

"As the candidate's supervisor I agree/do not agree to the submission of this thesis."

**The Experiences of
Women Leaders in the
South African Democratic
Teachers' Union (SADTU)**

The Experiences of Women Leaders in the South
African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU)

by

Shermain Mannah

A thesis submitted in the fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of

Doctorate in Education

In the Faculty of Education

University of KwaZulu-Natal

2008

Durban, South Africa

Main Supervisor: Prof. Michael Samuel

Co-Supervisor: Dr Devarakshanam Govinden

DECLARATION

I Shermain Mannah declare that

- (i) The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.
- (ii) This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- (iii) This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
- (iv) This thesis does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted, then:
 - a) Their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced;
 - b) Where their exact words have been used, their writing has been placed inside quotation marks, and referenced.
- (v) Where I have reproduced a publication of which I am author, co-author or editor, I have indicated in detail which part of the publication was actually written by myself alone and have fully referenced such publications.
- (vi) This thesis does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the Internet, unless specifically acknowledged, and the source being detailed in the thesis and in the References sections.

Signed:

ABSTRACT

This study answers the critical question: How do women leaders experience gender equality in the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU)? It focuses on five women leaders in the union, illuminating their experiences and evolving gender consciousness. This qualitative study addresses a gap in research on gender in teacher unions, to understand and reveal how women who have accessed previously male-dominated spaces experience gender equality. The women leaders' experiences are a prism through which to understand the "depth" of the substantive experience of gender equality in the union. It examines how the union through its organisational bureaucracy, culture and politics shapes their experiences.

Through a historical analysis of the gender and liberation struggle, I demonstrate the trajectory of achievements, challenges and visions for gender equity in South Africa within the trade union movement, noting the achievements and highlighting lost opportunities to advance gender struggles of its members.

The study theorises different conceptions of feminisms and imagings of organisations to understand the women's experiences in relation to the union and to broader society, within the culture, politics and bureaucracy of the organisation. I extended this lens by exploring differing conceptions of feminisms to understand the gendered experiences of the women leaders as they traverse life from childhood to adulthood.

Conceived with the broader realm of feminist methodology, I use elements of life history research, notably in-depth interviews to produce narratives in the form of "harmonised poems" to illuminate the public and private experiences of the research participants, providing deep insights into their evolving gender consciousness.

The analysis is multi-dimensional, traversing the influence of the family, school, and the historical and political contexts that shaped the women's gender consciousness. The findings indicate that teachers' contradictory class location, history of patriarchy and acceptance of sexual division of labour contribute to the women leaders' experiences of gender inequality in the union. These experiences of inequality were magnified by apartheid's¹ structural and ideological roots, which shaped gender roles while simultaneously catalysing the development of gender consciousness and advancing political activism. In this regard, the family served as a crucial site of gender socialisation, while the school formally reproduced a hierarchical gendered society.

At the organisational level, hierarchically bureaucratic structures maintained and reinforced particular patterns of control and power through the formal system of trade union governance in which gender oppression is institutionalised and legitimised under its banner of emancipatory politics. However, women in the organisation are by no means innocent victims of hostile patriarchal forces, but are active participants in their own oppression as they strategically comply with institutional norms. Significantly, the findings indicate that equality of opportunity for women leaders in the union does not translate into equality of outcome.

¹ A system of government in South Africa based on racial hierarchies

This thesis contributes to the theoretical debates on evolving gendered consciousness by advancing an extended conceptual lens to interrogate women's gendered experiences in predominantly patriarchal spaces. It identifies four domains of evolving consciousness. Starting with the *divided self* in the domain of home, girl children imbibe the dominant hierarchical social structures, and fixed gender roles are inscribed here. However, the family domain provides the catalyst for a developing consciousness among the women as children.

The *socialised self* emerging in the domain of the school emphasises the gender socialisation, both overt and covert, that occurs in schools. It illuminates their evolving gender consciousness by resisting such subjugation initially as students and later as radical teachers.

Progressing to the domain of the union, the women embody a *strategic self* in response to gender inequality in SADTU, which often takes an organisational form that contradicts its espoused policy and public pronouncements. Armed with the maturity to transcend their individualised gender consciousness, the women leaders emerge with a collective consciousness determined to break down the barriers to equality at the structural level.

Finally, in the *emerging collective self*, the women simultaneously embody elements that constrain their individual emancipatory impulses while trajecting them to potentially higher levels of consciousness as change agents. Their willingness to embrace a shared consciousness and their call for activism indicate a shift towards heightened collective consciousness. As they move from their individual subjugated selves to their heightened collective, transformed consciousness, they express a compelling desire for collective agency to challenge structural drivers of inequality and enact change at the systemic level.

DEDICATION

*To all the women in our past, our present
And all the women in our future,
Let's look to our Agency
To assert our voice and
To wield the Power that is rightfully ours*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am greatly indebted to the five women leaders and the South African Democratic Teachers Union for their courage and commitment to gender equality that made this thesis possible. I am also grateful to the South African Democratic Teachers' Union for its financial support and for the privilege to have walked in their corridors of power.

I also wish to express my sincere appreciation to my supervisors Professor Michael Samuel and Dr Betty Govinden for their guidance throughout the research process. In particular, I want to thank Professor Michael Samuel for the wisdom, dedication and tolerance he afforded me as I traversed the challenges of writing up my thesis.

My gratitude also goes to Veerle Dieltiens for her generosity of spirit and for accommodating my unreasonable demands. I will forever be indebted to Mary and Michel Clasquin for their camaraderie and assistance that finally got me to this point. And to Rubby Dhunpath for his solidarity and wisdom that helped me to the finish line.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my family for the experiences that have defined my activism and shaped my life choices. In particular, I want to recognise my role model, my younger brother, Shelindra Baros, whose life has been a triumph of will and consciousness against great odds.

DEFINING GENDER CONCEPTS

The term “gender” has broad definitional scope and encompasses a wide range of concepts. For this reason, it is important to commence by clarifying the definitions of the important gender-related terms used in this study.

Gender in this study is defined as,

the construction of a social category of differentiation based on biological sex i.e. a process by which biological differences between women and men (in terms of reproductive capacities and some physiological traits related to these capacities) are converted into processes of social differentiation that result in differential valuations of the capacities, skills, abilities, entitlements and rights of women and men.

(Subrahmanian, 2003, p.5)

Biological sex differences are not the primary reason for gender inequality in society; rather, such inequalities are socially constructed and, for this reason, can be changed (Kimmel, 2004). Hence, the emphasis in this study is not strictly on biological physiology, but rather on the socially constructed differences between the two sexes.

Many of the arguments and discussions in this study talk to gender equality, with the understanding that the ultimate aim is gender equity. However, the emphasis on gender equality emerged out of discussions with women members of the South African Democratic Teachers’ Union (SADTU), who indicated that gender equality still eluded the union. Although they aspire to gender equity, they argued that equality for women was an essential starting point.

Gender equality in this study is defined as,

...elimination of those differences which ascribe lower value to women’s choices and perpetuate unequal power and resources. Also refers to those more limited areas where men’s choices and access to power and resources are limited. A distinction is often made between equality of opportunity and equality of outcome to allow for the possibility that women and men may freely make different life choices.

(Mayoux, 2005, p.3)

Also relevant to this study is the definition provided by the ABC of Women Worker’s Rights and Gender Equality in the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which defines gender equality as:

...that the different behaviour, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally. It does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.

(ILO, Geneva, 2002, p.48)

This study understands gender equality as a prerequisite for gender equity and defines gender equity as,

The condition of fairness and equality of opportunity whereby gender is no longer a basis for discrimination and inequality between people. In a gender equitable society both women and men enjoy equal status, rights, levels of

responsibility, and access to power and resources. This enables them to make their own informed, realizable and free life choices.
(Mayoux, 2005, p.3)

This study emphasises that gender equality has to ensure that equality of opportunity for women has to translate into equality of outcomes between the sexes. It argues that equality of opportunity alone is insufficient in promoting gender equality, but rather that equality of outcome of such opportunities for men and women is essential for achieving gender equality and equity. The study advocates that all human beings, both men and women, should be free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by patriarchy, class divisions, stereotypes, rigid gender roles or prejudices.

GLOSSARY

ANC	African National Congress
ANCWL	African National Congress Women's League
CEC	Central Executive Committee
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CWIU	Chemical Workers Industrial Union
EFA	Education for All
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
FSAW	Federation of South African Women
GEAR	Growth Employment and Redistribution Strategy
GS	General Secretary
ILO	International Labour Organisation
NALEDI	National Labour and Economic Development Institute
NAPTOSA	National Association of Professional Teachers of South Africa
NEC	National Executive Committee
NECC	National Education Crisis Committee
NEDLAC	National Economic and Labour Council
NEHAWU	National Education and Health Workers Union
NGC	National General Council
NOB	National Office Bearers
NGC	National General Council
NWC	National Working Committee
RDP	Redistribution and Development Programme
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SACP	South African Communist Party
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SAMWU	South African Municipal Workers Union
SARHWU	South African Railways and Harbours Workers Union
SAOU	Suid Afrikaanse Onderwysers Unie

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Experiences of Women Leaders in the South African Democratic Teachers’ Union (SADTU).....	2
DECLARATION.....	4
ABSTRACT.....	5
DEDICATION	7
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	8
DEFINING GENDER CONCEPTS	9
GLOSSARY.....	11
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	12
LIST OF TABLES.....	18
LIST OF FIGURES.....	18
FOREWORD	19
BACKGROUND, RATIONALE AND CRITICAL QUESTION:.....	23
MOVING BEYOND RHETORIC.....	23
1.1 CHAPTER OUTLINE.....	23
1.2 INTRODUCTION.....	23
1.3 CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND	23
1.4 RATIONALE.....	24
1.5 CRITICAL QUESTION	25
1.6 METHODOLOGY	26
1.7 POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF THIS STUDY	26
1.7.1 Research in Gender	26
1.7.2 Research in Trade Unions.....	27
1.8 CONCLUDING REMARKS	28
CHAPTER TWO	29
GENDER IN THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE, COSATU AND SADTU:	29
UNDERSTANDING HISTORY AND CONTEXTS.....	29
2.1 CHAPTER OUTLINE.....	29
2.2 GENDER AND THE NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLE	29
2.3 GENDER IN THE LABOUR FEDERATION COSATU.....	33
2.3.1 Historical Legacy	33
2.3.2 Engendering Protest in COSATU	34
2.3.3 Women’s Structure versus Gender Structure.....	35

2.3.4 The Quota System.....	36
2.3.5 COSATU Gender Policy	37
2.4 THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEMOCRATIC TEACHERS' UNION	39
2.4.1 The Formation of SADTU.....	39
2.4.2 The SADTU Constitution.....	41
2.4.3 Policies that Support Women's Empowerment	42
2.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS	43
CHAPTER THREE.....	44
ORGANISATIONAL IMAGING AND CONCEPTIONS OF FEMINISMS:.....	44
TOWARDS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	44
3.1 CHAPTER OUTLINE.....	44
3.2 CONCEPTIONS OF FEMINISMS	44
3.2.1 Introduction	45
3.2.2 Liberal Feminism.....	45
3.2.3 Radical Feminism	46
3.2.4 Marxist Feminism	47
3.2.5 Socialist Feminism.....	50
3.2.6 African Feminism	50
3.2.7 Critiques of Feminisms	53
3.3 ORGANISATIONAL IMAGING	56
3.3.1 Introduction	56
3.3.2 Images of Organisations.....	56
3.3.3 Organisations as Machines.....	57
3.3.4 Organisations as Culture	57
3.3.5 Organisations as Political Entities	58
3.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS	60
CHAPTER FOUR.....	61
FEMINIST THEORY AND RESEARCH PROCESSES:.....	61
ENGENDERING RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	61
4.1 CHAPTER OUTLINE.....	61
4.2 INTRODUCTION.....	61
4.3 FEMINIST RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES.....	64
4.3.1 Feminist Research Methods	66
4.3.2 Sampling.....	67
4.3.3 Context	68

4.3.4 Positionality	69
4.3.5 The Research Relationship	71
4.4 THE INTERVIEW PROCESS	72
4.4.1 Trial Run.....	73
4.4.2 Making Contact	74
4.4.3 Interview Schedule.....	75
4.4.4 Interview Session.....	78
4.5 EXCAVATING EXPERIENCE THROUGH GROUNDED THEORY	79
4.5.1 Harmonisation of Data	82
4.5.2 The Girl-child	82
4.5.3 Growing up as a Girl.....	82
4.5.4 Why was I a Vulnerable Child?	84
4.6 QUALITY IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS	85
4.6.1 Credibility.....	85
4.6.2 Transferability.....	87
4.6.3 Dependability.....	87
4.6.4 Authenticity	88
4.7 ETHICAL ISSUES	88
4.8 CONCLUDING REMARKS	90
CHAPTER FIVE.....	91
ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVES:	91
THE SOCIO-POLITICAL ENGENDERING OF	91
WOMEN IN THE RESEARCH	91
5.1 CHAPTER OUTLINE.....	91
5.2 SITUATING THE RESEARCHER.....	91
5.2.1 Woman: “Seeds of Activism”	91
5.2.2 Researcher: “Shifting Identities”	94
5.3 NARRATIVE ANALYSIS: THE GIRL IN THE WOMAN	99
5.3.1 Why was I a Vulnerable Child?	99
5.3.2 My Father, a Strange Kind of Person.....	100
5.3.3 My Mother, the Perfect Example.....	101
5.3.4 Mathematics, the Domain of Boys	101
5.3.5 The Question of Race and Oppression.....	102
5.3.6 A Defining Moment!	103
5.4 ANALYSIS OF THE NARRATIVES.....	103

In the following section, I analyse the narratives which are captured in poetry. The narratives are derived from the historical experiences of the women leaders in the home and school. The influence of apartheid on their identities is foregrounded as is the development of their consciousness of gender inequality.

.....	103
5.4.1 Shared Experiences	103
5.4.2 Engaging Difference	106
5.4.3 Gendered Childhoods.....	109
5.4.4 Patriarchy in the Family	109
5.4.5 Patriarchy in School	110
5.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS	114
CHAPTER SIX.....	115
ENGENDERING ORGANISATIONAL ANALYSIS:.....	115
THE WOMEN IN THE LEADER.....	115
6.1 CHAPTER OUTLINE.....	115
6.2 BUREAUCRACY AND CULTURE: NARRATIVES AND ANALYSIS	115
6.2.1 My Heart is Singing just for SADTU	116
6.2.2 Women are an Intrinsic Part of the Organisation.....	116
6.2.3 Ganging up of Race and Culture	116
6.2.4 I was a Nuisance to Them	116
6.2.5 The Gender Desk: Something Went Wrong	117
6.2.6 Aspiring to Gender Equality.....	118
6.2.7 Trade Union Bureaucracy.....	121
6.2.8 Tradition and Culture	123
6.2.9 Married Women	126
6.2.10 Gender Desk	127
6.3 CULTURE AND POLITICAL CONTESTATIONS	131
6.3.1 Yes and then I saw Patriarchy.....	132
6.3.2 Insults, Guns and Kisses.....	132
6.3.3 I was Really Invisible.....	133
6.3.4 We Could Do Better	133
6.3.5 Nothing is a Lost Cause	133
6.3.6 Mediating Power.....	134
6.3.7 Towards a Quota System.....	137
6.3.8 Institutionalised Sexism	142

6.3.9 Overt Sexism	145
6.3.10 Collective Bargaining.....	146
6.4 GENDER CONSCIOUSNESS AND RESISTANCE	148
6.4.1 We Shout Slogans	148
6.4.2 We Have to be Victims.....	149
6.4.3 It is a Collective	149
6.4.4 None are Free until we all are Free.....	150
6.4.5 Reflections.....	150
6.4.6 Complicity	151
6.4.7 Resistance.....	153
6.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS	155
CHAPTER SEVEN.....	157
SYNTHESIS:.....	157
DOMAINS OF EVOLVING CONSCIOUSNESS.....	157
7.1 CHAPTER OUTLINE.....	157
7.2 INTRODUCTION	157
7.3 DOMAINS OF EVOLVING GENDER CONSCIOUSNESS	159
7.3.1 THE HOME: The Divided Self.....	160
7.3.2 THE SCHOOL: The Socialised Self.....	161
7.3.3 THE UNION: The Strategic Self.....	162
7.4 SOCIETY: The Emerging Collective Self.....	167
7.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS.....	169
REFERENCES	172
APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRES.....	187
APPENDIX 2: NEWSPAPER ARTICLE.....	192
APPENDIX 3: FIRST LEVEL HARMONISED NARRATIVES	195
1. The Girl-child.....	195
2. Father	195
3. Mother.....	195
4. Growing up as a Girl.....	196
5. In the Classroom.....	197
6. Forced Removals	198
7. Culture and Race	200
8. Personality.....	201
9. Political stirrings.....	201

10.	Identity	203
11.	Activism.....	203
12.	Student Politics.....	203
13.	Expectations of being a Woman	204
14.	Taking the Lead	204
15.	Male Domination.....	205
16.	Teaching during Apartheid.....	207
17.	Gender and the National Liberation Struggle	208
18.	Teaching Experiences	208
19.	Expectation of SADTU.....	209
20.	Violence against Girls.....	210
21.	Support.....	210
22.	Gender in SADTU	211
23.	Gender Desk.....	215
24.	Double Standards.....	220
25.	Women as Leaders	222
26.	Threats.....	225
27.	Understanding of the Term “Gender Issues”	225
28.	Sexual Harassment.....	226
29.	Gendered Experiences	226
30.	Congress.....	228
31.	Challenges.....	231
32.	The Rape Trial.....	232
33.	Reflections.....	235
34.	What they Want?.....	236
35.	I Feel very Excited to be Part of this Study	236

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Gender breakdown of SADTU NEC (2007)	118
Table 2: SADTU National Congress (2006): Gender breakdown per province	136
Table 3: Domains of evolving gender consciousness among women leaders	156

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Percentage gender distribution of teachers by province	106
Figure 2: Membership: Male vs female (2006)	133
Figure 3: Distribution by ranking in South African public schools (2004)	144

FOREWORD

Seasons of Struggle

Spring

Bright bursts of colour

Wafts of delicate perfumes

Promising futures

Summer

Visions of beauty

The smile of a blooming rose

Confident, hopeful.....

Autumn

Anaemic slumber

Shadows of yesterday's hope

The death of a rose?

Winter

Petals in the wind

The rosebush bare but sturdy

Reaching to the sun

Growing up in South Africa under the glare of apartheid magnified racial differences. Being black and a woman during apartheid meant that my “othering” was not just confined to my race, but was also intensified by my gender. However, my affirmation of being woman and my resistance to patriarchy are rooted in the experiences of my grandmother. Her struggles and triumphs as woman, wife, mother, breadwinner, and role model defied my gender conditioning and awakened my gender consciousness at a tender age. These experiences inculcated empathy and nurtured my solidarity with women in general.

My journey to the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) was shaped by my gendered experiences as daughter, sister, student, teacher, activist, and trade unionist. I was in the employ of SADTU for over a decade and identified the union as my home and family. I am proud of the union's espoused commitment to social

justice and gender equality, but troubled by its poor enactment of these pronouncements. Furthermore, my gendered experiences in the union continue to be amplified by its masculine hegemony. I embarked on this enquiry five years ago when I became deeply embroiled in the anxieties and tensions that challenged women's experiences in SADTU, in particular those entangled in its organisational politics. I was spurred to explore alternative avenues to make visible the experiences of women leaders in such a politically charged organisation. Hence, this disruption and unease in the union triggered this difficult yet fulfilling journey.

I consider this research an expression of resistance by women, with women and for women against the seemingly omnipotent patriarch that has followed us from childhood to adulthood and continues to live among us and inside of us. The power of this research lies in its potential to interrogate and disrupt our dualism, our complicity, and our exclusion, and to catalyse our courage, triumph, and agency as women. This is a journey of struggle, of evolving consciousness and of irreversible change.

I have deliberately chosen to use poetry to represent the experiences of women in this study. I draw on feminine sensibilities of poetry as resistance and as a counter to traditional patriarchal scholarship. The women's poems metaphorically claim their pain and pleasure, their disempowerment and emancipation, as an alternative to masculine expression that subverts. I have written four sets of haikus to frame this research. Henderson (in Bowers, 1996, p.vii) dubs haikus "mediations starting points for trains of thought". Similarly, this study is a starting point towards the willingness to transform both for the union and the women in the research.

The haikus share much in common with the intention of this research. Haikus originated in ancient Japanese society as a reaction to the formality of the "language of the gods". The "gods" were powerful masculine figures, such as the rarefied mikados and exalted military shoguns. They dominated Japanese society and spoke an elitist language, effectively excluding ordinary women and men (Bowers, 1996, p.vii). In contrast, the haikus spoke in everyday language, making them accessible to ordinary women and men. Although simple in form their intention was to create awareness, empower and transform.

In the same way, this study is a reaction to hegemonic patriarchal forces, and uses poetry to make accessible the submerged voices of women and make visible their experiences, which are often distorted by traditional patriarchal scholarship. Although this study has been written within the conventions of academia, it has been consciously written to be accessible to teachers, trade unionists and gender activists across the literacy divide. The narrative text presented as poetry is both powerful in its simplicity and compelling in the evocative images it creates of women's gendered experiences in the family, school, and union. Each chapter is framed by an epigram that has been lifted out of the harmonised poems presented in Appendix 3. Each epigram had been selected for its relevance to the intention of the chapters.

Bowers (1996, p. ix) maintains that: "Each Haiku contains a hidden dualism, the near the far, foreground background, then and now, past and present, high and low, sound and silence, and temporality and eternity." Similarly, this study unmasks the dualism and paradoxes in the diverse experiences of the women leaders traversing childhood to adulthood, from apartheid to democracy, and from activist to leader, and in the emerging tensions experienced between their private and public worlds in the union.

I considered it appropriate to write the haikus in sets that draw on the life cycle of a rose within the four seasons. The journey of the rose resonates with the intention of capturing the women's journeys from childhood to womanhood, while simultaneously portraying the disruption of their innocence and their evolving consciousness. Thus, the hidden experiences of women expressed in poetic form capture the dualism of our struggle.

The following is an overview of the study.

Chapter One explores the research gap in understanding women's gendered experience in unions and frames the argument for the study. The chapter introduces the overall aim, rationale and critical question of my study and provides a brief outline of the context of the research, the methodology and the overall benefits of the study.

Chapter Two sketches the historical contexts that influenced the struggles for gender equality in South Africa. It explores how this context shaped gender discourses and advanced the interest of women in the national liberation struggle. The chapter then focuses on the influence of global and national pressures on the Congress of South African Trade Unions' (COSATU's) response to the challenges facing its women membership. The intention is to use the COSATU experience as a mirror to SADTU, given that the teachers' union takes its lead from the federation. Finally, the chapter outlines the emergence of SADTU and its evolution into a powerful teachers' union and presents an overview of the union's gender policies and programmes.

Chapter Three provides the theoretical frame of the study and provides a justification for a multi-dimensional approach that incorporates historical and social contexts. It explores the different conceptions of feminisms that theorise the social and ideological construction of gender in relation to family, schools, unions and broader society. The chapter also argues for the different imagings of organisation as a micro-lens to theorise the gendered experiences of women within the culture, politics and bureaucracy of the organisation. In this way, I provide the theoretical frame for the analysis of women's position in organisations, education system and society. I argue for the different imaging of organisations and their gendered subtext in relation to women's gendered experiences and evolving consciousness in organisations.

Chapter Four discusses the theoretical underpinnings that inform the feminist research methodologies which shaped the research. This chapter also illuminates the pervasiveness of power in the research process and captures the way it was mediated between the researcher and the research participants. It argues for the value of the life history methodology to illuminate the public and private experiences of the research participants. The chapter provides a detailed description of the mechanics of the research, including sampling, data collection and research instruments. The process of data capturing and data generation from the interview transcripts to harmonised poems is outlined in detail. The chapter explains the ethical and methodological challenges of employing feminist research methodology and describes in detail how the research was subjected to the rigours of feminist research to ensure quality.

Chapter Five provides a multi-layered analysis of the harmonised poems that incorporate history, context, situatedness and the gendered socialisation of the women leaders and researcher. The poems trace significant milestones in the lives of the women leaders, which are analysed to reveal the influence of socialisation on the development of their identity and gender consciousness as children and young radical teachers. Particular emphasis is placed on the influence of the women leaders' gendered experiences as

children and young adults to produce particular kinds of identities and subjectivities. The poems are interrogated to reveal how significant childhood experiences were shaped by the political and social realities of life under apartheid and how they converged to shape common identities as young activists and catalyse the development of their gender consciousness.

Chapter Six provides an analysis of SADTU as a gendered organisation by interrogating the experiences of its women leaders through the lens of organisational imagining. It focuses on the bureaucracy, culture and politics of the organisation. In particular, the chapter draws on key relationships between the organisation and gender in the education system to explain the experiences of the women leaders and the evolution of their gender consciousness. The different conceptions of feminisms (refer to Chapter Three) are employed to analyse the structural and ideological motives that perpetuate gender oppression in the union. The chapter explains the trajectory of evolving consciousness that is evident in women's earlier experiences of gender oppression in the union and their growing resistance to institutionalised gender inequalities and patriarchy in the union.

Chapter Seven draws on the previous chapters to develop a synthesis of the study. It presents the main arguments in the thesis and attempts to depict graphically the trajectory of gendered consciousness that women have embarked on as they have negotiated their gendered identities and experiences in the various domains of the family, school, workplace and the teacher union. The chapter argues that women's gendered experience is central to building knowledge for generating substantive societal change and attempts to develop a theory on evolving consciousness of change, encapsulated in the construct of "domains of evolving consciousness".

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND, RATIONALE AND CRITICAL QUESTION: MOVING BEYOND RHETORIC

*He² is a real traditionalist in his belief
In his heart of hearts
What he is saying when he is delivering speeches on podiums is politically correct
rhetoric
That people want to hear
However, in their³ heart of hearts they do not believe that woman can serve equally
and can lead equally.
How I see it is that we shout slogans,
We talk of one leader mentor a woman,
We talk of NDR⁴ in which we talk of race and gender
However, in practice we do not do it.*

(Appendix 3; Poems 22, 25; No. 4, 3)

1.1 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The main thrust of this chapter is to present the rationale of the study, and explain the aim and motivation for embarking on the research. The influence of context and history on the research is explained.

The potential benefits of this study for research in the field of gender and education and for research in field of gender and trade unions are argued. The chapter also explains my reasons for identifying the experiences of women leaders in the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) as the unit of analysis.

The critical research question is discussed together with a motivation for the use of feminist research methodology for achieving the aim of the research. The varied and different terminologies related to gender that are used in this study are clarified in the introduction to the study. This chapter sets the tone for the research.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on how women leaders experience gender equality in SADTU. The use of the term "gender" has become common in the vocabulary of most government departments, trade unions, civil society organisations, development agencies and academic institutions in democratic South Africa. However, the use of the term "gender" in post-apartheid South Africa tends to reflect political correctness, being purely rhetorical and lacking in substantive awareness and analysis of gender in society (McDonald, Sprenger and Dubel, 1994, p.10). This study moves beyond rhetoric by embarking on research that provides empirical evidence on the gendered experiences of five women leaders in SADTU, with the intention to build knowledge and theory.

1.3 CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

Several researchers and commentators agree that contexts, particularly historical,

² SADTU National Leader

³ Male leaders in the union

⁴ National Democratic Revolution

political, socio-economic and personal contexts, are significant in research (Harding, 1987; Lather, 1991). The history of apartheid and the struggle for liberation have shaped both my identity and the identities of the research participants. This research focuses on five women leaders in SADTU who have a long history of political activism and trade unionism.

The research participants are former teachers who played an active role in the anti-apartheid struggle fighting for the liberation of disenfranchised black people in South Africa. They were members of the African National Congress (ANC) and supported its success in winning the first democratic election in South Africa in 1994. The women leaders were instrumental in the development of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of the new democratic government. The RDP was intended to address the problems inherited from the apartheid era and supported the principles of social and economic justice. The women strongly believe that they have a role to play in promoting democracy and human rights in democratic South Africa.

The timing of this research, 14 years after the first democratic elections in South Africa, in the midst of the ANC's succession debates and within the broader political campaigning for the next general elections, is a crucial factor in how I and the women leaders make meaning of the world. Furthermore, the women are acutely aware of the growing sense of disillusionment within certain circles of the left and among many poor and vulnerable communities. They are conscious of the resurgence of community mobilisation and protests for basic services that mirror struggles during the apartheid era. These feelings and events, coupled with the increase in rape and violence against women and children in the country, have all seeped into their collective psyche. The study considers the influence of contextual dynamics on the women leaders' experiences.

1.4 RATIONALE

Gender equality is a fundamental human right and an essential prerequisite for achieving a gender equitable society (UN, 1995). However, gender inequalities continue to characterise African societies in general (Mama, 1996; Lewis, 2002) and trade unions in particular (Orr, 2006; Ledwith & Colgan, 1996). Gender inequalities exist in a range of resources, from income and wealth to social honour and cultural authority. Inequalities define interests – those benefiting most from inequalities often have a stake in defending them and those who bear the cost have an interest in ending them (Connell, 2003, p.142). In the past 18 years, SADTU has made efforts to promote gender equality by developing policies and practices that reflect gender sensitivity to women's rights and entitlements. Furthermore, at the public level, the visibility of women in previously male-dominated spaces and utterances of male leaders demonstrate the union's commitment to advancing gender equality. However, there appears to be a disharmony between the union's public pronouncements and espoused gender pronouncements and its organisational practices among its women leaders (Chisholm and SADTU, 1999).

Organisational theory remains heavily gendered (Mills & Trancred, 1992). In explaining the unequal position of women in organisations, Hearn and Parkin (1983) argue that feminist theory will remain nebulous until women themselves research organisations. Similarly, Ferguson (1984, p.23) argues that the aim of feminist discourse is "to penetrate the constraints and limitations of bureaucratic discourses"

by seeking out women's experience that is usually hidden from public life. This study attempts to bridge this gap in research by women on organisations and gender by placing emphasis on the experiences of women leaders in the union. This emphasis challenges the male discourses of organisations and provides a political alternative from the standpoint⁵ of women. I argue that focusing on the experiences of women leaders will illuminate their experiences that have been mediated by their evolving consciousness in the union. Thus, the research highlights levels of gender consciousness to explain the women's experiences.

The study aims to understand whether women who have accessed previously male-dominated patriarchal organisations experience equality of outcomes with their male counterparts. This qualitative study about the women leaders' multiple realities straddles their private and public worlds. In telling their life stories, the women document significant milestones in their lives, in this way acknowledging their presence in and contribution to the history of the union. The research overcomes the limitation of quantitative research by illuminating the often hidden subtext and subtle nuances of the women's experiences of gender equality measures. The study uses women leaders' experiences as a prism through which to assess the "depth" of the substantive experience of gender equality in the union. It examines, among other things, the overt and covert power differentials that shape women's experiences, especially in relation to male leaders. There is a paucity of empirical research on the complicity of women in perpetuating their subjugation in organisations (Martin, 2002), which this study seeks to address.

The study also discusses various theoretical conceptions of feminism in understanding the women's experiences in relation to the union and to broader society. I look to approaches aligned to the subjectivities of women in the different conceptions of feminism to understand the experiences of women in the union. The influence of the historical and political contexts that have shaped the women's socialisation informs the analysis of the women's experiences. The women leaders are not treated as a homogenous group and the study analyses how race, class and gender converge to shape women's experiences.

1.5 CRITICAL QUESTION

The critical question explored in relation to the aim of this study is:

How do women leaders experience gender equality in the South African Democratic Teachers' Union?

This question asks how the women leaders who have penetrated previously male-dominated spaces experience gender equality in the union. Gender equality encompasses a wide range of factors, including material, cultural, social, political and economic experiences in the union.``

The critical question explores the following:

⁵ Feminist standpoint theories regard gender as a fundamental organising principle of patriarchal society; they reason that men's dominating position in social life results in a partial and perverse understanding of society, whereas women's subjugated position provides the possibility of a more complete and less perverse understanding of society (Alvesson & Billing, 1997, p.29)

- The women's reflections on their experiences of the union's bureaucracy, culture and politics, i.e. what it means to be a woman in the union;
- The challenges and opportunities encountered in the union and its influence on their private and public worlds and evolving gender consciousness;
- Their public (union-led) and private (personal) response to gender challenges emanating from within the broader political context; and
- A reflection on how their gendered experiences from childhood to adulthood have shaped their gender consciousness.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

I have chosen the research methodology in this study because I believe that it is best suited to producing knowledge about the experiences of women leaders in a teacher trade union. The focus of the study is as much political as it is intellectual. Feminist research methodology is research about women, research with women and research for women (Duelli Klein, 1983). Its bias towards the subjectivities of women and embracing of their multiple realities resonate with the rationale for the study. I argue that feminist research methodology understands best women's gendered experience.

