R., 2021). The study also made sure that dependability was adhered to.To ensure the dependability of the findings, the data were analyzed separately by an additional researcher, and the results were compared. Any inconsistencies in the data were addressed. The findings were also discussed with other scholars, and peer input helped identify previously unaddressed categories.

4.11.4 Confirmability

Confirmability looks at the extent to which other researchers could validate the research study's conclusions. According to Tuval-Mashiach (2021), confirmability is the process of proving that the findings and interpretations of the data are indeed drawn from the data and are not the product of the inquirer's imagination or bias. This process was adhered to in this study. The researcher ensured that her values did not interfere with the data. In this study, she adopted a reflexive stance, balancing subjectivity with neutrality. Reflexivity implies that the researcher should remain empathetic without losing objectivity—a challenging balance in qualitative research, which often involves engaging with participants' emotions. The researcher did not influence the participants' views; thus, the study's findings genuinely reflected the participants' perspectives without alteration. The researcher conducted data collection and analysis with support from research assistants. Each participant was provided with an interview guide, while one assistant

observed and took notes. Both the researcher and another assistant facilitated the interview process using the guide.

4.12. Ethical considerations

Ethics in research serves as guidelines that regulate the procedures of a study. It is a system of moral belief about what a researcher can and cannot do to research participants who may be human beings or animals (Babbie, 2013, Monette, Sullivan & Dejong, 2011). Ethics is also referred to as ‘rules of conduct’ in research aimed at causing no harm and providing the best possible benefits for all stakeholders (Vosloo, 2014). All ethical consideration were adhered to in this study; these are detailed below.

4.12.1 Voluntary participation

In social research, no one should be forced to participate no matter what the situation might be (Babbie & Mouton, 2010). The researcher informed the participants about the content and aims of the study as well as the advantages and disadvantages of taking part so that respondent may participate willingly. The participants where further informed that they can withdraw at any time if they feel that they cannot continue with the study. The researcher, therefore, allowed the participants to make their own decision whether to be involved or not, thus, voluntarism was upheld.

4.12.2. Informed consent

The researcher got the necessary permission from the respondents after being thoroughly and truthfully informed about the purpose of the study and investigation. The respondent also signed the consent form as a way of agreeing to be part of this study. This implies that the researcher did not pose questions to the participants without their willingness and clear understanding of what they were doing and what they needed to expect and not to expect (Rubin & Babbie, 2011). The researcher, therefore, provided sufficient information for the participants and did not deviate from the truth about the study or hide any information about the study.

4.12.3. Anonymity

In research, especially when investigating a sensitive matter, anonymity is essential. This means that the researcher would not record any identifying details of the participants, rather used codes, or numbers, instead of the real names of the participants. This was done to protect the participants and their personal information from being exposed to their families, friends, communities, and the public (De Vos et al., 2013).

4.12.4. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an assurance from the researcher not to divulge the identity of those participating in study (Monette, Sullivan & Dejong, 2011). The researcher assured the participants that their information shared during the interviews would be kept confidential. This was done to ensure that the participants gain trust and are open about the information that the researcher wanted to get from them. The researcher kept the information given by the participant in strict confidentiality thus making sure that the information, especially sensitive and personal details provided by participants were protected. Such information was not made available to anyone, other than the researchers.

4.12.5 Privacy

Privacy entails the right of individuals to decide how information about them is to be communicated to others (Burgoon, 2012.). Personal information shared by the participants was kept private to protect them. This means that the researcher would not share the participants' information with anybody to avoid incriminating or embarrassing them. The researcher interviewed each respondent in a private room so that they could be free to talk about their experiences without feeling intimidated by other participants. This was done to help the participants feel protected from the public eye so that they could give accurate and comprehensive information.

4.13 Conclusion

This chapter explored the research approach used to guide the process of data collection and analysis. This study selected a qualitative approach as the researcher wanted to get in-depth information on this study. Positivist, interpretivist and constructivist were

discussed. The chapter explained the population and the location where the participants were selected. The chapter further explained how data was extracted from participants using interviews. Thematic data analysis was also used and all the steps were used to analyze data to ensure and produce reliable and valid results. Measures of trustworthiness were also followed. Ethical considerations were also followed and discussed to protect participants. Limitations encountered during the process of data collection were also discussed.

Chapter 5

Data presentation and analysis

5.1 Introduction

The research findings are presented, analyzed, discussed, and interpreted in this chapter. Interviews with a semi-structured were used to collect data. The data was examined using thematic analysis. The study aim, objectives, and research questions are aligned with the presentation of the findings. 16 participants, both men and women in traditional leadership roles in Mauluma village inside the Vhembe district municipality, and two officials from Cogta provided the data.

5.2. Biographical Data

5.2.1. Cross tabulation for age group and gender

Table 5.: Summary of the Biographical Information

Respondent	Gender	Marital Status	Education Level
1. Matodzi	<i>Female</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>Secondary</i>
2. Lufuno	<i>Female</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Tertiary</i>
3. Madzunya	<i>Male</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>No formal education</i>
4. Mashudu	<i>Female</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>No formal education</i>
5. Vhutshilo	<i>Female</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>No formal education</i>
6. Makonde	<i>Female</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>Tertiary</i>
7. Nyamuofhe	<i>Female</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>Tertiary</i>
8. Vhuthu	<i>Male</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>Tertiary</i>
9. Daniel	<i>Male</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>Tertiary</i>
10. Takalani	<i>Male</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>Secondary</i>
11. Piet	<i>Male</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>Primary</i>
12. John	<i>Male</i>	<i>Widower</i>	<i>Secondary</i>

13. Nyamutshagole	<i>Female</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Tertiary</i>
14. Marium	<i>Female</i>	<i>Widower</i>	<i>Secondary</i>
15. Mandiwana	<i>Male</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Primary</i>
16. Mthombeni	<i>Male</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>Primary</i>
17. Sara	<i>Female</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>No formal education</i>
18. Mushadu	<i>Male</i>	<i>Widower</i>	<i>No formal education</i>

Table 5 above indicates that gender balance was demonstrated by the fact that there are nine male and female participants in the study. Two of the study's female participants possess secondary qualifications; two have no formal qualifications, and two have primary qualifications. The remaining two female participants have tertiary qualifications. This distribution picture is essential because of the need to take education levels into account when discussing women's participation in traditional leadership roles by providing insights into the educational diversity among the female participants. Five female participants are from tribal councils, and the others are from tribal families. Examining the influence of these affiliations on the roles that female participants play in traditional leadership is contextualised by knowing their backgrounds. Six participating women are married, two are widows, and one is unmarried. Given that marital status may be associated with social expectations and responsibilities, this information about marital status may impact the conversation surrounding women's roles in traditional leadership. Overall, the demographic details point to the varied group of women who participated in the study regarding education, marital status, and family background. The results, therefore, should enhance our comprehension of the different categories of women's participation in traditional leadership, by considering variables that influence their roles and contributions, like marital status, education, and family ties.

5.3. Gender Audit on Party Representation

As one of the study's questions was to get an insight into gender representation in traditional leadership, the researcher made an examination of the gender profile of the members of the traditional and royal council of Mauluma village, with the assistance of key informants. The participants also assisted the researcher in getting access to official documents like minutes of essential meetings. The key informants also assisted in clarifying questions that appeared to be a bit ambiguous to the other participants.

Section B

This section explores gender representation in traditional leadership from the perspective of women. Open-ended questions were used in this regard. The following question was posed:

5.4 What do you understand by the concept of 'gender equality'?

5.4.1 Understanding Gender Equality

This section discusses the participants understanding of the term 'gender equality'. The data demonstrate that majority of the participants are familiar with the term, whereas a few indicated that they do not know what this concept means. The participants responded as follows:

- *Men and women should be considered as equal partners in all facets of life (Makonde).*
- *Equal representation and equal treatment of the genders is essential for the success of our communities (Vhuthu).*
- *There should be equal opportunities for both men and women (John).*
- *Equal and fair distribution of resources for both sexes is a must if we want to prosper as human beings (Marium).*
- *Gender discrimination must be abolished as it is an archaic practice (Matodzi).*

Some participants said that they were unaware of the notion of gender equality, but the statements above show that they understood it well enough to admit that women could represent them in traditional leadership roles. A few participants indicated that the term 'gender equality' is totally foreign to them. This shows that there is a need to workshop these participants about the term as this can also assist the community to understand why women should also be part of leadership.

5.5 Community perception on women's participation in traditional leadership

The next question sought the views of participants regarding participation in traditional leadership or taking part in traditional discourses. Investigating the participants' views on women in traditional leadership positions in Mauluma village Vhembe District Municipality, the majority, 80% of the participants, indicated that women have always been visible in traditional leadership as can be seen by their statements hereunder:

- *Among Vhavenda, women have always taken part in traditional leadership for example, as Makhadzi, Vhakoma (queen mother), and chiefs wife (Mutanuni) (Mashudu).*
- *Queen Mother (Vhakoma) has always carried great responsibility within the royal family (Mushadu).*
- *Women are taking the role of adviser and that is taken as one of the most influential positions in traditional leadership.*

These responses run counter to the gender representation section, where the majority expressed the opinion that gender equality has not yet been achieved. This demonstrates that a small percentage of participants believe that equality has been attained because women are not as involved in traditional leadership roles as men are. These answers present uncertainty on whether South Africa is making progress on equality in traditional leadership, however, one participant added that:

- *Although certain villages have recently shown a preference for women, women are still not granted higher roles in this because of the traditional and cultural heritage of the Vhavenda people (Takalani).*

Considering the above statement, in as much as women are in positions of Senior Aunt (*Makhadzi*) in the traditional leadership sphere, they are considered as being accorded some levels of traditional leadership, albeit a low level, as the position offered to them is not equal to those of a king, chief, or headmen. This contradicts the constitution of South Africa (1996), which emphasises the issue of equality in all spheres of life. This is confirmed by Thobejane (2019), who contends that women are still finding it hard to fill leadership positions due to patriarchy, culture, and tradition. Looking at this situation and considering the fact that women are not empowered enough in this institution, the government should revisit its policies; this can assist in people reviewing women in traditional leadership. These responses demonstrate that, in Vhembe and throughout South Africa, women are still relegated to less senior leadership roles in the traditional leadership domain. Traditional leadership institutions are not exempt from patriarchal hurdles, despite government efforts to eradicate gender inequality. Many obstacles remain in place and prevent gender equality from reaching its full potential.

Few participants indicated that they are a few women who have been taking part in traditional leadership since 1994, although they endure a lot of fights and animosity with people who fail to accept changes. Below are some statements to support this point:

- *As worldwide laws pertaining to gender norms are changing, women are starting to claim their rights (Makonde).*
- *Some women are now sworn in as chief, and also form part of royal and tribal council ministers, for example, Hosi Nwamitwa and other women who are now part of the councils that are part of advising the chief (Lufuno).*

These statements contradict the responses provided on gender representation, where the majority of respondents expressed the opinion that women are underrepresented in traditional leadership roles. These quotations show that few participants are of the opinion that equality has yet to be achieved as it is only a few women who are fully participating

in traditional leadership, like the men, therefore, it poses uncertainty as to whether the institution of leadership is becoming gender-inclusive or not.

5.6. How are women in leadership perceived by people in the community?

5.6.1 Women as emotional beings

The majority of the participants shared the opinion that women and men cannot be given the same position in traditional leadership as these are positions that are culturally given to men. Below are some of the responses from the participants:

The statements above suggest that patriarchy still controls the way communities conduct their lives. Participants responded that they do not trust the leadership of women, although, they feel that some women are capable in positions that support chiefs and kings. Kadaga (2013) support this view point by arguing that patriarchal thinking limits women's chances, particularly in the leadership domain because it views women as inferior and unstable in such roles. Few participants shared the idea that both females and males should be given an equal chance to participate in chieftaincy and kingship positions not only as *Makhadzi* as allowed by culture. The defining feature of patriarchy is the downgrading of women to only doing household chores. The respondents' opinions confirm what Inglehart and Norris (2003) postulated that women should actively participate in leadership positions because they are more compassionate than men. Their emotions should also be understood as normal human nature rather than attempt to rationalize women's actions. It is in light of what Inglehart and Norris said that we can deduce that the responses of these participants support the outmoded view that a woman's place is in the kitchen and that women are better suited for productive, reproductive and household work.

Some participants indicated that women have their own issues that can be best articulated by them only, and this is where their participation was needed so they could give a first-hand account. Some participants went further to say that their problems can be catered for by the *Makhadzi* and other members of the royal family. In this respect, the following were said by participants:

- *Women can also lead and participate as men do in traditional leadership (Makonde).*
- *Female leaders are needed in our communities as they are now face the challenges that other women are experiencing (Daniel).*
- *Women should also be included in traditional leadership position (Mariam).*

These statements above suggest that most communities/people are gradually accommodating the role that women can play in traditional leadership. Their views are supported by Inglehart and Norris (2003) who opine that women should actively participate in leadership because of the different experiences they hold as nurturers and groomers of our future generation. This viewpoint places women in an advantageous position as it seems accepted that women are bequeathed with talents – able to multi-task, be generous, as well as be passionate about what they endeavour to achieve.

These positive attributes, however, do not dispute the notion that was brought up in the literature review by Lawless and Fox (2012) who contend that leadership is often based on the notions of ‘winners’ and ‘losers’, ‘competition and confrontation’, rather than on systematic collaboration and compromise, with only men claiming these standards. For women to climb the leadership ladder, they should also exhibit such traits as they are the only recognisable virtues of good leadership, especially in a patriarchal setting; however, these scholars also agree that these are merely masculine stereotypes. The consensus is that women should be included in the institution of traditional leadership to neutralise the already existing patriarchal norms of masculinity.

5.7 Perception of community on women leadership

5.7.1 Women’s suitability in traditional leadership

This section of the research study sought to address the suitability of women in traditional leadership. This section discusses the appropriateness of women in traditional leadership. The data demonstrates that the majority of women are unsuitable leaders as they are very emotional and sympathetic in traditional communities, where they are

expected to lead people with different personalities. Participants explained this notion as follows:

- *Women are very kind and caring human beings (Sara).*
- *Traditional leadership is for strong people, women are weak by nature, and traditional leadership needs people with strong character (Mthombeni).*

The statements above indicate that participants do not trust women's leadership. A few participants were of the idea that both males and females should be given the same chance to participate in the positions of chiefs and kings, not only as *Makhadzi* as is allowed by culture. Questioned on their opinions about the suitability of women in the position of traditional leadership, the majority of the respondents indicated that women are suitable in leadership like men. To support the above, some participants said:

- *Since the resolution of the ANC in Polokwane, women can now occupy strategic positions. For example, we now have female house speakers, chief whips, mayors, managers and directors of political parties (Nyamutshagole).*
- *Women are beginning to realise that they can also take part in leadership positions (Daniel).*
- *Women are now in traditional leadership and have proven a point that they, like men, can also lead (Makonde).*

These views are in stark contradiction to some of the participants who had reiterated that women are not born to lead. The above participants responded that equality can be achieved if women can be given the same chance as men. Radical feminism places a strong emphasis on the necessity of grassroots activism and structural change in order to oppose and alter oppressive systems. For them, equality on male terms is not enough; rather, the inclusion of women's experiences and voices is crucial as it allows them to take part in all aspects of the improvement of their lives and community activities. Magadla (2023), believes that women-led grassroots movements have played a significant role in promoting increased representation of women in traditional leadership positions within the *Vhavenda* community. To support the above, Magadla (2023), posit

that women-led grassroots movements have played a significant role in promoting increased representation of women in traditional leadership positions within the *Vhavenda* community. In most societies, women play a more emotional and nurturing role focused on the home and family, while men are seen as having an influential function serving as a link between family life and the life of the community at large. This is proven by the fact that women are now visible in decision-making positions. Other participants echoed these sentiments through quotations like the one below:

- *Lately South African policies are in favour of gender equity and equality, however, our traditional institutions still regard women as inferior (Nyamutshagole).*

On this point, according to Tshikota (2020), one cannot argue that someone cannot succeed merely because of their gender. In principle, according to the *Vhavenda* customs, the nomination of the successor lies in the powers of *Makhadzi*. This means that no one in the country, including the president of the country, has the power to nominate a chief.