By placing women at the centre of the study, I create the space for subjective, emotional and biographic factors to shape both researcher and researched participants. The aim has been to allow feminist principles to drive the research process, and in this way create an environment that yields rich, nuanced insights into the women's experiences in a non-judgemental manner. The study illustrates the potential for feminist research methodology to be both political and epistemological. It is political in making visible the union's paradox of espoused commitment to gender equity and the often hidden tensions in its enactment.

Feminist research methodology recognises that people are shaped by their experiences of class, race, gender and culture. It implies that research is not neutral but rather value-laden. Indeed, my position and experiences in the union have brought about a conscious partiality that prevents me from being neutral and indifferent towards the lived experiences of the research participants. The methodology reveals how my positionality has brought its own opportunities and limitations to the study. The research demands a delicate balance between positionality as researcher and positionality as an activist. These are explored in relation to the rigours of research in Chapters Four and Five.

1.7 POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF THIS STUDY

1.7.1 Research in Gender

This study acknowledges that gender is a key dimension of personal identity, political life, social relations and culture, embedded in the larger social and economic relations in society. It recognises that knowledge is deeply gendered, in terms of who produces it and, more significantly, what is produced. Much of our knowledge, scholarship and research have universalised the male perspective as the norm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). The blindness of patriarchal scholarship, particularly in

its analysis of organisations, has exposed its gendered assumptions. This study intends to challenge this male bias by adding to feminist scholarship on organisational theory.

Gender research in South Africa, particularly pre-1994, is steeped in the traditions and scholarship of the west (Mama, 1996; Meer, 2000; Walker, 1991). Lewis (2002) asserts that this influence, coupled with the weak cultural and political isolation of the apartheid South African state, reinforced the influence of models from the developed world. She maintains that the lack of access to academic institutions for black students and black researchers contributed to local white women, regardless of their political affiliations, dominating gender research in South Africa.

Black women, who were often the subject of research, made little or no inroads into the writing traditions defined by white South Africans (Lewis, 2002; Mama, 1996). Although this has changed in post-apartheid South Africa, its influence on the content and politics of gender research in South Africa is significant. Hence, this study intends to add to the growing scholarship of black female writers and researchers in South Africa. Black South African women, who also create the rich tapestry of narratives for the study, have shaped the research collectively. This is significant in that it acknowledges the participation of black women in constituting to memory their contribution to gender research in South Africa.

1.7.2 Research in Trade Unions

The United Nations Fourth World Congress on Women (UN, 1995) acknowledges the critical role of trade unions in promoting gender equality and in protecting vulnerable women workers. The Beijing Platform for Action is explicit in its expectation of trade unions "to achieve equality between women and men in their ranks, including equal participation in their decision making bodies and in negotiations in all areas and at all levels" (UN, 1995, p.113). The research focuses on the paradox facing many South African unions that while they seek influence over labour, economic and political matters for their constituency, they continue to perform poorly in promoting gender equality (Meer, 2000; Orr, 2003b).

In South Africa, unions continue to limit the call for gender equity to bargaining achievements such as pay parity and maternity leave (Orr, 2003a). Little emphasis is given to the ideological and structural drivers of gender oppression (Meer, 2000; Denga, 2003; NALEDI, 2006b). Although the lack of women in leadership positions is acknowledged, there is also a paucity of research that examines the experiences of these women leaders in unions in particular (Meer, 2000; Denga, 2003; NALEDI, 2006b). The research aims to address this gap and extend the current research by incorporating the evolving levels of consciousness into the understanding of women's experience. The study makes a contribution to gender research by providing empirical evidence that explains how women leaders experience gender equality in unions.

Although this study focuses on women in trade unions, women participating in the study are also practising teachers and principals in schools in South Africa. They represent the aspiration of female teachers in a country where education continues to remain a feminised profession. Ironically, the education system is still grappling with equality and equity issues, in particular in middle and top management positions in schools (Dieltiens & Vally, 2001). Hence, this study also provides some insight into

the challenges facing women educators in the schooling system in South Africa.

1.8 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter anchors the study by providing a rationale for its relevance in addressing gaps and silences in research on gender and trade unions. It emphasises the significance of in-depth examination of the multiplicity of realities that influence women's experiences of gender equality in organisations.

In the chapter, I explain why feminist research methodologies are best suited to excavate and make visible women's submerged voices in patriarchal organisations. In line with the principles of feminist research methodologies I argue that research is not neutral and advocate for a delicate balance between my positionality as researcher and my positionality as an activist.

I maintain that contexts, particularly historical, political, and socio-economic contexts, shape the identities and experiences of women in the study. Hence, the next chapter discusses in detail the influence of the liberation struggle on the gender struggle in apartheid and democratic South Africa. It also provides a critique of trade union federation COSATU's achievements and failures in promoting substantive equality for women workers, and discusses the origin of SADTU and its aspiration toward gender equality.

CHAPTER TWO

GENDER IN THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE, COSATU AND SADTU: UNDERSTANDING HISTORY AND CONTEXTS

*I do not think the national struggle gave equally to the issues of gender
We recognised that there was a need to fight for women's issues,
However, those women's issues were only discussed among us as women,
Then there were the bigger issues,
With the men in the boardroom that we needed to be part of as well,
Therefore, I think that the national issues were about liberating the country,
It was about defeating the enemies of apartheid,
It was about bringing everybody home.*

(Appendix 3, Poem 17, No. 1)

2.1 CHAPTER OUTLINE

In this chapter I sketch the political and historical contexts that shaped gender struggles in the trade union federation, Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and the South African national liberation struggle. The chapter briefly explores the influence of the national liberation struggle on women's struggle in South Africa and examines the extent to which these tensions and synergies shaped feminist discourses and advanced the interest of women in the new democratic order.

I then focus on the response of the labour federation to global and national challenges facing women workers within the broader political and economic realms in democratic South Africa. My intention was to use the COSATU experience as a mirror of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU), since the teachers' union takes its lead in the advancement of gender equality from the federation. COSATU's gender structures and policies are discussed and critiqued.

Finally, I provide a brief political and historical overview of the origin of SADTU and its progression into a powerful teachers' union and provide a summary of the union's Constitution and gender-related policies.

2.2 GENDER AND THE NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLE

South Africa has a rich body of research and literature that critiques the gender relations in different spheres of our society, examining the apartheid and post-apartheid experiences in South Africa (Walker, 1991; Wolpe, Quinlan & Martinez, 1997, Mama, 1996; Meintjies, 1996; Meer, 2000; Hassim, 2006; Orr, 2003a). I draw on some of these writings to provide an overview of the tensions between the struggle for women's emancipation and the struggle for liberation in South Africa. My intention is to provide a vignette on how the fight for liberation during apartheid often clouded and crowded out the fight for gender equality. My aim is to offer a contextual and historical frame to some of the constraints and successes experienced by women leaders in SADTU. Furthermore, my study makes visible the similarities between the experience of women leaders during the national liberation struggles and the women leaders in SADTU.

The respected O.R. Tambo had the following to say about the gender struggle at the ANC Women's Conference in 1981 in South Africa:

The struggle to conquer oppression in our country was the weaker for the traditionalist, conservative and primitive restraints imposed on women by the male-dominated structures within our Movement, as also because of equally traditionalist attitudes of surrender and submission on the part of women.
(COSATU, 2001, p.1)

Tambo noted the collusion of patriarchy, traditionalism and women's complicity in their subjugation in the liberation movement almost three decades ago. Of significance to this study are the attitudinal and institutional changes that former members of the liberation movement advanced and current leaders in SADTU and COSATU have advanced two decades later. This study provides nuanced insight into whether women and men in the union remain trapped in the traditionalism, conservatism and patriarchy highlighted by Tambo so many years ago.

Although many researchers and gender commentators (Hassim, 2006; Walker, 1991; Lewis, 2003) argue that the external political environment of the national liberation struggle was not entirely conducive to the pursuit of gender equality in South Africa, they concede that the success of women's organisations was highly dependent on the balance of political forces during that historical period. Shamim Meer (2000, p.13) maintains that women engaged in political resistance within male-dominated political organisations, which recognised the women's struggle but failed to consider gender disparity as a fundamental contradiction that needed addressing in order to attain a more egalitarian society. Chapter Six analyses the influence of the broader political environment on shaping the women leaders' commitment to advancing gender equality and raising their voices to gender transgressions within the political environment.

In her analysis of the opportunities and costs of nationalism for the women's movement in South Africa, Hassim (2006, p.21) asserts that participation in the national liberation struggle enabled women activists to link race, class and gender oppression and to universalise the demand for equality within the national liberation struggle. However, she questions whether this participation really allowed space for women to articulate their vision for women's liberation. She concedes that the foresight of women's organisations to seize political opportunities emerging out of the national liberation movement was instrumental in laying the foundation for the entrenchment of gender rights in the new dispensation in democratic South Africa. The central role played by the National Women's Coalition and the ANC Women's League (ANCWL) during the pre- and post-apartheid eras to secure a gender-inclusive democracy and to create new institutions to measure such inclusivity has to be acknowledged. The experiences of the women leaders illustrate the influence of such measures in the union.

Analysing women's resistance in South Africa pre-1994, Walker (1991) maintains that the establishment of the Federation of South African Women (FSAW), which culminated in the historic 1954 Women's Charter, was significant for women's resistance in South Africa. However, she contends that the federation failed to prioritise gender on the agenda of the liberation movement. Instead, the federation's political practice emphasised the race of its members rather than their gender. She observes that in as much as discrimination against women was looked at, it was often viewed as a barrier to women's full participation in the national struggle, i.e. gender was a means to an end rather than an end in itself.

Similarly, Fatima Meer (1985, pp. 22-30) maintains that the South African liberation struggle concentrated on “race” as a primary factor, and, indeed, the experiences of women were often more starkly experienced in colour and class terms, thus obscuring the gender dimension of their oppression. She argues that, although there were women’s organisations and activism, these did not necessarily give space to a voice for women independent of the liberation movement. Furthermore, she maintains that there was strong pressure from male-dominated leadership against the idea of women organising separately around specific gender issues, as this was seen as “divisive” and “bourgeois” and as amounting to “hijacking the struggle” (Meer, 1985, pp. 22-30). A similar criticism of the ruling party is made by ANC stalwart, Frene Ginwala (Agenda, 1990), who argues that the eventual incorporation of women as full members of the ANC after 1943 still fell short of their achieving equal status and power with their male counterparts. Similarly, this study analyses the influence of ideology, race and culture on the experiences of women leaders in the union.

In relation to women struggles and feminism in South Africa, Meintjies (1996, p.50) argues that even in the 1950s, although the FSAW was not a feminist movement, it did succeed in introducing a women’s perspective into the struggle. Walker (1991) concludes that few FSAW members would have described themselves as feminists, and that the formal commitment to women’s emancipation was overshadowed by practices and ideas that could only be described as patriarchal. However, she acknowledges moments of explicit feminist consciousness but that these moments were always subordinate to the claims of national liberation, which Hassim (2006) argues resulted in a limited development of feminist consciousness among the women.

These arguments are significant to this research. Much of the union’s policies and language are couched in terms of gender and at the beginning of my research the women leaders appeared to be uncomfortable with feminism and had varying conceptual understandings of feminism. Furthermore, initially many were reluctant to talk about feminism. Hence, the study uses different conceptions of feminism to understand the ideological and political positioning of women in the union and in society, but reveals these insights through the “gender” lens of the organisation. The following chapter (Chapter Three) explains why consciousness and awareness of gender politics, which I refer to as “gender consciousness”, are important to advancing gender equality. Chapter Seven of this study provides an explanation for these conceptual shifts in understanding the women’s experiences in the union.

Today the ANC acknowledges that the emancipation of women is a worthy goal in itself and has prided itself in moving beyond the gender equality rhetoric. Hassim (2006, p.11) argues that, although the women’s movement gave priority to the national liberation struggle in South Africa, in the long term the struggle for the inclusion of women’s demands into the national liberation goals had laid the basis for more long-term constitutional and institutional gains for women in the new democratic dispensation. A decade on, we have seen progress in the numbers of women in Parliament and government, and the introduction of important legislation and the establishment of statutory bodies to advance equality. Hassim (2006) maintains that under the new dispensation, affirmative action and the implementation of the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 have become the linchpin of women’s participation in previously male-dominated institutions. Hassim (2006) argues that gender representation has become the measure of inclusion in the new democracy.

Democratic South Africa is hailed as a “success story” given its performance in promoting equality in government and in establishing institutions to represent and defend women’s interests (Hassim, 2006). The creation of a national representative structure for the national women’s movement, the role of the Women’s League of the

ANC and the participation of trade union federation COSATU were crucial to securing the rights of women in the Constitution of South Africa. Furthermore, the ANC-led government has made strides to increase the representation of women in structures of governance from Cabinet to Parliament and to local government. This was a significant achievement towards advancing gender equality. However, political analyst, Steven Friedman (May 2004), raises an important criticism of the ANC's promotion of women into Cabinet positions in the 2004 general elections. He argues that women occupying top leadership positions must enjoy majority support to wield real power. He suggests that currently some appointments can be perceived as patronage from the president of the country. He cautions that if equality were perceived as patronising, symbolic and merely a numbers' game of quotas, it would take women and democracy backwards. Similarly, this study explores in detail the challenges and tensions associated with affirmative action measures, male patronage and access to power for women elected into leadership positions in SADTU.

The Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) is the supreme law of the country and commits the country to the founding provisions of human dignity (encompassing the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms), non-racism and non-sexism (Constitution of RSA, Act 108 of 1996). Meintjies (1996) maintains that the Constitution of South Africa enables women to claim their rights as equal citizens in the new democracy. This includes the formal commitments to involve women at all levels of decision-making and incorporate equality concerns in policy frameworks. However in her class analysis of the Constitution, Shamim Meer (2000) argues that the overarching framework of the new government did not put the eradication of massive inequality in South Africa at the centre of its agenda. Instead it favoured the historically privileged and, in particular, it failed to provide for redistribution of resources to the majority of South African women.

The Constitution of South Africa gives everybody (women included) equal rights, including the right not to be discriminated against.⁶ The Constitution, while concentrating on equality in terms of recognition, merely implies redistribution for the previously disadvantaged groups, and their progressive realisation is dependent on the availability of resources. The concern at the time was that the apartheid Constitution would not, in the near future, undergo any significant change under the new Government. This has become apparent in areas that impact directly on the poor and vulnerable, especially women, and that include basic rights such as land redistribution, health care and housing.⁷

Over and above the Constitution, the following were some of the legally binding provisions to address inequality in general and education in particular: the Labour Relations Act (1994), the White Paper on Education and Training (1995), the Commission on Equality Act (1996), the National Education Policy Act (1996), the White Paper on Programme for Transformation of Higher Education (1997), the White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service (1997), the White Paper on Transforming Service Delivery (1997), the Employment of Educators Act (1998), the Employment Equity Act (1998) and the White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service (1998). These policy documents have clauses prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender and generally advance equality in the workplace. Furthermore, the South African government has also been a signatory to international conventions that promote equality. Among others, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination

⁶ Section 9 of the Bill of Rights, Chapter 2 of the Constitution of RSA, Act 108 of 1996

⁷ Section 25(5); section 26(2); and section 27(2) of the Bill of Rights, Chapter 2 of the Constitution of RSA, Act 108 of 1996

Against Women (CEDAW) ratified in 1995, the UN Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, and the ILO Action Plan on Equality and Mainstreaming.

Chapter Six discusses how progressive policies have influenced the union and whether they have made an impact on the experiences of the women who are meant to benefit from them. The study provides empirical evidence of the disjuncture between similar policy initiatives and practice in the union.

2.3 GENDER IN THE LABOUR FEDERATION COSATU

SADTU takes much of its direction and guidance from COSATU and for this reason I provide a brief critique of the “mother body’s” attempt to advance gender equality inside and outside the federation. The COSATU experiences provide insight into some of the gaps and silences in SADTU’s gender performance.

2.3.1 Historical Legacy

The liberation of South Africa owes much to the extraordinary role played by women in the trade union social movement of the 1970s and 1980s who mobilised against racism, state repression, capitalist exploitation and patriarchy under extremely difficult conditions (Walker, 1991; Jafta, 2006). Shamim Meer (2000) maintains that women in trade unions made links between struggles in the factory, the community, the country and at home. Given the position in society, in relation to the state and capital, women’s struggles brought together race, class and gender.

Several gender commentators in South Africa agree that the oppressive historical context of apartheid capitalism and patriarchy played a critical role in the evolution of race, class and gender identities in our country (Meer, 2000; COSATU, 2001, Orr, 2006; SACP, 1998). The details of how these different forms of oppression converged to shape the identities of the women leaders and influence their gender consciousness are discussed in Chapter Five. Few would dispute the fact that each form of oppression had its own specific features and combined to form an intricate system of oppression.⁸ The apartheid capitalist system benefited from and reproduced patriarchal relations in South Africa (Orr, 2003b). A little over a decade ago, the South African Communist Party (SACP) argued:

...the specific capitalist growth path in our country involved the appropriation of existing patriarchal customs and traditions, and their articulation into the reproduction of the capitalist system. This articulation saw the vast exacerbation of the coercive features of pre-existing patriarchy. In particular, the brunt of the reproduction of a massive army of reserve cheap labour was borne by the unpaid (and hidden) labour and effort of millions of [black] women.

(SACP, 1998, pp.19-20)

Apartheid laws provided for limited and impoverished roles for African women. The

⁸ Oppression, in this instance, speaks of the experiences of women and black people within patriarchal, racist, and capitalist relations. “Women’s oppression” refers to the experiences of women as wage worker, as mother, as household worker/caregiver and citizen, and “gender oppression” refers to the gender roles and expectations of women and men in these various categories, and the unequal power relations between women and men (Orr, 2006, pp.5-6).

system led to widespread abuse of women, both inside and outside the family (Institute for Black Research, 1990). Confronted with triple oppression – oppression based on their race, gender and class – African women workers looked to COSATU for liberation (COSATU, 2001, p.4). COSATU's National Gender Officer, Jafta (2006), asserts that interrogating the inextricable link between class, race and gender and the extent to which they formed a system of exploitation, discrimination and oppression was integral to transforming gender relations in South Africa. Hence, the federation argued that socialism would “build new men and women and transform gender relations” in South Africa (COSATU, 2000, p.19).

The following section discusses whether this intention was purely rhetoric or genuine commitment on the part of COSATU.

2.3.2 Engendering Protest in COSATU

The 1994 democratic elections in South Africa ushered in one of the most progressive constitutions in the world, promising equality to women and non-discrimination on the basis of gender, marital status and sexual orientation. However, realising these constitutional imperatives has been constrained by global capitalism and the new democratic government's neo-liberal macro-economic policies. The past decade has witnessed dramatic changes in the global economy. Currently, the world economy is witnessing a decline in the profitability of capital. Hence, capital has chosen to maintain profit margins by lowering the cost of labour. Given the sexual division of labour, lower labour costs, retrenchment and rationalisation affect women disproportionately.

In 1996, the government's shift from its RDP priorities that targeted apartheid backlogs to the Growth Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR) that targeted foreign investment caused a major rift between trade unions and government. COSATU and SADTU argued that GEAR was a self-imposed structural adjustment policy, thus impacting negatively on the working class and the poor (COSATU, 2001; SADTU, 2002, 2006). GEAR cut back government spending on social services, and promoted the privatisation and commercialisation of social services. GEAR deepened poverty and entrenched inequalities in the country (SADTU, 2006). Furthermore, COSATU (2001) argued that GEAR impacted negatively on women, particularly black working class women, given their structurally disadvantaged position in the economy. GEAR resulted in some of the most intense struggles between labour and government in South Africa. COSATU argues that its opposition to GEAR and its other labour-related campaigns illustrate its commitment to advancing gender equality (COSATU, 2001b).

However, Shamim Meer (2000) argues that the labour movement has been ineffective in engaging the state and its institutions on their poor performance in redressing social inequalities. Instead, COSATU naively assumed that the ANC-led government would automatically deliver, based on its historical record and intention as a national liberation movement and now as part of the Tripartite Alliance.⁹ Furthermore, Lehulere (2003) argues that from the late 1990s COSATU itself had made a rightward shift in its economic strategy, from a radical socialist position in the early 1990s to drifting towards accommodation of GEAR and capitalism. The federation's use of rhetorical radicalism to defend its position rather than challenging

⁹ An Alliance between the ANC, SACP and COSATU

capital and advancing socialist aspirations of the working class in South Africa has come under severe criticism from leftwing political circles (McKinley, 2003; Lehlere, 2003). Thus, COSATU finds itself in a contradictory position fighting for higher wages *within the existing capitalist system*, unlike other union movements committed to the overthrow of that very system (NALEDI, 2006b).

The federation, having emerged from a capitalist society, is also gendered (Orr, 2006). Moreover, neither COSATU nor the Tripartite Alliance, consisting of male-dominated patriarchal organisations, has been ineffectual in prioritising gender oppression (Meer, 2000, p.19). Orr (2006) maintains that struggles and silences characterise COSATU's efforts to advance gender equality. Although it challenged government policies (especially GEAR and privatisation), the federation failed to make explicit the gendered impact of these policies. This is evident in the deepening impoverishment of working-class women in the country (Orr, 2006). Orr (2006) argues that COSATU has failed to exploit possibilities for state reform within a capitalist system to improve women's lives. The federation has the potential to lessen the burden of unpaid reproductive labour, act to change the sexual division of labour in the home and the workplace, and consciously challenge unequal gender power relations (Orr, 2006, p.11).

The lowering of labour costs resulted in increased unemployment, retrenchment and casualisation. Orr (2006) argues that casualisation has a particularly negative effect on women workers because benefits such as health, training and paid maternity leave are lost. Furthermore, given the patriarchal nature of South Africa, job losses emasculate men (Meer, 2000). The loss of power as "breadwinners" in traditional notions of society strip men of their dignity and often manifest in increased domestic violence, rape and abuse. In most instances, women and children endure most of these violent acts. However, COSATU's job and anti-poverty campaign has failed to highlight the increasing vulnerability of women in the wake of unemployment, retrenchment and casualisation (Orr, 2006).

COSATU has challenged government's disappointing response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic and has worked tirelessly with the Treatment Action Campaign and the Tripartite Alliance to agitate government to provide leadership and resources to deal with the epidemic. However, again it has lost the campaign opportunity to underscore the disproportional impact of HIV/AIDS on women and the girl child. Hence, the federation's lack of a gendered approach to its campaigns has been a lost opportunity to underscore gender in campaigns against neo-liberal policies, privatisation, unemployment, poverty and HIV and AIDS (Orr, 2006).

2.3.3 Women's Structure versus Gender Structure

The period of militant women's resistance during apartheid has given way in the past 15 years to a politics of engagement in South Africa. Since 1994, the promotion to gender equity has been ceded to democratisation and nation building. The heightened women's activism that characterised the trade union movement in the 1980s has now been replaced by negotiation and participation. Thus, in the past decade there has been little activism among women activists and workers (NALEDI, 2006).

This period witnessed a conceptual shift in COSATU's undertaking on gender equality. COSATU adopted a "gender structure" as a shift away from its earlier emphasis on a "women's structure". The women's structure was conceptualised as a

separate structure and criticised for its emphasis only on women. The conceptual shift to gender¹⁰ as a theoretical tool was designed to tackle the inequalities in the relations between men and women (NALEDI, 2006). Unlike the reformist nature of the women's structure, this perspective emphasised women's oppression as a product of the unequal power relations between men and women in society and was perceived as a progressive approach that included both men and women sharing responsibilities in resolving their problems together.

However, many women activists interpreted this conceptual shift as a strategy by male trade unionists to prevent women from accessing resources and occupying the separate spaces necessary for their development and empowerment. They argued that the historical exclusion of black women from economic and political life required special redress in the unions (NALEDI, 2006). Furthermore, a "women's structure" was also seen as a strategy for the separate organising of women. According to NALEDI (2006), many trade union women activists at the time argued that using "gender" as a dominant term in an environment still plagued by unequal relations between men and women ignored men's resistance to change. Orr (1999, p.12) observes that male unionists manipulated the concept of gender to dilute the potential militancy of women's structures to challenge their power base.

It was unfortunate that this conceptual shift from women's structures to gender structures has not opened critical debate about the federation's approach to women's emancipation and equality. Instead, COSATU has not moved beyond arguments based on gender stereotypes and has failed to engage the federation on the changing nature of reproductive labour under global capitalism. Nor has it redressed the exploitation of black men and women (Meer, 2000; Orr, 1999; NALEDI, 2006b). The September Commission (1997) made similar observations in its investigation of political and economic challenges facing the labour movement in the new millennium.

2.3.4 The Quota System

Many organisations employ quota systems to promote gender equality. According to Trebilcock (1991, p.412), quota systems are a strategic approach, based on the principle of positive action, that recognises the need for special measures to redress gender discrimination. Redressing gender discrimination, mainstreaming women's work and securing a gender perspective in the union's decision making are important overall objectives of a quota system. International experience suggests that the introduction of quota systems is essential to increasing and strengthening women's leadership in trade unions, and to the achievement of gender democracy in the workplace (Daphne, Daphne & Orr 1997; Trebilcock, 1991).

The September Commission proposed a quota system to the sixth COSATU Congress (1997) but this was rejected after intense debate (Daphne, Daphne & Orr

¹⁰ Gender: Sex is a fact of human biology; gender is not. The experience of being male or female differs dramatically from culture to culture. The concept of gender is used by sociologists to describe all the socially given attributes, roles, activities, and responsibilities connected to being a male or a female in a given society. Our gender identity determines how we are perceived, and how we are expected to think and act as women and men because of the way society is organised (March, Smyth & Mukhopadhyay, 2005, p.17). These roles create expectations, in that men and women, respectively, have to conform to these roles. It is also about power relations between men and women (NALEDI, 1999).

1997). The dominant thrust in the pro-quota arguments among COSATU affiliates (NEHAWU¹¹, SAMWU¹², CWIU¹³, SARHWU¹⁴) was that change for women in the labour movement had to include concrete structural mechanisms. Arguments against this thrust were that women should be elected on the basis of merit, and that the quota system amounted to tokenism. They argued that the system assumed women were not capable of taking up leadership. The debate was finally resolved by a compromise position – that the COSATU Central Executive Committee (CEC) would develop a programme on building women’s leadership within a broad political programme with measurable targets.

Of significance was that, overall, the women who spoke about the quota system at the Congress spoke against it (Daphne et al., 1997). However, Daphne et al. (1997) argue that this would be a superficial observation since it was not reflective of views of women in the federation. They are also critical in their assessment of the level of debate at the Congress on the quota system as it lacked political content and understanding of gender issues, particularly on the structural position of women and the oppression they face under patriarchal power relations. The notions of “merit” and “tokenism”, which formed the arguments against the quota, showed a lack of understanding of the structural nature of women’s oppression and the reasons for their absence in the leadership and decision-making structures of the federation (Daphne et al., 1997).

Chapter Six discusses in detail how the women leaders in SADTU experienced the quota system. The analysis is anchored in the observations made in COSATU, in particular the resistance and support by women and men of the quota system in SADTU and the complicity of women in succumbing to male power agendas. The argument incorporates the level of gender consciousness in resisting socialisation and patriarchal and cultural conditioning when it comes to the quota system.

2.3.5 COSATU Gender Policy

COSATU made significant progress in adopting a comprehensive gender policy in 2001 to provide a framework for action for its affiliates to establish gender structures. The policy espoused a progressive vision towards gender relations across all sectors of society. The policy stated that:

COSATU and its affiliates were guided by a vision of a society free of sexism, racism, class exploitation, and other forms of oppression. We envisage a future where women participate equally in the economy and society without barriers, and where women are emancipated from all forms of oppression in the household, the workplace and in broader society. We have a vision of a trade union movement as a home for women workers.
(COSATU Gender Policy, 2006, p.2)

The two policy statements, “Promoting Equality in union structures and staffing” and “Equality in the Labour Market”, cover a range of issues and include guidelines with targets for affiliates in the following key areas:

¹¹ National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union

¹² South African Municipal Workers Union

¹³ Chemical Workers Industrial Union

¹⁴ South African Railways and Harbours Workers Union

- **Promoting Equality in union structures and staffing**
 - Building Women Leadership
 - Building Gender Structures
 - Eliminating the Gender Division of Labour in Trade Unions
 - Education and Empowerment
 - Sexual Harassment
 - Organising Women Workers
 - Building the National Women's Movement

- **Equality in the Labour Market**
 - Parental Rights and Childcare
 - Equal Pay for Equal Work and Work of Equal Value
 - Employment Equality Agreements
 - Health and Safety
 - Participation of Women in Collective Bargaining
 - Fighting Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation
 - Gender Equality in Broader Society

(COSATU Gender Policy, 2001)

In line with the COSATU Gender Policy, most of the COSATU unions have established gender structures to drive gender campaigns and to spearhead the participation of women in the unions. However, the discussion document proposing the gender policy highlighted the attitudinal barriers to advancing gender equality in the federation:

One of the key challenges that we face in the gender struggle was the elimination of conservative attitudes and resistance to change on the part of both women and men. For this reason we have chosen the theme: "Gender: A struggle within the struggle". This theme clearly points to the challenges and contradictions that we face in living up to our political vision through our organisational practice. (COSATU, 2001, p.1)

Similarly, recent reports (NALEDI, 2006b; Orr, 2006; COSATU, 2006) are highly critical of the pervasive patriarchal attitudes that bedevil the federation and its affiliates and note that patriarchy has been a major obstacle to women occupying leadership positions and to engaging in women's emancipation and equality.

However, Jafta (2006, p.7) asserts that although progress has been uneven across the federation there have been success and achievements. COSATU (with two women in decision-making structures, as Treasurer and Second Deputy President at national level) adopted the quota as a policy position to increase women in leadership positions. The quota not only secured women in leadership positions, but also in developmental programmes and activities. There is also an improvement in the representation and visibility of women leaders at the national level, and the election of the first woman president in NEHAWU. However, lower levels of the organisation are still lagging behind. COSATU has also adopted a "Sexual Harassment Code of Good Practice" to deal with Sexual Harassment (SH) in the federation and its affiliates. This code is aligned with the NEDLAC policy and the Employment Equity Act (1998).

Clearly, COSATU has to move beyond the rhetoric of its gender policy and engage in deep introspection for fundamental transformation in gender relations within and outside the federation. As a federation championing the interests of the working class, it has to balance social transformation alongside workplace and bargaining struggles. Hence, the centrality of gender equality cannot be denied, nor can it continue to be delayed (Orr, 2006a, p.18). Chapter Six provides a detailed analysis of SADTU's gender policy and its impact on gender equality. The extent to which the SADTU experience mirrors the federation's is obvious in the analysis of the women leaders' experiences.

2.4 THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEMOCRATIC TEACHERS' UNION

2.4.1 The Formation of SADTU

Historically, teacher unionism in South Africa was divided along racial, ethnic, geographical and political lines that reflected the provision of education as determined by apartheid legislation. In an attempt to curb teachers' civil and political rights, the apartheid state passed several Acts to prohibit any public criticism of any department, office or institution of the state. It was common for the apartheid state to recognise only established conservative, apolitical teacher organisations, while withholding recognition, and forcefully rooting out any forms of teacher militancy, from emerging unions that challenged its racial policies. This refusal to grant official recognition became one of the major catalysts of teacher militancy in the 1980s.

In looking at the origins of SADTU we must go back to the wake of the 1976 student uprising in South Africa. The imposition of Afrikaans¹⁵ as the compulsory medium of teaching and learning in black schools under the apartheid state fanned the flames of an already volatile situation in the black townships. Such an inflammatory policy precipitated an open revolt against the state that spread like wildfire through much of urban South Africa. MacDonald (2006, p.68) asserts that, despite the revolt being poorly organised, it sounded the death knell for apartheid and destroyed confidence in the economy, thus forcing the state towards the path of reform. In typical fashion, the apartheid state responded by introducing a state of emergency and increased torture and detention without trial, and by repressing political activity among black people. This served to intensify the struggle against apartheid. Out of this maelstrom emerged powerful trade union social movements that organised against apartheid. COSATU was formed out of these earlier trade union social movements. The formation of COSATU provided stronger impetus for the formation of other trade unions that grew in support and in organisational discipline (Meintjies, 1996, p.50).

By the mid-1980s, at the height of the struggle for national liberation in South Africa, established teacher organisations were increasingly coming under criticism for working within the apartheid system. These unions' acceptance of apartheid laws was viewed as being complicit in black oppression. This was exacerbated by the growing dissatisfaction among young teachers in particular who were opposed to the political and educational realities facing the profession. Govender (1996, p.34) contends that the rise of the labour movement, the powerful message from the Black

¹⁵ The language of the white minority of Dutch origin

Consciousness Movement and the growing militancy of the students' movement post-1976 had a politicising effect on many teachers. Chapter Five describes the impact of these experiences on the political consciousness of the women leaders and their growing activism.

The situation reached its peak with the introduction of the new tricameral parliamentary system in 1983, which was designed to legitimate racial representation in South Africa. The tri-cameral parliament expanded the previous exclusive preserve of whites in parliament by establishing three segregated houses, with Coloureds and Indians gaining their own "House of Representation". Although this gave Coloureds and Indians responsibility for their "own" affairs (e.g. schools), whites still retained real citizenship and black Africans continued to be excluded from political decision making. This further entrenched separate education, based on a racial hierarchy. Black Africans received the least amount of resources and thus the poorest quality of education.

However, this attempt to divide blacks further along racial lines backfired when the majority of Indians and Coloureds boycotted the elections. Furthermore, political mobilisation against the tricameral system served to have a unifying impact on Africans, Coloureds and Indians, thus overcoming the state's intention to sow racial divisions among black South Africans. Teachers, especially the young and radical, played an active role in mobilising against the tricameral parliament system by taking the lead in the school boycotts of the 1980s and by conscientising communities to challenge apartheid rule and advance the struggle for national liberation. The influence of apartheid racial categorising on the identity of the women leaders and their political values is analysed in Chapter Five.

With the country's education system suffering a virtual collapse, established teacher organisations were challenged to rethink their political and social responsibilities in black communities. These developments in education converged with struggles in the workplace and community-based struggles, creating a critical mass of young politicised teachers who identified strongly with working-class struggles against apartheid. Chapter Five illustrates the experiences of the women leaders during this period and analyses their influence on the women's gender consciousness. SADTU was born out of the two great social movements – the trade union movement (principally COSATU) and the education mass movement led by the National Education Coordinating Council (NECC) – that dominated the political landscape of South Africa in the late 1980s and 1990s. Thus, there were great expectations that SADTU would deliver progressive change to the teaching profession. Chapter Six provides a glimpse into the women leaders' aspirations that tell of the hope the union was expected to bring for ending discrimination against women.

The birth of the union was accompanied by the surge of teacher militancy in South African schools that resonated strongly with Giroux (1988) and Freire's (1972) view of teachers as critically engaged transformative intellectuals. These theorists asserted that, although teachers were central to reinforcing ideological control of those in power, they were equally capable of sabotaging these controlling ideological relations (Giroux, 1988, p.127). Hence, the positions that teachers take as either servants of, or resistors to, capital depend to a large extent on their ideological and political identities. The role of teachers in South Africa in the national liberation struggle thus gives credence to Freire's theory of resistance and agency. Chapters Five and Six discuss the resistance and agency among the women leaders as radical

young teachers and as SADTU leaders. In a similar vein, Govender (1996), in explaining teacher militancy in the 1980s and early 1990s, provides a convincing argument, by linking teacher resistance to the struggles of the oppressed masses, the role of the repressive apartheid state and the development of social movement unionism, that all these factors favoured the flourishing of SADTU as a trade union in South Africa.

SADTU was launched in October 1990, with 30,000 members, and went on to become the largest and most influential teachers' union in South Africa, effectively organising nearly two-thirds of the country's teachers. This was achieved by the upsurge in teacher militancy during the 1980s that hastened the teacher unification process and coupled with a sustained recruiting campaign by the fledgling SADTU during the 1990s. SADTU affiliated with COSATU three years' later and entrenched itself as part of the broader working-class movement in the country.

Today SADTU membership stands at 230,000 teachers, of which over 64% are women (SADTU, 2006a). This mass membership provides SADTU with its strength in the bargaining chamber, and its political clout in influencing education policy. The large membership base has ensured that the organisation has rapidly achieved financial self-sufficiency. However, even if the union is clearly non-racial in intent, SADTU is still largely a black organisation. As the third-largest union in COSATU, and with its president having led the federation for eight years, SADTU occupies a powerful position in the federation.

2.4.2 The SADTU Constitution

The SADTU constitution encapsulates progressive and gender-sensitive vision, aims and objectives, which give the organisation its formal authority to wield its power. Hence, the SADTU constitution has created conducive intentions for the union to advance and achieve equality.

Accordingly, the Preamble of the SADTU Constitution (SADTU, 2006b, p.5) states that:

We, teachers of South Africa, having committed ourselves to the transformation of education and dedicated ourselves to the development of an education system which is fully accessible, equal and qualitative, free of apartheid legacy and which is the just expression of the will of the people, as enshrined in the Constitution of the country, hereby proclaim the need for a single teachers' union in our land.

Further, recognizing the deeply embedded class and gender cleavages in South African society, SADTU commits itself to eliminating all gender and class based discrimination in education in South Africa. To this end, SADTU shall endeavour to inculcate the values of egalitarianism and social justice among its members and the broader society.

The history of the union is rich with stories of the contribution of women teachers to the formation of the union. The inclusion of gender and class in the preamble of the SADTU constitution illustrates that it reflects the concerns of women and forms the basis for the union to effect equality.

The preamble was supported by the following aim and objectives relevant to this study:

Aim:

The aim of the Union shall be to unite teachers and educationalists and to work for a non-racial, non-sexist, just and democratic system of education in a free and democratic South Africa. It shall observe and act in accordance with the spirit and principle of democracy in all the Union's activities. SADTU shall combat all class based discrimination in education, and commits to expose, at all times, the class nature of the South African society.

(SADTU Constitution, 2006b, p.5)

The aim of the SADTU constitution establishes the parameters within which women may claim their rights as equals with their male counterparts and commits the union to working towards an inclusive democratic education system. It also alludes to a socialist Marxist frame by emphasising the eradication of class-based discrimination in education and society in general.

The SADTU constitution has as its objectives that are relevant to gender equality:

- To eradicate discrimination based on gender, sexism and the sexual harassment of teachers and learners;
- To establish affirmative action programmes for women and to maximise participation of women at all levels of the Union and the education system as a whole;
- To eradicate racism and discrimination in employment and education generally.

(SADTU Constitution, 2006b, pp.5-7)

Among the objectives in the SADTU constitution are objectives which explicitly address gender discrimination and target women's active participation in the union and the education system. The vision, aim and objectives of the union illustrate the nested identity of the union within the broader education system. Chapters Five and Seven provide empirical evidence of the implementation of the constitution into the organisation.

2.4.3 Policies that Support Women's Empowerment

In a recent analysis of teacher trade unions in South Africa, Govender (2004) states that a critical challenge for teacher unions, both in terms of membership strength and union commitment to educational and social change, is the question of gender politics. Arguably, gender concerns continue to be marginalised (Parker 1993 & Unterhalter 1998, cited in Govender, 2004). Teacher unions can be criticised for having laudable policies but little to show for it. Women teachers constitute the larger proportion of the general teaching force. They comprise close to 64% of the members of both SADTU and NAPTOSA and 70% of SAOU's members, but continue to occupy lower positions in the unions (Govender, 2004).

In its endeavour to advance gender equality, SADTU has established a Gender Desk. The rationale supporting its establishment is grounded in the federation's conceptual shift

from a “women’s structure” to a “gender structure” (refer to Section 2.3.3 above). The experiences of the women of the Gender Desk and its impact on advancing the gender struggle are analysed in Chapter Seven.

In addition to a Gender Desk, the union has also developed a “Sexual Harassment Policy”, an “HIV/AIDS Policy” and a “Child Care Policy” to promote gender equality in the union. In addition, the Gender Desk has put in place programmes and mechanisms to address the gender imbalance at leadership level. These include a mentoring programme in 1999, capacity building and gender consciousness raising workshops from 1997 to date, quotas for attendance of training workshops and other meetings within the organisation in 2003, and the adoption of a policy to set measurable targets for women's advancement within the union in 2002.

There is no doubt that gender is on the SADTU agenda. This study attempts to explore the contention of many writers (Mama 1996; COSATU, 2006; Orr, 2006) that the paradox facing South African trade unions is that, while they seek progressive gains and benefits for their constituency, they still function within a male-dominated ethos and continue to remain patriarchal organisations. This study provides us with empirical evidence of SADTU’s progress in terms of its intention to achieve gender equality within the organisation.

2.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter I argue that the national liberation struggle, although not very instrumental in advancing the gender struggle during apartheid, was pivotal in securing women’s rights in the democratic South Africa.

I maintain that women in the trade union social movements were instrumental in the fight against apartheid and made visible the race, class and gender oppression of women under apartheid. I argue that the labour federation COSATU played an extraordinary role in dismantling apartheid and building the new democratic South Africa. In my critique of COSATU’s gender achievements, I concede that although the federation has moved beyond the rhetoric of gender equality it has failed to exploit opportunities to champion the centrality of gender that emerged out of the policy shifts of the new democratic government. In addition, I note COSATU’s successes and challenges in advancing gender equity within the federation.

In discussing the history of SADTU, I argue that the lack of gender parity in teacher unions is generally common in South Africa. I trace the militant political trajectory and put forward the potential for resistance and agency. In critiquing the gender structures and policies embodied in the SADTU constitution, I discuss the union’s potential for advancing the gender struggle.

Having outlined the historical and political context of the gender struggles for this study, I move on, in the next chapter, to discuss the theoretical lenses I employ for understanding women’s experience in the union and in the broader society.

CHAPTER THREE

ORGANISATIONAL IMAGING AND CONCEPTIONS OF FEMINISMS: TOWARDS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

*I am still experiencing discrimination as a woman every day
Although I am a gender activist and,
Although I am educated on gender issues
I am experiencing it every day,
In SADTU in the trade union,
Now that I am out of SADTU, I am experiencing it even more.*

(Appendix 3, Poem 22, No 12)

3.1 CHAPTER OUTLINE

This chapter builds on the previous chapter and provides the theoretical lenses for analysing women's experiences in the union. I propose a multi-dimensional approach, which has necessitated the inclusion of several layers to interrogate women leaders' experiences and evolving consciousness in the study. These layers include the influence of the political and historical contexts on the women's identity. These contexts have already been discussed in Chapter Two.

In my attempt to build theory on the experiences of women leaders in the union, I explore the different conceptions of feminism and organisational imagings. In this chapter, I focus on the social and ideological construction of gender within different conceptions of feminism in relation to family, schools, unions and broader society. In this way I provide the theoretical frame for the analysis of women's position in organisations, the education system and society.

I then discuss the different imaging of organisations and their gendered subtext in relation to women's gendered experiences and evolving consciousness in organisations.

3.2 CONCEPTIONS OF FEMINISMS

The notion of feminism has multiple philosophical and ideological constructions which are often highly contested. It would therefore be disingenuous to attempt a definitive conception of the construct. For the purposes of this research, I borrow from the traditions of postmodern and poststructuralist thinking which stress plurality and reject the conceptions of certainty, truth, and objectivity (Bryson, 1992, p.226). Thus, they denounce universalised and totalising accounts for all phenomena. They draw attention to the male bias of claims of universal truths and argue that these "truths" are not neutral but sexually specific and linked to power (Beasley, 1992, p.86). According to them universalising principles becomes complicit in women's subordination where the notion of the universal human being in traditional western thought is the white male standard. Post structuralism shares broad features with post

modernism but tend to stress the shifting fragmented complexity of meaning, whether referring to language, communicative systems or other aspects of cultural and social life, and its related power relations (Beasley, 1999, p.91). Hence, according to post structuralism, meaning and or language is never neutral but rather is socially contextualised and constructed. Bryson (1992) maintains that in post structuralism, patriarchy cannot be eradicated unless we can think as women and free ourselves from the oppressive thoughts we have internalised as women.

3.2.1 Introduction

Scanning the literature on feminisms yielded quite diverse varieties of feminist thought, each with its corresponding philosophical base, tensions and contradictions (hooks, 1992; Harding, 1987; Evans, 1997; Beasley, 1999; Fraser, 1997); Mama, 1996; Lather, 1991; Wolf, 1997; Barret, 1980). However, although feminisms differ in their analysis of the origin of gender oppression and what constitutes women's liberation, they all converge in their concern about women's oppression in society and strive to improve the lives and relations between women and men by proposing strategies for women's liberation. A feminist is someone whose central concern and preoccupation lies with the position of women and their struggle for emancipation. Feminists are driven by their feminist consciousness to put women's rights at the centre of their work, and for these scholars feminism is a conscious political choice (Ledwith & Colgan, 1996, p.27). The study considers gender as a fundamental organising principle of society and has a material, structural and ideological basis.

The study is one example of an attempt to utilise feminist principles to understand the experiences of women within organisations. Although organisational theories are assumed gender neutral, they weigh heavily towards the study of males in society (Mills & Trancred, 1992). Hence, the exploration of different conceptions of feminisms makes gender visible in organisations. The feminisms argue ideological and structural drivers of gender inequalities and gender oppression which occupy the different domains occupied by women. By examining the experiences of women in the union, the research exposes the way power structures and positions women in organisations. Acker (1994) argues that feminist theories serve a dual purpose, as guides to understanding gender inequality and its effect on women, and as guides to action. Hence, I consider a broad spectrum of feminist conceptions in my exploration to gain an expansive understanding of women's gendered experiences in organisations.

This study is not located exclusively within a particular strand of feminism; instead, it incorporates five conceptions of feminism that affect a feminist analysis of how the women leaders experience their gender in the organisation. My choice of feminisms has been guided by COSATU's Political Education Booklet (July, 2000) "Understanding Gender: A struggle within the struggle". African Feminism does not feature in any of COSATU or SADTU's policies, articles or training manuals on gender issues; nevertheless, it resonates strongly with the experiences of the women leaders of my research and, hence, is included in this section.

3.2.2 Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminism's political philosophy supports the belief that all individuals have rights to freedom and autonomy. A just society is one in which all individuals have

the right to exercise their autonomy and to fulfil themselves regardless of their sex or gender. Liberal feminism understands female subordination in society in terms of unequal rights or artificial barriers to women's participation in the public world, beyond the family and household (Beasley, 1999). Liberal feminists view these barriers as being rooted in customary and legal constraints that block women's entrance and/or success in the public world (Tong, 1989, p.2). They argue that women are not fundamentally different from men yet are denied opportunities on the basis of their sex. Society excludes women on the basis of the false belief that women are, by nature less capable than men and do not share the same rational nature as men. This notion has its roots in Western Enlightenment and its understanding of reason. Hence, the analysis of the women's experiences in Chapter Six ascertains whether "false belief" excludes women leaders in the union and the consequence of this false belief in fulfilling their true potential.

Gender equality, according to liberal feminists, requires, first, making the rules of the game fair for both men and women and, secondly, making certain that none of the runners in the race for society's goods and services are systematically disadvantaged. Liberal feminists do not critique or advocate change to the systemic structural base for gender inequality, but rather advocate temporary measures of "affirmative action", in terms of which women are appointed or promoted in advance of equally qualified men. Even "reverse discrimination" is suggested, in terms of which they are appointed before a more qualified man (Bryson, 1992, p.164). The aim is to alter women's status and opportunities within existing political and economic frameworks by removing barriers to women's liberation.

Liberal feminists focus on women's access to what men have in society. Unlike their radical sisters, they assume that gender equality can be achieved by democratic reforms, without the need for revolutionary changes in the economic, political or cultural life (Weiner, 2000). By focusing on a wide range of experiences encompassing childhood to adulthood, the research intends to reveal the barriers to gender equality that inhabit the women leaders' homes, education systems, union and individual psyches. The liberal feminist aim of equality with men is sometime criticised for devaluing women by encouraging them to absorb masculine values in the pursuit of equality of the sexes. The analysis in Chapter Six provides nuanced insight into the way the women leaders experience similar reforms in the union.

3.2.3 Radical Feminism

Radical feminism unlike other feminist approaches supports the theoretical standpoint that women's oppression is buried deep in patriarchy's sex-gender system (Tong, 1989). Patriarchy is a trans-historical system of male domination over women, pervading all aspects of culture and social life (Moorosi, 2006). It is systemic and hegemonic (Harding, 1987), characterised by power, dominance, hierarchy and competition; a system that cannot be reformed but can only be ripped out by its roots (Tong, 1989). This does not include only patriarchy's legal and political structures but comprises every level of society – its social and cultural institutions. Patriarchy takes the form of discrimination, disregard, control, violence and exploitation. Radical feminism argues that social institutions such as the family, education system, religion, workplace and broader society perpetuate and institutionalise these negative values of patriarchy. The ideology of patriarchy supports the belief that men are superior to women and that women are the property of men and under their control. Chapter Six of this study tests these assumptions in

the analysis of the women's experiences in the union and argues the relevance of a radical feminist lens for understanding the women's experiences in the union.

Simone de Beauvoir (1989, p.15) appropriately captures women's secondary status in her description of the hierarchical relationship between men and women in her argument that, "He is the subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other". Similarly, Kelly-Gadol (1976, p.815) maintains that the sense of "otherness" is essential to our historical awareness of women as an oppressed group. She argues that radical feminists help us to appreciate the social formation of "femininity" as an internalisation of ascribed inferiority, which has served, at the same time, to manipulate those who have the authority women lack. For many radical feminists, the basis of women's oppression lies not in social organisation or physical domination, but in a male control of culture, religion, language and knowledge that limits the ways in which we think and causes patriarchal assumptions to be internalised by women as well as by men (Bryson, 1992, p. 223).

Radical feminism sees the traditional concepts of male power extending male control to both our public worlds of politics and employment and our private worlds of family and sexuality. The family, as a central part of society's power structure, sustains patriarchal power and perpetuates women's oppression in the public and private worlds – "it is a social institution in which women's labour is exploited, male sexual power may be violently expressed and oppressive gender identities and modes of behaviour are learned" (Bryson, 1992, p.198). Furthermore, radical feminists argue that the pervasiveness of male domination and female submission as the norm in something as fundamental as sexuality makes it the norm in other contexts as well. This study analyses the gendered experiences of the women to understand whether patriarchy has influenced, manipulated or conditioned women to serve male needs, wants and interests in the union. Hence, the analysis focuses on the women's childhood to their adulthood, to provide an expansive view of the role of patriarchy on their socialisation.

3.2.4 Marxist Feminism

The central tenet of Marxist and socialist feminisms is the belief that women's situation cannot be understood in isolation from its socio-economic context, and that any meaningful improvement in the lives of women requires that this context be changed (Bryson, 1992, p.232). A significant aspect of the analysis in Chapters Five and Six is the examination of the socio-political gendering of society and its influence on the status and position of women in the union. Marxists understand women's work as an outcome of the sexual division of labour that occupies two distinct spheres of work: one is **reproductive work**, which is largely unpaid and unrecognised, and the other is **productive work**, which has a market value. Marxist feminism is rooted in the belief that class is a primary indicator for women's status and function in a capitalist society. Hence, women's experiences of oppression is determined by their class status in a capitalist society.¹⁶ Marxist feminists claim that women's oppression originated with the introduction of private property¹⁷ and the rise of industrial capitalism.¹⁸ They have assisted us in understanding how the

¹⁶ Bourgeois women's experiences will not be the same as those of proletarian women.

¹⁷ This is based much on the work of Fredrich Engels.

¹⁸ Capitalism is viewed as a system of exploitative power relations that are transactionary (exchange related) in nature.

institution of the family¹⁹ supports capitalistic principles, in terms of the low status of women's domestic work and women's wage-earning power. They argue that we have grown accustomed to the work-family split and to a concomitant version of the public-private split that is peculiar to capitalism.

Marxist feminist, Kelly-Gadol (1976), maintains that a theory of social change that incorporates the relation of the sexes has to consider how general changes in production affect and shape production in the family and, in this way, the respective roles of men and women. Reflection on this state of affairs suggests that women's oppression is a product of the political, social, and economic structures associated with capitalism (Tong, 1989, p.2). Hence, incorporating Marxist and feminist conceptions into the analysis required the examination of how the family and schooling system had socialised the women leaders into particular roles that influenced their world-views and experiences in the union. Generally, unions are set up to oppose class divisions in society and to protect the working class from exploitation, particularly in capitalist societies. Hence, this study also critiques the paradox of union politics, where unions are expected to focus on the exploitation of the working class but set up their own internal discriminatory power structures.

According to Marxist feminism, social existence determines consciousness and in order to understand women's oppression we must analyse women's work status and women's self-image. Chapter Six provides rich details of how the women experienced their position in the union and its impact on their self-image and consciousness. Marxist feminists look to the awakening of class consciousness, in which people as a group become fully conscious of their oppression as a class, and in which that group works towards the elimination of such oppression. The importance is that their collective action as a particular class strengthens them making it extremely difficult to halt the achievement of their fundamental goal of emancipation.

Marxist feminists advocate the elimination of the opposite of class consciousness – false consciousness – which impedes true class unity by deceiving exploited people into thinking that they are not really exploited and are, therefore, capable of acting and speaking as if they were just as free and equal as their exploiters (Tong, 1989, p.43). Similarly, this study engages in domains of consciousness related to gender oppression for understanding the barriers to women's emancipation in the union. Martin (2002) argues that there is relatively little feminist work on false consciousness and its complicity in engineering subjugation. This thesis intends to add to the scholarship on false consciousness that exists by focusing on the influence of class location and levels of consciousness on the gendered experiences of the women leaders in the union.

Marx's social reproduction theory focuses on the centrality of class in perpetuating inequalities in capitalist societies. According to Marx, social relations and institutions

¹⁹ Capitalism views the family as an economic unit that has been manufactured to reproduce labour at women's expense. The family in modern society has served as the domain for the production and training of the working class. It has been the alleged reason for women having to function as underpaid, irregular labourers whose wages generally had to be supplemented by sexual attachment to a man, inside or outside family arrangements. And it has served to compensate the worker whose means of subsistence were alienated from him but who could have private property in his wife (Kelly-Gadol, in Harding, 1987, pp.21-27).

in society often perpetuate and reproduce class structures in a capitalist society. He identifies five main aspects of social reproduction: the technical division of labour in the work place, the social division of labour in society, the education system, the state, and the family (Walker, 1979, p.XV). According to Marx, education systems are a classic site of social reproduction and schools are the mechanism that reproduce and maintain the capitalist's social fabric. Hence, the South African education system, with its sexual division of labour and the class location of teachers, has particular significance in understanding the gendered experiences of the women leaders in the union.

This study applies some of the conceptions of Marxist feminism to explain the experiences of the women leaders, particularly in relation to the sexual division of labour and its impact on equality in the teaching profession. Since this study considers class location in analysing the experiences of women in the union, it is necessary to provide a brief discussion of the influence of teachers' class location on perceptions of gender.

The identities of teachers have overwhelmingly concentrated on professional status and only recently has the gender and race dimension of teacher identity begun to receive attention in current discourses (Apple, 1989; Carrim, 2003; Jansen, 2003). The participants in this research, both the researcher and women leaders, are teachers and this study attempted to add to the discourse on gender and class by focusing on women teachers within a teachers' union. The gendered experience of the women leaders provided a snapshot into the interaction of gender and class in the education system in general and the union in particular.

Earlier theories on teachers' identities viewed teachers as performing an "intellectual" role in society. Teachers were bound by professional codes of conduct, served particular clientele, and were supposedly given high prestige and status in society as "professionals" (Wright, 1979). In terms of the class position of teachers, Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich (1979, p.8) argue that workers in the state and other "ideological apparatuses" – schools, government agencies, welfare agencies, mass media etc. – must be considered as being different from production workers. Many theorists (see Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, 1979; Wright, 1979) argue that teachers typically occupy a contradictory class location, straddling the working class at the economic level and the petty bourgeoisie (middle class) at the ideological level. Thus, they are located simultaneously in two classes and share the interests of both the petty bourgeoisie and the working class.

Wright (1979) maintains that teachers at the level of production, like the rest of the working class, sell their labour to capital or the state and have no control over the education system as a whole, although they do have some control over the process of their work. However, at the ideological level, teachers contribute to the ideological hegemony of the bourgeoisie. Thus, while teachers may be functionally located closer to the bourgeoisie, structurally they are generally not members of the bourgeois class. He asserts that this "disarticulation between their class location at the economic and ideological levels has important consequences for the potential role of teachers in the class struggle" (Wright, 1979, p.208). The enactment of this contradictory class location provides insight into the experiences of the women in the union and in their schools. The study examines the influence of teachers' contradictory class location on the union's gender practices and gender assumptions; in particular, it interrogates the experiences of women leaders in previously male-dominated spaces in the union.

3.2.5 Socialist Feminism

Socialist feminists have become convinced that living in a classed society is not the only, or even primary, cause of women's oppression as women. Experiences of women in socialist countries, such as Cuba, mainland China, and the former USSR, among others, indicate that, although women have entered the labour force and are relatively economically independent, they are still trapped in the grip of patriarchy. Hence, socialist feminism attempts to weave together the different strands of feminisms by considering the impact of the structure of production, the manipulation of women's reproductive rights and sexuality, and the socialisation of the sexes on the oppression of women. Unlike Marxist feminism, which relates mainly to capitalism, generally socialist feminist theory views capitalism and patriarchy as related and as mutually reinforcing of one another. Socialist feminists recognise that both class and race clearly mediate women's experience of patriarchy.

Socialist feminism recognises that oppression based on gender, race and class has both a material and ideological basis (Orr, 2006, p.6). Hence, oppression is structured into a system within the society; underpinned by the relations of ownership and production; justified; and perpetuated through the dominant ideas and beliefs articulated within the society. Consistent with socialist feminism, the analysis in Chapters Five and Six examines the material and ideological basis of women's oppression in the union by analysing the influence of race, class and gender on their experiences, cutting across childhood and adulthood.

According to socialist feminism, any change in the mode of production will result in a change to women's biosocial²⁰ and ideological²¹ ways of seeing the world, but women's oppression will persist unless their psyches undergo a revolution equivalent to the economic one that effects the transition from capitalism to socialism (Tong, 1989, p.176). Changes to a woman's exterior environment must simultaneously follow the transformation of her psyche. Fellow socialist feminist theorist, Jagger (Tong, 1989, p.189) views the alienation of women, from all the processes²² and people²³ she needs to achieve wholeness as a person, as a unifying concept under capitalism. She believes that "use of the theoretical framework of alienation identifies women's contemporary oppression as phenomena peculiar to the capitalist form of male dominance" (Tong, 1989, p.189). She maintains that oppression is not just in the minds of women, it also lurks in social institutions and cultural structures. Chapter Six also employs a socialist feminist lens to examine how the women, once having penetrated male positions of power, experience their achievement at a material and ideological level.

3.2.6 African Feminism

This study also considers African Feminism as a possible lens for analysis in the study. African Feminism is a response to the domination of western influences, and

²⁰ Interplay between female biology and social environment

²¹ The unconscious ideas (related to psychoanalysis and the Oedipus complex) that men and women have about the way women should relate to men in society

²² These include sexuality, motherhood and intellectuality (women are unsure of their intellectual capacities).

²³ Her children and competition impede her friendship with women, among others.

attempts to provide an interpretation of women's oppression in Africa by registering sensitivity to the African context and practice and by ensuring that "what is local and context specific vitally informs gender analysis, feminist practices and organisational development in Africa" (Essof, 2001, p. 125). According to Kolawole (2002, p.92), Africa's diverse historical experiences continue to shape social realities, including gender and feminism, and are significant to African feminism. Thus, Africa's response to feminism is dynamic. The paragraphs below provide a very brief historical and conceptual overview of African feminism.

Feminism was slow to take root in Africa and was initially usually dismissed as something alien and western, far removed from the concern of "real" African women. Mama (1996, p. 2) maintains that the "real" African woman, in the collective imagination of the traditional African male, is:

a wife, mother and beast of burden, she is passive in the face of abuse, tolerant of all forms of infidelity; her only real ambition is to retain respectability by labouring for the maintenance of a stable marriage and family and seeing to the satisfaction of her husband's desires.
(Mama, 1996, p.2)

The intense collective oppression of African women, in time, created the mood and context for their resistance and agency.

The collective marginalisation of African women, the alienating discourses of white western feminists, and the dismal failure of international "Women in Development" programmes to address gross gender inequalities in Africa converged to create the impetus for gender resistance in Africa. Furthermore, emerging regional and national women's movements, often driven by shifts in regional and national politics towards independence and democracy, served as a catalyst for the development of a feminist consciousness, articulating the oppression of African women in political terms. However, many of these fledgling women's movements opted to join male-led nationalist movements rather than mobilise independently to fight for equality or to embrace feminism as a separate movement.

Mama (cited in Essof, 2001, p.124) maintains that, although women in Africa display reluctance to embrace feminisms, they are vocal about their commitment to women's equality. Mama (cited in Essof, 2001, pp.124-125) explores three schools of thought to explain these contractions. The first argues that feminism is not African: it is a western invention and has no real value for African women. The second acknowledges feminism as an ideology for women's emancipation but names it differently as "Womanism" and as "Islamic Feminism". The particular relevance of Womanism to the anti-apartheid context in South Africa is explained below. The third school of thought advocates an African feminism that retains the concept of feminism but contextualises it within Africa and gives it African meaning. Similarly, Arndt (2002a) maintains that African feminism analyses the unequal position of women in African gender relations, illuminating the causes and consequences of this inequality with the aim of upsetting existing patterns of domination, transforming gender relations, and improving the situation of African women. This study attempts to add to the scholarship of African feminism by illuminating the experiences of African women within an African teachers' union. Furthermore, it explores the tensions between feminist academics and gender activists by simultaneously focusing on the mediation between theory and practice in the research.

Kolawole (2002, p.96) argues that, unlike the exclusive, polarised approach of feminism, Womanism emphasises cultural context, the centrality of family and the inclusion of men. Womanism has its roots in the black feminist movement and resides within a black nationalist tradition (Essof, 2001). Mama (cited in Essof, 2001) argues that South Africa experienced a similar phenomenon during the liberation struggle, where women, although conscious of their marginalisation, opted to incorporate the gender struggle into the broader struggle against white supremacy. This phenomenon was discussed in detail in the previous chapter, under the heading “Gender and the National Liberation Struggle”, and highlights its influence on the struggle for gender equality. It is significant to note that the women leaders in this study were activists in the national liberation struggle. Their response to gender inequalities in the union is influenced by their history of struggle as women and as an oppressed people. An African feminist frame would examine the influence of this history on women’s identity and agency. Similarly, Chapters Five and Six analyse the impact of apartheid on the women’s identity and commitment to gender equality during the liberation struggle and post-liberation period.

African feminists are wary of western feminists and accuse them of imposing western experiential and historical frameworks onto other societies and cultures. Of great significance to African feminism is that women’s subordination is not only a consequence of male oppression but also of colonial and neo-colonial oppression of black people in Africa. The history of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa is regarded as a significant contributor to the subjugation of women, particularly black working-class women. Such emphasis has particular relevance to research on gender in South Africa, which in pre-1994 gender research was considered to be steeped in traditions and scholarship of the west (Walker, 1991; Mama, 1996; Meer, 2000).

Mohanty (1988, p.72), in critiquing western feminism’s relevance to Africa, argues that “what is problematic in the use of ‘women’ as a group, as a stable category of analysis, is that it assumes an ahistorical universal unity among women based on a generalized notion of their subordination”. Western feminisms often consider women as a homogenous group irrespective of differences, which effectively denies women their particular history and identity. African feminists believe that they still have to negotiate the stereotypes, generalisations and bad reputation that have become associated with feminism of the west. However, African feminism recognises the material circumstances, social realities and cultural histories of African societies. It does not treat women as a homogenous group (Arndt, 2002b). African feminism resonates with the intention of this study, and the various material, social and cultural realities that shape the experiences of women are an integral part of the analysis. Chapter Five explains in detail the impact of apartheid on the women in this study and illustrates their marginalisation and “othering”.

Africa’s difficulties with western feminism have led to the conceptualisation of African alternatives to western concepts. African feminism usually critiques existing gender concepts and relations on the basis of flexible paradigms that promote coexistence of men and women. This includes the idea of “cooperation or complementarity” with men, which aims to dispel or challenge the crude conceptions of feminisms as “anti-male” and “anti-family”, and consequently incorporates the notion of “dual-sex role”²⁴ systems which place men as potential allies in the struggle

²⁴ Some African theorists claim that the organisation of social life in pre-colonial Africa is based on a “dual-sex” system, and they associate this system with complementary forms of power in the

for equality (Arndt, 2002a, p.32). The affirmation of motherhood and the family which, according to some African theorists, constitute the symbolic core of a powerful female subject position, contests the Marxist feminist view of women's social disempowerment and symbolic lack (Bakare-Yusuf, 2003, p.4). Similarly, Habasonda (2002, p.101) maintains that often gender campaigns fail to advocate institutional structural change, thus making women vulnerable and creating resistance from men while simultaneously destabilising the family unit. He argues that gender activists respect the operating structures of traditional African society while pushing their ideals. Chapter Six explores the notions of dual-sex roles and the affirmation of motherhood in the experiences of the women leaders in the union in relation to culture and tradition.

African feminists advocate the scrutiny of patriarchal manifestations in a differentiated way that affirms those manifestations that are advantageous to women while working towards abolishing those that oppress them. According to Arndt (2002a, p. 32), this careful consideration attempts to allay African feminists' discomfort with the criticism of African societies. African feminists argue that criticism of African gender relationships plays into stereotypes and prejudices against Africans, and weakens Africa's position with respect to the west. Their concern regarding how they navigate the politics of decolonisation (Msimang, 2002, p.5) aligns African feminists to political struggle and African resistance to western cultural imperialism. Thus gender relations are discussed not only in the context of patriarchy as with radical feminists but also in the context of other oppressive mechanisms such as racism, colonialism, socio-economic exclusion and exploitation. Finally, African feminism moves beyond mere criticisms of patriarchal structures by also attempting to identify both traditionally established and entirely new scopes and alternatives for overcoming women's oppression (Arndt, 2002a).