In spite of the powers of the *Makhadzi*, women are still subjected to low leadership positions in most of the traditional institutions. There are efforts made to end gender inequalities by the government, but there are still barriers which are in existence which are acting against the full realisation of gender equality, and the institution of traditional leadership is no exception to these barricades.

5.8 Advantages of having women in traditional leadership

On the above theme, the majority of the participants indicated that it is an advantage to our societies for women to participate in leadership positions. Some participants indicated that women would bring a caring aspect into such leadership positions as these quotations show:

- *Women are mothers who can bring harmony to society (Takalani).*
- *Women will represent the experiences and needs of women (Daniel).*
- *Women are always more understanding about the plight of their communities (Nyamutshagole).*

This demonstrates how women may be exploited to the benefit of society, as stated by Maqubela (2013) since they are better at uniting families and individuals during difficult times. They know how to maintain the family's standard of living and are capable of managing families and communities in the best possible ways. This knowledge can be shared amongst those who occupy strategic positions in various communities. According to Inglehart and Norris (2003), women should actively participate in leadership roles due to their experiences as family managers. Having women actively involved in decision-making processes will be extremely beneficial.

5.9 Visibility of women and its advantages in traditional leadership

The purpose of this portion of the study was to find out if people in Mauluma Village thought men and women were equal. It also sought to understand if women are visible enough in traditional leadership roles and what benefits they could offer traditional institutions. About 10% of the participants said that women's visibility is being improved in Mauluma, in the Vhembe District, in response to the question. According to some of the respondents:

- *The Department is creating awareness campaigns to make people aware, and it encourages equality between men and women in traditional leadership (Daniel).*
- *Women and men were not equal in rights and work, but currently, they are being offered equal chances in traditional leadership (Vhutshilo).*
- *The South African government took the initiative to fight for the rights of women. Workshops and imbizos on gender equality are being conducted to familiarise people in our villages, but this information does not reach all the people in the villages (nyamutshagole).*

Considering these statements, it seems South Africa is trying to educate people on gender equality to tone down the gender disparities that are still in existence, however, the country has not yet reached the gender parity phase. This is because the country is not reaching out to the relevant people who are in need of such information to bring about

transformation. This is backed by a few of the respondents who indicated that difficulties still existed. This is what some of them pointed out:

- *While gender equality is gradually improving in South Africa, both men and women find it difficult to accept women in traditional leadership jobs (Vhuthu).*
- *Several cultural beliefs are still contributing massively to the issues of gender inequality (Mandiwana).*
- *In the villages that are currently run by women they are doing it for compliance reasons (Sara).*

Vissandjee et al. (2006) indicated that Because women are perceived as having inferior leadership qualities to men, a variety of cultural behaviours and beliefs impact the attainment of gender equality. Persistent preconceptions and detrimental cultural attitudes about women contribute to discriminatory and gender-biased practices that hinder the advancement of women in leadership roles. Furthermore, Jackson (2011) points out that culture marginalized women from active participation in leadership positions in their communities. Stamarski & Son Hing (2015) support the above by saying that, people from patriarchal countries stress women's feminine values in accordance with their culture and socialization. For Thobejane (2019), African feminist theory was relevant for this study as it was developed to challenge patriarchal norms, address African women's specific experiences and challenges, and promote gender equality within the African context. It seeks, thus, to empower African women, amplify their voices, and advocate for their rights and well-being.

Kauzya, 2008; Magagula (2009) posit that the causes and effects of gender marginalisation differ from nation to nation; stereotypes and anti-women traditional, cultural, and religious practices and beliefs are major contributors to the incidence of discrimination against women. Only if the government actively and completely creates a number of initiatives to address the underlying causes of gender inequality in its society will the difficulties be overcome. Women can become more visible in such positions by challenging the current status quo in traditional leadership, where men are seen as the dominant gender. According to Sossou (2006), men control and dominate the majority of

traditional leadership positions, and as a result, men often make important decisions for women since they are not present.

5.10 Equal representation of women in traditional leadership positions

One of the goals of this study is to gain insight into the representation of women in traditional leadership roles. To that end, an audit was conducted with the assistance of key informants to ascertain the number of women in leadership positions. Additionally, they helped the researcher obtain access to official records and the structures' overall attendance records. The village has seven communities under it; each has a headman. The focus was on one village - Mauluma - headed by *Khosi* (chief) Vho Ravele.

The goal of this study was to determine the gender representation of the community under study. The issue of whether there is equal participation in traditional leadership positions was posed in order to ascertain this. The majority of the participants indicated that such did not exist. Men and women who responded provided the following answers:

- *In all traditional leadership structures in this community, very few women are included. This happens at a certain level; for example, a few women form part of the tribal and royal committees. Above those positions, we do not have a woman, as our culture does not allow such a thing to happen (Nyamutshagole).*
- *Women tend to take the backseat or are said to be inferior such that they cannot assume any leadership position due to their gender (Madzunya).*
- *Men in this district still occupy most traditional leadership positions, even though they boast of having a female mayor (Lufuno).*

The aforementioned quotes demonstrate how underrepresented women are in traditional leadership roles. Traditional leadership institutions continue to prioritize numbers over gender dynamics. This situation is confirmed by the SADC Gender Protocol (2015) and Matuba (2016) in their statistics on the representation of women at a provincial level in South Africa. According to these reports, only a few women in Limpopo Provinces in South Africa are currently occupying the positions of chief (*Vho Thovhele*) and Headmen (*Gota* and *Vhakoma*). This suggests that since women are not equally represented in this

institution, their concerns and experiences are not taken into consideration; therefore, for such experiences to be heard and any ill effects mitigated, women need to be represented in the traditional leadership scope. “The myth that women need men to succeed causes communities to exclude women from many traditional leadership roles” (Biri & Mutambwa, 2013;Tatira, 2000).

Traditional structures across the province have a list of few women acting as Head-women or *Vhakoma* inspite of the fact that majority of them are selected as *Makhadzi* (Aunty or Sister to the Chief), who according to tradition, act as care takers or advisers. The few women representatives in the decision-making bodies of traditional leadership, are the selected sisters from the royal family. Women are usually given such positions after vicious fights with the family, villagers and many other structures. Conclusively, it can be seen from these findings that, gender inequality has been a custom in traditional leadership in the Vhembe region, as well as nationally.

5.11:The role that culture plays in the participation of women in traditional leadership

5.11.1 Culture and the perceived gender roles

Culture has been seen as a major barrier to women’s participation in the decision-making processes in leadership. The majority of the participants showed strong views towards culture as a major hindrance to women’s representation in the institution of traditional leadership; among them, some said:

- *“Women are culturally made to assume a submissive position towards men, and this has been an aspect that led to gender inequality in many rural societies (Mashudu).*
- *Women are trained to be submissive and obedient to their husbands(Mashudu).*

These quotations are a reflection of what is happening in many societies. Women are advised to be submissive and to live under the command and leadership of men. Martin and Barnard (2013) indicate that women hold a position of power in the private sphere of

the home, where they are responsible for all household duties. They should, therefore, learn to translate this power dynamic into the public domain so that they can be equal. Bari (2005) notes that female leaders demonstrating feminine behaviour is unacceptable in leadership positions as this is viewed as weak, although the male authoritativeness inherent in the field of traditional leadership creates additional pressure for women. The struggle for gender equality, however, is a significant factor in analysing women's entry into traditional leadership. Van de Walle and Franklin (1996) indicated that in African countries, rites of passage are about the preparation of young girls for marriage as well as to be good wives and excellent mothers rather than to be good leaders.

Participants in this study indicated that marriage has been one of the major cultural factors that continue to keep women marginalised and unable to freely take part in traditional leadership. In this regard, two of the participants had this to say:

- *Marriage continues to be the domain that does not allow women to take part in traditional leadership (Nyamutshagole).*
- *Women are prepared as young girls through initiation school to be "good wives" who respect their husbands (Marium).*
- *Giving the position of traditional leadership to women will kill the entire village (Piet).*

This is further proof that marriage has been one of the factors that creates an obstacle when it comes to representation of women in *leadership* positions. In agreeing with the sentiments above, Inglehart and Norris (2003) argue that marriage favors a patriarchal lineage and male domination.

Culture, thus, plays a dominant role in women's marginalisation in traditional leadership. Friedan (1999) and Chauke (2015) both point out that women who aspire to traditional leadership roles are more likely to encounter hostility and exclusion from their families than other women in other positions. Connell's theory of 1995 contends that hegemonic masculinity, or the dominant form of masculinity in a given society, is inextricably linked to positions of power and authority. The majority of the respondents indicated that this is a major barrier to women's active participation in traditional leadership. Luyts (2016) advocates for the standpoint theory by arguing that for women to act against oppression,

they need knowledge of their own, hence, women must develop appropriate knowledge based on the experiences of the oppressed, in particular, the marginalised women. In the context of this study, women, who are unable to be in the echelons of power, should rise up to the occasion and challenge the patriarchal status quo. In this vein, some of the participants said the following:

- *Men think that they are superior to women in all aspects of life in our communities. This has to be challenged head-on (Nyamutshagole)*
- *Society considers men as dominant to women because they were brought up to see women as subservient and, therefore, should always be submissive to them (Makonde).*
- *The soft duties that are ascribed to women make them to be more marginalized and under-valued (Lufuno).*

Giving attention to the above responses, support the point that men will always believe that women are inferior to them; thus, those women who are taking up leadership positions, especially, in traditional leadership roles which are meant to be the domain of men will make them to feel uncomfortable and demeaned. This was also supported by Pérez-Martínez, V., Marcos-Marcos, Cerdán-Torregrosa, Briones-Vozmediano, Sanz-Barbero, Davó-Blanes, Daoud, Edwards, Salazar, La Parra-Casado, and Vives-Cases, (2021) by saying that, Although few women may want to participate in women's leadership, traditional leadership continues to be 'naturalized as a masculine area', as hegemonic masculinities and requiring masculine biological traits; this has made traditional leadership an obvious place of work for men only . This view is buttressed by Kadaga (2013) and Perum (2019), as well as Moyo (2019) who opined that men thrive because of patriarchal relations in the society. Additionally, Burns (2016) emphasizes the psychological effects of patriarchy, highlighting how the constant reinforcement of women's inferiority erodes their confidence, thus, hindering their pursuit of leadership positions.

5.12 Selection of traditional leaders amongst the *Vhavenda* community

This section of the interview was to establish how the *Vhavenda* conduct their selection of a traditional leader. Various questions were asked to get respondents' opinions.

5.12.1. *Makhadzi* (Senior sister to the chief) and *Khotsimunene* (Brother of the chief)

Majority of the participants indicated that the selection of traditional leader is one process that is not open to the public. *Makhadzi* (senior sister) to the chief of king and *Khotsimunene* (uncle) are two people who fully involved in the entire process. In this respect, participants said:

- *This is the process that is done by Makhadzi with the assistance of Vho khotsimunene but the most relevant person is Makhadzi(Piet).*
- *Makhadzi and other members or the royal family assist each other in the selection process (Meriam).*

The above statement is also supported by Van Warmelo and Phophi (1948), who indicated that the most prominent figure to identify the Khosi khulu, Vho Thovhele and Gota - is *Makhadzi*, the chief's sister; this is done in consultation with the Ndumi, the chief's brothers. This arrangement shows how men are always overpowering women in decision-making. The composition of such consultative meetings favours men as they are in the majority. This runs in line with Nethengwe's (2005) assertion that the chieftainship's true owners and beneficiaries are *Makhadzi* and *Kotsimunene* and that they have an equal position in traditional leadership. The only difference between them is the different roles allocated to them by virtue of their gender.

A few participants mentioned that the above-mentioned process also include the other members of the royal council, but this is also done in a patriarchal manner.

- *Although the Makhadzi plays a crucial role in the selection of the heirs to the throne, other selected members of the royal family also form part of the selection process so that she is not the sole person involved in this process(Daniel).*

The above clearly illustrates that it is not the Makhadzi alone who takes part in the selection process; this is a collective process, unlike the selection of Vho Thovele (chief) and Gota (headmen).

5.12.2 Dzekiso Wife

The majority of the participants indicated that the selection of the heirs of the throne takes the *dzekiso* line. A *dzekiso* wife is a woman who is chosen for an arranged marriage and undergoes initiation to become the king's wife. "The identified woman would be taught the responsibilities of an official wife." Van Warmelo and Phophi (1948) and Johnson (2005) supported the above by saying that gender inequality emanates from the socialization process; hence, due to the communities' patriarchal structure, women believe that participating as a *dzekiso* wife confers high status. According to Van Warmelo and Phophi (1948), a *dzekiso* wife obtains her status through the relationship between the two families, prior to marriage. From the data gathered, a *dzekiso* wife should be from a specific royal family and her position as a *dzekiso* wife is not widely known, with only a few members of the royal family being aware of this arrangement. This study discovered that the arrangement for a *dzekiso* wife, in polygamous marriages causes women to be discriminated against, because their treatment and status within the royal family are not the same. Qomfo (2020) states that patriarchal attitudes that stems from an adherence to cultural norms are noted barriers to women's full participation in community structures.

The study established from the collected data, that a *dzekiso* wife is chosen to give birth to the next chief or king. In this regard, two of the participants had this to say:

- *The process takes the line of dzekiso wife whose first-born son is the rightful person to take over the throne (Nyamutshagole).*
- *Makhadzi has the final say in the entire selection process (Mashudu).*

The above shows that the selection process is for very few individuals within the family. These responses testify that not every child from the family has the right to take over the throne. Among the *Vhavenda*, the senior sister (*Makhadzi*) is described as having a somewhat comparable position to that of a chief or king. She has to be consulted on all

important communal affairs and is described as exercising significant influence over the king's personal and political conduct and is treated with almost the same level of respect, and formality afforded the king himself (Matshidze, 2013 & Mulaudzi & Krieland 2022). In supporting this viewpoint, participants said:

- *Makhadzi's crucial role in traditional leadership is to take the final-discussed matters to the whole family and other community structures (mthombeni).*
- *Her role is like that of Khotsimunene and Ndumi in this regard (Nyamutshagole).*

The above statements contradict Van Warmelo & Phophi (1948) and Tshikota (2020), who stated that Makhadzi does the selection process with the assistance of *Ndumi* and *Khotsimunene*. Data collected for this study, further indicated that the position that a *Makadzi* holds in traditional leadership does not make her position equal to that of chief (*Vho Thovele*) or King (*Khosi Khulu*). Stamarski et al. (2015) define discrimination as treating people differently because of their sex or race.

The statement made by a few participants, who claimed that other members of the royal family and council are also involved in this process, is completely at odds with the quotations above. The aforementioned indicates that some individuals do not view women as having the same level of influence (Matshidze, 2013) and Mulaudzi & Kriel, (2022). Some few participants believe that the *Makhadzi* position in traditional leadership has the same value as *Khotsimunene*, however, giving women this position does not promote equality in this institution.

Women should also be given tasks that are believed to be tough, challenging, and significant so that when they can solve them this would prove that they are equal; this will assist in challenging gender stereotypes in our communities. Bessong and Ekanen (2014) conclude that re-arrangement of social responsibilities can be a good solution to the fight against gender discrimination and women oppression. Giving them positions such as that of *Makhadzi* is just a mere tokenism and it will not assist the country in challenging the patriarchal belief system inherent in our communities. There are a few examples which show that there is undoubtedly a limit when women participate as chiefs

and kings (Kadaga 2013). This finding can be best understood in the context of African feminist theory which advocates for women because of those who fought great battles against colonialism and neo-colonialism. This theory asserts that traditional patriarchal societies as amplified by the practice of the *Vhavenda*, should take note of the strength that women possess. In the case of the *Makhadzi*, she should be given the highest honour she deserves and not be placed in a position where she will only endorse the position of male leaders and subsequently, the king. In light of this, Ibuke (2015) argues that in order for women to participate like men in traditional leadership, there is a need to challenge discriminatory laws and practices that limit their access to certain positions.