African feminism can also be distinguished into three different versions: reformist, transformative and radical African feminism (Arndt, 2002a, pp.33-43). Reformist African feminism shares much in common with liberal feminism in the sense that reformist African feminists want to negotiate with the patriarchal society to gain new scope for women but accept the fundamental patriarchal orientation of society. Hence, men are criticised as individuals and not as representatives of a villainous patriarchal group of oppressors as seen by radical feminists. In contrast, transformative and radical African feminism maintains an essential and fundamental critique of patriarchal social structures, although to varying degrees. Radical African feminism argues that men as a social group, either by nature or through socialisation, inevitably discriminate against or mistreat women. Sisterhood or solidarity among women is a possible source of hope. On the other hand, transformative African feminism commences from the premise that men are products of patriarchal patterns of thought and have the capacity to transform. African feminism provides a possible lens to analyse the experiences of women leaders.

3.2.7 Critiques of Feminisms

It is important to consider some of the major criticisms of the feminisms in the study. The following section highlights some of the criticisms that are significant to the research.

Liberal feminists, argues Bryson (1992, p.168), are often accused of reflecting only the concerns of middle-class white women, who are privileged in every way other than their sex, and of ignoring the inequalities among women, especially those related to the realities of class and race oppression. This is taken further by radical and socialist feminist criticism that liberal feminists fail to see a woman as a member of a sexual class whose oppression is rooted in the fact that she is a woman and as such a victim of patriarchal society. Radical and social feminists further question the assumption that all women are autonomous individuals with the power to change their situation. Critics argue that placing emphasis on formal legal rights and the provision for equal opportunities ignores the fact that many women cannot access them owing to poverty and economic oppression. Socialist feminists disagree strongly with the liberal feminist belief in the abstract individual, and they view humans as selfless, with identities that are socially constituted. However, contemporary liberal feminists are moving away from this traditional belief and many acknowledge that individual actions and social structures are a barrier to women's liberation (Tong, 1989, p.38).

Critiques of Marxist feminism have criticised its condemnation of the family as an economic unit under capitalism. They are accused of disregarding the important emotional role that families play. Socialist feminists have criticised Marxist feminists for failing to analyse women's oppression by men. According to Tong (1989), Marxist categories, like capital itself, are sex-blind. When Marxist feminists speak about women's oppression, they argue that capitalism is the primary oppressor of women as workers and that men are, at most, the secondary oppressors of women as women.

Criticisms of socialist feminist theory, on the other hand, warn that it has the ability to engender a sense of hopelessness among women and that it treats all women, regardless of cultural, ethnic, racial and class backgrounds, to a common structure of patriarchy. Socialist feminists are accused of being flawed for their failure to challenge traditional Marxism adequately and explain the oppression of working women. Furthermore, if patriarchy is the constant and universal, whether in pre-capitalist, capitalist or post-capitalist times, then it can only be overthrown if the very nature of men and women changes.

Unlike their liberal sisters, who tend to de-emphasise men's power over women and who quite often suggest "that men are simply fellow victims of sex-role conditioning," radical feminists insist that to eliminate male power, men and women have to eliminate gender, in particular the social construction of gender (Tong, 1989, p.2). Radical feminism differs from other approaches to feminism in many ways (Tong, 1989; Bryson, 1992; Beasley, 1999; Fraser & Honneth, 2003; Moorosi, 2006); is regarded as a theory of, by and for women; and places women's experiences and perceptions at the centre of the theory. These feminists support the view that women's oppression is the most fundamental and universal form of domination driven by patriarchy and as such provides a conceptual model for understanding all other forms of oppression. Radical feminism is often criticised for regarding women as a homogenous group with similar interests that unite them in a common sisterhood, transcending divisions of race and class. They propose that women have to struggle together to achieve their own liberation and that it is only within women-only institutions that women will have their way, and enjoy their full autonomy.

Some radical feminists have been criticised for their biological determinism and for

neglecting the interplay between environment and biology and between culture and nature (Tong, 1989). Although the material base for women's oppression in pornography, rape, and sexual harassment, among others, is identified, patriarchy is viewed as a universal phenomenon in which all men are dominant and victimisers, and all women are submissive and victims. This failure of some radical feminists to distinguish between various forms and degrees of male power, coupled with the view that all men are enemies, has been used to justify many radical feminists' proposal for total separation from men (Bryson, 1992, p. 189). Besides, these feminists also ignore the issue of race and class, thus making the approach more applicable to privileged white women as compared to women of colour and poor women. Tong, (1989, p.130) argues that radical feminism had to be expansive enough to include those women who believe that, at least for them, racism or classism are more oppressive than sexism.

African feminism has been criticised for an over-reliance on patriarchy or the dual-sex role systems to explain women's position in African society (Bakare-Yusuf, 2003, p.5). Hence, while they are rooted in divergent political perspectives, these feminists place too much emphasis on generalisation and determinism. Similarly, Andrade (2002, p.47) criticises African feminists for "overhauling women's agency in the face of colonialism at the cost of more complex and fully developed systems of knowledge". Borrowing from Nancy Rose Hunt, Andrade (2002) accuses African feminism of a naïve unproblematised celebration of agency, which assumes that women have the autonomous capacity to change their situation. Hunt (cited in Andrade, 2002) believes that this analysis overplays African women's ability to escape the depth of patriarchy and colonialism, which is so embedded in and informs social practices. Andrade (2002, p.48) cautions that, although women may potentially unite in common opposition to patriarchy, their class location could function as an axis for division among them. Similarly, Mohanty (1988, p.77) states, "Beyond sisterhood there is still racism, colonialism and imperialism!"

Gender commentators (Mama, 1996; Lewis, 2003; Bakare-Yusuf, 2003) maintain that African culture continues to be used as a weapon for enforcing women's obedience and perpetual servitude. They assert that men often label women that display "untraditional" behaviour as "westernised", hence forcing them to conform or relinquish their identity. African feminism has not adequately addressed the class progression of African women and its tension in traditional African patriarchal societies. Although Lewis (2003, p.1) supports the argument that African tradition and African culture share a history of misrepresentation and cultural marginalisation, she questions the authenticity of such claims when they bolster patriarchal goals and suppress debates of how the "culture" serves the interest of certain groups. Furthermore, Lewis (in Bakare-Yusuf, 2003, p.5) cautions against the inability of African feminism to acknowledge how women's nurturing is embedded within social institutions that often view motherhood as the norm for African women. Failure to challenge such notions generates an uncritical celebration of the motherhood paradigm. In this way, African feminism has failed to investigate the regimes of power that condition the choice of women whether to have children or not.

The different conceptions of feminisms discussed in this chapter are an integral component of the analysis of the women's experiences presented in Chapters Five and Seven.

3.3 ORGANISATIONAL IMAGING

After considering a wide body of literature on organisations (Morgan, 1986; Bush & West-Burnhan, 1994; Webster, Buhlungu & Bezuidenhout, 2004; Hellberg-Phillips, van Schalkwyk, & Banks, 1999; Kelly, 1988; Thompson & McHugh, 1995; Ledwith & Colgan, 1996), I found that the critical approach to organisational theory resonated with the intention of the study. The critical approach views organisations as contested and conflictual entities, and aims to understand the influence of historical and contextual factors on organisations embedded in social structures (Thompson & McHugh, 1995). This approach argues that gender inequality in an organisation cannot be understood without considering the broader social structures and ideologies in which the organisation is rooted. Hence, individuals in organisations end up in specific positions largely because of their position in society. The critical approach, therefore, provides a suitable multi-dimensional lens that facilitates an understanding of how the history of South Africa (apartheid and the national liberation struggle) and the context of the union within the federation, COSATU, shaped my experiences and the experiences of the women leaders in the study. This was discussed in Chapter Two of the study.

3.3.1 Introduction

Itzen and Newman (1995, p.5) argue that, despite being relatively ungendered in its conclusions, organisational theory has established as a “norm” male-typified patterns of behaviour, values and styles against which women are defined as “other”. Hearn and Parkin (1983) conclude that dominant notions of “organisation” are themselves patriarchal. Furthermore, they maintain that organisational theory fails to even consider the most basic information on gender division within organisations. Alvesson and Billing (1997, p.39), using a “feminist postmodernist and poststructuralist” approach to understanding gender and organisation, argue that the notion of gender within the language of organisational theories is omitted and mostly hidden, thus making organisational theories gender blind.

In the research on organisations, Mills and Trancred (1992, p.64) problematise the norm of male dominance and question the in-built bias. They assert that “it is not that such research is invalid but rather that there are omissions in its concerns and very little that might be called feminist organisational theory”. Furthermore, Silvestri (2003, p.149) argues that there is a dearth of research that critically identifies the structural arrangements that marginalise women and allow male models to flourish in organisations. Hence, the assumed gender-neutrality of organisational theories often conceals the gendered experiences of women in organisations. This study attempts to address these assumptions, omissions and silences by employing the different conceptions of feminisms, the principles of feminist research and engendered images of organisations to illuminate the gendered experiences of women leaders in the union.

3.3.2 Images of Organisations

The majority of trade unions within the labour federation COSATU are rooted in the trade union social movements of the 1980s and 90s. However, in order to function effectively and efficiently they had to establish a certain degree of formality, structure and hierarchy. Hence, they evolved into organisations and functioned as typical bureaucracies (Webster, Buhlungu & Bezuidenhout, 2004, p.45). SADTU

was no exception.

Buhlungu (2000) maintains that using metaphors to think about organisations is a fruitful way of critiquing organisations and broadening our vision. Similarly, Morgan (1986) maintains that metaphors assist in illustrating the complexity and paradoxical phenomena of organisations. The following sections provide a brief overview of three selected organisational metaphors constructed by Morgan (1986) to make visible the gendered experiences of women in the union. These metaphors are elaborated in Chapter Six and are used to analyse the women leaders' gendered experiences in the organisation.

3.3.3 Organisations as Machines

Morgan's (1986, p.25) metaphor of machines, as a network of parts arranged in specific sequence, illustrates the bureaucratic tendencies of organisations. Bureaucracies are built on organisational patterns with clear delineated roles that are organised in a hierarchical manner and articulated through defined lines of command or communications (Morgan, 1986, p.25). These rules, responsibilities and processes found in the constitution and policies of the organisation are considered to be apolitical and gender neutral. This study considers how the women experience the enactment of bureaucratic patterns.

Morgan (1986, p.25) maintains that bureaucracies are perceived as rational systems, largely ignoring their human aspects. He argues that they are popular because of their ability to reinforce and sustain particular patterns of power and control (Morgan, 1986, p.25). Ferguson (1984, p.6) asserts that bureaucracies are dynamic and influenced by certain historical and political ends that reproduce particular modes of power and suppress any opposition. She (1984, p.4) argues for feminist concerns with bureaucracies given their control on women who hold jobs outside the home. Given that bureaucracies are an integral part of modern society, feminists must construct theory that critiques the modes of power and control in bureaucracies (Ferguson, 1984, p.4). Hence, the research analyses how the bureaucratic patterns of the union are gendered, oppressing women leaders and advancing male agendas.

3.3.4 Organisations as Culture

The metaphor of organisations as culture is used to reveal the socially constructed realities that guide the organisation. Culture can be described as the shared meaning, shared understanding and shared sense making that is found in social norms and customs that construct social reality (Morgan, 1986). Macdonald, Sprenger and Dubel (1994, p.20) argue that culture is significant because it touches on the beliefs and value systems of individuals. It is the point at which the personal becomes political in an organisation. Newman (1995, p.11) maintains that our realities are shaped and structured through a process of enactment which is gendered. Organisations often transmit cultural messages about gender roles that promote institutional sexism in the daily practice of organisational life (Newman, 1995, p.11).

The strength of the culture metaphor lies in the fact that it directs attention to the symbolic significance and human side of even the most rational aspects of organisational life. The culture metaphor also emphasises the significance of environment in social enactment. This has important implications for change in an

organisation and emphasises the power of culture to facilitate or impede organisational change. Chapter Six explores how the organisational culture of SADTU shaped the experiences of women leaders in the union.

3.3.5 Organisations as Political Entities

Morgan (1986, p.142) maintains that an organisation is intrinsically political because it involves creating order and direction among potentially diverse and conflicting interests. Thus, organisational politics could be systematically analysed by focusing on the relationship between interests, conflict and power. These are explained briefly below (Morgan, 1986, pp.148-184). This section also includes the level of consciousness of women as an important source of resistance to patriarchal bureaucracies, culture and politics.

Interest

Interest in terms of organisational politics is conceived in terms of three interrelated domains, i.e. organisational task, career, and personal life. The tensions existing between these different interests and among the different players in the organisation are political. Organisations are also coalitions for advancing one's interests and increasing one's power and influence. The research analyses the role of women leaders in maintaining and contesting patriarchal interests in the union.

Conflict

Conflict arises when interests collide. The inherent design of most hierarchical organisations as systems of simultaneous competition and collaboration makes conflict inevitable. The research analyses the gendered subtext when interests collide.

Power

Power in organisations is influenced by structural factors and context. Morgan (1986) maintains that power is the medium through which conflicts of interest are ultimately resolved. Such powers often underlie gender inequalities where those benefitting from them have the interest in maintaining them (Connell, 2003). There are several sources of power that shape organisational life; however, I have only focused on those relevant to SADTU: formal authority, control of resources, and interpersonal alliances and networks.

Formal authority in organisations is a form of legitimate power. The most obvious form of formal authority is bureaucratic and is associated with the position one holds and its influence. Often formal authority manipulates organisational structures, rules, and regulations as products for political control. For example, the general secretaries and presidents of trade unions have relatively little day-to-day contact with their rank-and-file members. However, they are able to maintain political control because of their formal authority as elected leaders. It is common for union leaders to be criticised for the power they wield either as allowed them by the constitution or informally through their expertise or networks (Kelly, 1988). This ability to influence the outcomes of a decision-making process is a well-recognised source of power. The utilisation of formal power to influence or thwart gender equality in the union is analysed in Chapter Six.

The ability to exercise control over resources is another important source of power in organisations. Scarcity and dependence are the keys to resource power. Money, expertise and knowledge are closely linked to power. The extent to which resources,

including financial and material, shape the experiences of women leaders in the union is interrogated in the analysis chapter. Furthermore, interpersonal alliances, networks and controls of “informal organisations” all provide a source of power in organisations. Successful networks and informal alliances and coalitions usually have some form of mutually beneficial exchange, and this is one way of balancing power relations. Leadership power involves an ability to define the reality of others (Morgan, 1986). Such power, which emanates from symbolism and the management of meaning, rests in one’s ability to persuade others to enact realities that further the interests one wishes to pursue.

The power of patriarchy is significant in investigating women’s oppression in gendered organisations (Ledwith & Colgan, 1996). SADTU as an organisation comprises a variety of political actors drawing on a variety of power bases that have shaped the experiences of the women leaders. Chapter Six uncovers possible sources of power in SADTU and analyses how power influences the political dynamics in the union that impact on gender equality initiatives.

I have added the idea of a “level of gender consciousness” to this section because it is significant to the way women respond to their gendered experiences in the union. Gender consciousness in this study is understood as the awareness of the politics of gender in women’s experience and position in society. Gender politics is systematically analysed by focusing on the gendered relationship between interests, conflict and power in the union. This would encompass the individual self as woman and the identification with other women as a collective who occupy a similar position (Silvestri, 2003; Ledwith & Colgan, 1996). Silvestri (2003, p.154) maintains that gender consciousness and the willingness to transform into a shared consciousness are essential for agency and women’s activism.

Levels of Gender Consciousness

Ledwith and Colgan (1996) argue that consciousness and awareness of gender politics are important strategies for women to survive and progress in gendered organisations. Women’s responses to gender challenges in organisations are often dependent on their consciousness of discrimination, career barriers, reading of organisational politics and willingness to adopt individualistic, collectivist and/or separatist strategies (Ledwith & Colgan, 1996, p.23). Women’s consciousness plays a direct role in the level of gender activism in organisations and this study incorporates women’s level of consciousness to understand the women leaders’ response to gender inequality in the union.

According to Ledwith and Colgan (1996, p.23), traditional women in an organisation accept women’s gendered place in society. Traditional women believe that the difference in status and power between men and women is legitimate. They ignore the structural and ideological drivers of gender oppression and believe that organisational procedures are fair and that women should demonstrate their own ability within the prevailing climate and not look for “special treatment” as women (Ledwith & Colgan, 1996, p.25). On the other hand, “women in transition” display an awakening consciousness of their gender oppression in their organisations. However, they are often unsure of their identity and role, ill-equipped with coping strategies, and most anxious not to be labelled as feminists. Cockburn (1996) argues that such attitudes are common within robust patriarchal hegemonies whose values of gender relations are possibly the strongest invisible force against women. Women in transition often opt for an individualistic and short-agenda approach to women’s

progression at work.

Silvestri (2003, p.148) argues that gender consciousness does not necessarily lead to feminist consciousness but that a gender consciousness is a prerequisite for the development of a feminist consciousness. Hence, all feminists possess a gender consciousness. Women with a developed feminist consciousness are those for whom feminism is a conscious political choice (Ledwith & Colgan, 1996). These women place activism for women's rights at the centre of their work. Feminists are distinguished as leaders, organisers, publicists, and lobbyists of women's rights, and may employ individualist, collective and separatist forms of action in the pursuit of a more radical, long-term systemic change approach to advance gender equity. An altruistic sense of reciprocity and sisterhood is a key value among women with a feminist perspective (Ledwith & Colgan, 1996, p.29). Clearly, women can gain strength and power from feminist unity to use in their collective strategies. Hence, women with evolving gender consciousness and those with a feminist consciousness are a potential force for change in gendered organisations. Chapters Six and Seven analyse the relation between the women's gender consciousness and the level of gender activism in the union.

3.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter, I argue for a multi-dimensional theoretical framework that incorporates history, context and organisation. I present five different conceptions of feminisms and discuss their structural and ideological arguments for gender oppression within the different domains occupied by women. I consider a broad spectrum of feminist conceptions to explore and theorise women's gendered experiences in organisations.

I then problematise the built-in male bias in organisational theories that renders invisible women's gendered experiences in organisations. I argue that the use of metaphors in organisational imaging is useful for illustrating the complexity and paradoxes in the gendered dynamic of organisations. Building on organisational imaging, I maintain that a gender analysis of the metaphors of organisations as machines, culture, and political entities would illuminate the experiences of women leaders in the union.

This study is one example of an attempt to utilise feminist principles in understanding the experiences of women within organisations. In the next chapter, I discuss in detail the research methodology that enacted the intention of the study to build knowledge and theory rooted in the experiences of women.

CHAPTER FOUR

FEMINIST THEORY AND RESEARCH PROCESSES: ENGENDERING RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

*It is going to be very difficult to answer this question,
Because this is such an emotional thing,
It is such a sensitive issue.
You should have used another article because this one is a special case.
This is problematic, you understand that people are picking up issues to highlight,
Journalists want hype all the time.
Switch it²⁵ off!*

(Appendix 3, Poem 32, No. 4)

4.1 CHAPTER OUTLINE

In this chapter, I argue for a research methodology that resonates with the broad principles of feminism as best suited to achieve the aim of the research. I examine the potential of life history interviews to illuminate women's experiences, and act as a catalyst for change. I discuss the challenges emerging from the context of the research relationship and my positionality within the research to reveal the tricky balance I maintained as researcher, activist and friend.

Following this, I describe the mechanics of the research, including sampling, data collection, and research instruments, and provide a detailed step-by-step description of the interview process and the challenges that emerged. The process of data capturing and data generation from the interview transcripts to harmonised poems is then described in detail. I explain in a systematic manner the inductive approach I used to generate theory grounded in the data.

I then explain the ethical and methodological challenges of employing feminist research methodology and describe in detail how the study was subjected to the rigorous specifications of feminist research to ensure quality. As researcher, I discuss the ethical challenges I faced in trying to honour both women and research. I explain the methodological innovation I developed to maintain the anonymity of the women leaders while still making visible their narratives. I conclude the chapter with an example of the different levels of harmonisation of the women's voices under emerging themes.

4.2 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research is to bring to the fore the experiences of women leaders by illuminating how the ideology and organisational dynamics of the union interface with the politics of gender. This study has its roots in the experiences of women and I

²⁵ Tape recorder

want to make explicit my belief that gender matters, that what happens to women matters, and that experience is essential for building knowledge, theory and change.

The following poem demonstrates why this research was important to the women involved:

Personally, I feel very excited to be part of this study
I do not think anybody has done any research specifically on women in SADTU,
I am very excited
I feel very honoured and privileged to be part of this.
So personally, for me it is a kind of victory
It says something about the Gender Desk of SADTU
That somebody is interested in using our experiences in the SADTU Gender Desk.
(Appendix 3, Poem 35, No. 5)

The research focuses on experience as a prism that illuminates the experiences of women leaders in SADTU, in particular whether they enjoy equality of outcome once they penetrate male-dominated spaces in patriarchal organisations. It interrogates the “depth” of the experience of gender equality from the perspective of these women. Thus, it uses the experiences of the women leaders as a resource for social analysis (Harding, 1987, p.7). It “directly addresses the politics in research by confronting social oppression at whatever levels it occurs” (Mertens, 2005, pp.16-17).

The long-term aim of this research is catalytic: to encourage critical consciousness that will challenge gender inequality and encourage transformation while at the same time contribute to the advancement of knowledge and feminist scholarship on women’s experiences in unions. Thus, my intention is both political and epistemological.

The critical question of this study is:

How do women leaders’ experience gender equality in the South African Democratic Teachers’ Union?

The intention of the critical question is to determine how the gendered experiences of women leaders in the union facilitate or constrain gender equality. The status of gender equality is illuminated by focusing on the women leaders’ experience of the organisation’s politics, rules and traditions, and cultural and social relations that together determine how power is appropriated in SADTU. The assumption is that the women’s gender consciousness will indicate their awareness of the politics of their gender.

The critical question explores the following:

- The women’s reflection on their experiences of the union’s policies and processes, i.e. what it means to be a woman in the union;
- Their experience of the challenges and opportunities in the union and how it has influenced their private and public worlds;

- Their public (union-led) and private (personal) response to gender challenges emanating within the broader political context; and
- A reflection on how their gendered experiences from childhood to adulthood have shaped their identities.

Guided by theoretical underpinnings that inform feminist research methodologies, I draw on feminist discourses biased towards the subjectivities and multiple realities of the women leaders. The feminist theoretical framing of the research has much in common with critical theorists, participatory action researchers, and Marxist theoretical frameworks. These theoretical frameworks generally privilege “materialist-realist ontology”, stressing that I understand that the real world makes a material difference in terms of race, class and gender (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p.35). The intention for deep structural and political change locates this research within a transformative paradigm.

The intention to catalyse a willingness to transform is shared by the women leaders and me. The research methodology pursues “an interactive relationship between researcher and research participants” which is empowering to both (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p.35). The poem above, which views the research as “a kind of victory”, a positive step for women in the union and which make the women leaders feel “honoured and privileged”, emphasises the shared investment in the research and the sense of empowerment it evokes in the women concerned.

This study acknowledges that social, political, cultural, economic, and ethnic, gender values influence the construction of realities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003), and the interviews tease out these influences. Chapter Five and Six analyses these constructions of reality especially as they relate to the experiences of oppression and an evolving consciousness. The research reveals the constraints on the lives of women leaders while also revealing the strategies they employ to accept, resist, challenge, and subvert these constraints.

By creating the space for the women to critically reflect on their gendered experiences, the research draws on the evolving gender consciousness of women leaders. Lather (1991) argues that this process of reflection is vital for promoting transformation. Reinharz (1992, p.220) explains that consciousness raising involves women discussing and understanding their personal experiences without professional leadership. She maintains that this promotes group solidarity among women which may facilitate political activism for change. Similarly, in an effort to raise the consciousness of the women leaders, the methodology challenges them to reflect on the deeply structured multiple relations of power that they experience within the union and to share this experience. The aim of the methodology is to reveal both the invisibility and distortion of the female experience in the union and advance a struggle for gender equality.

One of the woman’s initial thoughts about the research supports this assumption:

4

But I think what you are doing here is also going to challenge me
 To look at my own role so far,
 Moreover, to be able to give you a glimpse of where I am coming from,
 On what experiences we have had here in the union,
 I think that it is going to be mutually beneficial,

It works both ways,
I do not have a problem with that.
(Appendix 3, Poem 35, No. 4)

I pursue an interactive relationship with the women leaders and there is evidence of my attempt to “relinquish control” throughout the research (Lather, 1991). I have engaged in self-reflective examination of my influence on the research and this is discussed in Chapter Six. Keeping my intention to facilitate transformation I will produce a discussion paper on the union’ performance in advancing gender equality for the union’s National General Council in 2009. This paper will be consolidated after feedback from the NGC and incorporated in the Secretariat Report for the forthcoming SADTU National Congress in 2010. In this way, I intend to advocate for the transformation of gender relations in the union and shift from researcher to activist using the thesis to inform policy and practice in the union.

Research within the transformative paradigm is not without its critics. Positivist and post-positivists express concern about the loss of objectivity specifically where the researcher consciously enters the research as participatory activist. However, I consider my attempt to engage with the women’s experience and gender consciousness an important component of the research. Hence, I structured my questions to maximise their reflection on the politics of gender in their personal and private lives. Feminist researchers are often criticised for research bias and they are accused of flaunting research protocols in pursuit of ideological and political agendas (Mertens, 2005, Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). However, I am confident in my choice of theoretical framing since feminist researchers offer no apology for the inclusion of politics in their research stating that although they “begin with a set of intellectually and politically charged questions”, they do not force “ideological alignment” and keep “each other honest to forces of differences, divergence, and contradiction” (Fine, 1994, p.75). Later in this chapter, I discuss how I used grounded theory to allow the data to speak to me rather than speaking for the data. In this way I did not force any ideological alignment.

Furthermore, I discuss the power differentials that emerged in the research process and how they were mediated. Similarly, Harding (1993, p.66) argues that recognising knowledge is socially situated; for example, as in feminist standpoint²⁶ theories, which “require and generate stronger standpoints for objectivity than do those that turn away from providing systematic methods for locating knowledge in history”. She argues that the researcher who “starts off thought” from marginalised lives is actually imposing a stronger objectivity by soliciting viewpoints ignored in past research.

The following sections discuss in detail the rigours of research as demanded by feminist methodology.

4.3 FEMINIST RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

Much of society is characterised by a marked degree of gender asymmetry, given its

²⁶ Feminist standpoint regards gender as a fundamental organising principle of patriarchal society and focuses on making the lives of women more visible. Research tends to be pro-women and the focus is strongly on women (Bendl, 2003)

patriarchal underpinnings, and, until recently, academic discourse was in reality male discourse that located itself in the realm of science, rationality and patriarchal scholarship (Govinden, 2004). Traditionally, sociological knowledge of human behaviour was equated to knowledge of male behaviour, and researchers looked to men's experiences as the norm (white, male, dominant class). In doing so, researchers were equating men with the universal (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Feminist researcher Harding (1987, p.3) argues that traditional theories, which excluded women as "knowers" or agents of knowledge, made it difficult to understand women's participation in social life or to understand men's activity as gendered.

Indeed, feminist research methodology attempts to uncover and proclaim as valid the experiences of women in a context where masculinist hegemony still prevails. Hence, this study employs feminist methodology to make visible the experiences of women in a patriarchal union and to proclaim as valid their experiences. The women talk in accord of their othering in traditional research conducted in SADTU. This is illustrated by one of the women,

I am more than comfortable with this research.
Also in the past, nobody, not even NALEDI
Has been interested in having this kind of conversation with me
As a woman leader
Although they have interviewed me there was,
Nothing tabled at SADTU.

(Appendix 3, Poem 35, No. 6)

In addition to subverting existing gender hierarchies, feminist knowledge and imagination are concerned with asking different kinds of questions, "requiring new conceptualisations about wider realities that include women as well as men" (Pereira, 2002, p.17). Feminist methodology reveals how gender inequality in the union is often masked, hidden and/or denied.

Chapter Three argues that gender discrimination and inequality are often systemic and structural, embedded in major institutions and other shapers of societal norms such as schools, religion, media, pop culture, government, and corporations. I use feminist research methodology to expose such inequalities within the union by generating the "problematic from the perspective of women's experiences and recognising the importance of using women's experiences as resources for social analysis" (Harding, 1987, p.7). In this way, women are recognised as "knowers" or agents of knowledge. The intention is to provide an explanation of social phenomena that is aligned to the standpoint of women and to unearth and make legitimate their experiences.

The women in this study came from different cultural, class and racial backgrounds that shaped their identities. Feminist research methodology recognises the intersection of race, class, and gender in shaping women's experience (Mertens, 2005). Advocates for feminist research methodology argue that women are best placed to research and reveal the experiences of women (Fine, 1994; Harding, 1993). However, Harding (1987, p.9) argues that feminist analysis requires the researcher to analyse how her class, race, culture and gender assumptions and beliefs have shaped the research study: "thus the researcher appears to us not as an invisible, anonymous voice of authority, but as a real, historical individual with concrete, specific desires

and interests”. In Chapter Five I discuss the influence of my race, class and history on the research.

I view this research as both intellectual and political and am explicit that the personal experiences, perspectives, and characteristics I bring lead to a particular political stance. Mertens (2005, p.17) maintains that acknowledging the political nature of such enquiry often raises questions concerning the definition of objectivity within the traditional norms of science. However, I argue that this study, unlike positivist and post-positivist research, is not concerned with “pure” truths (Harding, 1987, p.8). Neither is it preoccupied with “one objective method which leads to the production of pure knowledge” (Reinharz, 1992, p.7). Rather, the intention is to understand how women experience inequality and oppression, how it shapes their world, and how to challenge and ultimately overcome it.

Feminist research methodology does not view the researcher as completely objective and unbiased (Harding, 1987). Instead, it emphasises that research is a product of the values of the researcher, and that the “knower and respondent co-create understanding” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p.35). Therefore, as researcher, I am explicit about my conscious partiality in the process. I am fully aware that I identified with the women in the research. However, I tried to create a critical and dialectical distance between the women leaders and me that heightened both our gender consciousnesses (Mies, 1996). By operating within a self-reflexive mode I foreground my complicity and positionality as the researcher in the study (Lather, 1991). This is discussed later in this chapter.

4.3.1 Feminist Research Methods

A basic tenet of this theoretical frame is that realities are multiple and socially constructed (Lather, 1991; Reinharz, 1992). Hence, it resonates closely with the principles of ethnography in feminist methodology. Reinharz (1992) characterises the principles of ethnography in feminist methodologies as to:

- Document the lives and activities of women, focusing on women as full members of their social, economic, and political worlds;
- Understand the experience of women from their own point of view, rather than trivialising their activities or interpreting them from the standpoint of men in society; and
- Interpret women’s behaviour as shaped by social context, such as their marital relations or community values.

This study has drawn extensively from ethnographic research methods. Ethnography requires long periods of research time to interview and observe the life of the research participant. However, the availability of the women for long interviews and observation was problematic. Given these constraints, I drew on the principles of ethnography to conduct the study and employed the method of life history interviews. The life history interviews are appropriate for feminist research methodology and in addition addressed the practical challenges emerging out of researching powerful women leaders. Reinharz (1992, p.18) states that the face-to-face, semi-structured life history interview appeals to feminist research methodology because it “explores people’s view of reality and allows the researcher to generate theory”. She asserts that these interviews encourage free interaction between

researcher and research participant and allow the researcher to make full use of differences among participants. This type of interview required openness, emotional engagement and the development of a potentially long-term and trusting relationship between the researcher and the research participant (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p.48).

The life history interview is often used within the transformative paradigm because it strives to avoid status and power dynamics between researcher and research participants and promotes a sense of connectedness between them. Furthermore, it has the potential to illuminate, empower and transform. Dhunpath (2003, p.61) maintains that the purpose of life history interviews is to:

Understand what is going on from the participants' own perspectives as accurately and honestly as possible, to document this in a credible and legitimate way and make this accessible to participants as a stimulus for self-appraisal.

He asserts that herein lies the "act of empowerment", and thus this "illuminating experience at the individual level often sets the stage for liberation at the institutional level" (Dhunpath, 2003, p.61). Hence, my intention is to use life history as a catalyst for advocating change.

Life history interviews also provide a way to gain first-hand accounts of social experience from the participants' point of view by assigning significance and value to each person's own story. Goodson (1983 in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2003, p.165) argues that life history interviews have the potential to make "a far reaching contribution to the problem of understanding the links between 'personal troubles' and 'public issues', a task that lies at the very heart of the sociological enterprise", and indeed of this research study. It requires the researcher to build rapport and develop close relationships with the participants in an attempt to minimise status differences and to steer clear of the traditional hierarchical situation in interviewing (Mertens, 2005). Thus, the life history interview method resonates with the principles of feminist methodology. The challenges that emerged from using this methodology are discussed later in this chapter.

4.3.2 Sampling

The sample for this study is purposive. Cohen and Manion (2000) state that in purposive sampling the researcher employs judgement on the basis of the typicality of the case and thus handpicks a sample that best meets the specific purpose of the research. Neuman (1997, p.206) identifies three situations for purposive sampling:

- To select unique cases that are especially informative;
- To select members of a difficult-to-reach, specialised population; and
- To identify particular types of cases for in-depth investigation; the purpose is less to generalise to a larger population than it is to gain a deeper understanding of types.

The choice of purposive sampling was driven by my intention to identify participants who would provide rich in-depth insights into the experiences of women leaders in SADTU. The women had to be leaders in the union. Thus, my sample was biased towards women who had occupied national and provincial leadership positions in SADTU and who were prepared to give their trust, time and energy to the research process. My initial sample list included women leaders spanning the inception of

SADTU to present day. They were a diverse group in terms of race, class, geographic location and experience in leadership in the union. However, I was also influenced by practical matters such as convenience, availability and the intention and willingness of the women to participate in prolonged research on the union. Although all the women approached were very interested in the study, many declined to be part of the study, citing time constraints and unavailability for lengthy interviews. However, those who agreed to participate displayed the intention and willingness to engage in research to advance transformation in the union's gender politics.

Nevertheless, the challenge to secure the participation of the women leaders forced me to rethink the data-collection technique. I tried to strike a balance between research method and the need for quality data. I reduced the number of interviews to make the interview timeframes more appealing to the research participants and secured their permission to continue discussions telephonically if necessary or informally during the daily operations of the union. Nonetheless, securing interview appointments with the women leaders still proved to be difficult – several women failed to honour their interview appointments and many refused to reschedule. One woman, a pioneer of the gender struggle and SADTU's first Vice President for Gender, passed away before the interview and another left the country on study leave. As a result, my original list of possible research participants began to shrink. Finally, I was left with five willing research participants out of an initial list of 12. However, I was not unduly perturbed by the sample size since the aim of the study was less to generalise than to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of women leaders in SADTU.

Of the five women leaders who made themselves available for the study, two were from the national leadership of SADTU, two from the provincial leadership structures, and one had experience in both national and provincial positions. They had been in the union for over a decade. National leaders are elected at the SADTU National Congress that convenes every four years, while provincial leaders are elected in the provincial conferences that convene every three years. The election of leaders is significant to the gendered experiences of the women and is discussed in the data analysis chapter. The Constitution of SADTU (SADTU, 2006b) deemed that national leaders are members of the National Working Committee (NWC) and the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the union, giving those powers as stipulated in the SADTU Constitution (2006b). Chapter Five highlights some of the constitutional spaces available to these leaders and analyses how they experienced these opportunities.

4.3.3 Context

Context is significant in feminist research methodology. Feminist theorists argue that it is essential to recognise that we cannot live as human subjects without in some sense taking on a history. Similarly, Lather (1991) contends that feminist writings need to articulate and claim a particular historical and social identity. Harding (1987) also maintains that context or situatedness is an important dimension to interpretation in feminist research. She explains situatedness as the interrelated issues that span the multitude of contexts of a person's life; namely, historical, political, socio-economic and personal or subjective (Harding, 1987). Similarly, feminist Mohanty (1988, p.70) argues that:

feminism and the ideological content of feminist consciousness should not be specified a priori according to the abstract definitions of universalist theory

but should be defined in context of particular social formations and should have resonance in the historical experience and political culture of specific societies.

The analysis of this study is anchored in the experience of the women leaders and advocates the subjective. Furthermore, it positions itself within a particular historical context in South Africa that shaped my social and political identities as researcher and the research participants. The struggle for national liberation, the transformation to democracy and the experience of being women all bear on the research, having shaped the researcher and the research participants in some way or another and have been discussed in earlier chapters. The influence of context and my situatedness in the experiences of the women leaders is discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

4.3.4 Positionality

The positionality of the researcher, like the context, is an integral aspect of feminist methodology. Denzin & Lincoln (2003, p.13) argue that research is not neutral but rather “value-laden”. They maintain that recognising that people are shaped by their experiences of class, race, gender and culture has powerful implications for feminist research because our ways of knowing are inherently culture-bound and situated. Unlike positivists and post-positivists, who stress objectivity, feminist research methodology argues that the values, assumptions, beliefs and biases the researcher brings to the study have to be reflected on. Similarly, Harding (1987, p.9) asserts that feminist analysis requires the researcher to “be placed in the same critical plane” as the research participants, placing the researcher “within the frame of the picture she attempts to paint” and in this way avoiding the “objectivist stance” that makes the researcher “invisible”. Lather (1991, p.10) claims that by being “paradoxically aware of one’s complicity in that which one critiques”, the researcher will be aware of how her historical, social and political situatedness have shaped the research.

Harding (1987, p.9) advocates that making the researcher visible in the research is the only way social scientists can produce knowledge which is “free (or, at least, more free) of distortions from unexamined beliefs and behaviours of social scientists themselves”. She asserts that the preoccupation in positivist research paradigms to hide the subjectivity of the researcher in empirical research decreases objectivity. Feminist research methodology, on the contrary, increases the objectivity of the research by factoring in the “subjective” element of the researcher (Harding, 1987, p.9). The researcher engaging in self-reflexivity, and examining how the researcher’s ways of knowing impacts on the research, is an integral part of feminist research within the transformative paradigm (Lather, 1991). Similarly, I used journal entries to engage in self-reflexive exercises. In this way, I analysed my position as researcher-“insider” and its influence on the study. Furthermore, I critique the influence of my subjectivities in the research by dialoguing with other research students in doctoral seminars convened by the university.

I have made explicit that my position as researcher is not innocent and that my lived experience, as woman, activist, teacher and trade unionist, has shaped this study. I had been employed by the union for the past ten years and had observed and experienced gender oppression within the union. As such, I was immersed in the union, which occasionally blurred the lines between researcher and research participant. Traditional research would question my objectivity and hence doubt the findings of this thesis.

However, feminist researchers emphasise “closeness rather than distance” in fieldwork relations, believing that understanding is enhanced by “total immersion in the world one is studying” and when the researcher “begins to share the fate of those she is studying” (Reinharz, 1992, p.69). This refers to as the complete participant approach (Reinharz, 1992, p.69).

Similarly, feminist ethnographer, Brown (1985) maintains that her experiences of total immersion in other cultures are significant in sensitising her to the social construction of the reality of her research participants. Her disillusionment with the preoccupation with the “objective” stance of the researcher led her to draw on her relationships with the research participants as “primary sources”. She believes this approach reflected her experiences as a woman, “socialised as women are to the skills of empathy, the importance of relationships, and the interconnection of thought and experience” (Brown 1985, pp.77-78; Reinhartz, 1992, p.69). Thus, she challenges mainstream social science by allowing her fieldwork to remove her from the constraints of “academic compartmentalization” and allowing her to “fuse herself and her work”, a principle she believes underpins feminist methodology (Brown 1985, p.79; Reinhartz, 1992, p.69). This research draws on these principles and I employ several strategies to maintain the quality of the research and preserve the critical stance of the researcher. These strategies are discussed later in this chapter.

My position as Education Officer in the male-dominated bureaucracy of SADTU located me as a women manager within the leadership structure of the union. Although I was not an elected leader, I participated in constitutional structures that elected leadership occupied. I sat in the NEC of the union and also in many other substructures and committees occupied by elected leaders. However, although I was a manager within the union, I was considered a “functionary” in the arenas of power in the NEC and was included because of the “technical” expertise I brought to the union. As such I was accountable to a “Political Head”, who was elected to the position of Vice President for Education.

I am of the view that my experiences in the union have assisted me in bringing into sharper focus the experiences of the women leaders and have allowed me to take advantage of my existing circumstances to elicit information in a more naturalistic manner. Indeed, my position and experiences in the union have assisted me in identifying strongly with the women in this research study and this kind of conscious partiality has prevented me from being neutral and indifferent towards their lived experiences. Instead, my position and experience have provided important insights into understanding the complexities of gender inequality in the union. However, I was aware that my positionality brought both benefits and limitations to the study. While conducting the study, I was aware that my “embeddedness” in the union was valuable for the intimate knowledge (Reinhartz, 1992) I brought to the study. However, I was also vulnerable to the danger of substituting my own experiences for those of my research participants or for failing to ask questions that would challenge my assumptions. Besides including my beliefs and positionality as part of the empirical evidence for this research, I also identified a “critical friend” who reviewed the analysis of the transcripts and provide comment. In this way, I hoped to address the limits of this “insider” perspective. Although, feminist research rarely calls for “pure truths”, in an attempt to temper criticism of objectivity and bias often raised in feminist research, I hoped to provide more rigour towards the credibility of my findings.

Fine's statement (1994, p.80) appropriately captures my choice of feminist research methodology within a transformative paradigm when she states:

Some researchers fix themselves self-consciously as participatory activists. Their work seeks to unearth, disrupt, and transform existing ideological and/or institutional arrangements. Here, the researcher's stance frames the texts produced and carves out the space in which intentional surprises surface. These writers position themselves as political and interrogating, fully explicit about their original research and where their research took them.

Similarly, I position myself as researcher and participatory activist in this study and am explicit about the collusion of these two positions in the research. The mediation between my developed identity as activist and my emerging identity as feminist researcher created challenges that often left me questioning my role in the research. As participatory activist embedded in the union, I had endeavoured to unearth the contradictions, tensions, gaps and silences in the enactment of the union's gender pronouncements and policies. My intention was to disrupt the current status quo that confined women to secondary status in the union and in this way raise consciousness for transformation of gender relations. For this reason, I saw my role as political. Similarly, I saw my role as feminist researcher in pursuit of new knowledge that illuminated the gendered experiences articulated by the women leaders. In terms of science, I saw my role as intellectual.

4.3.5 The Research Relationship

Central to feminist research is the relationship between researcher and research participant. The power dynamic between the two is a central concern in the transformative paradigm. Mertens (2005), p.360) reminds us that, when interpretations are created through critical dialogue, the question of who participates in that dialogue is politically charged. Research within the transformative paradigm usually focuses on those marginalised and without power in society; thus, the tension of researching-down with the aim of relinquishing control and of empowering would be a central challenge. This study, however, is researching-up, since the perception is that as leaders these women are in positions of power. However, these leaders have often experienced marginalisation given their gender. Thus, paradoxically, I was researching-up by focusing on leaders in the union, while researching-down by focusing on women. It could also be said to be researching-down given the control I wielded in the way I represented their personal and professional worlds in this research.

This act of illumination in the research revealed the women's vulnerability but simultaneously created a catalyst for self-appraisal and consciousness-raising, which in itself was an act of empowerment. (Refer to Poem 35 in Chapter Three, which illustrates the women's thoughts and feelings about the research.) Moreover, this act provided a stimulus for transformation at an individual level. The research relationship which emerged out of trust, empathy and solidarity had the potential to be beneficial for both the women leaders and me. The collective intention to transform had a profound impact on the power dynamic in this research relationship. Consciousness raising and openness to transformation laid the ground for shared solidarity in the research. Thus, unlike in the professional corridors of the union where my position carried a secondary status of "functionary", I was perceived as an equal in the research relationship. Hence, agency transcended bureaucratic divides when solidarity emerged out of our acknowledgement of our vulnerability as women

and our collective struggle to change this status quo.

One woman explains it appropriately, when she states that the research would be beneficial in teaching her new things and revealing things she had not been aware of before.

I think it is going to be very useful,
I do have a long experience in SADTU,
However, I also feel that I can also learn, in terms of what other peoples' views are,
I am very curious about that,
Maybe learn about other things that I have not really realised or learnt.

(Appendix 3, Poem 35, No. 1)

4.4 THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

Denzin and Lincoln (2003, p.48) assert that, although the interview has become a taken-for-granted feature of our society, it is not a neutral tool but rather a “negotiated text”, a site where power, gender, race and class intersect. Feminist research argues that the people engaged in the interview create the reality of the interview situation, which is influenced by the personal characteristics of the researcher and the research participants. The use of interviews in this study is the principal means of gathering data and is considered best suited for answering the critical questions of the study. Interviews were appropriate for this study because they:

provide access to what is ‘inside a person’s head’, [it] making it possible to measure what a person knows (knowledge or information), what a person likes or dislikes (values and preferences), and what a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs).

(Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 1998, p. 272)

Taking into consideration that interviews offer various choices and opportunities for discovering nuanced insight in the data-gathering process, the life history-type interviews appeared to be the most suitable research method for this study.

The use of interviews in feminist research methodologies has raised many questions and criticisms. Although its use is often perceived to be supported by the potential for mutual understanding among women, it does not necessarily guarantee that the researcher and research participants will identify, accept and empathise completely with each other. The interviews in this study reinforced the mutual respect and solidarity that united me as researcher and the research participants as women, activists, teachers and trade unionists. This is supported by the acceptance, empathy and a sense of camaraderie we shared in our quest for gender equality in our personal and professional lives. The intimacy experienced in an empathic interview often promotes self-disclosure, promoting the ethic of commitment and egalitarianism (Reinharz, 1992, p.27).

It is argued that shared cultural patterns are often necessary for understanding each other (Reinharz, 1992, p.27). Although the women involved in this study belonged to different races and cultures, the interview process strengthened our understanding of each other. The interview process has the potential to change those involved so that they accept and identify with each other regardless of their cultural difference (Reinharz, 1992, p.27). The establishment of trust is essential within a feminist research paradigm and necessary for

consciousness-raising. According to Reinharz (1992, p.28), trust is promoted by the interviewer “believing the interviewee” and is vital for the disclosure of “the truth”. However, this idea is still considered controversial by some since social interaction involves some level of deception, and not all feminists believe the women they interview. Reinharz (1992, p.29) asserts that a feminist researcher should start her interview with the intention to believe the interviewee and should question the interviewee if she does not believe her. As such, a task for data analysis becomes a discussion of this conflict between belief and disinformation. These controversies are discussed in Chapter Five.

The establishment of trust in the research process can also promote researcher disclosure. Researcher disclosure is encouraged in feminist research methodology because it often assists to put the research participants at ease and allows them to become “co-researchers” (Reinharz, 1992, p.29). The experience of researcher disclosure in this study promoted further intimacy, acceptance and mutual trust in the interview process. Some feminists are not comfortable with researcher disclosure, viewing such a practice as constricting and increasing the vulnerability of the researcher. However, as researcher, I agree with Reinharz’s (1992) claim that researcher disclosure has the potential to maximise the engagement of the self and promotes meaningful conversations between researcher and research participants. This is evident in the in-depth and deeply personal data that emerged out of the interview process. Researcher disclosure also assists in decreasing researcher bias and is consistent with Reinharz’s (1992, p.34) assertion that “hearing other people’s stories also provides the researcher with an alternative case that prevents her from generalising exclusively from her own experience”. The interview process in this study, which emphasised intimacy, trust and closeness, coupled with the ethic of commitment, is directly responsible for the rich, nuanced data that emerged out of the interviews. However, a common challenge in feminist research methodology is that the data, especially that which is disclosed in confidence, often exposes feminist researchers to stress that leaves them conflicted, anxious and depressed. These tensions and challenges that relate to the research process are discussed in the analysis chapter.

There is enough evidence that the strength of interviews, and life history interviews in particular, is largely dependent on the sense of trust between researcher and the research participants (Reinharz, 1992, p.34). This sense of trust influenced the women leaders’ willingness to speak openly about their experiences in the union. At the beginning of this study, only one woman leader remained in the union. This influenced the information these participants were willing to share and I experienced occasional episodes of reluctance and distrust from those still located within the union structures.

4.4.1 Trial Run

As a novice in life history research, I felt it necessary to conduct a trial run with two volunteers before diving into the interview process. My intention was to practise my interview technique and sharpen my skills, especially my listening and interpretation skills. I also prepared a transcript of both the trial interviews and this experience alerted me to some of the hidden, incidental and unintended aspects that can present itself in the interview and transcript writing process. I found a willing volunteer in a new acquaintance I had made through a mutual friend and cajoled my young cousin to volunteer. They were both female but differed in age, race and cultural background. I limited the questions in this face-to-face interview to demographic, background and attitude type questions. The first volunteer (the new acquaintance), an experienced researcher, was older than the second volunteer, and was enthusiastic

and responded with great gusto to the questions in the interview. In contrast, my second volunteer (my cousin), a young woman in her late twenties with little experience in research, appeared anxious about the interview. She found the interview stressful and displayed a lack of confidence in her responses by constantly questioning my acceptance of her responses. I spent a lot of time trying to make her feel relaxed and less anxious, particularly by stressing that there are no right or wrong answers to these questions. In the post interview feedback, my cousin revealed that she felt anxious because she was worried she would disappoint me if she responded differently to my expectations. I realised that my close relationship with her influenced her responses, whilst the other respondent who barely knew me, felt free to talk openly. This alerted me to the possibility that I might experience a similar challenge with my research participants since I knew all of them professionally and socially and some of them had become good friends. However, I was not unduly concerned because the women were older, more experienced in interviews and strong, confident leaders.

Furthermore, in reviewing the contentious issue of researcher-as-friend Reinharz (1992) maintains that the interviewer (researcher) can benefit from being friends with the interviewee (research participant) in terms of a greater rapport between them and the likelihood that more information would be disclosed. However, she also asserts that being interviewed by a stranger could make the respondent feel safer to reveal information because he or she will not see the interviewer again. However, despite this tension, feminist research encourages a close, interactive link between researcher and participants as an important ingredient to establishing trust, empathy and acceptance. Oakley (1981, p.40) recommends that the interviewer invest her own personal identity in the research relationship by answering respondents' questions, sharing knowledge and experiences and giving support when asked. This is consistent with self-disclosure discussed earlier in this section. However, Reinharz (1992) cautions that in such a relationship the interviewer must be sensitive to the possibility of biasing responses from the interviewee by triggering expected responses. As a result, I was sensitive to this tension in my interviews and was alert to the possibility of bias by carefully listening to the research participants' perspective and minimising the extent to which my own frame of reference was allowed to dominate. From the inception of the study I invited the women leaders to participate in the research by commenting on the critical question, the sample, research methodology and co-analysing the data. I shared my feelings, tensions, knowledge and experience on the issues under discussion.

4.4.2 Making Contact

My employment in the national office of SADTU gave me access to the majority of the women leaders who were still in the union leadership structure. I met them at different constitutional meetings and made appointments to discuss my research. Those who had left the union were contacted telephonically. I explained the nature and purpose of the study, the significance of their participation and the prolonged nature of the life-history interviews. All potential participants were excited about the research, however most of them were reluctant to commit themselves to the long interview process that characterized the life history approach. Those who had left the union under a storm were sceptical of my ambitious intention to initiate change in the union by illuminating the gendered experiences of women leaders, but they wished me well. Finally after much persuasion and many phone calls, I was able to secure the participation of five research participants after agreeing to reduce the number of

interviews.

4.4.3 Interview Schedule

Although I regard the research process as evolutionary and attempted to relinquish control of the research by allowing the women leaders to tell their stories, the interviews were not directionless but guided by critical questions. Hence, the interview schedules were developed as a supportive tool to enable the research participants to share as much data as possible. The interview schedule was semi-structured in an attempt to retain the following life history frame as a deliberate orientation (Kathard, 2003):

- Temporal Frame: the schedules were structured to trace changing gender experiences from childhood to adulthood;
- Social Frame: Based on the view that reality is socially constructed and multiple, the schedule had to assist with unearthing gender experiences within a social frame, as the influence of society, family, school, occupation, union participation and life circumstances are important;
- Public Frame: participants' sense-making of their experiences as women leaders within the union was central to the study (an addition to Kathard's (2003) original framing); and
- Personal Frame: participants' personal sense-making of their experiences and issues of importance to them was critical.

The interview schedule comprised semi-structured qualitative interviews which contained open-ended questions, some lasting more than two hours each. The questions consisted of demographic, behavioural, knowledge and attitude type questions. Below are examples of the different types of questions taken from the interview schedules:

- Demographic Question: e.g. what is your age?
- Behavioural Question: e.g. have you spoken at any of the SADTU National Congresses? How did you conduct yourself when you took the floor? Why?
- Knowledge Question: e.g. what do you understand by the term "gender issues"?
- Attitude Questions: e.g. what is your opinion of the Progressive Women's Movement?

Consistent with feminist research methodology I had opted for an unstructured and open-ended format to the interviews. Cohen, Manion & Morrison, (2000) contend that such a format allows for flexibility, creates the opportunity for the interviewer to probe issues, clears up misunderstanding and encourages better rapport between researcher and participants. In line with Neuman's (1997) assertion of interviews within a feminist research paradigm, I worked towards obtaining the co-operation of my research participants, built rapport, and created social connections and trust with my research participants. However, while doing this I also attempted to be "true" to the data. I was conscious of how I could shape the data and went to great lengths to factor this into the research process. As part of feminist research, I reflected on these experiences, especially the mediation of power between researcher and research participants. After I had completed the two interviews, the research participants assured me that they would respond to questions not covered in the interviews. They agreed to respond to queries and questions within the timeframe of the research study. I agreed to share the transcripts and the analysis with them and invited their comments. I hoped that this invitation to "co-

analysis” or “participatory-analysis” (Reinharz, 1992, p.38) would keep in check my interpretation and analysis of the transcripts. It was agreed that if no comments were forthcoming within a month of receiving the transcripts, I was to accept this as a ‘true’ reflection of what transpired in the interview.

The interview schedule was revised after my trial run to ensure that questions were clear and reasonably specific to the issues being covered. The first interview schedule was designed to:

- Gather information on the demographic details of the research participants;
- Focus on the research participant opinions, comments and recommendations on the research;
- Trace significant life experiences and events in relation to gender from childhood to adulthood;
- Trace the research participants’ political involvement in the union; and
- Illuminate gendered experiences in the union

The second interview schedule attempted to elicit the following information concerning an understanding of gender issues in terms of:

- How the research participants have experienced gender in the union;
- Gather their experiences on the implementation of gender policies in the union; and
- Create a safe space for them to voice their opinions on gender progress in the union, in their personal lives and in South Africa in general.

I had intended to supplement my interviews with a written activity that would encourage the research participants to reveal, via creative writing pieces, more nuanced personal accounts of their perspectives and experiences as women leaders. However, much to my disappointment, only two research participants completed the activity. After several attempts to follow up and many appeals later, I abandoned the activity once I realised the richness of the data gathered in the interviews. In addition to the interview questions, I also used a newspaper article to explore the views of the women leaders on progress made regarding gender in South Africa. I deliberately selected an article that would create tension, encourage consciousness raising and reveal how the women struggled between their public and private worlds.

I choose an article on a highly publicised rape case involving a senior politician from the country’s ruling party, the African National Congress. As explained in Chapter Two there are very close links between the ruling party, the ANC, the trade union federation, COSATU and the SACP. The three groupings had formed the tripartite alliance which maintains a dominant and influential presence in South African politics. All research participants were active members of the ANC and engaged trade unionists. Many of the women had first cut their teeth in activism by participating in politics during the liberation struggle. They displayed strong loyalty to the ANC and were patriotic citizens of the new democracy. As a result, my choice of newspaper article for discussion on gender progress in South Africa was met with anxiety, reluctance and, in some cases, complete refusal to

respond to the gender-related questions. I encouraged the research participants to ignore who the article referred to, dismiss the politics engulfing the incident and to rather concentrate on the gender challenges that were exposed. However, this had little influence on their willingness to answer the questions.

The article referred to the rape trial of ANC stalwart Jacob Zuma. At the time of the interview, Jacob Zuma was the Deputy President of the ANC and was in line to be the party's president in the next general election set to take place in 2009 and hence, he was the first choice for the position of President of South Africa. He is revered by the trade union federation as their hope to align the agenda of the government to that of the left and in favour of the working class and the poor. There were a myriad of issues that COSATU had with the current President of the ANC and South Africa, Thabo Mbeki. Hence, there was a fierce power battle within the tripartite alliance between those who supported Thabo Mbeki's bid to continue as President of the country and those who favoured Zuma for President. This political battle was further intensified when Mbeki fired Zuma from cabinet under allegations of corruption. This act further convinced the alliance partners that Mbeki was using his powers as President to destroy Zuma's chances of becoming President of South Africa. Although this is a very simplistic way to describe the political situation in South Africa, the details are, however, not necessary for this study.

The women leaders had the following to say about the impact of this political challenge to the union:

It is a very difficult time for women in SADTU and in the labour movement
generally

What is happening is that the debate is being quelled,

If you sing the tune of the most powerful group, you are okay

If you decide to go with the group that looks like it is getting a beating you are dead

However, you cannot be neutral.

You have to choose a side otherwise, you are going to be pushed out.

(Appendix 3, Poem 25, No. 10)

In addition to charges of corruption, Jacob Zuma was also accused of rape. His rape trial was highly political and unleashed a plethora of gender-related issues. I viewed this as an interesting opportunity to illuminate the way in which the women leaders interpreted, understood and experienced the gender implications that emerged during the trial. Jacob Zuma was accused of allegedly raping a young HIV-positive woman who had regarded him as her uncle. The rape trial evoked emotional political debate with many perceiving it as a conspiracy by Thabo Mbeki to thwart Zuma's ambitions for the presidency. My choice of the article had little to do with the innocence or guilt of Zuma; rather I was of the opinion that the article exposed many gender-related challenges for South African society. I choose the article, "Zuma's story "laughable, fanciful" by Amy Musgrave and Jenni Evans (Mail and Guardian Online, 26 April 2006, refer to Appendix 2) to engage in discussion on these gender challenges. Although it was not my intention when I chose the article, it evoked intense emotions and revealed the tenuous position the research participants occupied as women in their private worlds and as political leaders in their public worlds. The intention of this brief overview was to illustrate the possible reasons why the women were reluctant to respond to the question.

4.4.4 Interview Session

Given the challenges encountered in securing interviews with the women leaders, I was forced to decrease the number of interviews from four to two, each lasting for three hours or more. At the first interview session, I presented the consent forms and discussed the nature and purpose of the research. In keeping with feminist research's emphasis on giving greater visibility to the subjective experience of women (Neuman, 1997, p.262), I invited the women to share their feelings, ask questions, offer suggestions and share their thoughts about the research, the researcher and the choice of research participants. Appendix 3 presents their responses (refer to Poem no.35). In this way, I involved them in the research process from the very beginning and factored their suggestions into the study, thus allowing them to shape the outcome of the research. This also contributed towards building a trusting, empowering relationship between the women leaders and me. Issues of confidentiality and the recording of the interview were discussed. They granted me permission to record the interview on a Dictaphone with the caveat that they had the option to have the tape recorder switched off for whatever reason during the interview. They agreed to check the interview transcript to ensure it reflected the contents of the interview. I stressed that they had the option to negotiate issues and statements that made them uncomfortable so that both researcher and research participant were satisfied with the final transcript and in so doing, were prepared to take ownership of the research.

The following ethical consent form was given to each research participant:

RESEARCH STUDY EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN LEADERS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEMOCRATIC TEACHERS UNION

I, Shermain Mannah, am currently registered as a doctoral student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am engaged in illuminative research that focuses on the experiences of women leaders in the South African Democratic Teachers Union in relation to gender equality. I have received ethical clearance from my university - please refer to the attached letter for confirmation of ethical clearance.

The purpose of my study is to explore several related questions. Firstly, my interest is to understand the experiences of women leaders in the teacher union in relation to gender equality. Secondly, I wish to explore how the gendered experience of these women leaders constrain or promote the gender equality. Thirdly, I will attempt to explain why these gendered experiences promote or constrain gender equality in the South African Democratic Teachers Union.

I hope to engage women leaders at national and provincial levels of the union. They range from current leaders to past leaders. I intend interviewing research participants, and engaging them in reflective exercises as part of my research. The information gathered in this research process will add to the scarce scholarship on the gendered experiences of women in teacher trade unions.

As a women leader in the South African Democratic Teachers Union I hereby request your participation in my doctoral research. In carrying out the research I promise to acknowledge my ethical responsibility to the participants in the construction of the text of my thesis. I will conduct two three-hour long face-to-face interviews at a mutually agreed time and venue. I would like your permission to record each interview for the purpose of accuracy. At any time you may request the tape recorder to be switched off. Your confidentiality and anonymity as appropriate will be respected throughout the process. You are free to withdraw from the research process at any stage and for any reason. Your decision not to participate in the

research study will not result in any form of disadvantage to you. There will be no financial payments for participation in this research process.

Through the research, I will write a doctoral thesis and various conference papers. I undertake to provide all participants with a copy of the interview transcripts as work in progress so that they can check the accuracy of the information. A decision about the content of the final analysis of the interviews will be negotiated with the research participants. I will also provide the institution, through the library, with a copy of the completed thesis.

ETHICAL AND CONSENT STATEMENT

As the researcher, I wish to confirm our shared understanding and agreement with regard to my doctoral research on the experiences of women leaders in the South African Democratic Teachers Union in relation to gender equality.

I am willing to participate in this doctoral research on gender equality. The researcher may conduct interviews with me and engage me in reflective exercises of my experiences in SADTU.

As researcher, I, Shermain Mannah, agree to respect your views. I will acknowledge your participation in my thesis and in any report or paper that I write.

Signatures

Research Participant: _____

Researcher: _____

Date: _____

Contact Details:

Supervisor: Professor Michael Samuel
Wk: 012-312 5667
Cell: 083 782 6743

Researcher: Ms Shermain Mannah
Wk: 011-334 4830
Cell: 082 450 8156

The interviews are consistent with Neuman's (1997) emphasis on interviews as interactive processes within feminist research methodology. Since the intention was to illuminate the experiences of women leaders, the research participants were encouraged to make recommendations and share personal experiences and feelings. They were not obliged to answer questions they found threatening or uncomfortable and were invited to participate in various sections of the research process. They were also given copies of the transcripts and the narratives to encourage participation in the analysis and synthesis.

4.5 EXCAVATING EXPERIENCE THROUGH GROUNDED THEORY

This research admits data as text. Denzin and Lincoln, (2003, p.259) distinguish between

the two traditions of text: linguistic tradition, which treats texts as an object of analysis itself and the sociological tradition, which treats text as a window into human experience. This study concentrates on the sociological tradition in which the text is analysed in detail to illuminate the experiences of the women leaders. Reinharz, (1992, p.45) observes that feminist research methodology, which carefully describes in detail what occurs during interviews and in the analysis, can be challenged by the discovery of additional methodological and ethical dilemmas. She proposes self-reflexive reporting of the interview process and the exact reproduction of people's speech as steps towards addressing such methodological and ethical dilemmas (Reinharz, 1992, p.45). The research process followed in this study concurs with Reinharz's (1992) observations. However, given the detail, intimate knowledge and awareness of the researcher of these processes, no additional methodological and ethical dilemmas emerged.

The analysis of the interview transcripts, informed by an inductive method, generated theory from the data or theory grounded in the data. I applied the grounded theory approach developed by sociologists Glaser and Strauss (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003) and tried to develop grounded ways of linking theory to practice. Grounded theorists want to identify categories and concepts that emerge from the text, make comparisons and link these concepts into substantive and formal theories (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p.279). This approach is flexible, lets the theory and data interact and allows the researcher to be open to the unexpected (Neuman, 1997). By employing the principles of grounded theory, I aimed to understand the women's experiences in as rigorous and detailed a manner as possible to make certain that emerging theory is grounded in data systematically gathered and analysed (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Grounded theory resonated with the intentions of this research. I immersed myself in the data to excavate a richer understanding of the experiences of the women leaders. Grounded theory allows for in-depth depictions that are true to the research participants' worldviews. The emphasis is not on how accurately the data depicts reality, but rather on the concepts or categories that fit emerging patterns of data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Mertens (2005) asserts that the analysis of specific phenomena allows for insight into the larger dynamics of a society. Similarly, the careful and detailed analysis of the experiences of women leaders in the union provided insight into the broader struggles of women leaders in South African society. In addition, grounded theory also shows connections among micro-level events and between micro-level situations and larger social forces for the purposes of reconstructing theory and informing social action (Neuman, 1997). It was the aim of the researcher to illuminate the experience of the women leaders, and, in so doing, reveal the dynamics of gender oppression, and promote transformation.

The following section discusses in detail the process and the methodology employed to develop theory. The process appears to be linear but I would like to stress that this was an iterative process between researcher, research participants and the data.

I initially made telephonic contact with each research participant, explaining the intention of the research and the research methodology I was going to use. I received their consent to conduct the interview and proceeded to interview them as per the interview schedule. During the interviews, I wrote brief memo notes recording areas that needed clarification or elaboration in the second interview. At the end of each interview, I recorded my general impression of the interview in a personal diary. I also recorded responses and questions that challenged or intrigued me during the interview.