The majority of participants indicated that culture continues to be a barrier when it comes to women participating in positions of Vho Thovele and Khosi Khulu. In this regard, participants put forward their sentiments as follows:

- *A woman in our society cannot be a traditional leader. Due to our Venda culture, her biggest position is that of Makhadzi, (Mashudu)*
- *Culturally, women are socialized to believe that their place is in the kitchen. They tend to inculcate a sense of inferiority in this regard (Masudu).*

The above sentiments are in agreement with the assertion that socialisation in patriarchal communities has a great influence on the way most people view the participation of women in leadership positions, as indicated by Maqubela (2020) and Thobejane (2019). Patriarchal communities still view women as weak and incompetent, and as such, they cannot take up influential positions and make tough decisions. Azodo (2007) and Dogo (2014) show in their research that in African societies, a woman's place is reduced to household chores.

5.13. Is the selection procedure fair to both male and female potential traditional leaders?

5.13.1 Fairness of the selection process for traditional leadership.

The purpose of this section was to establish whether there is fairness in the process of selecting a traditional leader amongst the *VhaVenda*.

The majority of the participants pointed out that fairness in traditional leadership has always been there; women (*Makhadzi*) have had a crucial role to play, which is equal to that of *Khotsimunene*. The participants said:

- *Previously, both men and women had roles that were important in traditional leadership. However, even women have an important role to play (Mandiwana).*
- *In traditional leadership, each member of the council or royal family whether men or women, has an important role to play (Vuthu).*

Cultural beliefs and practice have made people to believe that there is fairness in traditional leadership as both women and men are seen as participating in traditional leadership. Culturally the role that one woman, *Makhadzi* plays is clouding the entire process of electing a woman to the highest positions of *Gota* (headman), *Vho Thovele* (chief) and *Khosi khulu* (king). According to Jackson (2011), women are culturally excluded from participating in challenging positions in that societies take them as weaker and are, as such, marginalized ..The dynamics of women's participation in traditional leadership among the *VhaVenda* can, thus, be better understood and addressed using the feminist standpoint theory. Using this approach, there is a better chance to advance greater gender equality and inclusivity in conventional leadership structures while also honoring and preserving the cultural heritage of the *Vha Venda* people; this can be done by recognizing the diversity of opinions within the community and challenging the historical privilege of male leaders. Harding, (2004) contends that no one's viewpoint or knowledge should be given a higher status than that of others, thereby, acknowledging that people's perspectives and knowledge are shaped by their social positions and experiences.

Some participants asserted that, although, it is tough for women to fully participate in traditional leadership, few are taking over the throne, but this often comes with a serious fight. Other participants had this to say:

- *Women these days know that they also have rights like their male counterparts and are poised to take over the throne (Nyamutshagole).*

- *Women are fighting for their rights, and we thank the government for assisting them(Nyamuofohe).*

The above statement is evidence that although it is still not an easy-going road for women to ascend the throne, at least the South African government is fully backing their efforts and struggles to make people aware of their rights. Furthermore, NGOs are also trying to bring equality and fairness in traditional leadership so that women can also be given an equal chance of succeeding in ascending leadership roles. Magagula (2009) and Jackson (2011) argue that it is not surprising that even in this era, women continue to fight for what is naturally their God-given rights because of what we may call gender stereotyping.

In the context of the *VhaVenda*, the headmen, chiefs and kings are given the latitude to marry as many wives as possible, but the same is not afforded to women who are culturally not allowed to ascend the throne of chieftaincy or Queen; on the contrary, they should respect the chieftain/Kingdom more than themselves. This finding can be best explained by the theory of social justice alluded to earlier. This theory is centred around fairness and an equitable society where everyone has access to rights, opportunities and resources. This theory emphasises the need for transformative change to ensure that women in traditional leadership are treated equally and that their voices and contributions are valued and respected.

5.14: Discrimination in who should give birth to headmen, chief and king

The “*dzekiso* wife” is selected based on her family lineage, which must be from a royal house; this is done for the fulfilment of cultural rituals and norms. According to Mushiana (2019), a “*dzekiso*” is a woman who is identified by elders within the royal family for an arranged marriage and goes through initiation to prepare her to be the king’s wife for culture does not allow the first wife of the king to give birth to the next king. This process does not promote gender equality and equity on the side of women. Another challenge is that the heir is dependent on the prerogative of the Chief rather than that of the Queen.

It is, therefore, clear that men and not women have to manipulate all the positions of traditional leadership and family responsibilities without requiring the permission of their female counterparts. Merma-Molina, Urrea-Solano, Baena-Morales, and Gavilán-Martín

(2022) posit that leaders are born to lead and the rest to follow, but the same cannot be said about female leaders in a patriarchal society.

Some participants added that in traditional leadership, marriage is for strengthening the friendship between two royal families and has little to do with the strengthening of female leaders. In this light, participants had this to say.

- *Dzekiso wife is married to the entire family (PIET).*
- *This arrangement is made even if the selected candidate does not love the successor (Mthombeni).*

Mushiana (2018) in supporting the above sentiments, says that if a person is of royal blood, then they do not marry for love; if you do that, it is the end of the line for your royal lineage and your children will be citizens like everyone else.

5.14.2 Marriage outside the royal family

This study further established those inter-marriages outside the royal family was found to hinder people from participating in traditional leadership. A child born from a mother without royal blood, culturally does not qualify to take over the position of a king.

To support the above, participants had this to say:

- *Only women from the chosen royal family can be married and give birth to the heirs to the throne (John).*
- *It is not all women who can take part in the role of Makhadzi (Lufuno).*
- *Culturally, women coming from certain clans cannot participate in traditional leadership, this is also true for their children as well (Makonde).*

5.15 Challenges faced by women in traditional leadership

This section addresses the challenges that women, as a marginalized group, come across in trying to get access to influential positions in traditional leadership institutions.

5.15.1: Educational Constraints

Education limitations was mentioned as a contributing factor to women's marginalization in traditional leadership and leadership positions in general. The majority (about sixty

percent of respondents) agreed that there was gender inequality due to educational achievements. History shows that in South Africa, traditional leadership positions are mostly occupied by older people who in most cases do not have qualifications. To support the above, participants said the following:

- *I wanted to go to school, but I was married at the age of seventeen, going back to school was no longer an option as I was expected to take care of my child and my husband (Sara).*
- *My parents were not supportive of the girl child going to school, they always reminded me that my husband will support you (Mashudu).*
- *Taking a girl child to school creates problems as educated females disrespect their husbands (Mthombeni).*

Tripp (2013) supports the above by showing that low levels of education and training are predominant among women, specifically, in rural areas and areas that are still extremely underdeveloped and poor. This lack of education reduces women's opportunities for access to leadership positions.

5.15.2 Low self-esteem as an obstacle

The majority of the participants believe that women are less likely than men to think they are the rightful people to assume positions of leadership. Billing and Alvesson (2000) as well as, Grove, Montgomery, and Radu (2017) maintain that women communicate and behave differently as a result of the gendered socialisation process where girls learn, through their early upbringing, to behave differently to boys, and this later gets taken into the organisational world. To support the above, these are what some of the participants said:

- *Socialization and traditional orientation result in women developing poor confidence and becoming scared to take challenging positions in their communities (Nyamutshagole).*
- *Low self-esteem and limited support from both men and women are the main drivers of gender inequality (Nyamuofhe).*

- *Women have low self-esteem when it comes to traditional leadership (Takalani).*

The above sentiments prove that socialization has taken a part in the way women view themselves regarding leadership roles. Both men and women have the mentality that women are incapable of taking up challenging and influential positions. Most women, according to Topic (2022), fall short of their potential, sometimes not because they are less masculine than others but rather because they do not work in ways that are consistent with what it means to be a woman. This implies that only men who exhibit traits like aggression, assertiveness, lack of empathy, and power-oriented leadership qualities that are typically associated with masculinity are socially constructed during early socialization; this suggests that traditional leadership is the domain of men.

This is perpetuated by traditional and cultural values that deem women uncompetitive. This has greatly influenced an unconscious mentality among people to regard men as being more powerful and superior to women. Male children are considered superior, and this causes an imbalance between the two sexes (Gidengil et al., 2010).

Some of the participants alleged that women do not think that they were incapable of taking traditional leadership positions. This is evidenced by the responses below:

- *Women have the potential and require leadership skills. They have what it takes to take up leadership positions (Vhuthu).*
- *If given a chance they can also prove that they are equally competent as men (Daniel).*

In light of the above, some participants believe that women do possess the required characteristics to take up leadership roles, however, in as much as they qualify to take these positions, women today are still facing great challenges in assuming leadership positions. Hicks (2010) posits that women in positions of leadership have no problem in terms of the way they manage power, but rather it is the men under them who feel bitter about taking directives from them; patriarchy, therefore, has made men feel that they are entitled to lead.

5.15.3 Lack of confidence

Lack of confidence among women emerged as a barrier preventing them from assuming decision-making positions; the majority of the participants saw this as a factor. This resonates well with the SADC Gender Protocol (2015) which quoted a statement given by Angie Motsheka, the ANC Women's League President, who said, "South Africa is not ready for a woman president" while addressing the league. Sentiments like these show that women are not yet confident to take up influential decision-making positions in the political sector and with her being a role model to the rest of women, this brings down the confidence among those who might have an interest in following their political aspirations.

5.15 4 Biological make up as a barrier

In addition to barriers that women encounter when it comes to assuming decision-making positions in traditional leadership arena, majority of the participants concurred that women were too biologically weak to take up these positions. One of the participants had this to say:

- *Traditional leadership is for strong people as it requires the leader to deal with different people with different personalities (Mthombeni).*

The position of a woman is said to be in the house, although, the majority of the participants did not concur that women were too biologically weak to take up these positions. Some of the participants had this to say:

- *Traditional leadership is about the strength of the mind and has nothing to do with the biological make-up of human beings. What matters is the capability to use the mind (Mthombeni).*
- *Women are equally capable of taking decisions as they have the courage and mindset to successfully lead. For example, many households are female-headed, and they are successful and even better than some male-headed households (Nyamutshagole).*
- *Besides biological make up, men and women can take up influential decision-making positions, yet women might do a better job (Makonde).*

Seeing these responses, it is therefore accurate to assert that good leadership has nothing to do with the biological makeup of an individual; what matters is courage, determination, and the skill to come up with good judgments. Bari (2005) notes that women have different visions and concepts of leadership owing to their sex and their gender roles as mothers, therefore, they could actively participate in the political arena because of these multiple experiences they possess.

5.15.5. MULTIPLE ROLES OF WOMEN

Close to seventy percent of the participants indicated that women's multiple roles - childcare and household tasks - were barriers to women's active participation in decision-making positions. This shows that cultural practices and perceived gender roles are contributing factors to gender gaps in leadership positions.

Lawless and Fox (2012) argue that women's reproductive responsibilities continue to define a permanent set of social concerns. As mothers, women continue to bear the loads - child and family caring and managers of the household. The continuing effects of these family roles are still defining today's traditional leadership.

5.15.6 . MORALS

Majority of participants view women who challenge and participate in traditional leadership positions as people who have low morals. In this vein, participants said the following:

- *Traditional leadership is not for everyone(Madzunya).*
- *These are positions for males (Mthombeni).*

Van Zyle (2021) raised the matter that in the *Vhavenda* tradition, one of the criteria for one to qualify for a leadership position is that one's mother needs to be a candle wife (*dzekiso* wife). Then she will have the right to give birth to a son to ascend the position of either *Khosi Khulu*, *Vho Thovhele*, or *Gota*. Participants said the following regarding this viewpoint:

- *Everybody is driven by passion and desire to achieve a specific objective; therefore, morality has nothing to do with this (Nyamutshagole).*

- *Leadership is for everyone, whether male or female, it has nothing to do with morals (Lufuno).*

Being a leader does not imply that someone is of loose morals (Vhuthu).

Looking at these comments, they clearly show that nowadays women who actively participate in influential political positions are no longer regarded as immoral. UNGA (2015) contends that during the 19th and 20th centuries women in leadership were considered to be women of loose morals who needed male attention. This shows a great transformation in the ideas of people from the previously blinkered and myopic attitude towards women's involvement in the heavy-masculine public territory. It is, however, hoped that one day, women will find it easier to follow their dreams and passion in the public spheres of government as the political plane field is gradually being leveled. Matuba (2016) notes that women participating in politics are subjected to more scrutiny of their personal lives as they are labeled as 'having slept their way' to a leadership position.

The participants had much to say about possible causes of gender gaps in traditional leadership. Participants revealed some of their views which they believed were the causes of the disparities when it comes to the representation of women in traditional leadership positions. This is what they had to say:

- *Treatment given to women by society creates gender gaps between the two genders as they are not treated equally. Women are always viewed as second-class citizens, and men are given more responsibilities from birth than females and are showered with positive acknowledgements than women (Lufuno).*
- *The cultural background that asserts that men should be leaders should be challenged at all levels (Makonde).*
- *There is a lack of confidence in women's leadership and as such, women believe that they are not capable of becoming proper leaders (John).*
- *Women have limited time due to their household chores (Vhutshilo).*

Considering the participants' understanding of the various barriers surrounding them, it is worth arguing that the world is faced with numerous obstacles to women's participation especially in the traditional leadership arena. This cements the argument by the UN (2015) that unfavorable cultural practices added to a lack of financial resources, lower levels of education, less access to information, family responsibility, and rights-deprivation of women - have resulted in fewer opportunities for women to be offered traditional leadership positions. It is safe, hence, to argue that in almost all the rural societies where traditional leadership is practised, women are subjected to unequal treatment and marginalization.

Do you think women cannot take up influential and challenging positions like their male counterparts in traditional leadership?

5.16 A response from the Cogta officials

This section of the research attempted to determine the role played by the officials from the Department of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, in dealing with cultural matters.

5.16.1. The role played by the officials from the Department of Local Government and Traditional Affairs in the selection process of traditional leaders

These participating officials indicated that it is the responsibility of the family to make sure that the right person is selected, and the name forwarded to them for final preparation and nomination of a leader, irrespective of the gender of the nominated person. This is also supported by Tshikota (2020) who explains that the Constitution's section 211(2) permits traditional family leaders to establish their systems, and it is consistent with constitutional principles for royal families to formulate their customary laws based on the requirements, values, and conditions of their local communities. Tshikota, (2020) continues in his article, that customary law should be in touch with society's ever-changing values, practices and needs.

The next question focused on the views of participants regarding dispute on who should take the throne. In this vein, the following were participants' views:

- *Women, according to the South African constitution also qualify to participate in traditional leadership (Daniel).*
- *Gender equality is supported by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Nyamuofhe).*

5.19. Attitude of women towards traditional leadership

In answer to the question on the attitudes of women towards traditional leadership, data collected showed that the majority of women are not interested in such positions as they already have other positions culturally contracted for females in traditional leadership. These positions are that of *Makhadzi* (sister to the headmen, chief, and king). Participants said the following in this regard:

- *Socialization has made women have less interest in traditional leadership (John).*
- *Women are afraid to lead especially in traditional leadership (Mariam).*
- *Women are hardly interested in leadership but they like to be more involved in salient things like raising of their families and protecting their households (Matodzi).*

This is evidence that patriarchal communities have socialised women in a way that they do not have an interest in leadership in general, as cultural requirements and gender stereotyping continue unabated. The above responses by the participants show that even if women have an interest in leadership, they are afraid of participating because they are aware that culturally, traditional leadership is not their territory.

It is generally agreed that treatment given to women due to socialisation and culture makes them to lose hope, as they do not have support even from other women. In some villages, women who are rightfully qualified for leadership positions are forced to move from one court to another to fight for their rights, but most end up losing their cases. This results in them getting more despondent.

In a nutshell, the findings on this theme was that, many women do not have any interest in traditional leadership because of lack of support from the relevant people within their families and the society, in general.

5.20 Is patriarchy (rule by men) the only main contributory factor to the undermining of women for a traditional leadership position?

With regard to this question, majority of the respondents indicated that other factors, besides patriarchy, undermine the active participation of women in traditional leadership, although, culture is seen as a major hindrance to women's participation in traditional leadership.