I then began the process of transcription. I opted for verbatim transcripts, capturing details such as silences, laughter, tone of voice and actual words spoken to allow for “rich interpretation” (Mertens, 2005) of the data. The transcriptions therefore served the purpose of representing in written form the actual spoken words of the researcher and research participants. Although this proved to be an arduous process, the benefits outweighed the difficulty. By immersing myself in the data during the transcription process, I was able to generate a preliminary interpretive understanding of the data emerging and compared these insights with the memo notes taken during the interviews. I then provided the women leaders with copies of the transcripts and invited comments, queries and suggestions on interpretations. I followed the same process for the second interview.

I organised the transcripts in tabular forms with the following headings:

Names	Content of Interview	Code Notes	Operational Notes	Theory Notes	Comment
-------	----------------------	------------	-------------------	--------------	---------

I adopted Strauss and Corbin's (1990) Memo Technique for recording relationships among themes (see also Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). I used Code Notes to describe the concepts that emerged out of the transcripts, Theory Notes to summarise ideas about what is going on in the text and Operational Notes to record practical matters. I used the last column to break down the code notes into themes and sub-themes and then to compare concepts and themes emerging from all the transcripts.

Following Henning's, Wilhelm & Smit (2004, p.104) advice, I then proceeded to read all the transcripts to get a total impression of the overall content. Thereafter, I read through the transcripts several times, line by line, jotting down comments and simply highlighting key phrases and identifying potential themes in each response. This inductive process is referred to as open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). The following codes, that reflected the different domains related to gender experiences from the life history interview, were used:

CODE	DOMAIN
P	Personal dimensions
SC	Social/cultural dimensions
SE	Socio/economic dimension
PL	Political dimensions
T	Temporal dimensions
N	Negative case to identify extensions, problems or deviance

The intention was to divide the data into smaller, more meaningful units by breaking up broad themes into narratives under common sub-themes. Since the data analysis process was inductive, the sub-themes were derived from the data. This was followed by a detailed process of comparing the data for the purpose of building and refining categories, to define conceptual similarities, find negative evidence and discover patterns. I asked questions of when, why and under what conditions do these themes occur in the text. This type of analysis is referred to as the “constant comparison method” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). I stopped once I was satisfied that the data could no longer yield new information and then began to elaborate on the sets of generalisations that cover the consistencies in the data. The focus of this study was

not to generalise but rather to illuminate. Identifying common patterns and providing thick description of the themes assisted in forming new constructs and knowledge. This promoted transferability.

4.5.1 Harmonisation of Data

I then proceeded to harmonise each woman's narrative into one data set under emerging sub-themes in a chronological order (refer to Appendix 3). This was the first level of harmonisation that includes all the sub-themes emerging from the responses of the five women leaders.

Example of First Level Harmonisation

4.5.2 The Girl-child

1

When I think about myself as a child,
I wonder why I didn't become more forceful,
Why wasn't I strong?
Why was I a vulnerable child?

2

I was growing up, with the fear of sexual predators in our environment.
I felt threatened when he was standing next to me in the middle of the night.
People that were there doing these terrible things could be your own family,
They damaged our psyche, our self-worth.

3

I was fair game because I was a child of an unwed mother,
That's why I had to stand up for myself,
That's what made me speak for myself,
Because no-one else is gonna speak up for me.

4.5.3 Growing up as a Girl

1

When my mother died I saw the doors of learning being closed.
I was the only woman now,
I will wake up and clean, I will cook, I will make the garden, I will chop the wood
and I will make fire, while my two brothers did nothing
I then decided to fight for myself.
I refused to cook, when they ask why is there no food, I said because there is no fire
because you won't chop the wood.
You chop the wood and then I will make fire and cook the food.
Or else we will all starve
So they all had to take responsibility.
I succeeded at home

2

I started reading novels when I was in standard two, and I went through phases and
read all Hardy Boys, every one of them.
All of Nancy Drews, every one of them.
I was reading Mills and Boon and my brother saw me

“You don’t read that rubbish, put it away!”
Well with all the sex in there.
I mean, it’s about sexuality, you know, we had to suppress our sexuality.

3

I was so upset and embarrassed and humiliated by it, and then after that he called me
and said he was sorry and he won’t do that again and
I mustn’t say anything to anybody and I didn’t.
But it sometimes made me feel sort of dirty,
Did I do something to encourage it?
It made me feel like, you know, I don’t know, how to say it.
It made me feel yucky about myself, you know, why would he do that to me?
Why me?

4

I felt it was unfair, I remember as a teenager, we went to buy the groceries for the
family
And came back around, say, half past five, six,
We’d find that they haven’t closed the curtains, they haven’t turned on the lights,
they haven’t cooked supper, and they are waiting for us.
They wouldn’t do anything until we’re back,
they were all adults, you know.

5

We were told that as good girls
We should be respectful, not have loud mouths as girls.
That is what my mother taught us, we should behave ladylike from a small age.
I questioned her how do you behave when you behave ladylike?
You don’t climb trees like the boys and you don’t play rough like the boys.
I was angry with them for having all the privileges to do what they feel like doing.
We must forever be told we must do things in a specific way.
I had never heard her telling them how they should behave, where they must go and
so on.
To me girls were being disciplined all the time.

I aligned the data to the life history method. I chose to present the data in a poetic form, which I considered a more textured and nuanced representation of the experiences of the women than direct speech from the interviews. Furthermore, the single harmonisation of the women’s voices masked their identity. Richardson (1997) argues that poetry can capture the epiphanies in people’s lives and touch the emotional centre of the listener. This form of representation presents the “reality” of the women in an innovative way making their experiences in the union visible and accessible to the reader. Hence, the choice of data representation assisted to resolve the ethical issue of anonymity and to project the duality of women’s experience metaphorically as poetry.

Poetry offers an analogical representation of reality that resonates easily with feminine sensibilities breaking away from traditional patriarchal traditions of writing. I considered the use of poetry as a shift from elitist forms of writing, and hence consciously projected the actual voices of the women with very little grammatical corrections and punctuation. I consider these poems as a form of protest to subvert

masculine forms of writing and as an alternative form to traditional conventional patriarchal scholarship. Like the Haikus presented in the Foreword, I intended the poetry to resonate with the everyday language of people and tried to present them in its most authentic form to evoke the pleasure and pain, to reveal the paradoxes and duality in the women's experiences. They do not sit easily with language conventions and are often difficult to read but they retain the authenticity of the women's voices. I considered writing poetry both liberating and empowering and an appropriate genre to give voice to women's often hidden experiences in patriarchal organisations.

However, I did consider some of the criteria for presenting the data as poetry as recommended by Piercy and Benson (2005, p.10) and subjected the data representation to their list of evolving standards by answering the following questions:

- Does the work have aesthetic merit
- Is the work credible?
- Does the work have an impact?
- Do the work and author reflect integrity?
- Does the researcher locate him/herself in the work?
- Is there rigor behind the work?
- Does the work point to a better world?
- Is there room for multiple interpretations?

After answering these questions, I was satisfied with the quality of the data and its potential to trouble patriarchal scholarship.

I then "cleaned" up the data to remove any detail that would identify the women leaders and tried to ensure anonymity. Thereafter, I selected those sub-themes that were relevant to the critical question and harmonised them further, sometimes merging themes, removing and adding sections under selected themes for the analysis. The data was then divided into two categories. The first category consisted of six sets of poems that depicted the leaders gendered childhood experiences and their evolution into young women, while the second category, which consisted of fifteen sets of poems, described the women's gendered experiences in the union. This was the second level of harmonisation, and is presented in Chapters Five and Six. The themed poems in Chapter Five are aligned to the different domains of consciousness that women experience in the family, school and as schoolteachers. The themed poems in Chapter Six are aligned to the imaging of organisations covering the bureaucracy, culture and politics of organisations.

Example of Second Level Harmonisation Under Specific Themes:

4.5.4 Why was I a Vulnerable Child?

1

When I think about myself as a child,
I wonder why I didn't become more forceful,
Why wasn't I strong?
Why was I a vulnerable child?

2

I was growing up, with the fear of sexual predators in our environment.

I was so upset and embarrassed and humiliated by it, and then after that he called me
and said he is sorry.
He won't do that again and I mustn't say anything to anybody and I didn't.
But it sometimes made me feel sort of dirty,
Did I do something to encourage it?
Why would he do that to me?
Why me?
They damaged our psyche, our self-worth.

3

We are told that as good girls
We should be respectful, not have loud mouths
That is what my mother taught us, we should behave ladylike from a small age.
What kind of mother are you going to make if you are this and that?
I was angry with boys for having all the privileges to do what they feel like doing.
We are forever told to behave in a specific way.
What kind of a woman are you going to make if you don't have that control?

4

I was fair game because I was a child of an unwed mother,
That's why I had to stand up for myself,
That's what made me speak for myself,
Because no-one else is gonna speak up for me.

I shared the two levels of harmonised data with the women leaders. They were encouraged to provide comment on its accuracy and to alert me to anything that troubled them. Each set of poems are analysed to provide an answer to the critical question of the study. Furthermore, the common threads between and among the different poems and categories were illuminated and argued within the theoretical frame of the research. The analysis was multi-layered. The historical, contextual and organisational factors that shaped the private and public worlds of women leaders were analysed.

4.6 QUALITY IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS

This study was subjected to the rigours of research to ensure credibility, transferability, dependability, authenticity and conformability.

4.6.1 Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research parallels internal validity in post-positivism (Mertens, 2005, p.254) by ensuring that there is a correspondence between the way the research participants actually perceive social constructs and the way the researcher portrays their viewpoints.

I used the following strategies taken from Guba and Lincoln (1989) to enhance the credibility of my research.

Member Checks

Since my intention was to unearth the “personal truth” of the experiences of women leaders in the union, I was cautious of my influence as researcher on the representation of these experiences. Therefore, I conducted member checks at various points in the research process in order to stay “true” to the data that emerged. All through the interview process, I reviewed my interpretations and clarified ambiguous data with the research participants. The following member checks were conducted:

- I shared the interview transcripts with the research participants, and invited comments with emphasis on the accuracy and anonymity of the data;
- Co-analysis was encouraged and participants received copies of the analysis and were urged to make recommendations and comments; and
- My strategies for transformation were guided by the input of the participants at various informal meetings and telephonic conversations.

Prolonged and Substantial Engagement

Mertens (2005) asserts that there are no hard and fast rules about prolonged and substantial engagement. Instead, she advises researchers to be guided by the quality of the data emerging to guide their time in the field. The interviews with the research participants were intense and lasted for more than two hours. After the second interview I was confident that the themes emerging were being repeated rather than extended. Therefore, there was no reason to continue the interview sessions. Common themes emerged with very few deviations.

Peer Debriefing

My participation in the Doctoral Seminars at the University of KwaZulu-Natal provided the opportunity to engage in extended discussions with fellow doctoral students and lecturers on the different aspects of the research. The provocative and challenging questions posed by my peers and lecturers in the seminars were invaluable in encouraging me to confront my values and biases and to guiding my study. In addition, I also participated as a casual student in three sessions of a Masters in Education Research Methods course at the Faculty of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. These sessions developed my critical questions and clarified the focus of my study. I also presented a paper on the status of gender equality in SADTU at a conference on Gender Equality and Education in 2004. This paper was later published in 2005. I published a similar article in the union’s national newspaper, “The Educators Voice”, and received positive responses from fellow female members that affirmed my intention to put to memory the experiences of women in the union.

Outside the formal doctoral sessions, I dialogued with doctoral graduates from other universities, researchers, trade unionists and local feminists. I found their advice, comments and ideas illuminating and encouraging. Of course, none of these engagements matched the powerfully empowering sessions that I had with my supervisor who not only played devil’s advocate in his critique, but also played the role of counsellor, confidante and friend. He was supportive when the writing up threatened to drag me into the depths of despair. The sessions with my peers, fellow colleagues and comrades, including late night phone calls, served to sharpen my skills as a researcher. Dialoguing with my fellow comrades in the union spurred my activism towards advancing political action and prompted me to engage reflexively

in the unfolding process as researcher and activist. The interactions tempered my ambitions for immediate change in the union. These peer engagements greatly enhanced the credibility of the research.

Progressive Subjectivity

According to traditional research, as employee of the union under research I would be at risk of allowing my subjectivity and bias to prejudice the research. However, feminist research methodology is less concerned with objectivity - rather it emphasises the declaration of positionality and encourages reflection on its influence on the research. Mertens (2005) advises that the researcher monitor or document their developing constructions and share these among peers. Peers challenged and helped maintain my critical stance as a researcher. As advised by my supervisor, I documented this process of personal change in a journal. I discussed these journal entries at peer debriefing sessions, and was constantly challenged to keep an open mind. Some of these reflections are included as part of the empirical evidence for the study.

4.6.2 Transferability

Transferability is similar to external validity of post-positivist research, which assesses whether the research results can be generalised to other situations. Transferability is facilitated when the researcher provides sufficient detail for the reader to make a judgement of transferability to other contexts (Mertens, 2005). This is usually done by providing a thick description of the findings. Thick description demands coherence, inclusion of facts and empirical data supported by the theoretical frame of the study (Henning, 2004, p.6).

The validity of any life history, according to Cohen; Manion and Morrison (1998, p.62) lies in its ability to represent the research participants' subjective reality, that is to say, their definition of a situation. However, the aim of this research is less to generalise but rather to a gain deeper understanding of the experiences of women leaders in SADTU with the intention of facilitating change. Nevertheless, this study provides a thick description of the empirical data, including the organisational context and the history of the women leaders within a theoretical framework. Furthermore, the actual voices of the women leaders are presented in the study. Thus, the research is transferable to other settings, contexts and cases.

4.6.3 Dependability

Dependability, according to Guba and Lincoln (1989) is equivalent to reliability in the post-positivist paradigm. Reliability in life history research within a post-positivist paradigm is dependent upon the identification of sources of bias and the application of techniques to reduce them (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 1998, p.62). In contrast, feminist research methodology encourages subjectivity and is not so concerned with how accurately the research participants depict reality. However, this study does allow for comparisons of the research participants' experiences in order to identify common perceptions of "reality" and as such has increased dependability.

Reinharz (1992, p.72) advises that feminists should be vigilant lest "research from the standpoint of women be a slogan masking the feminist researcher's application of her

own ideas onto the women she studies”. An integral part of this research included a self-reflexive process that compelled the researcher to consider her influence on the research and vice versa. I engaged in critical self-reflexivity that examined the influence of my ways of knowing on the research and examined the influence of the research on the development of my gender conscience and personal transformation. In Chapter Six I make explicit my positionality, and reflect on the influence of the research on my personal transformation. This is presented as part of the empirical evidence in this research.

4.6.4 Authenticity

According to Mertens (2005, p.257), authenticity answers the question: “Has the researcher been fair in presenting the views of the research participants? Consistent with feminist research methodology, the study honoured multiple constructed realities and an interactive relationship between researcher and research participants was pursued. I demonstrated authenticity by being transparent about my intention, aims and outcome of the research and by remaining committed to member checking throughout the research.

My intention was to ensure there was little or no misrepresentation of the voices of the women leaders. However, in the representation of the data, I have “intruded” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 1998, p.62) by editing and interpreting the data. Although I used the research participants' own words I had changed sequences, disguised names, places etc. and structured the data around emerging themes. I presented the voices of women leaders and included my own voice in the interpretation of their experiences of gender oppression in the union. Hence I want to make explicit that although I encouraged co-analysis in this research, to a greater extent my voice frames the arguments in this study. However, I have attempted to retain the research participants' authentic meanings at all times.

4.7 ETHICAL ISSUES

Henning, Wilhelm & Smit (2004) assert that the researcher is accountable for the ethical quality of a study. As a researcher, I was guided by Cavan’s (1977, p.810; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 1998, p.359) definition of ethics as:

...a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others. Being ethical limits the choices we can make in the pursuit of truth. Ethics say that while truth is good, respect for human dignity is better, even if, in the extreme case, the respect of human nature leaves one ignorant of human nature.

I was acutely aware of the moral and ethical issues implicit in this study and made every attempt to meet my obligations as a researcher and to honour the trust invested in me by those involved in this study. I tried to do this without threatening the validity of the research endeavour. My embeddedness within the union made ethical concerns more complex and occasionally confronted me as researcher with ethical dilemmas. This became more complicated when the research participants chose to provide off-the-record explanations to interview questions. I was guided by the ethical guidelines stipulated in the informed-consent contract between researcher and research participant and respected the confidentiality of the information shared. As stated by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (1998, p.350), the principle of informed consent is supported by the research participants’ right to freedom and self-

determination and also implies informed refusal. Thus, regardless of how powerful the off-the-record data was to the research, I was obliged to honour the rights of the research participants at all times.

When I first approached the potential research participants, I was very clear that their participation was not obligatory and invited them to volunteer to participate in the research. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (1998, p.350) argue that implicit in 'Voluntarism' is informed consent and this guarantees that exposure to risks is undertaken knowingly. Nevertheless, I also discussed in detail the intention of my research, the process to be followed, and the possible benefits and risks of participating in the study. I only proceeded with the interviews once the participants fully understood the nature of the research and had agreed to sign the informed-consent forms.

However, my existing relationship with the research participants also assisted in strengthening their trust and confidence in the research. I was clear that they were encouraged to make suggestions and amendments to the research design and process. In an attempt not to dishonour or misrepresent the women leaders, I emailed copies of the transcripts and poems as a "member check" to them. I only commenced with the analysis once they were comfortable with the way I had represented their data. By doing this I ensured that the welfare of the research participants was paramount, even if it compromised the impact of the research. I attempted to strike a balance between the demands placed on me as researcher, activist and friend to the research participants. Occasionally questions about honesty, levels of openness and power relations posed ethical challenges. However, the good relationship between all concerned was instrumental in addressing these challenges.

The question of anonymity was discussed at length with the research participants. The women leaders indicated a preference to be anonymous but understood that the research method of face-to-face interviews and the life history approach made a guarantee of anonymity impossible. Their preference for anonymity guided the design and representation of the data. In order to keep the women anonymous, I harmonised the individual narratives as poems under emerging themes and proceeded to "clean up" the data to remove the possibility of identification. This was the first level of harmonisation and was consistent with the life history interviews and was developed chronologically. These poems were further harmonised under selected themes to allow for the analysis of the women leaders' experiences as required by the critical question of the research. This was the second level of harmonisation, which involved the merging of themes to protect the women's identity while at the same time providing quality data for the analysis. I found this a useful technique for telling the stories of the women in a charged political environment and for keeping their identity anonymous. Furthermore, the use of member checks and open dialogue maintained the trust vital to the ethics of the research. As researcher, I promised them confidentiality on off-the-record discussions, and removed names and other personal details in the poems in an attempt to keep their identities hidden. Although the participants' names are not revealed, I have formally acknowledged their contribution to the thesis and thanked them for their support and solidarity. This is expressed in the Foreword of the thesis and is part of the ethics of collective ownership of the research data.

The relationship of trust and rapport developed through the processes of feminist research methodology dispelled any doubts or fears of betrayal or deception between

the research participants and the researcher. This relationship challenged me to be sensitive to the rights of the women leaders; while it gave rise to solidarity and respect, such closeness prevented me from creating a distance between myself and the women. Hence, my resolve to tell the women's stories, warts and all, began to waver as I become more and more aware of the culture of intolerance that was seeping into political circles in the union in particular and the country in general. I felt it would be unethical to pursue the truth without considering the consequences that such "truth" would have for us in the current political climate. As the research drew to an end, I became progressively more anxious at the levels of intolerance and the purging of dissenting voices and criticisms in political circles. This was particularly visible among those who criticised the ruling party and its new president. I therefore re-edited some of the poems as a precautionary measure but tried to maintain the essence and spirit of the argument. Upon reflection, I was surprised that I had censored our voices; however, I was guided by my commitment to honour the women above the research.

4.8 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter, I argue that feminist research methodology is best suited to yield a response to the intention and critical question in the study. I maintain that unlike traditional social research that focuses on men's questions about women, the research paradigm, theoretical framework, research methodology and methods of the study illustrate how research about women, with women and by women can be used to develop ideas and to challenge male-dominated theories.

I stress that the life-history interviews reveal the multiple interpretations, perspectives and social realities of the experiences of women leaders in the union and, hence, constitute the most suitable method for uncovering the experiences of women. I describe in detail the interview process to add to the rigour and quality of the research.

Although my own position as an insider troubles positivists' preoccupation with objectivity, I argue that this very "embeddedness" gives me the benefit of further in-depth insights and helps in building trust with the research participants. However, I acknowledge that my insider status makes me vulnerable to superimposing my own beliefs in interpreting the voices of the women. I discuss strategies implemented to ensure the quality of the research.

I argue that grounded theory is central to achieving the intention of the research and describe in detail the mechanics of data generation while simultaneously illuminating the tensions and challenges. I explain the ethical challenge of anonymity and describe the methodological innovation of "levels of harmonisation" to represent the authentic voices of the women while masking their identities.

The next two chapters present the research data as harmonised poems and engage in in-depth critical analyses of the experiences of the women leaders.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVES: THE SOCIO-POLITICAL ENGENDERING OF WOMEN IN THE RESEARCH

*The moment I entered high school, the gender war began.
In standard nine we had to make a choice of careers,
It was then that we experienced complete gender bias in subjects girls had to take and
boys had to take.
There was no explanation why girls had to take these subjects and boys that.*

(Appendix 3, Poem 5, No. 1)

5.1 CHAPTER OUTLINE

In this chapter I provide a multi-layered analysis that incorporates history, context, situatedness and the gendered socialisation of the women. I begin the chapter by situating myself as researcher in the research and by analysing the influence of history, race and gender on my identity. I also provide a vignette of some of the tensions and challenges that emerged for me as researcher and activist in the study.

I then proceed to the harmonised themed poems of the women leaders that speak of their gendered experiences and emerging gender consciousness in the home and school. The poems trace significant milestones in the lives of the women leaders, which I analyse to reveal the influence of socialisation on the development of their identity and gender consciousness as children and young radical teachers.

I place particular emphasis on the influence of the women leaders' gendered experiences as children and young adults to produce particular kinds of identities and subjectivities. The poems are interrogated to reveal how significant childhood experiences were shaped by the political and social realities of life under apartheid and how they converged to shape common identities as young activists and catalyse the development of their gender consciousness.

5.2 SITUATING THE RESEARCHER

5.2.1 Woman: "Seeds of Activism"

The central insight expressed by de Beauvoir (1989) is that women must begin by defining themselves as women. I began this journey firmly grounded in the understanding of my own subjectivity as a woman and my aspiration to make visible women's gendered experiences. Hence, the way women experience their gender is the starting point of the research.

I express the contradictions that trouble my consciousness, my reality and my experiences as a woman in the poem below:

I am a Woman,
I am Significant as I am other
I am Complete as I am fragmented
I am Strong as I am vulnerable
I am Political as I am private
I am a Woman,
I laugh, I cry, I shout!
I speak, I reason, I resist!
I am a Woman,
And I claim my reality as a Woman!

Growing up under the glare of apartheid magnified racial differences. I was painfully aware at a very young age that my race determined both my acceptance as a citizen in my country and my access into the world of privilege. The apartheid system categorised me as Asian under the sub-classification of Indian and effectively disenfranchised me in the country of my birth. I am a black South African woman whose ancestry can be traced back five generations to India during the time of British occupation. The memory of the oppression suffered by my ancestors under British imperialism, coupled with the oppression suffered by black people under apartheid in South Africa, is etched into the psyche of each new generation in my family. This collective memory of oppression interfaced with the repressive reality of apartheid and provided the catalyst for political activism in my family. As a black woman in apartheid South Africa, my othering was not just confined to my race, but was also intensified by my gender.

My celebration of being woman and my resistance to patriarchy are rooted in the experiences of my grandmother. Her struggles and triumphs as wife, mother, breadwinner and role model greatly influenced the development of my gender consciousness. Hence, her story has to be told, even if simplistically. My grandmother was born into a wealthy conservative family in rural Newcastle in the province of KwaZulu-Natal in the 1920s. During her adolescence her family terminated her education and arranged for her marriage to a wealthy Durban businessman 13 years her senior. After her marriage, she willingly moved to the big city to be with her husband and obediently embraced the domestic roles expected of a woman of her culture and community. Through the years she bore six children and was home-maker to a large extended family. However, a little over a decade into the marriage, my grandfather faced the prospect of bankruptcy. In the interest of his business he divorced my grandmother, married an economically independent woman and started another family.

It is significant to note that divorce in the 1940s was rare and practically unheard of, particularly in communities of East Indian descent. My grandparent's divorce was considered an aberration and severely stigmatised my grandmother and her children. Given his gender, my grandfather suffered no dishonour or shame, and his second marriage was accepted by his family and the community. No longer under the economic protection of her husband, my grandmother was forced to leave the only home she had known in Durban. The stigma and disgrace of divorce prevented her return to her parents' home in Newcastle. To add insult to injury, her extended family by marriage disowned her and her children. There was no financial assistance or maintenance from her ex-husband and she was forced to move her children, the youngest only three months' old, into an informal settlement for the poor and

destitute. She accepted a job as a domestic worker to a white family of English descent. Her job was in constant peril because under apartheid laws she faced constant police harassment about her movements in a white's only residential area. Although she struggled to make ends meet, she was determined to give her children better life chances than her own. She therefore focused all her energy and resources on their education.

By the time of my birth, she had just turned 37 and had singularly put the family on the road to prosperity. As the first grandchild, I grew up on my grandmother's knees and was blessed with her engaging presence and life lessons. By the time I had graduated from high school, my grandmother had risen in prominence in the community and was a respected member of their Religious Board. She used her position to advance gender equality and was a role model for women, especially those divorced and unmarried. Although she would not have acknowledged it, she was an aspiring gender activist. Through her conscientisation I learned to look at the world through a gendered lens and was inspired to advance gender equality. I have embraced this principle at all stages of my life – as a student, teacher, trade unionist and, overall, as a human being.

I grew up in an extended middle-class family dominated by men. I was the first grandchild and the only female child for many years. The memories of my younger years, although gendered, were happy and carefree. However, my adolescent years were fraught with the growing realisation of the injustices of apartheid and the fear of disease. The men in my family were political activists, resisting the apartheid regime, and often our family home was used as a base for political deliberations. As a teenager I was privy to secret discussions and was made aware at a young age of the brutality of apartheid's secret police. Politics was generally left to the men in my family. However, despite the history of gendered activism in my family and despite the danger accompanying political resistance in apartheid society, my evolving consciousness of the injustices of apartheid fired my politicisation and encouraged me to become an activist. I became politically active as a teenager and participated in several anti-apartheid activities throughout my life as student, teacher and trade unionist.

The fear that accompanied my political activism as a teenager was further magnified by my youngest brother's (12 years my junior) diagnosis of spinal muscular dystrophy. The reality of a degenerative life threatening disease changed my family forever. During my adolescence, I witnessed my brother's gradual degeneration from an active toddler to a disabled young boy confined to a life in a wheelchair. This experience had a profound impact on me. When I was 15, my mother was advised by her psychologist to take on an outside job as a way of coping with her depression, and my father left home to work in another city. He only visited once a month. Being the eldest and female, I was thrust into the role of parent, caring for my younger brother and doing the domestic chores around the house. As I grew older I often resented my mother for her selfishness and my father for not being there when we needed him so desperately.

My gendered socialisation had created the expectation that my father, as the head of the family, would be there to protect us no matter what the problem. My ideal of the perfect mother was challenged and I felt my mother was selfish to go out to work instead of staying at home and taking care of us. I felt disappointed that she was unlike my friends' mothers, who had devoted their lives to their children and

husbands. It was only later in my life that I understood my gender conditioning and overcame my resentment and disappointment in my parents. However, my deep love and sense of responsibility for my disabled brother had been instrumental in developing my consciousness of the rights of the marginalised and have determined my life choices. Furthermore, my activism for social justice was not only nurtured by the injustices of apartheid and the othering of women but also strengthened by my consciousness of marginalisation of the disabled.

5.2.2 Researcher: “Shifting Identities”

My journey of angst during this study was punctuated with internal conflicts and tensions experienced as researcher embedded within the site of the study. These tensions were further amplified by my shifting identity from grassroots activist to engaged researcher and to aspiring feminist. My past scorn for ivory tower academics and initial discomfort with the “bourgeois abstraction of research” (a common sentiment in SADTU) was quelled by a gradual realisation and understanding that participation in research “is activism and a contribution” (Lather & Smithies, 1997, p.169). In spite of this realisation, I was often frustrated with the conventions of and requirements for a doctoral degree. Furthermore, my earlier predisposition towards positivism or “scientific research” that had influenced my formal schooling and undergraduate studies initially challenged my aspiration to employ feminist research methodology. However, the idea of a researcher as participatory activist (Fine, 1994) resonated with my intentions as researcher and further strengthened my resolve to use the research to make a contribution (Lather & Smithies, 1997, p.169) to advancing gender equality.

A study completed by SADTU in 1999 revealed that many women were troubled by the union’s poor record of gender equality (Chisholm & SADTU, 1999). By the time I embarked on this study in 2003 I had sufficient anecdotal information that women were becoming increasingly conscious of and troubled by the union’s poor performance in enacting its espoused intention to advance gender equality. Motivated by solidarity with the many SADTU women, I was encouraged to embark on this research and provide empirical evidence of the gender inequality experienced by women members. One of the woman leaders explains her aspiration for this study:

There is a lot I would like to see come out of this research.
I would want us to discuss this and see where we can take it
Which platform in SADTU we can share it with the leadership.
What you have experienced through the interviews and what the women are saying
about the environment in which we are operating as leaders in SADTU.
There is a hell of discrimination that women are still experiencing at all the
leadership levels in SADTU.
And really this research can assist us.

(Appendix 3, Poem 35, No.7)

My life in the union was plagued with stories of gender inequality suffered by women members. I intended this research to create a safe space for women to reflect on and interrogate these experiences. My intention to produce knowledge about the realities of women leaders in the teacher trade union is to further the quest for gender equality and provide the catalyst for transformation. Hence, I view myself as researcher and as activist. I was fully aware of the political role I am taking on as researcher activist in the study. I shared this intention with the women leaders and

was encouraged by both their support and their confidence in me. The following response from one of the women demonstrates this point.

I think it's a good thing that the research is coming from within SADTU,
Somebody who understands the union, understands the dynamics,
I think with your background, in terms of your training and study,
I would think that it should be in good hands.
I know that you have been in teaching for some period and then you have moved
straight into the union,
So I think that you would be able to also see the kind of role that we as women
played
I mean I'm quite confident in you

(Appendix 3, Poem 35, No. 3)

The research method of in-depth interviews encouraged reflection and consciousness raising, supporting women as agents of knowledge. Consistent with the principles of feminist research methodology, this research was *with* the women rather than research *on* them. As I have elaborated in the methodology chapter, I was embedded within the organisation, and thus had an “insider” status (Lather, 1997, p.32. My “insider” status often blurred the boundaries between researcher, activist, employee and friend. Furthermore, I am acutely aware of my influence on the research and that my intention frames the research process and the text produced. However, the feedback from the women leaders, my “critical friend”, my peers and my supervisor allayed fears that I am transposing my voice on the voices of the women leaders.

Intense emotions emerged during the interviews when the women leaders reflected on their experiences of apartheid and gender inequality in the union. Their experiences often resonated with mine. Hence, there were many instances of researcher disclosure, which created a space of trust and mutual sharing. This is reflected in the comments and gestures made during the interview sessions. The brief excerpt of a transcript that is presented below is one of many examples of the mutual understanding, and common experiences we share. Although we grew up in different places we have similar experiences as student activists during apartheid.

Woman leader: And unfortunately I don't know who those people are, and they are arrested. But, you know, we got away because we ran and they could not run. All the cops came, hey, with the switches you know?

Researcher: Yeah, of course. Eish!

Woman leader: You remember, when you are running from the cops you can feel the smoke beating down your neck, (imitates breathing)

Researcher: I remember that too!

Woman leader: Oh my God! And you just prayed God, let me not fall!

Researcher: Yeah! Yeah! And you ran for your life. I remember that too.

Although the interviews consolidate our resolve to advocate for gender equality, they are also emotionally draining. The reflections and interrogation of past gender experiences reveal an evolving gender consciousness. As an employee of the union, I could not physically create a distance between myself and the research site, and this

seamlessness served to magnify my gender consciousness and nurture my developing feminist consciousness. I share a few examples of these emotional experiences taken from my journal entries in the box below. However, although I relate to many of the experiences of the women, there are differences that emerge in the way we had experienced our realities. These experiences reveal that as women in the union we are not one homogenous group but experience our realities differently. Such experiences bring into sharper focus the interaction of race, class and gender in the study. These experiences are explicit in the data; however, in an attempt to keep the women leaders' identity anonymous I have "cleaned up" the data to try to remove any categorisation of race. However, subtle racial and cultural tensions experienced among the women are often implicit in the experiences of the women leaders.

There are many instances when information divulged in confidence created tension between my position as researcher and my position as friend. However, as explained in Chapter Four, consistent with feminist research methodology I made a conscious commitment to honour the women above the research. I have, thus, excluded from the data those comments that were made off the record, and I have also changed the names of people, provinces and events to prevent the women's identity from being disclosed. These challenges were mediated with the women leaders, and consensus on what was permissible as data was reached. However, I made some strategic choices about the representation of the data which provides the sub-text for some of the issues discussed. In an attempt not to dishonour or misrepresent the women leaders I provided them with copies of the transcript and poems as a "member check" and asked them to notify me if they were uncomfortable with the way I had represented their experiences.

I include in this section some of the questions and thoughts that troubled and challenged me during the interview process. I have selected a few statements from the notes made during the interviews and journal entries to provide the reader with a glimpse of the emotional dichotomy that plagued me during the interviews.

- *I feel her pain and anger. It all makes me quite angry.*
- *I am unsure if I should have been direct and asked about it, this has really shaken me. Should I have said something more supportive? I don't want her to feel that I don't care.*
- *I know exactly how she feels! He has treated me the very same way.*
- *How am I going to tell her story? She obviously trusts me, I really feel like this is a big burden.*
- *She is not telling me the full story, there is something hidden that she wants me to understand. Maybe she needs more time. Maybe I need more time as well.*
- *It seems like I grew up in another world. I never experienced any fear of sexual abuse in my extended family. I was the only girl but felt completely protected by the males in my family. But from the time I was little I knew I was different from them, I knew I was a girl.*
- *This all sounds too staged, she is obviously telling me what she thinks I want to hear. I think she is making up a lot of these stories. Even her tone of voice has changed for the interview; this is not the person I know as a comrade and friend. Now what do I do about the information? Would I have reacted differently had I not been in SADTU? Am I prejudiced towards her?*
- *What an experience! I have re-newed respect for her. She is very brave.*
- *It is interesting how we all feel a sense of rapport even though I am not an*

elected leader. I feel quite pleased about this, but also a bit anxious that they expect me to change SADTU. We should be in this together.

- *Why didn't we take the lead? It's just too much pressure when you are a lone voice.*
- *They all seem to know about the problems but somehow they just cannot see any solutions. Am I judging them? What does this mean to me as a researcher? What does this mean to me as an activist? I also need to take some responsibility.*
- *As an activist I would have responded differently, but I am a researcher now. I don't think I can separate the two easily. It's almost like I am schizophrenic!!*
- *I had no idea how terrible this is for her. I feel quite angry about the way she was treated. My relationship with him will not be the same anymore.*
- *I will see them (the men and the women leaders) all so differently from now onwards. What does this mean for me and my work? It is so important that I experience a sense of social justice in the work I do. Will I be colluding with them (patriarchy) if I remain in SADTU? Is this what I want for myself? Am I having an existential crisis?!!*
- *Why did he treat her like that? He would never behave like that towards me. I am so disappointed. This is turning out to be too revealing and quite depressing. I was not prepared for this. How can I look him in the face from now onwards?*
- *I cannot believe what I just heard. I always thought she is one of us! Am I judging her? Should I be having these thoughts?*
- *She seems afraid to talk about it. Have I been unfair in asking these questions? I thought she was strong and could handle it. I suppose I was wrong.*
- *We have to do something about this. We cannot continue to accept this kind of behaviour from our male comrades.*
- *She obviously does not trust me. I know the history and have been part of it; maybe I should not be so disappointed. I wonder how she would have responded if I was not in SADTU.*
- *I am quite surprised that they all look up to me. Their responses often confuse me.*
- *Now what do I do? She has told me the most revealing things off the record!! I have to honour her wishes, but how do I honour my intention!!! I have to talk to Michael!!!*

This research had been made possible by the support of the SADTU Secretariat, which was vital for its success. Initial discussions in 2003 with the Vice President for Gender and General Secretary were met with encouragement and enthusiasm. They agreed on the benefits of such research to the union and proposed that the empirical data and analysis of the study be utilised to re-strategise the union's approach to advancing gender equality. I was given access to records and documents in the union's archives and the union funded the first three years of my doctoral study, including four months of fully paid study leave to complete the study. As I write my final draft I am engaged in discussions with the Gender Desk of SADTU on how best to utilise the thesis in the interest of advancing gender equality in the union. A report will also be written on this thesis, together with recommendations for the forthcoming SADTU National Congress. I am extremely grateful to SADTU for the privilege they afforded me to conduct this study and for their support, financial and otherwise.

However, this research has had a profound impact on my life. It has created the space for reflection and has motivated the development of a heightened consciousness. I had been in SADTU for over ten years and often identified the union as my home and family. The research revealed some unpleasant experiences encountered by the women leaders' at the hands of the male leaders. These stories deeply distressed me and often influenced my interaction with male leaders. Although I had experienced gender inequality in the union, my experiences paled in comparison to those of the women leaders. As an employee of the union, I was not considered a political threat and hence my gender politics were often tolerated or indulged without sanction. My increasing discomfort in the union over the past four years was intensified by its political trajectory. This was further aggravated by the intensity of the political struggle for the presidency of the ANC, which was splitting the union into two opposing camps. I felt a further sense of alienation from the union as I witnessed the political battles that engulfed constitutional meetings, turning comrades against each other. These experiences although often disillusioning spurred my decision to explore alternative vehicles to make visible the duality experienced by women in such politically charged environments. Hence this disruption and unease in the union became triggers of my evolving consciousness.

By the time I was writing the final draft of the thesis I had resigned from SADTU after ten years of service and taken up a position as HIV and AIDS and Gender officer for the United Nations Population Fund. My loyalty to the union and my close relationship with the national office bearers made my resignation extremely emotional. I suffered great distress and felt like I was breaking my heart to save my soul. As much as I cared for my union, I had felt a compulsion to look beyond the union to new broader sites of struggle for women in general. This decision was influenced by several other factors, including the need to increase my income and a need for a change of career.

This research has been instrumental in supporting my decision to move to a site to effect positive change for women. I argue that while the experiences of the women leaders provide empirical evidence of the gaps, silences and omissions in the current gender trajectory in the union, they also provide the opportunity to review, rethink and activate a willingness to transform. However, I am aware that organisational transformation in the union will take time; as one of the women leaders argues:

I always think that such research does have an impact,
It's just that the impact is not felt when you want it to,
It takes a little longer,
It's just been my experience,
When I compare our experience to some of these long established teachers' unions in
Europe, and elsewhere,
You can see that even for them it took a long time,
And that's what they always say,
They say you must be very patient

(Appendix 3, Poem 35, No. 2)

I agree that transformation is not a quick fix intervention and that it is complex and takes time, energy and resources to effect such change. Ramphele (2008, p.13) argues that "transformation of a society entails a complete change in both form and substance, a metamorphosis" and that transformation in South Africa "calls for its reorientation from past values and practices defined by racism, sexism, inequality

and lack of respect for human rights towards the values reflected in our national constitution”. This calls for radical change at all levels and is also relevant to institutions and organisations and determined by the levels of consciousness of the people who inhabit them. I argue that the departure point for such transformation is often dependent on the women leaders emerging and evolving consciousness that encapsulates their history, context, experience and willingness for transformation.

5.3 NARRATIVE ANALYSIS: THE GIRL IN THE WOMAN

The women who participated in this study have their own history, scripts, roles, strengths and weaknesses that shape their daily reality. My interview sessions encouraged reflection on these experiences in a space of trust that contributes to consciousness-raising. I am greatly indebted to the women leaders for their courage and generosity in laying open for public scrutiny their personal experiences of exclusion, fear, conflict, triumph and agency in the union. Their commitment to gender equality is illustrated by their confidence in holding up their voices for critique and interrogation, inspired by the hope of initiating positive change for women.

I have taken some liberties, particularly in the blending and merging of the different voices of these women leaders. As explained in Chapter Four, I developed their responses to the interviews into poems that depict their experiences as women. The poems in this chapter are the second level of harmonisation of the narratives. They are divided into two sets of poems: the first set, under the heading “The girl in the woman”, which focuses on their experiences of growing up as a girl child, is presented in this chapter, and the second, under the heading “The woman in the leader”, focuses on their gendered experiences in the union and is presented in the next chapter. Although the overwhelming majority of quotes are the actual words from the transcripts, I have at times taken their responses out of sequence and combined them with others for the purposes of theme development, dramatic flow and ethical consideration to protect the identity of the women. This has given expression to the researcher as co-constructor and analyst of the data.

5.3.1 Why was I a Vulnerable Child?

1

When I think about myself as a child,
I wonder why I didn't become more forceful,
Why wasn't I strong?
Why was I a vulnerable child?

2

I was growing up, with the fear of sexual predators in our environment.
I was so upset and embarrassed and humiliated by it, and then after that he called me
and said he is sorry.
He won't do that again and I mustn't say anything to anybody and I didn't.
But it sometimes made me feel sort of dirty,
Did I do something to encourage it?
Why would he do that to me?
Why me?
They damaged our psyche, our self-worth.

3

We are told that as good girls
We should be respectful, not have loud mouths
That is what my mother taught us, we should behave ladylike from a small age.
What kind of mother are you going to make if you are this and that?
I was angry with boys for having all the privileges to do what they feel like doing.
We are forever told to behave in a specific way.
What kind of a woman are you going to make if you don't have that control?

4

I was fair game because I was a child of an unwed mother,
That's why I had to stand up for myself,
That's what made me speak for myself,
Because no-one else is gonna speak up for me.

5.3.2 My Father, a Strange Kind of Person

1

When my father gets home we must feel his presence,
We might be laughing and talking but when he gets home,
We must feel his presence and all of a sudden we must be quiet.
I began to understand why mother was so withdrawn,
Here was the fear he would impose because he was so violent.

2

I think that my father was really a strange kind of person,
Very submissive,
I think it was this whole political thing that he knew he was married across the colour
line
He was more afraid of the apartheid regime and police.
Therefore he left everything in my mum's hands,
He never wanted to go to town, to do shopping or to open accounts because he needs
to show his I.D. and he was afraid of being caught.
In those years notwithstanding the might of apartheid, these marriages did happen.

3

He treated me differently.
If it was up to him I will be protected by glass.
I will play with other children when he was not there and when he was there I must
be at home.
He always wanted to see me in front of him,
I don't know why?

4

I want to tell you what keeps me going
I decided I am not going to get married,
I vowed I will not get married because I saw the hatred as a child,
I doubt if there was any love between my mother and father.
I realised for me to go where I wanted, there must be no hurdle of a husband

5.3.3 My Mother, the Perfect Example

1

My mother was a very passive person,
She comes from a rural community, and married at the age of fifteen,
With very little education
If I talk about my mother's role, she played the typical woman, who stayed at home,
who raised the children,
And who could not go out in public without my father or some other male member of
my family.
Her entire world was very restricted and limited.

2

My mother believed that the women's place was in the kitchen and that women had
to be married.
As I engaged in my pursuit for gender equality I met with opposition from my
mother but not from my father
But when I reflect on my mother's view of life I think she faced a tremendous
challenge
She undertook her responsibility with absolute dignity.
My mother was the most perfect example.

3

When my mother died I saw the doors of learning being closed.
I was the only woman now,
I will wake, clean up and then go to school
When I returned I will make the garden, I will chop the wood and I will make the
fire, and, I will cook,
While my two brothers did nothing.
I then decided to fight for myself.

5.3.4 Mathematics, the Domain of Boys

1

My grade 8 and 9 years are very interesting because I found that only 7 of us girls
proceeded to standard 10 to do mathematics.
Mathematics was considered to be the domain of the boys.
It became a losing battle for us to take on.
Most of the girls who wanted to study maths were complete underachievers
This was as a result of their experience and exposure to teachers who taught them,
who created negativity towards the subject.
When I meet them now, almost all of them are excellent home executives with no
academic success behind them because of the negative experience they had at school.
So it did have its effect on us.

2

My mathematics teacher was a chauvinist;
He did not like girls.
He was just a brutal man
He was completely negative.
I think everything I knew about maths he destroyed.
I think the same thing happened in the technical subjects.
Here too women were given the last of the share.

The only time you are recognised as a woman was if you achieved and you excelled.
If you are not one of those high flyers nobody paid attention.

3

The teachers will always tell us that the girls must sweep the classroom.
Girls had to do these tasks
The boys would leave and we would have to stay behind for half an hour.
I was angry.
I was very rebellious.

5.3.5 The Question of Race and Oppression

1

We were expropriated in terms of Group Areas Act.
We were removed from our home forcefully, and placed in another area.
One moment we're there, our home was there,
Then they knocked our houses down.
It was like death in the family,
I remember my parents cried for a long time,
My father was never the same person after that.
They thought they were going to live there forever until they passed away.
It was really like a small piece of heaven for us.
But then they had built these sub-economic houses for us
Only half of our furniture could get into that house.
That was a very defining moment,
I think that was the point at which, the whole question of race, oppression, the
violence rose in me
It got me thinking about what was going on and how do we respond to it,
Oh it was a Horrible, Horrible, Horrible experience.
That was the time I started to hate,
To hate whites with a passion.

2

Why did we have to buy through the window?
I grew up in the age when my mum had to buy groceries through the window of a
shop.
We couldn't go into the shop because we were not white.
They will first serve the white person inside the shop and then come back to serve us
through the window.
Once I remembered standing in the line with my mother,
We stood in the line for almost an hour.
She had to wait forever to buy us something to eat
We were crying because we were hungry,
She gave us a hiding.
Those experiences really shook me.
On that day I said to myself that my mother looked better than the whites.
She was a very smart woman.
I asked myself how can they make a smart woman stand here and wait for hours to
be served through this window.
It was a terrible experience.

5.3.6 A Defining Moment!

1

Certainly, 1976 was a defining moment
I think emotionally it burned a hole inside me, especially the killings.
I went around for a week crying,
I just couldn't believe some people could actually do that.
It's then I became very rebellious, I believe very rebellious,
I was involved in the student strikes of 1980, 1981,
I retaliated most when the security police harassed the women.

2

During the years of apartheid everybody was under suspicion.
It wasn't like open activism, you were very careful not to land into real trouble with
the police.
I came from a conservative family and my parents sent me to college with the little
money they had.
So I was very careful not to play a leading role and land in trouble,
I was scared to death.

5.4 ANALYSIS OF THE NARRATIVES

In the following section, I analyse the narratives which are captured in poetry. The narratives are derived from the historical experiences of the women leaders in the home and school. The influence of apartheid on their identities is foregrounded as is the development of their consciousness of gender inequality.

5.4.1 Shared Experiences

The women leaders and I grew up during the apartheid era and share similar experiences of race and gender in our childhood and adult life (refer to Poem 5.3.5 for examples). As stated earlier, apartheid was based on white supremacy, racially motivated inequality, and oppression that systematically privileged whites over blacks.²⁷ The apartheid state declared that four race groups populated South Africa: African²⁸, Asian²⁹, Coloured³⁰, and European³¹. However, racially segregated communities were few and had not existed prior to apartheid and the apartheid state had to build racialised communities actively. As one research participant stated, "We had white friends to African friends to coloured friends and we had everybody and we used to always go as a family on outings." (See Appendix 3, Poem 11, No. 4.) The apartheid state promulgated laws and legislation that tied people to racial categories. In addition, whites were given full political rights and citizenship while blacks were denied such rights. MacDonald (2006, p.46) argues that in this way the

²⁷ "Blacks" includes Africans, Coloureds and Indians.

²⁸ These consisted of the different tribes of Zulu, Xhosa, Pedi, etc.

²⁹ These are mainly Chinese and Indians. The majority of Indians came to South Africa from British-controlled India as indentured labourers to work on the sugar cane plantations in KwaZulu-Natal in the 1860s.

³⁰ Off springs of inter-racial coupling, e.g. Zulu and English, and including people of mixed origin, e.g. the Cape Malay.

³¹ Whites of Dutch, English, French etc. descent

apartheid state exalted racial communities over previously existing ethno-cultural communities. Race became the organising principle which bound whites together through citizenship and which disenfranchised all blacks.

The narratives of the women leaders tell of the impact of the racial and class oppression of the apartheid state that served to feed the development of a political consciousness (refer to poems 5.3.5 and 5.3.6) and sense of solidarity. During apartheid, racial classification determined a person's legal status and life opportunities. Segregation and separate development were formalised by the enactment of laws and legislation legitimising a racially motivated hierarchical scale of privilege and disadvantage. Thus, whites received the overwhelming benefits of apartheid, Indians and coloureds were afforded some opportunities that were necessary to fuel the apartheid machinery, and black Africans were the most deprived and disadvantaged. The most notorious laws in the experiences of the women leaders were the Group Areas Act, 41 (1950) (residential segregation), the Separate Amenities Act, 49 (1953) (segregation of public facilities), the Immorality Act, 23 (1957) (forbidding sex across the colour line), the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, 55 (1949) (prohibiting inter-racial marriage), and the Population Registration Act, 30 (1950), which defined and classified racial categories. The white apartheid state "quarantined" black people into separate homelands and townships, effectively distancing and isolating whites from the economic and social deprivation suffered by blacks under apartheid.

It is significant to note that capital colluded with the apartheid state by, among other, supporting the racial hierarchy in employment, and reserving better jobs for whites over blacks (Institute for Black Research, 1990, p.42). In so doing, it maintained its pool of cheap black labour. Hence, the racial hierarchy of privilege and deprivation had a direct impact on the class structure of apartheid society. In addition, apartheid capitalism benefited from and reproduced patriarchal relations, in this way sustaining black women as a cheap labour alternative (Orr, 2003b; COSATU, 2001b). In this way men, regardless of race, dominated women not only as patriarchs in the home but also as patriarchs in the workplace. Devaluing work carried out by women, whether in the home or in the workplace, simply because it is carried out by women devalues the women themselves. Thus, men in general benefit from preserving the gender barriers in society. We observe from the women's narratives that, regardless of their apartheid race classification and class location, they experience gender inequality in their public and private lives. The poems also reveal that the women are aware of the gender discrimination and inequality at a tender age. This creates a divided self that looks to solidarity with other oppressed groups while being painfully aware of racial differences.

The women also indicate a growing gender consciousness when they question inscribed gender roles and are troubled by the gendered patterns in the family and the school. As one woman reflects on her experiences of gender discrimination in school:

The teachers will always tell us that the girls must sweep the classroom.
Girls had to do these tasks
The boys would leave and we would have to stay behind for half an hour.
I was angry.
I was very rebellious.

(Poem 5.3.4, No. 3)

There are similar examples of a developing gender consciousness at a young age, for example:

They (men) damaged our psyche, our self-worth. (Poem 5.3.1, No. 2)

Or

I began to understand why mother was so withdrawn,
Here was the fear he (father) would impose because he was so violent. (Poem 5.3.2,
No. 1)

Or

Mathematics was considered to be the domain of the boys (Poem 5.3.4, No. 1)

Or

I think the same thing happened in the technical subjects.
Here too women were given the last of the share. (Poem 5.3.4, No. 2)

The examples above reveal an emerging gender consciousness during their childhood. A powerful revelation is the fear of the psychological, sexual and physical power of men over women at a very tender age. They indicate its destructive impact on women's self esteem. Chapter Six analyses the significance of these experiences in nurturing their activism and shaping their identities as teachers and leaders in adulthood. Interestingly, although they are acutely aware of the pervasiveness of gender inequality they feel uncomfortable with feminism, even though they display a sophisticated critique of gender relations. This creates a dualism between their private selves and their public personas.

Although all the women leaders have suffered oppression under the apartheid state, however, their experiences of apartheid differed given their different racial classification and class location. According to the apartheid racial classification, the women leaders consist of African, Indian and Coloured women from working-class and middle-class backgrounds. However, they foregrounded their national identity as Black South Africans rather than their apartheid racial classification. Calhoun (1994, in Perumal, 200, p.248) observed that this tendency to underscore one's national identity as "Black" is often peculiar to contexts of oppression where people choose their national identity to express their aspirations of a better life. MacDonald (2006, p.62) argues that the disadvantage, poverty and deprivation suffered by the non-white groups in South Africa coupled with their non-citizenship established a "basis of groupness" or solidarity among blacks. Similarly, Perumal (2006, p.250) maintains that the use of the category "Black" in South Africa is consistent with Black Power ideology that conveys a common historical experience of disenfranchisement among black South Africans and expressed a positive political and cultural identity among them. Furthermore, Black Consciousness leader Steve Biko argued that blackness cannot be conferred to skin colour but rather to a positive racial consciousness that opposed racial oppression (MacDonald, 2006, p.118). This implies that people who suffer oppression may be considered to be black without being of African descent. Biko's definition of black resonated with many Coloured and Indian people in South Africa, including the researcher and the women leaders.

Apartheid played a major role in shaping the early identity of women in South Africa. Poems 5.3.5 and 5.3.6 illustrate the impact of apartheid racism on the women's consciousness and othering. Of significance is their early experience of racial harmony that was shattered by the violence of forced removals and the pain and confusion they experienced as children under the Group Areas Act and Separate Amenities Act (refer to Appendix 3, Poem 9, No. 4 and 5). The women leaders share similar experiences as children during apartheid. However, while acknowledging

their common experiences, I support hooks' (1992, p.43) argument that when telling stories of shared experiences we should guard against only portraying the black female identity as that of "victimhood". She appeals to portraying some of the positive³² experiences of "blackness" that often ground and sustain black women. Similarly Poems 5.3.5 and 5.3.6 emphasise the politicised context of apartheid which shaped the identities and value systems of the women. These experiences have been catalytic in developing the women's consciousness and in encouraging them to become activists early in their lives. They describe in concert that these experiences were defining moments in their lives and solidified their solidarity with oppressed groups across all races.

Apartheid's injustices stirred a sense of social justice and awakening of political resistance among the women. This early political awakening resonates with Freire's theory of resistance and agency. The dehumanising experiences of violent, forced removals; humiliating segregation in public places; and the injustice of killing young school children on 16 June 1976 evoked questions of values, rights and "the deeper beliefs about what it means to be human, to dream, and to name and struggle for a particular future and form of social life" (Giroux, 1988, p.110) among the women. These experiences are catalytic in raising the women's consciousness and their awareness of the power of agency. Chapter Six analyses the impact of their developing consciousness on their aspiration to transform.

MacDonald (2006, p.75) asserts that the apartheid state humiliated as well as divided families. This assertion is supported by the women's experiences of apartheid. Appendix 3 (Poem 6) provides a painful reminder of the trauma of apartheid's segregation on the psyches of the women leaders. These events had a life-changing impact on them. An example from one of the transcripts below reflects on the impact that the death of a family member by the apartheid forces had on her political consciousness.

RP: Then one of my relatives is killed in a raid in Maputo, One of my mother's relative, He is very close to my mother's family, He used to love life, so he died there...I think from that time I became political...

Poems 5.3.3 and 5.3.4 reveal in a nuanced manner the experiences of marginalisation, exclusion, and racism that the women suffered under apartheid South Africa. These experiences had a significant influence on the development of the women's social consciousness and political activism at a very tender age. They also served to strengthen their evolving gender consciousness.

5.4.2 Engaging Difference

Although the shared experiences of the women are acknowledged, hooks (1992, p.43) maintains that we must guard against constructing a monolithic paradigm of black female experience that does not engage difference. She (hooks, 1992, p.51) argues that many black women thinkers often wrongly assume that "strength in unity" is only possible if differences among women are played down and that their

³² "I felt loved and cared about in the segregated black community of my growing up. It gave me a grounding in a positive experience of "Blackness" that sustained me when I left that community to enter racially integrated settings, where racism informed most social interactions" (Hooks, 1992, p.44).

shared experiences are emphasised. Hence, I was guarded against homogenising the experiences of these women. Although the women leaders shared a common history of oppression under apartheid and identified themselves as black South Africans, it was obvious from their responses that they often shared different experiences of being black and female. The interviews were punctuated with different experiences in terms of race, class, culture and resistance. (Refer to Appendix 3, Poem 2, No. 2, 3 and 7, and Chapter 6, for examples.)

Patriarchal societies, especially those fuelled by capitalism, project clear images of the different roles that men and women should occupy (Meer, 2000). Even though South African women make up a significant proportion of workers in the country, perceptions of the ideal role for women persist as the standard against which all “deviations” are assessed (Institute for Black Research, 1990, p.163). According to Mama (1996), the traditional African woman’s place is in the home, where she is expected to raise the children and tend to the needs of her husband and her family. Even though African women might be employed, they are tolerated as long as they preserve the family and family values. Even if they are the sole breadwinners in the family, they are judged less harshly if they remain “womanly” and subordinate to men in the work place and in the family (Mama, 1996). The women’s experiences resonate with these observations.

Okome (2001, p.2) argues that, given that gender is socially constructed, it often reflects the social, political and economic realities of the culture within which it emerged. The Institute for Black Research (1990, p.96) argues that women of Indian and African origin experience more intense patriarchal domination than their Coloured counterparts and that the traditional African family is dominated by the patriarchal head, with his rights to the lobola³³ of his daughters and the rights to practise polygamy. He exercises these rights as father, husband and son. This is consistent with Mama’s (1996) description of the “real” African women presented in Chapter Three. It also resonates with comments from the women leaders of African descent (refer to Appendix 3, Poem 4, No. 1). On the other hand, the Institute for Black Research (1990, p.96) argues that traditionally middle-class Indian women lived in the private world confined to the domestic sphere, and the men in their lives entered the public world of work. This view correlates with one of the women leaders of Indian descent, who described her mother’s entire world as very restricted and limited, and confined to family issues. However, the women leaders reflect that these traditional value systems are challenged by women who are empowered like themselves.

The women’s experiences reveal that mothers and other significant women in society often compel girls to accept patriarchal values and domesticity for women, i.e. the appropriation of the unwaged labour and energy of women to produce male power (Hearn, 1982, p.188). One woman leader explains, “My mother believed that the women’s place is in the kitchen and that women had to be married, and as I engaged in my pursuit for gender equality I met with opposition from my mother.” The powerful influence of patriarchy evident in this example reveals the depth of her mother’s internalised gender oppression and false consciousness. As a traditional woman, her mother had accepted her gendered place in society and inadvertently functioned as an agent of patriarchy in resisting her daughter’s aspirations for gender equality. Similarly, another participant described the role her mother played in her

³³ Cattle dowry

socialisation into society as, “That is what my mother taught us, we should behave ladylike from a small age. What kind of mother are you going to make if you are this and that?” Similar experiences of gender conditioning are common in the lives of the women leaders.

The ages of the women leaders and researcher ranged from early forties to early fifties. Of the five women interviewed, four had never married, and all were single at the time of the interviews. One was divorced with children in university, while another was a single parent of a young adult in her twenties. One of the women leaders explained that her choice to be single and child-free was extremely difficult and was met with opposition, given family and societal expectations. Similarly, Lewis (in Bakare-Yusuf, 2003) argues that the embeddedness of the nurturing role of women in African society often goes uncriticised and is celebrated in motherhood. Those women who challenge the status quo are viewed as abnormal or an aberration. The response below provides a vivid description of the power of patriarchy, tradition and culture, which often force women into roles of mother and nurturer. The participant concedes that the constant enquiry into her lack of husband and children resulted in her feeling alienated from her immediate and extended family.

So when you look back on a traditional Indian family you will know that
conservativeness and biasness is an inherent thing.
So it is not something I could run away from,
It is very difficult to face questions about traditional relationships and roles in society
at social gatherings.
As a result I tended to shy away from social gatherings because it demoralised me.

It is interesting to note that after the death of her father, this woman leader provided the material and social support for her family. However, she was still considered an aberration, having failed to conform to the traditional notion of the role of women in the family. As she explained (refer to the box below) these experiences impacted negatively on her psyche as a woman. They magnified her experience of being “other”.

I met with a lot of resistance,
Particularly from my male relatives.
They viewed me in a manner that made **me feel I was less a human being** because I
assumed this kind of role

The Institute for Black Research (1990, p.96) maintains that most men dominate women and children in the private sphere of the family, regardless of the material contribution the women may provide. They argue that this is more intense in working-class families, where the family is often the only place the male worker can exercise his authority and power. This overbearing power of the male worker in his home often results in domestic violence and fear. Poem 5.3.2, No. 1 provides a powerful picture of oppression experienced by one woman leader as a girl growing up in a working-class family wracked by domestic violence.

Some of the women leaders explain how apartheid’s racial and ethnic categories shaped and troubled their perceptions of themselves in their schools and in the union.

RP: I refused to become a member of (name of union removed); just think, it is just such an (race removed) sort of grouping, and I didn’t feel comfortable there at all.

This union was established under apartheid and represented teachers from a particular race. The woman leader had discomfort with this union because it was established on racial lines while she identified herself as black regardless of her sub-classification.

RP: “They cannot see a woman in the role of the secretary, a woman, and an (race removed) woman at that, no way!”

RP: “Women in this union, especially African woman, also come from conservative families and homes.”

5.4.3 Gendered Childhoods

The poems in this section provide powerful illustrations of the gendered experiences of the women in their childhood. Although the group of women are not a homogenous group but differed in race, class, religion, age and so forth, the accounts of their childhoods reveal commonalities in their socialisation and lived experience as “girls” in a gendered society. Their resistance to gender socialisation shaped their identity and consciousness. The strong feelings of being the “other” and the emergence of patriarchy expressed in their fear of sexual abuse and their rebellion against gender stereotyping were evident in their expressions of vulnerability, self-worth and gender consciousness.

5.4.4 Patriarchy in the Family

Poems 5.3.2 and 5.3.3 illustrate how the family, as argued by Marxist, socialist and radical feminism, is the first instance of women’s subordination. It is through the agency of the family that the fundamental process of socialisation is carried out and subservience inculcated (Institute for Black Research, 1990, p.16). Poems 5.3.2 and 5.3.3 make evident the roles played by the mother and father in the socialisation of young girls into traditional attitudes and fixed gender roles. As one participant explains, “If I talk about my mother’s role, she played the typical woman, who stayed at home, who raised the children, and who could not go out into public without my father or some other male members of my family. Her entire world is very restricted and limited” (Poem 5.3.3, No. 1).

It is also in the family that the patriarch, as the father, husband or brother, exercises his authority as the head of the family. One respondent describes the power of her father over the family: “When my father gets home we must feel his presence... I began to understand why my mother is so withdrawn” (Poem 5.3.2, No. 1). Women’s places were deemed to be in the home and it is in the home that the patriarch reigned. The experiences of some of these women reveal socialised patterns that place women in a position of dependency and deference to males. The impact of patriarchy, power, and the subordinate position of women in the family are made explicit in the women’s reflections on their mothers and fathers.

The apartheid policies and practices in South Africa emasculated black men and stripped them of their power (Orr, 2003b). As one participant states, her father preferred to keep a low profile because of his illegal marriage across the colour line;

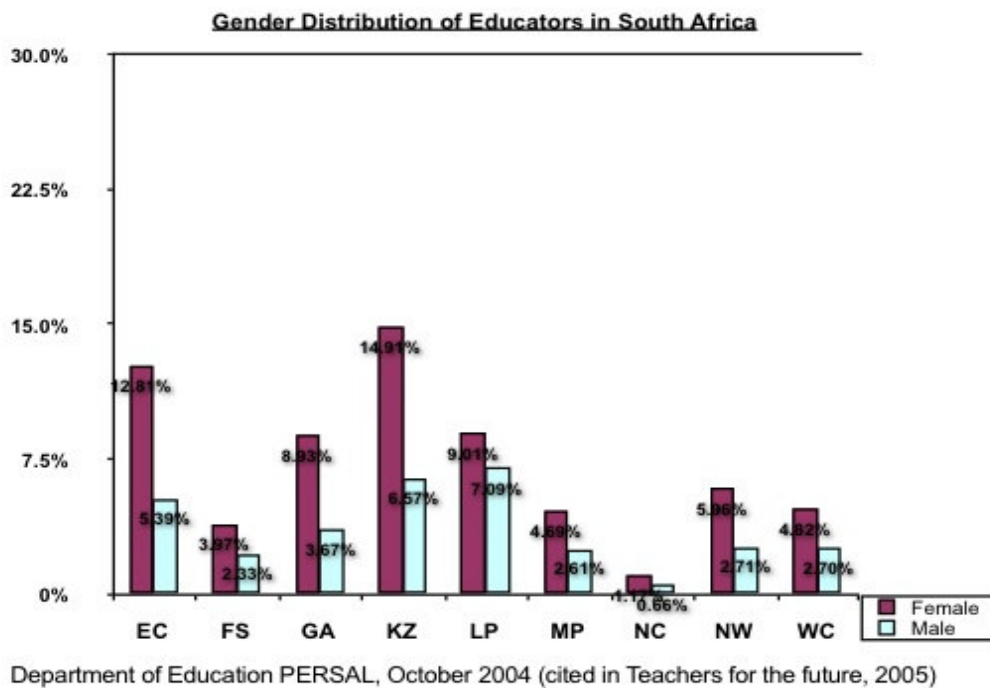


Figure 1: Percentage gender distribution of teachers by province

hence, he allowed his wife complete control over the family errands. It is interesting that the participant found this behaviour strange because it did not fit into her gendered perceptions of power and position of the father, the patriarch in the family. In particular she emphasises that the forced removals had emasculated the father as the protector of the family: “My father was never the same person after that.” Another woman leader explains her father’s humiliation and arrest for resisting apartheid laws. These experiences in their gendering created a divided self, emerging from the paradox that the male head although powerful in the family was powerless against the might of apartheid. The women leaders argue that these experiences activated a compelling aspiration towards liberation through activism.