The following are the participants' views:

- *Women's biological makeup marginalises them in the challenging environment of traditional leadership Daniel).*
- *Women culturally take a submissive position towards men because they have been nurtured that way (Vhthu).*
- *Cultural practices have been constructed in a way that makes women always submissive in our communities, and men are made to see women as their responsibility. As a result, they should always be obedient to them (Nyamutshagole).*

From the views above, it seems in patriarchal communities men will always make women inferior to them, thus, giving women leadership roles, which are believed to be masculine and competitive, will not be accepted. Opportunities for women are restricted by patriarchal standards, particularly in the field of leadership (Kadaga, 2013). Matuba (2016) notes that, even though the majority of members in South African political parties are women, the majority of men would prefer the status quo that defines the latter as natural leaders. This opposes the postulations of the radical feminists who advocate for the total destruction of patriarchy as this is the system that valorises the hegemony of men all over the world as noted by Cornell, 2021; Mohanty, 1998, and Hooks, 2000).

We encounter notions in feminist discourse that explain the background of women's oppression and provide ways to overcome it. Radical feminism, for example, according to Hooks (2000), destroys the gender norms and traditional patriarchal power structures that oppress women. Radical feminists consider patriarchy as the primary source of inequality between men and women and work to eradicate it, believing that men's need or desire to control women is what drives gender disparity. Rather than relying on

governmental or financial reform, they seek to address the underlying causes of oppression through action and systemic change. Hooks (2000) further indicated that radical feminist theory is based on the fact that, globally, people need a change of the system, and it seeks ways to re-think and apprehend the relationships between men and women so that women can ultimately be liberated.

The points raised by radical feminists are true reflections of what is happening in many communities. Women are expected to submit to men's authority and live according to their direction. However, this has resulted in women's marginalisation on all fronts socially and economically. This was seen by Bari (2005), who notes that in a male-dominated setting, a female leader exhibiting feminine conduct is viewed as inappropriate; males have been socialised to believe that it is their destiny to run the world.

5.23 Marriage as a Factor that Contributes to the undermining of women in traditional leadership

In response to the above theme, participants showed marriage as a cultural factor that continues to keep women marginalized, thereby, unable to freely take part in traditional leadership. To support the above, this is what some of the participants had to say:

- *Marriage is a leading factor that condemns women to perpetual servitude as it is wrapped up in the belief that culture does not allow their women to take part in traditional leadership positions (Takalani).*
- *Giving married women traditional leadership roles will erode the lineage as we know it (Madzunya).*
- *It is not culturally accepted as she is by virtue of marriage, using her husband's surname and therefore, traditional leaders are not comfortable with this as it means the man who married this woman will eventually get his surname blessed and eventually, his kids becoming chiefs and/or kings (Mthombeni).*

According to Jackson's (2011) theory, married women become the legal dependents of their husbands, fathers, or guardians. This demonstrates how marriage played a role in the marginalization of women in the traditional leadership setting and continues to do so.

This is also supported by Odome (2014), who pointed out that the patriarchal nature of leadership in African societies contributes to women playing complementary and subordinate roles to their male counterparts. This means that men in most African communities are still considered as having more power than women.

5.23.1 Women's multiple roles

Some of the participants stated that women's numerous roles in the family reproductive, productive, and communal roles are obstacles to their active involvement in traditional leadership positions where decisions are made. This demonstrates how cultural norms and ideas about gender roles play a part in the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions. This supports what Lawless and Fox (2012) postulate, that women's reproductive responsibilities continued to confer on them a permanent inferior status, socially and economically and this raises some serious concerns, regardless of other roles women carry within the family. The multiple roles of tasks women continue to have a negative effect on their participation in the public space. This, subsequently, leads to the gender gap that is visible in traditional leadership.

5.23.2. Fear of being victimized

The majority of participants indicated that women are afraid of being labeled and victimized by family members who were oriented to believe that leadership is not the domain of women. Participants voiced the following comments in this regard:

- *I do not think women can participate in traditional leadership roles as they are viewed as not being capable. They can only participate as makhadzi's of the community (Sara).*
- *There are Departments that deal with traditional leadership issues. I urge these women who aspire to become leaders, to have a relationship with such structures.*
- *My observation made me to believe that there is no support for women in traditional leadership or who wants to become community leaders. Those who would like to be leaders are discouraged and demotivated by the patriarchal tendencies of most community members.*

- *The government does not give women who aspire to become leaders the full support. Their struggle is always relegated to the margins.*

This study has established that women are not protected when they want to fully participate in traditional leadership as this is viewed as a male-dominated institution. This has been pointed out by Cornell (2009) who argued that this notion is deeply rooted in hegemonic beliefs of male superiority. The same sentiments have been shown by Thobejane (2019), Maqubela (2020) and Mohanty (2021), all of whom are of the belief that patriarchal foundations of our societies are largely to blame for the marginalization of women, especially in leadership positions.

5.24 SECTION C: QUESTIONS ON POLICY IMPLEMENTATION.

In this section, the researcher wanted to know the participants' understanding of international policies on gender mainstreaming and how effective these various gender Tools that have been implemented in achieving equal participation in traditional leadership positions by women.

The participants were requested to comment on three of the international gender policies Sara the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, and the Quota system.

5.24.1. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Most of the participants mentioned that they did not know the existence of the CEDAW, although a few did know of the policy and its contents. In this respect, one of the respondents had this to say:

- *This policy makes sure that women do not suffer discrimination (Daniel).*

The international gender policies / tools are mediatory in mainstreaming gender, however, it was evident that a country like South Africa, even though a signatory, has not done enough in conscientizing the people about it. In this study, hence, it is suggested that the implementors of such policies, should make sure that all people in rural areas are educated about issues pertaining gender mainstreaming.

Despite South Africa's intention to using the CEDAW to change social and cultural behavior patterns, the Advocacy Aid (2014) organization contends that the country's efforts are difficult since it grounds its arguments on stereotyped ideas about the roles of men and women. On the other hand, CEDAW places a strong emphasis on the need to dispel gender stereotypes and advance societal norms that uphold women's rights.

It focuses on the urgency of providing women and girls with equal access to healthcare, education, and social services. According to Morrell, Jewkes, and Lindegger, (2012) opine that South Africa is only paying lip-service to these gender policies so that the international community can identify it as a democratic country, while still pursuing its patriarchal notions that promote gender inequalities in the society.

5.24.2. The Beijing Platform for Action (BPA)

Majority of the respondents indicated that they did not know about this Act. One of the respondents had the following to say:

- *In order to secure more equality and opportunities for women, the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) identified twelve critical areas in which immediate action was required (nyamutshagole).*

The above statement shows that some participants have some knowledge about this gender equality tool. The fact that most people in our communities do not know about the BPA as a tool to promote gender equality should alarm - leadership institutions, the government and other stakeholders - as there is still inadequate representation of women in traditional leadership and in leadership positions in general. This could be part of the explanation for the few females in decision-making bodies, in traditional leadership.

5.24.3. The Quota System

Majority of participants in this study mentioned that they were unaware of the quota system. This could be the reason women are still not equally represented in traditional leadership in the Vhembe District in South Africa. This is in line with the SADC Gender Protocol (2015), which stated that the country's non-support of women's participation in traditional leadership remains a problem, as it is one of the few areas with a very low

number of female participants according to the quota, therefore, the South African government should effectively implement the quota system to achieve the goal of equal participation of women and men in traditional leadership positions and in leadership positions, in general. Implementing this will be beneficial because it will create a balance that more accurately reflects the composition of society and strengthens gender equality.

5.24.4 The National Gender Tools

This study also wanted to explore participants' knowledge on national gender instruments the South African constitution and the Employment Equity Act of 1998.

5.24.5. The South African Constitution

The researcher wanted to find out if the participants knew the contents of the South African Constitution. Majority of participants indicated that they knew it, however, they seem to know, mainly, the aims and purposes of the Constitution and that it is the supreme law of the land. They did not know how it may be relevant to gender equity and change. One participant said the following in this regard:

- *The South African Constitution states that all people are equal before the law and have the same rights (Daniel)*

This demonstrates a lack of knowledge, education, and awareness among those who are supposed to be the "know-it-alls" in such anti-gender inequality activities. This shows that there is no differences between those who were aware of the Constitution's existence and those who were not, as they all had no idea of its contents and how the establishment of such legislation would aid their society in eliminating gender inequalities.

The South African Constitution speaks about gender equality because it contains the Bill of Rights, which enshrines the democratic values of the state - human dignity and equality.

Sixty percent of the participants in this study indicated that they were aware of the South African Constitution and how it advocates for gender equality in society. The following is what most of them indicated:

- *The Constitution of South Africa states that all people are equal before the law and have the same rights (Lufuno)*

Given the participants' knowledge of what the Constitution says about gender equality issues, it can be assumed that those who hold positions of power in traditional leadership bodies are aware of some of the national gender instruments, however, this is not good enough. This is a clear picture of why South Africa's traditional leadership, and Africa as a whole, still suffers from major gender inequalities - ignorance and lack of knowledge are the contributory factors to this.

5.24.6. The Employment Equity Act (EEA) no 55 of 1998

The researcher continued by inquiring about the participants' knowledge of EEA. Most participants mentioned that they were aware of the existence of the EEA and what it entails. Those who indicated that they know of its existence, said the following:

- *It promotes the importance of equality in the workplace (lufuno).*
- *It ensures also equity amongst the genders (Daniel).*

The above statements show that participants know about the existence of the policy and that it emphasizes equality and helps to reduce gender inequalities, however, they do not know its full significance because they based most of their knowledge on general knowledge and wild guesses. Participants do not know what the government is doing to make gender equality a reality in South Africa. According to Muleya (2023), the government has not done enough in cascading policies on gender down to the ordinary masses. This is exemplified by the way in which communities around South Africa still harbour misgivings when it comes to female leadership.

5.24.7. Traditional Leadership and Khoi -San Act no. 3 of 2019

When asked if they were aware that the EEA existed, majority of the participants said but they didn't know much about what the act actually says concerning gender equality. Since leaders are not entirely aware of the policies of their nation, this explains why there are still gender disparities in positions of decision-making in the political sector. As per the SADC Gender Protocol (2014), many South African structures continue to fall short in putting special measures in place at the national level to boost women's participation. To do this, the country of South Africa needs to fully embrace new policies that would expedite gender parity, moving beyond gender and responsive governance.

This means that, while the South African government is attempting to develop diverse strategies to address gender inequalities, these efforts are not being communicated effectively to the citizens. Gender inequalities and the underrepresentation of women in traditional leadership positions will persist, thus, in order to achieve equality, the South African government must work to fulfill its commitment to equal representation in all spheres of life.

5.26. Conclusion

This chapter discusses findings from the data that was analyzed. The discussions focused on the variables that affect an individual's ability to fully engage in a traditional leadership role. This also applies to the way women are viewed as traditional leaders in tribal and royal councils. The findings demonstrated how multiple intersecting factors, such as culture and marriage, limit the number of women in traditional leadership roles; this includes the appointment of traditional leaders, the royal and tribal council, as well as local government structures.

One of the contributing factors limiting or preventing women's participation was shown as the lack of support from the royal family and the community at large. The chapter also addressed various factors that lead to women's lack of enthusiasm in participating in traditional leadership roles. One of the most debated reasons why women are excluded from leadership roles is due to families and communities who are involved in the selection of leaders. The results further showed that women prefer not to be perceived as leaders

in the traditional sense; by preferring not to be perceived as such, women protect themselves from being victims in the society that has its visions grounded in patriarchy

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the findings; it further examines contributions from the results and offers suggestions based on them. The suggestions will aid in addressing the dynamics surrounding women's involvement in traditional leadership roles among the Vhavenda in the village of Mauluma. The study's overview, a synopsis of the findings, their scholarly contribution, recommendations, and a conclusion will be detailed in this chapter. Below are the study questions which guided this research. Below are the study questions which guided this research:

- How are women leaders perceived in Mauluma village?
- What role does culture play in the participation of women in traditional leadership?
- How do the Vhavenda select their traditional leaders?
- What are the challenges faced by women in traditional leadership?
- Which strategies can be used to promote the full participation of women in traditional leadership?

6.2. Overview of the study

The debate surrounding women's participation in leadership has always focused on women's leadership in the corporate world. A significant portion of the literature highlighted men as traditional leaders. Kings, Chief Headmen, and the traditional courts (Khoros) are the domain of men. Within the royal kraal, women are assigned to the position of Makhadzi, which is only a symbolic position. Many women in South Africa are interested in traditional leadership; however, women still struggle to move up the social ladder because of cultural impediments. The goal of this study was to develop a gendered viewpoint on traditional leadership by focusing on the dynamics of women's participation in traditional leadership.

The theories of masculinity and standpoint paradigms were applied to explain the reasons behind the marginalisation of women. The standpoint theory comprehensively explains

the underrepresentation of women in traditional leadership roles. Objectives one to four have been thoroughly explored within the standpoint theoretical lenses as well as explicated in the chapter on the theoretical framework. For this study, a qualitative approach was adopted; snowball and purposeful sampling were used to select the study participants; face-to-face interviews with the chosen participants were conducted, and the thematic approach was used to analyze the data.

6.2.1 Findings on Objective 1

Objective 1 was to check how women are perceived in Mauluma village in the context of traditional leadership. The collected data indicated that women cannot be given the same position as men in traditional leadership as, culturally, within the royal family, they do not have a position that is meant for women. The findings of the study show that in Mauluma village, there was never a female in the position of chief, and women only occupy the position of Makhadi (advisor), and she is meant to serve the chief. Males occupy senior management positions, while females are few (See the genealogical information in Chapter 4). These figures clearly show that women are under-represented in the traditional governance structures. This is in line with the patriarchal framework, as identified by Thobejane (2019) and Maqubela (2020).

This demonstrates that female leadership is undervalued and despised, which is one of the reasons for very few female participations in traditional leadership. As a result of this under-representation, women have low self-esteem and lack confidence in their leadership abilities.

6.2.2 Findings on Objective 2

6.2.2.1 What role does culture play in the participation of women in traditional leadership?

This objective sought to explore the role culture plays in the participation of women in traditional leadership. The study established that Venda women were marginalised in matters relating to traditional leadership. When it comes to appointing traditional leaders, women are not easily considered for positions like Kingship, chieftainship, or headman. This finding can be best understood using the masculinity theory and African feminist

theory explicated in Chapter 3, which explores the study's theoretical framework(s). The mentioned theories assert that in patriarchal societies, such as in Vhavenda communities, patriarchal patterns of leadership are highly favored (see Radical feminism, standpoint theory and positionality frameworks and African feminism). Certain positions are openly reserved for men, and this is non-negotiable. This is a clear indication that such positions are deeply rooted in injustices of the past, and there is a need to confront the system of patriarchal leadership. The opinions inherent in exploring this objective are in line with Cornell (2008), who argues that women should stand up for themselves and fight for the injustices that are rooted in toxic masculinities.

According to the findings, The Vhavenda community holds deeply rooted cultural norms and beliefs that reduce women's participation in traditional leadership; hence, This marginalization impacts their opportunities to assume leadership positions. Participants are of the view that the persistence of a patriarchal cultural foundation forms the cornerstone of this marginalization.

The patriarchal stereotyping of women means they are not trusted to handle difficult or demanding positions because they are deemed too weak for such positions. Traditional gender roles and expectations assign men as the primary leaders, while women are often relegated to supporting roles within the community. The lack of family support and a masculine-oriented atmosphere exacerbates the challenge of participation of women in higher positions such as Vho Thovhele, Khosikhulu and Magota. This is demonstrated by the lack of institutional support for women who qualify for such positions; despite the South African Constitution and other laws supporting gender equality, women rarely receive institutional support, making it difficult to challenge such decisions. The study further shows that the selection processes for leaders also make it impossible for women to participate in traditional leadership. This continues to happen despite all the legislation passed promoting gender equality.

6.2.3 Findings on Objective 3

6.2.3.1 Selection of traditional leaders amongst the Vhavenda people

This section of the research sought to establish how the Vhavenda conducts its selection of traditional leaders and various questions were asked to get participants' opinions.

This study examined the selection criteria employed in traditional leadership participation and highlighted the discrepancies between men and women regarding their eligibility to participate. Specifically, it explored how the criteria favour men and contribute to the exclusion of women from traditional leadership positions.

The study also established that there is also discrimination of females based on class. Selection of mufumakadzi wa dazekiso as the right woman to give birth to the male heirs to the throne also came as a strain on female potential traditional leaders as this contributed to their failure in achieving the requirements for their promotions, as highlighted in Moodly & Toni (2017) and Sadiq et al. (2019). According to this study, the selection criteria for traditional leadership roles prioritize qualities associated with masculinity - strength, lineage, and political prowess. These criteria favor men and perpetuate gender biases in the selection of leaders. Women's qualifications, such as knowledge of the institution, community involvement, and leadership abilities, may need to be more recognised compared to the men's criteria for selection; gender disparity, hence, limits women's ability to participate in traditional leadership roles. Sometimes, women are only eligible for traditional leadership roles if they are married to chiefs or headmen. This requirement makes women's participation dependent on marital status rather than on their abilities, skills, and aspirations. The study further uncovered that the procedures for selecting traditional leaders often reinforce patriarchal norms and power dynamics. The decision-making process is typically dominated by male authorities, marginalizing women and limiting their influence in leadership positions. The above is further buttressed by Cornell's theory of masculinities, which argues for uprooting toxic masculinities (Cornell, 2000).

Women who marry chiefs or headmen may face significant power imbalances in their marriages. Their status as wives does not guarantee autonomy or equal decision-making power, which may result in their voices being silenced or ignored. Women who marry traditional leaders may face societal expectations that reinforce traditional gender roles, limiting their opportunities for personal growth and leadership outside of their marriage. This is in line with Van Warmelo (2005), who indicated that the Queen mother (Vhakoma), as the wife of the late chief, king and or headman, has a special position within the royal

family. The Queen Mother is the one who takes over in the absence of the traditional leader, which results in wives being silenced or ignored.

The gendered criteria and procedures contribute to the underrepresentation of women in traditional leadership, thus perpetuating a male-dominated power structure. By excluding qualified and capable women from participating in traditional leadership, communities miss out on diverse perspectives, innovative ideas, and the potential for more inclusive governance.

Addressing these disparities requires the revision of selection criteria, creating gender-inclusive guidelines on the selection processes, and empowering women within traditional leadership structures to ensure equitable representation and opportunities for all. The African feminist theory can also be invoked to indicate that Africa is full of female warriors and leaders who literally took part in the fight for freedom and the maintenance of their kingdoms.

6.2.4 Findings on Objective 4

This objective was to explore challenges faced by women in participation in traditional leadership. The data collected observed a positive association between gender parity and resistance to change at Mauluma village; thus, progress toward equality is sometimes met with backwards-looking reactions. Fear of being labelled may intimidate members of disadvantaged groups and their supporters and make them reluctant to push for social justice (Tshikota,2020). Furthermore, speeches made by traditionalist and their supporters against women participating in traditional leadership put fear into the discriminated.

The study's findings underlined the difficulty in getting leadership positions; rather, the communities reduce them to that of Makhadzi (senior aunt to the chief or headmen), which rightfully females still find it difficult to participate in as men have long dominated this sector. Women must adhere to the rules that are culturally contracted and favour men who are fully aware of the game's rules. This is supported by Bari (2005), who found that female leaders displaying feminine behaviour are unacceptable in a male-dominated society, for socialization has made males mirror harsh characteristics. The data revealed that the majority of male participants have always been supported by the selection

committee and the community itself, as their cultural practices have been formulated in a way that makes women submissive.

Some participants expressed concern about the marriage process as it was identified as one factor that hinders women's full participation in traditional leadership. The belief is that giving women leadership roles would weaken their lineage because they would be forced to take on their husbands' surnames after marriage, leading to rejection when they challenge the patriarchal system. One challenge to the system was the lack of mentorship; the leadership process required significant time, which most women do not have due to their already heavy family loads. Another concern about women taking leadership positions was a lack of time to focus on both the roles of chief/headmen and marriage life. Traditional leaders are expected to engage with the community day and night; therefore, the guardians of culture believe that women devoting long periods to leadership responsibilities could cause issues for the husband and family. There is the belief that giving women leadership roles would weaken their lineage because they would be forced to take on their husbands' surnames after marriage, leading to rejection when they challenged the patriarchal system; this means that women are not supported in challenging the system. Lack of mentorship was also perceived as a challenge since the selection process required a significant amount of time, which most women do not have due to their already heavy family loads. Another concern about women taking this position was a lack of time to focus on the role of chief/headmen and marriage life. Traditional leaders are expected to engage with the community day and night. The guardians of culture believe that this could cause issues for the husbands and families.

Participants' responses indicated that the women are given the position of Makhadzi, which, although culturally, is the highest female position, is still lower than that of chief and headmen positions. It seems women are assigned heavy responsibilities, whereas males assist. Therefore, women could also be good leaders if offered such a role. The participants mentioned that the role of Makhadzi is very demanding, which makes them good leaders. Makhadzi, in certain cultures, holds influential positions as regent. They often oversee specific aspects of community life, such as women's affairs, rituals, and cultural practices, although their roles may vary across regions and are subject to

communities' norms. Chiefs and headmen are traditionally compensated by the government or local authorities for their leadership roles. These payments are meant to acknowledge their position, responsibility, and contributions to community development. Depending on region, community size, and government financial allocations, payment amounts may differ. According to the study findings, Makhadzi's positions are not consistently recognised or compensated like chiefs and headmen. Makhadzi's roles and responsibilities may be overlooked by the Department in charge of traditional leadership matters, resulting in pay disparities.

The disparities in Makhadzi's recognition stem from deeply ingrained cultural beliefs and norms that undervalue the role of female traditional leaders compared to their male counterparts. The lack of clear legal frameworks or policies addressing Makhadzi's recognition may contribute to their marginalization in traditional leadership structures. The findings emphasize the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment in traditional leadership. These disparities can be addressed through advocacy and policy interventions.

The selection criteria employed were shown to be quite strict, and women faced numerous problems in meeting them. In general, most women still have a long way to go in achieving the selection criteria that have been set by the traditional leaders. Only the "Makhadzi's" have been allowed to participate in this process, thus, preventing a lot of women from taking part.

The study also established that too much workload and responsibilities are among the challenges that keep women away from participating in traditional leadership positions.

The findings also revealed that women in institutions of traditional leadership lacked mentorship and female role models. Several experts in the literature have determined that mentoring is the most effective way to address the problem of gender underrepresentation (Yousaf, 2018; Dopwell, 2019; Davis, 2015). Mentoring is essential in providing women with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in academia and in other walks of life. Women suffer from low self-esteem due to a lack of mentorship, so having female role models will help them admire the traditional leadership role. Mentorship also helps women stay informed about what is going on in their own institution

(traditional leadership), through meetings. The presence of female mentors may prevent aspiring female traditional leaders from feeling isolated and frustrated. The findings revealed that while the mentoring process is not available in traditional leadership institutions, the department does offer training programs such as workshops, which seem to be mostly attended by males as this is a male-dominated institution. It is true that there are very few traditional women leaders, however, there is a need for mentorship to be established to guide women who are interested in traditional leadership in various villages, around South Africa.

6.2.5 Finding on Objective 5

6.2.5.1 Strategies can be used to address the under-representation of women within the institutions of traditional leadership

This objective sought to establish the strategies that could be used to improve the under-representation of women within the institutions of traditional leadership, specifically, in rural villages around the Vhembe District. The findings revealed that training, such as in management and leadership skills should be made available within these institutions to help equip women for leadership positions. Concerns about workshops not particularly designed to coach and mentor women on leadership were raised; participants suggested that workshops should be made available, especially for those women who are interested in being on leadership programs (Ndebele's 2018; Herbst, 2020).

Secondly, incentives such as women's awards could be introduced to motivate and encourage more women into pursuing leadership positions. This would help recognize the capability of women's in leadership. This would also boost or encourage women from lower levels, to see value in leadership which will push them to work towards higher positions than remaining stagnant in lower positions. Participants revealed that these were all achievable through women empowerment workshops and seminars.

The other strategy is to assist men to work together with women so that they can realize that gender has nothing to do with one's capability to lead the nation or a community. Gender parity lessons as well as gender mainstreaming programmes should be promoted if we are serious about challenging all the patriarchal stereotypes pertaining to leadership. It is also argued that during policy formulations, it is essential to include the interest of

women by ensuring that they are present at such meetings and not use assumptions of what will suit women. All gender policies should be implemented and taught at local, regional and national levels so that the entire country knows and understands the urgency of gender mainstreaming.

6.3. Summary of the chapter

The under-representation of women in traditional leadership is mainly brought about by cultural beliefs that still view women as second-class citizens and inferior to men. Women should be encouraged to fill traditional leadership positions as they possess the skills to be more passionate and understanding of the needs of communities than most men. The chapter also details that there are few women who enjoy positions of power because they are seen as the “rightful women” who were born into power. These are the “Mufumakadzi wa dzekisos” and the “Makhadzis”. We are also told of the process where there is an erosion of the lineage of power, especially, in cases where a female is supposed to inherit chieftaincy or a position of power in the kingdom.

6.4. Limitations of the study

Numerous difficulties and obstacles were overcome in this study. The topic's sensitivity led to the researcher identifying a different location for the collection of data. The first sample of participants expressed no interest in participating. They explained that they did not trust strangers and they did not see the need for the study to be undertaken as it challenged the status quo prevalent in traditional governance. As a result, the first location was replaced with the second one which was during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants expressed discomfort with conducting interviews over the phone. The researcher added up choosing Mauluma as her location.

6.5. Recommendations

In acknowledging the findings presented in Chapter Five of this study, recommendations are made to the following stakeholders:

6.5.1. Suggestions for future researchers

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of this matter, a more extensive and comparative study of at least two or more traditional institutions of power would be helpful.

This would facilitate the creation of a thorough plan to deal with the persistent problem of women's underrepresentation in traditional leadership.

6.5.2. Recommendations for the institutions of traditional governance

The traditional leadership system should embrace democratic concepts and principles and enforce a welcoming surrounding that is sensitive to women's needs, rather than one that blocks/hinders women's participation in traditional leadership. The conflict between the Constitution and the culture should be addressed as these stifle the full participation of women in traditional leadership. There should be a proper consultation between custodians of culture and government to develop policies that address gender mainstreaming and gender parity.

Various parliamentary structures that address issues related to traditional leadership should ensure that the policies and guidelines encouraging women to participate in leadership positions are made available to all sections of our communities.

Casad and Bryant (2016) make a similar point as they encourage institutions of power to further put in place mentoring programs and policies that deliberately support women as they continue to face obstacles in their pursuit of traditional leadership roles. A well-designed training and mentoring program is the most effective method for addressing many women's fears about participating in leadership roles (Casad and Bryant, 2016).

The Cogta should make available female role models who can defend, encourage, coach, and increase the exposure and visibility of female traditional leaders. In order to assist women in achieving top positions like that of Khosikhulu, Thovhele and Magota within the institution, role models ought to be identified. Women need more support, capacity building, and role models to inspire and encourage them to pursue roles that men typically fill. The institution should also look into inclusive selection practices for both men and women, even though culture has made it seem like women do not meet the selection criteria equally nor want to be chiefs. Due to their numerous responsibilities, women should be given special consideration when deliberating the selection criteria, taking into account both their biological make-up and their position, which has been historically marginalized.

6.5.3. Suggestions for Female Traditional Leaders

Women in leadership must be seen to be encouraging a culture of inclusion and challenging the status quo rather than being co-opted into dominant power structures that are male-centred. Women who have already fought their battles in their traditional leadership roles should also advocate for the needs of other women. Women in traditional leadership should support and encourage one another rather than discourage each other in attaining traditional leadership positions. In addition, Women who participate in the selection process must recommend leadership styles favouring women.

6.5.4. Suggestions for the policymakers

Female traditional leaders should put in a lot of effort to show the community they are just as capable of leading as men. Those still having difficulty moving up the ladder should speak with relevant NGOs and other stakeholders to help them challenge the stereotypical ideas about female leadership positions. Policymakers are also encouraged to design pro-women policies; family-friendly policies should be implemented to assist women in balancing work and family life.

6.6. Contributions of the study to the existing literature

Existing research has revealed gender inequalities in traditional leadership domains. Some authors have brought to light the challenges that women experience as they want to assume the position of leadership within the institution of the traditional domain (Thobejane, 2019; Maqubela, 2020; Mogale, 2021 and Mudau, 2023); however, none of these studies have looked at the role women play in various institutions of traditional leadership as chiefs and advisors. The unfair criteria for the selection process used in traditional leadership were investigated further in this study. This was to provide some knowledge by revealing the basis of the problem that has kept females only as advisors to the chief and the impediments that have inhibited them from being recognized as leaders in traditional leadership institutions.

Additionally, this study has shown how little institutional support women receive despite their heavy burdens, such as childrearing, giving birth, and handling all family responsibilities from which they are unable to easily abstain. Unlike other studies that

have looked at specific factors that contribute to the lack of women participation in traditional leadership, this study probed the gendered nature of institutions of traditional leadership in terms of the selection process and women's full participation, as well as challenges women are faced with in the process of acquiring the position of king, chief and headman - to mention just a few.

6.7. CONCLUSION

Since the purpose of this study was to examine dynamics of women's participation in traditional leadership, it is relevant to note that participants defined gender equality in various ways. They also cited various obstacles such as patriarchal stereotypes, archaic socio-cultural belief systems and economic factors that hinder women's equal representation in the traditional leadership. Participants also made a number of suggestions on how to address gender inequalities. These include the need to have training sessions where women are orientated into becoming competent traditional leaders.

Gender equality and equity within the institution of traditional leadership have not been achieved, especially, in the community where this study was conducted. Marginalization of women based on gender in decision-making is still the norm. Women are still relegated to the margins inspite of the strides they have made both educationally and economically. The barriers that continue to deny women of their rightful place in traditional leadership should be fought on all fronts so that we can ultimately have a society that is free from gender discrimination and marginalization.

Bari (2005) argued that the creation of an enabling environment for women's full participation in traditional leadership cannot be viewed only within the boundaries of a province as it must be associated with global factors - this cannot be further from the truth. All women, irrespective of race and class, should come together to challenge the stereotypical ideas that would put them in perpetual servitude.

7. REFERENCES

Abbrey, J., Bagah, D.A. and Wulifan, J.K., (2015). The relevance of business planning document for small and medium scale enterprises in Tamale Metropolis, Northern Ghana. *Journal of Business Administration and Education*, 7(1).

Abubakar, M. and Ahmad, Z.B., (2014). Women and political participation: Toward attainment of 35% affirmative action and obstacles to the women participation in Nigerian politics and decision-making process.

Ademuson, A.O., (2016). Women domination and oppression in Nigerian society: Implications for sustainable development. *African Journal for the Psychological Studies of Social Issues*, 19(1), pp.24-36.

Age, L.J., (2011). Grounded theory methodology: Positivism, hermeneutics, and pragmatism. *Qualitative Report*, 16(6), pp.1599-1615.

Aiyedun, A. and Ordor, A., (2016). Integrating the traditional with the contemporary in dispute resolution in Africa. *Law, Democracy & Development*, 20, pp.154-173.

Alby, P., Auriol, E. and Nguimkeu, P., (2013). Social barriers to entrepreneurship in Africa: The forced mutual help hypothesis. *Unpublished manuscript, Toulouse School of Economics*.

Alesina, A and Giuliano, P., (2007). *The power of the family*. National Bureau of Economic Research. V The power of the family.VNBER working papers 13051, National Bureau of Economic Research, inc.

Alesina, A., Baqir, R. and Easterly, W., (1999). Public goods and ethnic divisions. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 114(4): 1243-1284.

Alger, I. and Weibull, J.W., (2010). Kinship, incentives, and evolution. *American Economic Review*, 100(4),1725-58.

Ali, M. and Peerlings, J., (2011). Ethnic ties in trade relationships and the impact on economic performance: The case of small-scale producers in the handloom sector in Ethiopia. *Journal of Development Studies*, 47(8), pp.1241-1260.

Alwedinani, J., (2017). Bargaining with patriarchy: Women's subject choices and patriarchal marriage norms. *International Journal of Gender and Women's Studies*, 5(2), pp.11-21.

Amadiume, I., (2015). *Male daughters, female husbands: Gender and sex in an African society*. Zed Books Ltd.

Archer, L., (2008). Younger academics' constructions of 'authenticity', 'success' and professional identity. *Studies in higher education*, 33(4), pp.385-403.

Bailey, C.A., (2006). *A guide to qualitative field research*. United States of America: Sage Publications.

Baily, J., (2012). *What happens when men get involved in feminism? Contemporary mixed-gender feminist activism in England* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Sheffield).

Baland, J.M., Bonjean, I., Guirkinger, C. and Ziparo, R., (2016). The economic consequences of mutual help in extended families. *Journal of Development Economics*, 123, pp.38-56.

Baland, J.M., Guirkinger, C. and Mali, C., (2011). Pretending to be poor: Borrowing to escape forced solidarity in Cameroon. *Economic development and cultural change*, 60(1): 1-16.

Baldwin, K., (2016). *The paradox of traditional leadership in democratic South Africa*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bari, F., (2005). Women's political participation: Issues and Challenges. In *United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women Expert Group Meeting: Enhancing Participation of Women in Development through an Enabling Environment for Achieving Gender Equality and the Advancement of Women*. Bangkok (Vol. 393).

Bates, T. and Servon, L., (2000). Viewing self-employment as a response to lack of suitable opportunities for wage work. *National Journal of Sociology* 12(2): 23-55.

Bauer, P.T. and Yamey, B.S., (1957). Economics of underdeveloped countries. *Heldref publication*.

Bayeh, E., (2016). The role of empowering women and achieving gender equality to the sustainable development of Ethiopia. *Pacific Science Review B: Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(1), pp.37-42.

Becker, M., (1999). Patriarchy and inequality: Towards a substantive feminism. *U. Chi. Legal F.*, p.21.

Bertram, C. and Christiansen, I., (2014). Understanding research. *An introduction to reading research. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.*

Besley, T., Coate, S. and Loury, G., (1993). The economics of rotating savings and credit associations. *The American Economic Review*, pp.792-810.

Bhandari, D., Bi, P., Sherchand, J.B., von Ehrenstein, O.S., Lokmic-Tomkins, Z., Dhimal, M. and Hanson-Easey, S., (2024). Climate change and infectious disease surveillance in Nepal: qualitative study exploring social, cultural, political and institutional factors influencing disease surveillance. *Journal of Public Health*, 46(1), pp.30-40.

Bloch, M., (1973). The long term and the short term: The economic and political significance of the morality of kinship. *The character of kinship*, 1, pp.75-87.

Blumberg, B., Cooper, D. & Schindler, P. (2011). *Business Research Methods*. Berkshire, UK: McGraw-Hill Education.

Bortolot, A.I., (2003). Women leaders in African history: Ana Nzinga, Queen of Ndongo. *Metropolitan Museum of Art*, October.

Botha, D. and Cronjé, F., (2015). Women in mining: A conceptual framework for gender issues in the South African mining sector. *South African Journal of Labour Relations*, 39(1), pp.10-37.

Boyd, J.P., (2001). *Chebyshev and Fourier spectral methods*. Courier Corporation.

Bryson, V., (1999). *Feminist debates: Issues of theory and political practice*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Burgoon, J.K., (2012). Privacy and communication. In *Communication yearbook 6* (pp. 206-249). Routledge.

Burns, J.S., (2016). *Patriarchy and Violence Against Women: Abrogations of Trust, Hope and Human Flourishing* (Doctoral dissertation, Georgetown University).

Busch, A. and Holst, E., (2011). *Gender-specific occupational segregation, glass ceiling effects, and earnings in managerial positions: Results of a fixed effects model* (No. 1101). DIW Discussion Papers.

Butler, J., (1990). *Awash in a sea of faith: Christianizing the American people* (Vol. 6). Harvard University Press.

Catalyst, (2004). *The bottom line: Connecting corporate performance and gender diversity*. Catalyst.

Cawe, A., (2015). *Programmatic procurement: A political economy review of the transnet freight rail competitive supplier development programme*. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (South Africa).

Chabaya, O., Rembe, S. and Wadesango, N., (2009). The persistence of gender inequality in Zimbabwe: Factors that impede the advancement of women into leadership positions in primary schools. *South African Journal of Education*, 29(2), pp.235-251.

Charles, C.Z., Dinwiddie, G. and Massey, D.S., (2004). The continuing consequences of segregation: Family stress and college academic performance. *Social Science Quarterly*, 85(5), pp.1353-1373.

Chauke, M.T., (2015). Personal names and naming practices among the Vatsonga. *The Anthropologist*, 19(1), pp.303-312.

Cheng, B., Ioannou, I. and Serafeim, G., (2014). Corporate social responsibility and access to finance. *Strategic management journal*, 35(1), pp.1-23.

Chigwata, T.C., (2018.) Decentralization in Africa and the resilience of traditional authorities: Evaluating Zimbabwe's track record. In *Decentralization, Democracy, and Development in Africa* (pp. 31-45). Routledge

Chinyakata, R. (2019). *An investigation of the vulnerability of young Zimbabwean female immigrants in Johannesburg, South Africa*. (Doctoral dissertation)

Chiteji, N.S. and Hamilton, D., (2002). Family connections and the black-white wealth gap among middle-class families. *The Review of Black Political Economy*, 30(1), pp.9-28.

Chiweshe, M.K., 2016. Wives at the Market Place: Commercialisation of Lobola and Commodification of Women's bodies in Zimbabwe. *The Oriental Anthropologist*, 16(2), pp.229-243.

Coetzee, J.M., (2018). *Giving offense: Essays on censorship*. University of Chicago Press.

Collins, P.H., (1990). Black feminist thought in the matrix of domination. *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*, 138(1990), pp.221-238.

Collins, P.H., (2015). The social construction of black feminist thought. In *Women, Knowledge, and Reality* (pp. 222-248). Routledge.

Connell, R.W. and Messerschmidt, J.W., (2005). Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept. *Gender & society*, 19(6), pp.829-859.

Cornell, J., Ratele, K. and Kessi, S., (2016). Race, gender and sexuality in student experiences of violence and resistances on a university campus. *Perspectives in Education*, 34(2), pp.97-119.

Crenshaw, K., (1991). Race, gender, and sexual harassment. *S. Cal. J. Rev.*, 65, p.1467.

Crespi, I., (2003). Gender socialization within the family: A study on adolescents and their parents in Great Britain. *Department of Sociology Catholic University of Milan*.

Cresswell, W. (1998). Diurnal and seasonal mass variation in blackbirds *Turdus merula*: consequences for mass-dependent predation risk. *Journal of Animal Ecology*, 67(1), 78-90.

Creswell, J.W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach*. United States of America: SAGE Publications, Incorporated.

Creswell, J.W. and Poth, C.N., (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage publications.

Curry, G.N., (2003). Moving beyond postdevelopment: Facilitating indigenous alternatives for “development”. *Economic Geography*, 79(4), pp.405-423.

Davis, K., (2008). Intersectionality as buzzword: A sociology of science perspective on what makes a feminist theory successful. *Feminist theory*, 9(1), pp.67-85.

De Vos, A.S., Strydom, H., Fouche, CB and Delport, CSL., (2011). *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Service Professions*, 4.

Delius, P. (2020). Chiefly Succession and Democracy in South Africa: Why History Matters. *Journal of Southern African Studies* Vol. 47, No. 2, 209–227.

Di Falco, S. and Bulte, E., (2011). A dark side of social capital? Kinship, consumption, and savings. *Journal of Development Studies*, 47(8): 1128-1151.

Dodo, O. (2013). Traditional leadership systems and gender recognition: Zimbabwe, *International journal of gender and women’s studies*, 1(1):29-44.

Dopwell, L.K.J., (2019). *The queen bee syndrome: Autoethnographic insights and educator observations: Perspectives from minority women* (Doctoral dissertation, Northwest Nazarene University).

Dosekun, S., (2021). African feminisms. *The Palgrave Handbook of African Women's Studies*, pp.47-63.

Driscoll, D.L., (2011). Introduction to primary research: Observations, surveys, and interviews. *Writing spaces: Readings on writing*, 2(2011), pp.153-174.

Du-Plooy-Cilliers, D.F., Davis. C., & Bezuidenhout, R.(2014). *Research matters*.

Eagly, A.H. and Karau, S.J., (2002). Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders. *Psychological review*, 109(3), p.573.

Elder Jr, G.H., (1987). Families and lives: Some developments in life-course studies. *Journal of Family History*, 12(1): 179-199.

Engel, R.J. and Schutt, R.K., (2016). *The practice of research in social work*. Sage Publications.

Enyew, B.E. and Mihrete, A.G., (2018). Liberal feminism: Assessing its compatibility and applicability in Ethiopia context. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 10(6), pp.59-64.

Fafchamps, M. and Lund, S., (2003). Risk-sharing networks in rural Philippines. *Journal of development Economics*, 71(2): 261-287.

Ferguson, K.E. (1999). Patriarchy. In: H. Tierney (ed.). *Women's Studies Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 2. Westport: Greenwood Publishing

Foster, A.D. and Rosenzweig, M.R., (2001). Imperfect commitment, altruism, and the family: Evidence from transfer behavior in low-income rural areas. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 83(3): 389-407.

Gatwiri, G.J. and McLaren, H.J., (2016). Discovering my own African feminism: Embarking on a journey to explore Kenyan women's oppression. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 17(4), pp.263-273.

Gerald, E.I. and Ogwuche, C.H., (2014). Educational level, sex and church affiliation on health seeking behaviour among parishioners in Makurdi metropolis of Benue state. *Journal of Educational policy and entrepreneurial research*, 1(2), pp.311-6.

Gidengil, E., O'Neill, B. and Young, L., (2010). Her mother's daughter? The influence of childhood socialization on women's political engagement. *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, 31(4), pp.334-355.

Giorgi, A. (1997). The theory, practice, and evaluation of the phenomenological method as a qualitative research procedure. *Journal of phenomenological psychology*, 28(2), 235-260

Goettner-Abendroth, H., (2018). Re-thinking 'matriarchy' in modern matriarchal studies using two examples: The Khasi and the Mosuo. *Asian Journal of Women's Studies*, 24(1), pp.3-27.

Goldkuhl, G. and Cronholm, S., (2010). Adding theoretical grounding to grounded theory: Toward multi-grounded theory. *International journal of qualitative methods*, 9(2), pp.187-205.

Gosa, T.L. and Alexander, K.L., (2007). Family (dis) advantage and the educational prospects of better off African American youth: How race still matters. *Teachers College Record*, 109(2): 285-321.

Graham, E.L., (2016). *Making the difference: Gender, personhood and theology*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Greif, A., (1993). Contract enforceability and economic institutions in early trade: The Maghribi traders' coalition. *The American economic review*, 525-548.

Grimm, M., Gubert, F., Koriko, O., Lay, J. and Nordman, C.J., (2013). Kinship ties and entrepreneurship in Western Africa. *Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship*, 26(2), pp.125-150.

Grimm, M., Hartwig, R. and Lay, J., (2017). Does forced solidarity hamper investment in small and micro enterprises? *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 45(4), pp.827-846.

Grinnell Jr, R.M. and Unrau, Y.A., (2010). *Social work research and evaluation: Foundations of evidence-based practice*. Oxford University Press.

Guba, E.G. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. *Handbook of Qualitative Research* 2(163-194): 105.

Hagestad, G.O., (1990). Social perspectives on the life course. *Handbook of aging and the social sciences*, 3, 151-168.

Handayani, S.O.I. and Candraningrum, P.D., (2018). *Oppression to Women in Shirley Conran's Crimson Novel (1992): a feminist literary criticism* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta).

Hansen, K.V. and Garey, A.I. eds., (1998). *Families in the US: Kinship and domestic politics*. Temple University Press.

Hareven, T.K. ed., (1996). *Aging and generational relations: Life-course and cross-cultural perspectives*. Transaction Publishers.

Harries, P., Mbenga, B. and Etherington, N., (2010). From colonial hegemonies to imperial conquest, 1840-1880. Cambridge University Press 1, 319-391

Harris, M., (1989). *Cows, pigs, wars, & witches: the riddles of culture*. Vintage Press.

Hart, C., (2018). *Doing a literature review: Releasing the research imaginati*. Sage Publications Ltd.

Hassim, S., (2009). *Rethinking gender politics in a liberal age: Institutions, constituencies and equality in comparative perspective*. United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD).

Heath, H. and Cowley, S., (2004). Developing a grounded theory approach: a comparison of Glaser and Strauss. *International journal of nursing studies*, 41(2), pp.141-150.

Hwang, K.K., (1999). Filial piety and loyalty: Two types of social identification in Confucianism. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 2(1), 163-183.

Hwang, S. and Satchell, S.E., (1999). Modelling emerging market risk premia using higher moments. *International Journal of Finance & Economics*, 4(4), pp.271-296.

Ibeku, I. A. (2015). Adichie's purple Hibiscus and the issues of Feminism in African Novel. *Journal of literature and African Studies*, 5 (6): 426-437.

Inglehart, R. and Norris, P., (2003). *Rising tide: Gender equality and cultural change around the world*. Cambridge University Press.

Inman, A.G., (2020). Culture and positionality: Academy and mentorship. *Women & Therapy*, 43(1-2), pp.112-124.

Jaiyeola, E.O., (2020). Patriarchy and colonization: The" brooder house" for gender inequality in Nigeria.

Jakiela, P. and Ozier, O., (2010). Risky Investments in Village Economies.

Jakiela, P. and Ozier, O.W., (2012). Does Africa need a rotten kin theorem? Experimental evidence from village economies. *Experimental Evidence from Village Economies (June 1, 2012)*. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper, (6085).

Jakiela, P. and Ozier, O., (2016). Does Africa need a rotten kin theorem? Experimental evidence from village economies. *The Review of Economic Studies* 83(1), 231–68.

Jakobsh, D.R., (2004). Barriers to women's leadership. *Encyclopedia of leadership*, pp.77-81.

Janssens, W., (2006). Social Capital and Cooperation. An Impact Evaluation of a Women's Empowerment Programme in Rural India. *Thesis, Tinbergen Institute Research Series No. 401*.

Jasper, M.A., (1994). Issues in phenomenology for researchers of nursing. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 19(2), 309-314.

Javid, A., (2020). Behind closed doors: hegemonic masculinities, romantic love and sexual violence in gay relationships. In *Men, Masculinities and Intimate Partner Violence*. (pp. 97-111). Routledge.

Johnson, M.H., (2018). *Essential reproduction*. John Wiley & Sons.

Joseph, R., (2020). Toward a pragmatic understanding of Rawls' social justice theory in social work: A critical evaluation. *Journal of Human Rights and Social Work*, 5(3), pp.147-156.

Kabeer, N., (2021). Gender equality, inclusive growth, and labour markets. *Women's Economic Empowerment: Insights from Africa and South Asia*, pp.13-48

Kabir, S.M.S., (2016). Basic guidelines for research. *An introductory approach for all disciplines*, 4(2), pp.168-180.

Kaboub, F., (2008). Positivist paradigm. *Encyclopaedia of counselling*, 2(2), p.343.

Kadaga, R. (2013). June. Women's political leadership in East Africa with specific reference to Uganda. In *Commonwealth Local Governance Forum (Ed.). Commonwealth governance handbook* (Vol. 2014, pp. 32-36).

Kalil, A. and Wightman, P., (2011). Parental Job Loss and Children's Educational Attainment in Black and White Middle-Class Families. *Social Science Quarterly*, 92(1): 57-78.

Kazi, M., (2003). An introduction to scientific realist evaluation. *British Journal of Social Work* 33(6), 803-818.

Kelly, J.E., (2015). Bantu authorities and betterment in Natal: The ambiguous responses of chiefs and regents, 1955–1970. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 41(2), pp.273-297.

Keulder, C., (2010). Traditional leaders: State, society and democracy. *A reader in Namibian politics*, pp.150-70.

Khan, A., Khan, I.U. and Ahmad, M., (2019). The Impact of Patriarchy on Female Quality of Life in Tribal Areas. *Pakistan Journal of Society, Education and Language (PJSEL)*, 5(2), pp.106-119.

Kibuacha, F., (2021). How to determine sample size for a research study. *GeoPoll*.

Kircherr, J. and Charles, K. (2018). Enhancing the sample diversity of snowball sample: Recommendations from a research project on anto-dam movement in SouthEast Asia. *PloS one* 13(8), p.e0201710.

Kothari, C.R., (2004). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques*. New Delhi: New Age International.

Lee, A.S. and Baskerville, R.L., (2003). Generalizing generalizability in information systems research. *Information Systems Research* 14(3): 221-243.

Leedy, P. D. and Ormrod, J. E., (2010). *Practical Research: Planning and Design* (9th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson

Lewis, R. B., (2004). NVivo 2.0 and ATLAS. ti 5.0: A comparative review of two popular qualitative data-analysis programs. *Field Methods*, 16: 439-464.

Lewis, S., (2015). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches. *Health Promotion Practice* 16(4): 473-475.

Löhr, K., Weinhardt, M. and Sieber, S., (2020). The “World Café” as a participatory method for collecting qualitative data. *International journal of qualitative methods*, 19, p.1609406920916976.

Lombardo, E. and Meier, P., (2008). Framing gender equality in the European Union political discourse. *Social Politics*, 15(1), pp.101-129.

Luyts, J.J.G., (2016). When feminist standpoint epistemology and participatory research meet: towards knowledges that are more power-aware and inclusive. (Master's thesis).

Mafela, M.J., (2019). Intercultural Conflict and Traditional Leadership in the Indigenous Communities of South Africa. *Intercultural Communication Studies* 28(1): 36-46

Magubane, N.N., (2016). Black Tax: The emerging middle-class reality. *MBA dissertation, Gordon Institute of Business Science*, University of Pretoria.

Mamabolo, S., (2009). Research design and methodology. SA: UNISA.

Mangoma, A. and Wilson-Prangle, A., (2018). Black Tax: Understanding the financial transfers of the emerging black middle class. *Development Southern Africa*: 1-18.

Maponya, F., (2019). Mphephu royal family accepts court ruling. Sowetan live. 15 May 2019. Viewed 17 August 2021, <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2019-05-15-mphephu-royal-family-accepts-court-ruling/>.

Maqubela, L., (2013). The relationship between friendship quality, masculinity ideology and happiness in men's friendship (master's thesis, University of Cape Town).

Maqubela, L.N., Ndanduleni, D.H. and Nishimwe-Niyimbanira, R., (2020). Destabilising masculinities: perceptions on the gendered division of labour in the mining sector in Phalaborwa, Limpopo Province. *Ife Centre for Psychological Studies/Services. PO Box 1548, Ile-Ife Osun State, Nigeria, 18(4)*, p.16944.

Marshall, C. and Rossman, G. B. (1995). *Designing qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Martin, P. and Barnard, A., (2013). The experience of women in male-dominated occupations: A constructivist grounded theory inquiry. *SA Journal of industrial psychology, 39(2)*, pp.1-12.

Martiskainen, M., (2017). The role of community leadership in the development of grassroots innovations. *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions, 22*: 78–89.

Matentjie, T., (2017). The educational motivations and strategies of black middle-class parents in predominantly white schools in post-apartheid South Africa (Doctoral dissertation, University of the Free State).

Mathunjwa, Z., (2017). Black Tax: Two sides of one coin. Retrieved from https://www.huffingtonpost.co.za/zimkhitha-mvandaba/black-tax-two-sides-of-one-coin_a_23009741/ Accessed 20 September 2021.

Matshidze, P.E., (2013). The role of Makhadzi in traditional leadership among the Venda', Unpublished Doctoral thesis, University of Zululand, Kwa Dlangezwa.

Matshidze, P.E. and Mulaudzi, T.P., (2016) Investigating the Role of Modern Practices on Women's Rites of Passage among the Vhavenda in Vhembe District, Limpopo. *The Oriental Anthropologist, 16(2)*, pp.291-302.

Matshidze, P.E., (2013). The role of Makhadzi in traditional leadership among the Venda (Doctoral dissertation, University of Zululand).

Matsumoto, D., (2007). Culture, context, and behavior. *Journal of personality*, 75(6), pp.1285-1320

Matuku, S. and Kaseke, E., (2014). The role of stokvels in improving people's lives: The case in orange farm, Johannesburg, South Africa. *Social Work* 50(4): 504-515.

Matwetwe, H.N., (2016). Principles and Strategies for Reaching and Discipling Nomads: A Case Study of the Pokot of East Africa. *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies*, 12(2), pp.290-300.

Mbabvu, D., (2017). Political socialisation and its implications within a rural setting in South Africa: a case study of Calais village in Limpopo Province. Pretoria: (UNISA) University of South Africa.

Mbuzo, S., (2018). The conversation around black tax. Retrieved from <https://www.careersportal.co.za/news/the-conversation-around-black-tax> Accessed 20 September 2021.

Mehta, C.M. and Dementieva, Y., (2017). The contextual specificity of gender: Femininity and masculinity in college students' same-and other-gender peer contexts. *Sex Roles*, 76, pp.604-614.

Messerschmidt, J.W. and Messner, M.A., (2018). Hegemonic, nonhegemonic, and "new" masculinities. *Gender reckonings: New social theory and research*, pp.35-56.

Mhlungu, G. (2015). Black tax is not real. Retrieved from City Press: <http://citypress.news24.com/Voices/Black-tax-is-not-real-20150508> Accessed 7 August 2021.

Miller-Cribbs, J.E. and Farber, N.B., (2008). Kin networks and poverty among African Americans: Past and present. *Social Work*, 53(1), 43-51.

Misafi, H. P., (2014). Women's participation in decentralized local governance: the case of pastoral and non-pastoral women in Kondoa local authority, Tanzania. *Afrika Focus*, 27(2), 87-97. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1163/2031356X-02702006>.

Misra, J., Curington, C.V. and Green, V.M., (2021). Methods of intersectional research. *Sociological spectrum*, 41(1), pp.9-28.

Mmusinyane, B., (2009). The role of traditional authorities in developing customary laws in accordance with the constitution: Shilubana and others v Nwamitwa 2008 9 BCLR 914 (CC). *Potchefstroom Electronic Review* 12: 136-161.

Moodly, A. and Toni, N.M., (2017). Accessing higher education leadership: Towards a framework for women's professional development. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 31(3), pp.138-153.

Mophosho, B.O., (2013). Identity Construction of Black South African Female Students. (Doctral dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Faculty of Humanities, School of Human and Community Development).

Morrell, R., (2001). Corporal punishment and masculinity in South African schools. *Men and masculinities*, 4(2), pp.140-157.

Morrison, A.M., (1992). *New solutions to the same old glass ceiling. Women in Management Review*, 7(4).

Dabhi, J.C., Bharati, K. and Vartha, S., (2023). *Functioning of Tribal Political Structures: A Study of Tribal Self-Governance and Panchayats in Selected Villages of South Gujarat*.

Moyo, N.F., (2019). Enhancing resilience of women to hazards through mainstreaming gender into Disaster Risk Reduction policies in Botswana. North west: North west University (South Africa)

Moyo, Z. and Perumal, J., (2020). A systematic review of research on women leading and managing education in Zimbabwe. *Gender and Behaviour*, 18(2), pp.15688-15697.

Mtelera, P., (2013). *Exploring barriers to citizen participation in development: a case study of a participatory broadcasting project in rural Malawi*. Core. ac. uk

Mwandiambira, N., (2015). The importance of saving. Retrieved from https://www.savingsinstitute.co.za/campaign_archives/SavingsMonth2015/The%20Importance%20of%20Saving.pdf. Accessed 15 July 2021.

Myers, J.C., (2008). *Indirect Rule in South Africa: tradition, modernity, and the costuming of political power* (Vol. 33). University Rochester Press.

Myers, R.H., Montgomery, D.C. and Anderson-Cook, C., (2009). *Response Surface Methodology, Hoboken*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Neckerman, K. M., Carter, P. and Lee, J., (1999). Segmented assimilation and minority cultures of mobility. *Ethnic and racial studies*, 22(6): 945-965.

Nemutandani, V., (2017). The experiences of social workers in the implementation of the community development strategy in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, RSA (Doctoral dissertation, University of Limpopo).

Nethengwe, G.T., (2005). *The Study of Chieftainship: A Case of Tshivenda Lore* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Limpopo).

Neuman, W.R. and Guggenheim, L., (2011). The evolution of media effects theory: A six-stage model of cumulative research. *Communication Theory*, 21(2), pp.169-196.

Ngwadla, X., (2014). An operational framework for equity in the 2015 agreement. *Climate Policy* 14(1): 8-16

Nillesen, E.E.M., Beekman, G. and Gatto, M., (2011). Kinship Networks and Investment in post-war Liberia. *Unpublished Manuscript*.

Nkosi, S., (2011). *Lobola: Black students' perceptions of its role on gender power dynamics*. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Witwatersrand.

Nt'sekhe, R., (2017). The burden of 'Black Tax'. Daily Maverick Opinionista, 13 April. Retrieved from https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2017-04-13-the-burden-of-black-tax/#.WS_oXGh97IU. Accessed 8 July 2017.

Ntlama, N., (2020). The changing identity on succession to chieftaincy in the institution of traditional leadership: *Mphephu v Mphephu-Ramabulana* (948/17)[2019] ZASCA 58. *Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal/Potchefstroomse Elektroniese Regsblad*, 23(1).

Ntsebeza, L., (2003). Traditional authorities, local government and land rights. *Grassroots governance*, pp.173-226.

Ntsika., (1998). State of small business in South Africa. Pretoria: *Ntsika Enterprise Promotion Agency*.

Onsander, S., (2006). Swedish development cooperation through Swedish and local NGOs. *Perspectives*, (7).

Owuor, P., (2018). Effects of Transformational Leadership Style on Organisational Performance in Kenya: A case study of Kenya breweries limited. MUA

Pallock, L.L. and Lamborn, S.D., (2006). Beyond parenting practices: Extended kinship support and the academic adjustment of African-American and European-American teens. *Journal of Adolescence*, 29(5), 813-828.

Pankhurst, D. ed., (2012). *Gendered peace: women's struggles for post-war justice and reconciliation*. Routledge.

Paustian-Underdahl, S.C., Walker, L.S. and Woehr, D.J., (2014). Gender and perceptions of leadership effectiveness: A meta-analysis of contextual moderators. *Journal of applied psychology*, 99(6), p.1129.

Pérez-Martínez, V., Marcos-Marcos, J., Cerdán-Torregrosa, A., Briones-Vozmediano, E., Sanz-Barbero, B., Davó-Blanes, M., Daoud, N., Edwards, C., Salazar, M., La Parra-Casado, D. and Vives-Cases, C., (2023). Positive masculinities and gender-based

violence educational interventions among young people: a systematic review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 24(2), pp.468-486.

Périlleux, A. and Szafarz, A., (2015). Women leaders and social performance: evidence from financial cooperatives in Senegal. *World Development*, 74, pp.437-452.

Perré, Y., Wauters, A.M. and Richard-Yris, M.A., (2002). Influence of mothering on emotional and social reactivity of domestic pullets. *Applied animal behaviour science*, 75(2), pp.133-146.

Perumal, J. and Moyo, Z., (2019). Disadvantaged school contexts and female school leadership in Zimbabwe. *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies*, 14(1), pp.83-105.

Peters, K., Morgenroth, T. and Michelle, K., (2015). The Motivational Theory of Role Modelling: how Role Models influence Role Aspirants' goals.

Phaswana, N.S., (2000). *Marital problems in religiously mixed marriages amongst the Vhavenda people of South Africa: An African-Christian perspective* (Doctoral dissertation).

Planting, S., (2013). The blackmiddleclass burden. Moneyweb, 28 November. Retrieved from [https:// www.moneyweb.co.za/archive/the-black-middle-class-burden/](https://www.moneyweb.co.za/archive/the-black-middle-class-burden/). Accessed 9 November 2018.

Platteau, J., (2000). *Institutions, Social Norms, and Economic Development*. SAGE JOURNALS

Platteau, J.P. (2006). Solidarity norms and institutions in village societies: Static and dynamic considerations. *Handbook of the economics of giving, altruism and reciprocity* 1: 819-886.

Plowman, D.A., Solansky, S., Beck, T.E., Baker, L., Kulkarni, M. and Travis, D.V., (2007). The role of leadership in emergent, self-organization. *The leadership quarterly*, 18(4), pp.341-356.

Pollack, J. (2006). Pyramids or Silos: Alternative Representations of the Systems Thinking Paradigms. *Systemic Practice and Action Research* 19(4): 383-398.

Rajasekar, S., Philominathan, P. and Chinnathambi. (2013). Research methodology. Retrieved from <http://arxiv.org/abs/physics/0601009>. Accessed 9 August 2021

Ratlebjane, M. (2015). Notitle. Mail & Guardian, 30 October. Retrieved from <https://mg.co.za/article/2015-10-29-how-black-tax-cripples-our-youths-aspirations>. Accessed 8 August 2021.

Reeser, T.W., (2023). *Masculinities in theory: An introduction*. John Wiley & Sons.

Reeves, T.C. and Hedberg, J.G., (2003). *Interactive learning systems evaluation*. United States of America: Educational Technology.

Renzetti, C.M., (2018). Feminist perspectives. In *Routledge Handbook of critical criminology* (pp. 74-82). Routledge.

Richter, L. and Morrell, R., (2006). Baba: men and fatherhood in South Africa. *HSRC Press*

Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., Nicholls, C. M. and Ormston, R., (2013). *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*. Sage.

Roy, S., (2015). Empowering women? Inheritance rights, female education and dowry payments in India. *Journal of Development Economics*, 114, pp.233-251.

Rugege, S., (2003). Traditional leadership and its future role in local governance. *Law, Democracy & Development*, 7(2), pp.171-200.

Ruiz, F.J., (2010). A review of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) empirical evidence: Correlational, experimental psychopathology, component and outcome studies. *International Journal of Psychology and Psychological Therapy*, 10(1), pp.125-162.

Sambo, A.R., (2020). *Evaluating the Beijing Declaration: An Analysis of the Effects of Discourses, Agendas, and Aid on Women's Equality and Empowerment*. The University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Scannapieco, M. and Jackson, S., (1996). Kinship care: The African American response to family preservation. *Social Work*, 41(2), 190-196.

Sequeira, J.M. and Rasheed, A.A., (2006). Start-up and growth of immigrant small businesses: the impact of social and human capital. *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship* 11(04): 357-375.

Skade, L.J., (2018). *Educational psychology practice and domestic abuse: an exploratory mixed methods web survey* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nottingham).

Sobh, R. and Perry, C., (2006). Research design and data analysis in realism research. *European Journal of Marketing* 40(11/12): 1194-1209.

Spark, C. and Corbett, J., (2018). Emerging women leaders' views on political participation in Melanesia. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 20:2, 221-235, DOI: 10.1080/14616742.2016.1189680.

Srivastava, A. and Thomson, S.B., (2009). Framework analysis: a qualitative methodology for applied policy research. *Journal of Administration and Governance*.

Stahl, B.C., (2007). Positivism or non-positivism—tertium non datur: A critique of ontological syncretism in IS research. In *Ontologies: A handbook of principles, concepts and applications in information systems* (pp. 115-142). Boston, MA: Springer US.

Stamarski, C.S. and Son Hing, L.S., (2015). Gender inequalities in the workplace: the effects of organizational structures, processes, practices, and decision makers' sexism. *Frontiers in psychology*, 6, p.1400.

Stamarski, C.S. and Son Hing, L.S., (2015). Gender inequalities in the workplace: the effects of organizational structures, processes, practices, and decision makers' sexism. *Frontiers in psychology*, 6, p.135488.

Staunæs, D., (2003). Where have all the subjects gone? Bringing together the concepts of intersectionality and subjectification. *NORA: Nordic journal of women's studies*, 11(2), pp.101-110.

Stewart, P, L., (2015) You Moved Up, you forget Us?: The Influence of African American Intra-Familial Social Mobility on Extended Family Relationships. *Journal of African American Studies*, 19, pp.214-232.

Sultana, A.M., (2010). Patriarchy and women's gender ideology: A socio-cultural perspective. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(1), pp.123-126.

Tezler, R., (1992). Small scale industry's contribution to economic development. *Gender, Small Scale Industry and Development Policy*, IT Publications, London, 24-32

The Constitution of Republic of South Africa (1996). Chapter 9

Thomas, A., Menon, A., Boruff, J., Rodriguez, A.M. and Ahmed, S., (2014). Applications of social constructivist learning theories in knowledge translation for healthcare professionals: a scoping review. *Implementation Science*, 9, pp.1-20.

Tustin, D.H., Ligthelm, A.A., Martins, J.H., and Van-Wyk, H.D.J., (2010). *Marketing research: in practice*. 1st ed. Pretoria: Business Print.

Tuval-Mashiach, R., (2021). Is replication relevant for qualitative research? *Qualitative Psychology*, 8(3), p.365.

Tyagi, N., (2021). Stumbling blocks in battered women access to justice: gender inequities, violence, and economic marginalization. *Women, Matrimonial Litigation and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Transforming Indian Justice Delivery System for Achieving Gender Justice*, pp.167-216.

Udry, C., (1994). Risk and insurance in a rural credit market: An empirical investigation in northern Nigeria. *The Review of Economic Studies* 61(3): 495-526.

Van der Watt, J.S., (2007). *Images of men and masculinities within cultural contexts: A pastoral assessment* (Doctoral dissertation, Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University).

Van Rijn, F., Bulte, E. and Adekunle, A., (2012). Social capital and agricultural innovation in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Agricultural Systems*, 108, pp.112-122.

Vincent, C., Rollock, N., Ball, S. and Gillborn, D., (2013). Raising middle-class black children: Parenting priorities, actions and strategies. *Sociology*, 47(3), pp.427-442.

Walkerline, V., (1989). Femininity as performance. *Oxford Review of Education*, 15(3), pp.267-279.

Wheary, J., (2006). The future middle class: African Americans, Latinos, and economic opportunity. *New York: Demos: A Network for Ideas and Action*.

Wiid, J. and Diggins, C., (2013). *Marketing Research*. 2nd ed. Cape Town: Juta and Company Ltd.

Wilson, K., (2015). Towards a radical re-appropriation: Gender, development and neoliberal feminism. *Development and change*, 46(4), pp.803-832.

Wolpe, H., (1972). Capitalism and cheap labor-power in South Africa: from segregation to apartheid. *Economy and Society* 1(4): 425-45.

Zohrabi, M., (2013). Mixed method research: Instruments, validity, reliability and reporting findings. *Theory and practice in language studies*, 3(2), pp.254-262.

APPENDIX 2: CONSENT FORM

Institute for Gender and Youth Studies



**Informed consent for participation in an academic
research study entitled:**

**Title of the research: The dynamics of woman participation in traditional
leadership
among Vhavenda in Limpopo Province, South Africa**

Research conducted by: **Mulaudzi Tshilidzi Patrecia**

Contact details: Cell: 072 4869 177 email: Patrecia.mulaudzi@univen.ac.za

Dear Respondent

You are invited to participate in an academic research to be conducted by Mulaudzi Tshilidzi Patrecia from the Institute for Gender and Youth Studies at University of Venda (UNIVEN). This study has received approval from the School of Human Social Sciences as well as the Institute for Gender and Youth Studies at Univen. The purpose of the study is to assess if women are being given an equal chance as men to participate in leadership in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, South Africa.

Please note the following:

- This study involves responding to questions, in an interview guide, about the participation of women in traditional leadership. Names will not appear in the

findings and the answers given will be treated as strictly confidential. You cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give.

- Your participation in this study is very important to us. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.
- Please answer the questions as honestly as possible. The interview may take 30 to 60 minutes of your time.
- The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and may be published in an academic journal. We will provide you with a summary of our findings on request.
- Please contact my promoters, **Prof Thobejane and Adv. Dr P Matshidze**, if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

Please sign the form to indicate that:

- You have read and understand the information provided above.
- You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

Respondent's signature

Date

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Institute for Gender and Youth Studies

This interview guide is for the collection of data for the study entitled - ***The dynamics of women participation in traditional leadership among Vhavenda in Limpopo province, South Africa.***

Research conducted by: **Mulaudzi Tshilidzi Patrecia**

Student No: **9615045**

Contact details: Mobile 0724869177

Email: **Patrecia.mulaudzi@univen.ac.za**

GUIDELINES FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

Your assistance and participation in this interview will be appreciated.

- The researcher is committed to uphold ethical values and will adhere to ethical principles as they apply to academic research projects in institutions of higher education in South Africa.
- Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw whenever you no longer want to participate.
- Participant's responses will be treated in the strictest confidence; anonymity will be guaranteed.

INSTRUCTIONS- There are no **RIGHT** or **WRONG** answers. Just be honest about your own perception and give as much detail as possible when you respond to the questions in this interview guide.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

This section of the interview guide is to be used to solicit biographical information. Although we are aware of the sensitivity of the questions in this section, the data you will provide will enable us to get a clear understanding of what is happening in traditional leadership.

Please answer the following questions by putting a **(x)** in the **relevant block**.

1. Gender

Male	
Female	

2. Age

18-25	
26-35	
36-45	
46 and above	

3. Marital Status

Single	
Married	
Divorced	
Other	

4. Status within the royal/ tribal council

Member of royal council	
------------------------------------	--

Member of traditional council	
Official from department	

SECTION B

This section explores your views on the participation of women in traditional leadership. Open-ended questions are used to find your perceptions.

5 What do you understand by the concept “gender equality”?

.....
.....

6. How are women in leadership perceived by people in your community?

.....
.....

7. Do you think it is appropriate for women to take part in traditional leadership?

Yes/ No

Explain your answer.

.....
.....

8. Do you think there is equal representation of women in traditional leadership positions?

Yes/No

Explain your answer

.....
.....

9. Is there any procedure followed by the *Vhavenda* when selecting traditional leaders?

Yes/No

If yes, explain the procedure.

.....

.....

10. Who forms part of the selection process? Give reasons why these people should form part of the selection process.

Vhomakhadzi	
Vhokhotsimunene (uncle)	
Any member from the royal council	
Any member from the traditional council	
Officials from the Department	
Other	

10. Who has a final say in the selection process?

Vhomakhadzi	
Vhokhotsimunene	
Royal council	
Official from department	

Other	

Do you think the selection procedure is fair to both male and female potential traditional leaders?

Explain your answer

.....
.....

11. What is the role played by the official from the Department of Local Government and Traditional Affairs in the selection process?

.....
.....

12. In case there is a dispute during the selection process, what role does the official from the Department of Local Government and Traditional Affairs play in solving the dispute?

.....
.....

13. Since the new political dispensation in 1994, is culture supporting or undermining the participation of women in traditional leadership? Do you think women who contest for traditional leadership positions are threatened or discouraged from contesting against male contestants? Explain your answer.

.....
.....

14. Which factors do you think contribute to the undermining and disregard of women for traditional leadership? Explain your answer.

.....
.....

15. What are the attitudes of women towards traditional leadership?

.....
.....

16. Are women less likely than men to be interested in traditional leadership and to run for office?

Yes/No

Explain.

.....
.....

17. Do you think patriarchy (rule by men) is the only main contributory factor to the undermining of woman for a traditional leadership positions?

Yes/No

Explain your answer.

.....
...
.....
...

18. Do you think women are not capable of taking up influential and challenging positions like traditional leadership?

Yes/No

Explain your answer.

.....
.....

19. Do you think there gender equality these days when it comes to the election of traditional leaders?

Yes/ No

Explain your answer

.....
.....

20. Women’s active participation in positions of influence, in traditional leadership is an added advantage to societies.

Yes/ No

Explain your answer.

.....
.....

21. What are the challenges faced by women in traditional leadership?

Explain your answer

.....
.....

SECTION C: QUESTIONS ON POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

This section needs to get your perspective / understanding on how effective are the various gender policies / tools that have been implemented on achieving women’s equal participation in traditional leadership positions.

22. Do you know of any international gender tool(s) that support gender equality from the list below?

International Gender Tool	Yes	No
Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against Women (CEDAW)		
Beijing Platform for Action		

Quota System		
--------------	--	--

If yes, to any of the tool(s) please, justify and indicate how it supports women’s representation and participation in decision-making and leadership issues.

.....
.....

23. Do you know of any national gender tool(s) that advocate for gender equality from the list below?

National Gender Tool	Yes	No
South African Constitution		
The Equity Act		
Traditional Leadership and Government Framework Act		

If yes, to any of the tool(s), please, justify and indicate how it supports women’s representation and participation in decision-making and traditional leadership issues.

.....
.....

24. Which strategies can be used to promote representation and full participation of women in traditional leadership?

.....
.....

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ESTIMATED BUDGET FOR THE RESEARCH STUDY

ITEM	QUANTITY	RAND/ UNIT	AMOUNT (RAND)
<u>LANGUAGE EDITING</u>			
Proof reading for proposal	40 pages	R40 per page	R1,600
Proof reading for finished research	250 pages	R40 per page	R21,000
Total for language editing			R15,600
<u>DATA COLLECTION</u>			
Data collection assistants	2	R2350	R4700
Tape recorder	1	R1500	R1500
Cassettes	2	R150 x 2	R300
Exam pad	10	R40 x 10	R400
Black pen	10	R15 x 10	R150
Total for Data collection assistants			R7,050
<u>DATA CODING AND ANALYSIS</u>			
Data coding analysis by a qualitative specialist	1	R7000	R7000
Total for data coding and analysis			R8000
<u>SUBSISTENCE AND TRAVELLING</u>			
Traveling expenses for researcher: Trip from Univen to Tshaulu and return for pilot study.	46km x 2 = 92km	3.61/km	R332.12
Traveling expenses for researcher: Trip from Univen to Polokwane for pilot study and return.	175km x 2 = 350 km	3.61/km	R1,263.30
Traveling expenses for researcher: Trip from Univen to Dzanani for pilot study and return.	43km x 2 = 86km	3.61/km	R310.46

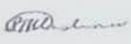


Traveling expenses for researcher: Trip to Univen from Tshaulu for data collection.	46km x 2 = 92km	3.61/km	R332.12
Traveling expenses for researcher: Trip from Univen to Polokwane for data collection.	175km x 2 = 350 km	3.61/km	R1,263.30
Traveling expenses for researcher: Trip from Univen to Dzanani for data collection.	43km x 2 = 86km	3.61/km	R310.46
Accommodation: researcher	14 days	R600/day	R8400
Accommodation: 2 research assistants	14 days	R600/day	R16800
Catering for 1 researcher and 2 research assistants	14 days	R300/day	R4200
Subtotal for subsistence and travelling			R32,258.72
<u>BINDING</u>			
Spiral binding	6	6 x R150	R900
Hard copy binding	6	6 x R350	R2100
Binding total			R3000
<u>PRINTING</u>			
Printing of copies for spiral binding	6 copies of 250 pages	R70x6	R420
Printing of final research for hard copy binding	6 copies of 250 pages each	R300x6	R1,800
Total of printing			R15000
Grand total for the whole research			R74,771.31

STUDY PLAN (The dynamics of women participation in traditional leadership among *Vhavenda* in Limpopo Province, South Africa.)

TIME FRAME	ACTIVITIES
-------------------	-------------------

March 2020	Waiting for ethical clearance from university higher degree committee
April -May 2020	Refining the research instrument and starting with field work for data collection
June -September 2020	Continuing with fieldwork.
October 2020	Consultation with promoters and submitting the chapter on data presentation, analysis and interpretation
November 2020	Working on corrections from promoters and writing a concluding chapter on recommendations and conclusion on the entire study
December 2020	Consultation with promoters and submitting the last chapter
January 2021	Working on corrections from promoters on the last chapter and proofreading the entire thesis
February 2021	Working on corrections
March 2021	Consultation with promoters
March and April 2021	Writing an article from one of the objectives

Ethical clearance certificate

<p>ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE</p>	<p>RESEARCH AND INNOVATION OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR</p>															
<p>NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR: Ms TP Mulaudzi</p>																
<p>STUDENT NO: 9615045</p>																
<p>PROJECT TITLE: The dynamics of women participation in traditional leadership among Vhavenda in Limpopo Province, South Africa.</p>																
<p>PROJECT NO: SHSS/20/GYS/01/0818</p>																
<p>SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS</p>																
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 30%;">NAME</th> <th style="width: 40%;">INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT</th> <th style="width: 30%;">ROLE</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Dr NR Raselekoane</td> <td>University of Venda</td> <td>Promoter</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prof TD Thobejane</td> <td>University of Venda</td> <td>Co - Promoter</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dr PE Matshidze</td> <td>University of Venda</td> <td>Co - Promoter</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ms TP Mulaudzi</td> <td>University of Venda</td> <td>Investigator - Student</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE	Dr NR Raselekoane	University of Venda	Promoter	Prof TD Thobejane	University of Venda	Co - Promoter	Dr PE Matshidze	University of Venda	Co - Promoter	Ms TP Mulaudzi	University of Venda	Investigator - Student
NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE														
Dr NR Raselekoane	University of Venda	Promoter														
Prof TD Thobejane	University of Venda	Co - Promoter														
Dr PE Matshidze	University of Venda	Co - Promoter														
Ms TP Mulaudzi	University of Venda	Investigator - Student														
<p>Type: Doctoral Research Risk: Minimal risk to humans, animals or environment Approval Period: August 2020 - August 2023</p>																
<p>The Research Ethics Social Sciences Committee (RESSC) hereby approves your project as indicated above.</p>																
<p>General Conditions While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project leader (principal investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the REC. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project - Within 48hrs in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project. - Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit. - The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the REC. Would there be deviation from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited. - The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date; a new application must be made to the REC and new approval received before or on the expiry date. - In the interest of ethical responsibility, the REC retains the right to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project, - To ask further questions; Seek additional information; Require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process. - withdraw or postpone approval if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected, - It becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the REC or that information has been false or misrepresented, - The required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately, - New institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary 																
<p>ISSUED BY: UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE Date Considered: July 2020</p>																
<p>Name of the RESSC Chairperson of the Committee: Prof Takalani Mashau</p>																
<p>Signature: </p> <p>Director Research and Innovation</p> <p>Signature: </p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"> <p>UNIVERSITY OF VENDA OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION</p> <p>2020-08-13</p> <p>Private Bag 35050 Thohoyandou 0950</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>UNIVERSITY OF VENDA OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION</p> <p>2020-08-13</p> <p>Private Bag 35050 Thohoyandou 0950</p>														
<p>UNIVERSITY OF VENDA OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION</p> <p>2020-08-13</p> <p>Private Bag 35050 Thohoyandou 0950</p>																
 <p>University of Venda PRIVATE BAG 35050, THOHOYANDOU, 0950, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA TELEPHONE: 015 328 54111 FAX: 015 328 54110 "A quality driven, financially sustainable, north-based Comprehensive University"</p>																

Turtitin Report

MULAUDZI TP THESIS

ORIGINALITY REPORT

15%	14%	5%	6%
SIMILARITY IN DEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	univendspace.univen.ac.za Internet Source	4%
2	Submitted to University of Venda Student Paper	1%
3	hdl.handle.net Internet Source	1%
4	uzspace.unizulu.ac.za:8080 Internet Source	<1%
5	researchspace.ukzn.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
6	wrap.warwick.ac.uk Internet Source	<1%
7	m.moam.info Internet Source	<1%
8	repository.nwu.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
9	uir.unisa.ac.za Internet Source	<1%