5.4.5 Patriarchy in School

Historically, the teaching profession has been dominated by women. In South Africa women comprise 70% of the country’s teachers (Teachers for the Future, 2005). The figure above illustrates the overwhelming female majority both nationally and provincially in South African schools.

According to the “Teachers for the Future Report” (2005, p.43):

This gender ratio has not changed significantly over the past seven years. At primary school level by province, women teachers account for between 67 and 75 per cent (the lowest percentage being in Limpopo). At the secondary level female teachers represent approximately half the teaching force.

The high percentage of women teachers at the primary school level mirrors the stereotype of teaching as a caring and nurturing role that supports patriarchal ideologies of domesticity and “women’s proper place”. Teaching has been defined as an extension of the productive and reproductive labour women engage in at home (Barret, 1980). The experiences of the women leaders in school reveal the patriarchal nature of schooling and their social conditioning into gendered roles. Poem 5.3.4 reveals the often hidden gendered experiences that shape girls' aspirations in schools

and the schools' reproduction of gender hierarchies. The women's experiences are consistent with Marxist and socialist feminist claims that schools often reproduce the class and gendered division of labour in society. These experiences interfaced with similar experiences in the home and family, thus generating the development of a socialised self that was conscious of the gendering of society, giving impetus to the initial stirring of resistance.

According to radical feminism, gendered experiences in schools influence the life choices of young girls. Acker (1994) maintains that teachers gendered conditioning often thwart girls' potential to excel in traditionally male-dominated subjects. These claims correlate with the experiences of the women leaders in secondary schools. They speak in concert of the attitudes of male teachers, which steered girls to conventional domestic careers and discouraged their aspirations towards mathematics and other technical studies. The experiences of these women remind us of the cumulative disadvantages suffered by young girls in schools. Often the low aspirations of girls are attributed to their short-sighted perceptions (Acker, 1994) that tend to blame the victim, rather than appreciate the collusion of other actors and variables that force girls to make the best out of a bad situation. Marxist and socialist feminisms argue that the education system consciously manipulates and reproduces the sexual division of labour in a capitalist system. The women's experiences tend to support these claims. They recognise that girls are discouraged by male teachers from pursuing academic subjects and most of them had gone on to become housewives in their adult lives. In this way their socialised gendered othering was enacted through overt patriarchal conditioning and the hidden curriculum in schools.

The women's experiences support Acker's (1994, p.39) assertion that patriarchal structures exist within schools and transmit powerful messages of male dominance within the school environment. Similarly, the women speak of experiences of teacher bias in favour of male learners, and chauvinistic attitudes discouraging girls from aspiring to take on subjects like maths and science. Marxist and socialist feminist critique argues that these male biases must be understood as sex-type socialisation. They maintain that these aspirations within schools are shaped to a large extent by the reproduction of the sexual and social division of labour (Acker, 1994, p.38). It is in schools that the women's socialised self conflicts with their emerging gender consciousness. The women recognise that discouraging girls to aspire to traditionally male-dominated careers and compelling them to sweep and clean classrooms after school are powerful models of male-female power relations and sex-differentiated responsibilities. These models reinforce girls' association with domesticity that influences their career choices later in life. The consequence of these career choices ingeniously assists in the creation of a cheap pool of women workers in a capitalist society. The women acknowledge that teachers' gendered and class location often colludes with organisational discourse to reinforce gender hierarchies in schools.

The experiences of the women leaders also expose the patriarchal culture of schools that often fuels the deep-seated culture of violence against girls within schools. This is consistent with the radical feminists' charge that patriarchy takes the form of discrimination, disregard, control, violence, and exploitation. The Human Rights Watch's report "Scared at School – Sexual Violence against Girls in South African Schools" (2001) observes that girls regularly encounter violence in school, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and assault by male classmates and teachers. These observations are consistent with the women leaders' accounts of their preoccupation with their vulnerability to sexual harassment and sexual abuse in school, especially the fear of

male teachers, who used their positions of power to prey on young girls. Although the women leaders reflect on experiences that occurred over two decades ago, it appears that not much has changed for girls in South African schools. Recent research by Brooks, Shishana and Richter (2004) indicates that schools continue to be unsafe places for girls. A South African Demographic and Health Survey asked women about rape in childhood, and found that schoolteachers are often perpetrators of rape (Education for All, 2004).

The poem below provides a powerful, detailed description of one of the women leaders' attempt to deal with discriminatory action taken by her school against a pregnant girl in her class.

I was travelling a lot on SADTU business at the time,
One of my students in class fell pregnant,
The principal expelled her in my absence,
When I returned I was unaware she had been expelled,
After one lesson she approached me, 'Miss, I want you to know the principal has
expelled me because I am pregnant'
This was after 1994, after the South African Schools Act!
I talked to the principal, telling him that it's against the law to expel someone
because she is pregnant,
but he said 'No, the thing is, the government doesn't want students who are
pregnant, and we are not expelling her, we are suspending her, and she can come
back next year',
I replied, 'It's the same thing, she's going to lose out, all her classmates are
matriculating this year, so she's going to lose out'
We then had a big debate and I asked him to take over my class
I didn't do the schedule, I didn't do the reports
I had my own little toyi-toyi³⁴ there.
Ah, ay! There is chaos now, there is chaos,
The school governing body called me in
I said to them, "What am I here for?"
He didn't even have the decency to speak to me about this, which means I'm
worthless, yo!,"
After the meeting, one of the male teachers questioned me, 'Well why you don't you
ask us if we want to teach pregnant girls?'
I replied, 'Is that why you impregnate girls so they won't be at school?'
You see he had impregnated a girl, at least one girl, there could have been more.
It became so tense by then, you know
Eventually the governing body told me in no uncertain terms to go back to my class
So my campaign folded there...
Nobody, not one teacher in my school supported my campaign
Anyway, after my twelve minutes or fifteen minutes in front of the governing body,
I went back
I was much deflated.
I told the girl to go through the legal system at the University, and get representation
to be reinstated at school
But in hindsight I should have taken her there to lay a charge against the governing
body,

³⁴ Dance of protest

But I thought if I do this maybe its going to be war between me and the parents,
Her mother probably supported the principal's decision to suspend her,
I would then go up against the parents,
But who am I..?

(Appendix 3, Poem 20, No. 2)

Despite the existence of progressive legislation and policies, gender inequality persists in the majority of schools and communities (Human Rights Watch, 2001). The South African Schools Act (1996) protects the rights of all children, girls included, from discriminatory practices, while the Educators Employment Act (1998) and the SACE Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers prohibit teachers from engaging in any sexual relations with female students. The women leaders speak passionately about their experiences of discrimination and victimisation in their schools and about the culture of silence that shrouds sexual abuse and violence against girls in schools.

The above poem reveals the complexity of challenges facing women teachers who attempt to assert the rights of the girl child in schools. The patriarchal and traditional culture in many schools, especially those headed by male principals and male headed school governing bodies often collude with the parents often dismissing the rights of the girl child while protecting the male perpetrator. The male perpetrator whether a teacher or fellow student is usually least affected when the pregnant girl is "suspended" from school and denied her right to education. Furthermore, the poem portrays the alienation and isolation that female teachers face if they challenge such discriminatory and gendered practices. There appears to be no solidarity among the teaching staff and as the women leader stated, "Nobody, not one teacher in my school supported my campaign". If a leader of the most powerful teachers' union in the country is confronted with such challenges, one can understand the difficulty facing ordinary level one teacher in similar cases of gender discrimination and sexual harassment in South African schools.

This is further compounded by the apparent complicity of union officials handling cases of sexual harassment by male members against female students. One woman leader accuses the union's patriarchal culture for its poor response to sexual violence and sexual harassment in schools. She accuses the male buddy system among union officials for the lack of action against male teachers who flout the country's laws and the SADTU code of conduct.

She explained:

We keep quiet when these things happen in our school,
If we have to blow the whistle it is a question of female teachers blowing the whistle
and male teachers saying that they (female teachers) are jealous.
In all these cases either it's always the female teachers or the parent who exposes the
abuse.

And other males close up and protect each other.
My experience again is that SADTU branches are afraid to deal with the cases of
sexual harassment because that male comrade is their friend.
They refer the cases to province so that it is not them who are seen to be defending
this animal!

Whilst there is a moral part to it, comrades just can't act.
They don't feel comfortable in representing and dealing with these cases.
(Appendix 3, Poem 30, No. 2)

The women leaders acknowledge that violence against girls perpetuate the gender gap in education and impede the girls' right to education. Furthermore, they agree that women teachers who report such incidents often face personal attacks from male teachers and hence are reluctant to pursue such cases. Although the teacher unions, the South African Council for Educators, and the Department of Education have strict codes of conduct prohibiting rape, sexual harassment and abuse of learners by teachers, the women agree that SADTU's efforts to charge teachers as perpetrators of sexual harassment are at best patchy.

5.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter I demonstrate that a multi-layered analysis of the historical, political, socio-cultural and gendered experiences of the women in the study exposes the complicity of the family, the home and the schools as agents of patriarchal conditioning and reproduction of the sexual division of labour in a capitalist society.

I argue that the women's early resistance to racial and gendered patterns of inequality embedded in apartheid ideology reveals the women's emerging and evolving political consciousness. I explain that their paradoxical relationship as children with the patriarch in the home and school both as the protector and the oppressor created a divided self, thus awakening a shift towards gender consciousness.

However, I argue that the development of the socialised self often resisted the formal conditioning of the schooling system that reproduce inscribed gendered roles and patriarchal hierarchies. I maintain that the many episodes of ideological resistance and contestation of gendered roles and gender identities in the women's experiences in the home and the school reveal an evolving gender consciousness.

I argue that the experiences that constituted the development of their gendered identities and resistance can be viewed along a trajectory of constraints and possibilities in advancing the evolution of gender consciousness in other sites of oppression such as the teachers' union. The next chapter discusses the women's experiences in the union.

CHAPTER SIX

ENGENDERING ORGANISATIONAL ANALYSIS: THE WOMEN IN THE LEADER

*In any struggle you always got to be strategic
But not all strategies are the correct one.
Priority area for the union is gender awareness
Most women do not understand how important that it is for them to have a voice.
They do not understand it.
They thought the women in the gender committee are crazy, deranged, they just want
too much.
Women in leadership positions do not understand that they are there because of
our struggles.
They are individualistic in the way they understand things,
They need to understand that it is a collective.
Working together,
Unity of women across portfolios
Women should support each other
I think you become mature over the years.*

(Appendix 3, Poem 23, No. 2; 10; Poem 34, No. 1)

6.1 CHAPTER OUTLINE

In this chapter I appropriate the imagings of organisations as the dominant theoretical lens for interrogating the gendered experiences of women, and the culture, politics and bureaucracy of the union. I have deliberately separated the poems and analyses into categories to facilitate ease of reading. However, in reality an organisation's bureaucracy, culture and politics are closely integrated and the overlaps are evident in the narratives and analysis.

In particular, I draw on key relationships between the organisation and gender in the education system to explain the experiences of the women leaders and the evolution of their gender consciousness. I employ the different conceptions of feminisms (refer to Chapter Three) to analyse the structural and ideological motives that perpetuate gender oppression in the union.

I explain the trajectory of evolving consciousness that is evident in women's earlier experiences of gender oppression in the union and their growing resistance to institutionalised gender inequalities and patriarchy in the union.

6.2 BUREAUCRACY AND CULTURE: NARRATIVES AND ANALYSIS

This section commences with the aspiration of the women leaders and the potential for SADTU to promote gender equity and transform women's lives. The role of the organisational bureaucracy and culture in thwarting these aspirations, together with the constraints that emerge among the different racial and ethnic cultural groupings in fostering agency is highlighted.

6.2.1 My Heart is Singing just for SADTU

1

We were waiting for SADTU
I was just excited about SADTU
We would say in Zulu “My heart is just singing for SADTU”
We were ready for the challenge,
We were rubbing our hands and saying “When?”
We were ready to start rolling.
I sat in the first row of the first SADTU recruitment meeting.
The organiser spoke so powerfully and he said everything I wanted to hear all my life.
We couldn’t wait to join this new union.
I wanted to play a leadership role in this union
Through this union I would find a way of addressing the burning issue of discrimination
against women

2

SADTU will sort out all the problems,
Remember at that time women were still earning less than the men,
We didn’t have maternity leave,
You had to resign if you fell pregnant,
All sorts of funny things that people think are ridiculous today.
And also remember the housing subsidy?
Divorced and single women couldn’t get a housing subsidy.
All those problems,
SADTU had to do something

6.2.2 Women are an Intrinsic Part of the Organisation

We have begun to recognise that women are an intrinsic part of the organisation
When I started at SADTU
We started with almost zero per cent of women in Congress
But at the last Congress,
If I have to take that as the current SADTU landscape
Then we have made dramatic progress.
Although it’s not the ideal
But it is a big improvement

6.2.3 Ganging up of Race and Culture

I came from the provinces that have absolute division.
You have women who came from different racial groupings
There was no racial divide among the women.
But there was a cultural divide in terms of what each subscribed to.
Zulu women will not take on the struggle as vociferously as the other groupings would.
At the national level when you advanced the gender struggle women from other cultural
divides found they couldn’t subscribe to it.
There was a ganging up of issues like race and culture
People of one³⁵ race will gather together and ask what does this woman³⁶ think about them.

6.2.4 I was a Nuisance to Them

I was a nuisance to them
I was a married woman with children

³⁵ Race reference changed to woman

³⁶ Race changed to woman

I overheard them complaining about me attending meetings when I should be at home with
my husband and children
It made me feel like I was a burden to them.
It was like I am looking for trouble with my husband
I was going to cause them trouble with my husband.
They might have tolerated a single woman
More so she can move with them whenever they go to meetings late in the evening.
They really did not want me around.

6.2.5 The Gender Desk: Something Went Wrong

1

Gender issues are not women's issues,
Any person can deal with gender
We need to eradicate the stereotypes of both women and men in terms of activities, boys and
girls or whatever.

2

It is very difficult because you would have to be a feminist
But we see gender as part of education but focusing on these stereotypes
We believe that issues of gender are cross cutting issues which cannot be driven by women
alone.
Something went wrong and the bosses, the leaders made it a women's issue
All about celebration and things like that.

3

We identify with women and not necessarily with women's issues.
We see gender as part of education, focusing on these stereotypes
We are supposed to be a socialist trade union, a trade union for social change,
At which point do we begin to move beyond the rhetoric?
People quote Marxism in a fashionable way.
Wearing a Che t-shirt doesn't make you a Marxist,
I think very few men and women in SADTU engage in terms of dialectical materialism and
so on.
Right now it is a superficial struggle and a superficial understanding of gender.

4

I found we have to change strategies
And then your biggest allies actually became male comrades who advanced the struggle
eventually.
If truth be told a lot of the men took on the voice of the women because in the leadership the
women were too few.
So we have to re-strategise and go to the men in order to advance the issue.
You have to go and win favour with the men.
We went to them directly, we formed groups with them, and we drank with them,
We went to pubs with them.
Yeah we had to do that, we had to do that.
We had to socialise before meetings, after meetings and over weekends.
It was all part of the strategy to win them over.

5

Then I gave the NEC the history,
First you didn't want the Gender Desk to have its own budget,
Now when we are trying to integrate the programmes you don't want that either
The gender report was usually put as the last item in the NEC and we won't even discuss it.
So it means what you actually want us to just die and not breathe in this union.
I was too angry that day.
In fact I was close to tears but I didn't want to cry.

I didn't want to cry in front of them
So I realised their suggestions were not meant to build the union's programmes on gender,
They were meant to kill the union's programme on gender.

6

Priority should be on gender awareness
Most of women do not understand how important it is for them to have a voice and
participate in robust gender debates.
There is no capacity and political will to lead on gender issues.
Today we all have a simplistic gender understanding,
We don't discuss gender, Marxism in gender, we don't evaluate feminism,
Where the women's struggle has originated and how we are going to be advancing the
women's struggle?
How do we want to transform society based on gender equity?
Rather we have accepted that men must lead and women must follow.
And what is sadder is that we use gender issues to exploit personal agendas.

6.2.6 Aspiring to Gender Equality

It is significant to note that the women's aspiration to become leaders was motivated by their desire to advance gender equality in the union (refer to Poem 6.2.1 No. 1 in this section). This aspiration can be traced to their evolving gender consciousness from the different domains of home, school and union. Earlier resistance to traditional gender socialisation in their homes and schools, strengthened by student politics and activism as radical young teachers during apartheid, catalysed a heightened consciousness among the women leaders. By the time they joined the union, the women leaders possessed an evolving gender consciousness and could be labelled as women in transition. The women leaders brought to the union their particular mix of activism, knowledge and experience that did not fit easily into fixed gender roles prescribed by society in general and by the union in particular. Hence it is here that they would challenge gender stereotypes and gender inequality.

The women leaders are powerfully articulate, courageous and strong women and, as part of the group of radical young teachers in the early 1980s, they had cut their teeth on activism as students and shared common ideologies and leadership experiences. These experiences were instrumental in their success in mobilising communities to protest against the injustices of apartheid. Hence, they had high expectations of their potential to activate change in a progressive organisation such as SADTU.

The box below cites examples of experiences that influenced the evolution of the women leaders' gender consciousness as radical teachers during apartheid. These experiences contributed to their strengths as leaders.

I was already an activist in the province.
When SADTU was launched
I became the first secretary, of the first branch of SADTU
(Appendix 3, Poem 14, No. 2)

This woman brought to the union her activism and political passion which was vital for SADTU as a fledgling union and it appears that she was elected because she was valued for her skills, knowledge and institutional memory. Later in her interview, she stated:

They will put a woman in a leadership position, someone they have power over.

**But I became a leader because I have the history
I am more than all the other women, I am the history.**

I have come through the ranks and compared to a lot of them I have the historical perspective of this union,
(Appendix 3, Poem 7, No. 3)

This woman leader believed she was elected as leader because of her history of participation in union politics and not because she was a pawn in the agenda of male leaders. It is interesting that she distinguishes herself from the other women leaders. This distinction is significant in that she did not perceive herself as part of the traditional women in the union; rather she saw her success as part of her accumulated experience and history of struggle. Thus, one can infer that such a journey of struggle is instrumental in bringing about heightened consciousness.

I was scheduled to do the assembly on my last day at that school,
To read the book and facilitate the prayers in the morning,
Well I opened the bible and I read about the angels of god, corrupt rulers of apartheid
and things like that
I said everything that was eating me up, corrupt rulers, anyway they won't last, even
the scriptures tell us, ah!
The kids were so excited they were singing so loud,
But that day I packed up everything, and I was out of there.
(Appendix 3, Poem 16, No. 3)

This woman talks about her experience in a school dominated by apartheid collaborators and her manipulation of the school assembly to conscientise the teachers and learners about the evils of apartheid. Her earlier experiences as a student leader equipped her with the skills to exploit any opportunity to fight apartheid. Hence she was able to make a valuable contribution to the vision for liberation of this country. However, although she was so bold she feared the apartheid security forces and supporters of the apartheid-backed black political party and left the school for good. This indicates that she was strategic in reading the dangers in resisting apartheid and moved on once she had made her point.

They taught me that there is more to life than just wanting to be an educated teacher,
to earn a salary.
We are all human beings at the end of the day and we are bound by our destinies.
I learnt to share what I have.
So I said to myself I should become involved in some way to improve the future of
this country.

I should become a voice for them in the future.
At that time we did not think apartheid would come to an end.
But I said to myself I am going to make a difference and play some kind of role.
(Appendix 3, Poem 18, No. 1)

In this excerpt the woman leader talked about teaching in a rural farm school that evoked a spirit of activism and raised her level of consciousness. The solidarity she felt for the suffering of her people galvanised her to fight against apartheid and to use these skills later to fight for gender equality in the union.

We refused to be crushed by the lackeys of the apartheid government.
Our school Principal was reactionary
He had invited the National Party Head of Education to the official opening of the
school,
We, the teachers, were not going to accept this.
(Appendix 3, Poem 17, No. 1)

As discussed in Chapter Two, it was the young radical teachers who mobilised against apartheid's symbols of oppression. This excerpt describes the woman leader's mobilisation of a group of radical teachers to resist the celebration of apartheid's segregation and separate development. She passionately describes the teachers' refusal to sing the national anthem of this regime, their collaboration with learners to develop an alternative anthem, and their wearing black as a sign of protest. She showed immense courage given the brutality of the apartheid forces towards any form of resistance. She brought her courage and a wide array of skills to the union.

It used to kill me to see those girls fall pregnant and leave school,
Some of them were actually very good students,
You could just tell that this one can go very far
(Appendix 3, Poem 20, No. 2)

Given her experience as a student leader, this woman leader worked tirelessly to conscientise her students about gender equality. In her interview she talked at length about her struggle, as a young teacher, with the school principal and the governing body to reverse the suspension of one of her female students for falling pregnant. Her positive gender consciousness made her unpopular among the teachers in her school, especially among those male teachers she suspected of having sexual relationships with learners. These experiences provided her with the knowledge, skills and passion to tackle gender inequalities in the union and activated a heightened consciousness that looked to eliminating the structural drivers of women's oppression.

The experience, confidence and knowledge displayed by the women leaders challenge the liberal feminist notion of false belief in the capabilities of women leaders. These women leaders were elected because of their capabilities, experience and history of struggle against apartheid. They initially displayed enthusiasm and the confidence that joining SADTU would actualise the union's potential for gender equality because they believed in the union's espoused commitment to advance gender equality. This section acknowledges that the women leaders were conscious of the discriminatory policies that disadvantaged women teachers and recognised that

their othering proceeded on racial, class and gender lines. Hence, this consciousness stirred an awakening resistance.

6.2.7 Trade Union Bureaucracy

According to Max Weber, bureaucracies bring with them “an instrumental rationality in which impersonal rules, procedures and hierarchies are operated with technical efficiency” and hence they often function within a masculine paradigm (Thompson & McHugh, 1995, p.147). Mills & Trancred (1992, p.111) argues that the similarity between the male stereotype and the values that dominate many organisations is striking. As explained in Chapter Three, the union bureaucracy is structured hierarchically, and maintains and reinforces particular patterns of control and power through the formal system of trade union governance. The women leaders’ experiences (refer to Poem 6.3.1) highlight that the union’s enactment is not gender neutral but rather is shaped by the patriarchal culture of the union that often reflects the broader society. The patterns of power and control are gendered, hence contradicting its espoused commitment to gender equality.

In terms of the SADTU hierarchy, the SADTU President, in consultation with the General Secretary, has the formal authority and power to preside over all the national structures and constitutional meetings of the union (SADTU Constitution, SADTU, 2006b). The General Secretary is responsible for the overall administration of the union. This organisational hierarchy is replicated at provincial level, with the provincial chairperson and the provincial secretary occupying respective seats of power. At the national level the President and General Secretary, together with their deputies, and the treasurer, comprise the Secretariat of the union. Flanking these positions are the vice presidents of three portfolios: the Education Portfolio, the Gender Portfolio, and the Sports, Arts and Culture Portfolio. The President and his deputy, the General Secretary and his deputy, and the national treasurer, together with the three vice presidents, are referred to as “National Office Bearers” (NOBs).

The NEC is one of the primary decision-making structures in the union. Unlike other national structures, such as the National General Council, which meets once a year, and the National Congress, which meets every four years, the NEC meets a minimum of four times a year. The NEC comprises the NOBs, the chairperson and the secretary of each province and is responsible for the overall management of the affairs of the union. Of significance is that leaders in the NEC are all elected positions which come with considerable decision-making powers. As such the NEC is vested with considerable authority and wields substantial power and influence.

The union’s organisational structure is often manipulated and engineered by its male majority that thwarts women’s potential entry into a position of power. Hence, women leaders have been prevented from enacting an emancipatory value system that would influence the union’s enactment of substantive gender equality. Particularly, in terms of equal opportunities between the sexes translating into equality of experience and outcome. Paradoxically, the union’s public persona and policies espouse gender equality, but the women leaders’ experiences project a different story. They argue that, although women are given access to the NEC, they continue to be elected into maintenance positions, thus remaining at the fringes of real power and benefit. The positions of the three vice presidents are considered to be “maintenance positions” because they are perceived to lack decision-making authority. One woman makes the following comment about the position of vice

president in the union’s power hierarchy (Poem 6.3.1, No. 4):

These positions (secretaries) are valued and therefore must be held by men and not women.

You have women in the vice president positions because they are not valued.

A gender breakdown of the NEC illustrates the overwhelming male dominance of leadership structures.

Table 1 below illustrates the overwhelming male dominance in the SADTU NEC.

Table 1: Gender breakdown of SADTU NEC (2007)

NATIONAL	POSITION	GENDER
National Office Bearer	President	Male
National Office Bearer	Deputy President	Male
National Office Bearer	General Secretary	Male
National Office Bearer	Deputy General Secretary	Male
National Office Bearer	Treasurer	Male
National Office Bearer	Vice President for Education	Female
National Office Bearer	Vice President for Gender	Female
National Office Bearer	Vice President Sports, Arts and Culture	Female

PROVINCE	POSITION	GENDER
1. Gauteng	Chairperson	Male
	Secretary	Male
2. Eastern Cape	Chairperson	Male
	Secretary	Male
3. Limpopo	Chairperson	Male
	Secretary	Male
4. Mpumalanga	Chairperson	Male
	Secretary	Male
5. Northern Cape	Chairperson	Male
	Secretary	Male
6. Western Cape	Chairperson	Male
	Secretary	Male
7. North-West	Chairperson	Male
	Secretary	Male
8. Free State	Chairperson	Male
	Secretary	Male
9. KwaZulu-Natal	Chairperson	Female
	Secretary	Male

Kanter (1976) argues that the ratio of male to female, what she refers to as “relative number”, significantly influences gender politics in an organisation. An analysis of the gender breakdown of the NEC reveals that out of a total of 26 members, only four are women, making the NEC close to 84% male. However, the women leaders argue that even this small gain of approximately 16% is significant for the struggle for gender equality in the organisation. They maintain that this is a vast improvement to previous years when there were no women in the NEC. They argue that the mere presence of women in these structures indicates the potential for change.

As one woman points out, the men in the union have come to recognise that “women are an intrinsic part of the organisation” (Poem 6.2.2), while another maintains that women have made significant progress since the inception of the union:

But we accepted the fact that women are here,
That they are no longer around the corner as the union saying used to be in the past.

Another woman leader, looking at the trend of women occupying previously male-dominated spaces, states:

The traditionalists are feeling threatened (Poem 6.3.1, No. 1).

According to the women leaders, the union is making small but significant progress in advancing gender equality by including women in previously male-dominated leadership structures. Although the women concede that the union has fared poorly in its attempt to move beyond the rhetoric of change, they argue that there is a potential to unlock the union’s transformative agenda as this change is irreversible. The women leaders argue that there is a conscious acceptance that the women are there to stay, and hence the space has been created to shift the consciousness of both men and women towards recognising that women are an integral part of the union.

6.2.8 Tradition and Culture

The NALEDI Organisational Review (2006, p.12) commissioned by SADTU observed that the union reflected the organisational culture of the government’s Department of Education. According to the review this organisational culture was bureaucratic and authoritarian. Interestingly the review notes that the union appears unaware of how this inhibits the development of a democratic union culture (NALEDI, 2006, p.12). However, the women leaders’ experiences indicate that male leaders consciously manipulated the union’s patriarchal culture and masculine traditions to further their agendas. The experiences of the women leaders of the union’s tradition and culture provide ample evidence of the conscious and deliberate manipulation by male leaders of bureaucratic structures, policies, procedures and organisational culture to secure male control of the union.

The women spoke of the patriarchal culture of SADTU that exploited women (refer to Poems 6.2.4, 6.2.5, 6.3.1 and 6.3.2). They gave explicit descriptions of the collusion of patriarchy, culture and traditionalism in the union bureaucracy that constrains substantive gender equality in the union. Their observations resonate with African feminism’s views on the influence of African conservative culture and traditionalism on women’s subordinate position in society. The observations also resonate with radical feminism’s views on the power, dominance, hierarchy and competition of patriarchy, and the Marxist and socialist feminists’ explanation of class and the sexual division of labour.

The box below gives a vivid description of the brazen and open statement on traditionalism and patriarchy made by a powerful male leader in the union.

They unashamedly put forward what they see as their African-ness, their male
African persona,

That requires a certain kind of response from women.

One high-ranking national leader once told a meeting “When I go home my wife must have the food on the table, and that’s how it is, I don’t care. I know the women are going to get really angry with me, but she will have the food on the table when I get home, and I would eat, and then I must go and do my work.”

And, if your national leaders speak like that,

Then it obviously gives everybody else carte blanche to continue operating in the way they’ve always been operating.

(Appendix 3, Poem 25, No. 3)

The above description, together with Poem 6.3.1, concurs with Mama’s (1996) description of the traditional African male’s expectations of a woman and wife. It is significant to note that the male leader emphasises the inflexibility of the fixed gender roles he has become accustomed to as an African patriarch. The male leader’s statement reflects radical and socialist feminist argument on the role of the home and family in perpetuating and institutionalising patriarchal value systems. The male leader is clear that his wife belongs in the domestic sphere cooking and cleaning and that he, as head of the family, is the provider of this sphere. As a leader he is aware that he has to be politically correct and has the arrogance to inform the meeting that he does not care if the women in the meeting take offence because this is the reality. The woman leader argues that as a leader and a role model of others his utterances send a very wrong message about gender equality in the union. Similarly Poem 6.3.1, No. 1 also highlights the double standards and hypocrisy of male union leaders and the disjuncture between the union’s rhetorical public utterances, espoused values and their enactment.

Poem 6.2.4 describes the male leaders’ discomfort with the participation of a married woman with children in union activities. These comments highlight the acceptance of fixed gender roles by the male leaders and resonate with the previous comments that women belong in the home cooking and taking care of their husbands and children while men go out to work and participate in union activities. The message affirms the gendered norm in society, as the male leader stated, “And that’s how it is” (see Appendix 3, Poem 25, No. 3). Lewis (2003, p.1) argues that culture continues to be used as an excuse to enforce women’s obedience and servitude in South Africa. The women leaders emphasise the public-private split in the union. They argue that in the public arena male leaders profess to support the advancement of gender equality and to challenge patriarchy; however, in their private spaces in their homes and constitutional meetings in the union, they continue to practise traditional gendered cultural roles.

Webster, Buhlungu & Bezuidenhout, (2004) observe that the position of individuals in organisations largely reflects their positions in society and much has already been said about the subordinate position of women in the teaching profession. Chapter Five explains the significance of history, context and gender in the formation of the women leaders’ identity. Although the women leaders foreground their national identity as black South African women, they argue that they are not completely homogenous since they espouse to different cultural and ethnic identities. Poem 6.2.3 argues that, although race was not an organising principle among women, their racial

and cultural differences challenged their aspiration for agency and often constrained the advance of gender equality. Often men employed false consciousness to persuade women to temper their resolve for gender equality in the union. Hence, women leaders suffer further marginalisation and alienation from fellow female comrades when they attempt to take gender equality forward. As one woman leader explained:

Every time we attempted to create a forum to discuss this³⁷

We found that the very women who were involved in the discussion acted against us
in collaboration with the male comrades.

As a result you were isolated and labelled the rebel rousers.

(Appendix 3, Poem 23, No. 1)

Marxist and socialist feminism look to the class location of teachers to explain such challenges. The contradictory class location of teachers positions them ideologically in the lower-middle class and materially in the working class. Acker & Van Houten (1992) argues that teachers' class location, especially male teachers, carry conventional stereotypes of women and their position in society. Similarly, the experiences of the women leaders reveal that the conservative and conventional ideas about women's role in society and the family are held by men and women. Socialist feminism argues that even if women are economically advantaged their oppression will persist until they free their minds, i.e. their consciousness. The experiences of the women leaders indicate that in many instances other women members had internalised gender oppression, which thwarted attempts at solidarity among women. The women leaders' reading of the situation in the union reveals a heightened consciousness that looks to solidarity and collective responses to women's inequality.

Those women members who have come to accept women's gendered place in the union fall within Ledwith & Colgan's (1996) "traditional women" category. Similarly, the Marxist feminist view of false consciousness is relevant to the SADTU experience. False consciousness could be responsible for the reluctance of the women members to unite as a particular class of women against the negative impact of the gendered division of labour in education (refer to 6.3.10 on Collective Bargaining in this chapter). Hence, unlike the women leaders' heightened collective consciousness, the majority of ordinary women members of SADTU fail to perceive their oppression, either in terms of gender or in terms of class. Hence, they are vulnerable to false consciousness and patriarchal manipulations.

The box below illustrates this point.

Women are forever going to feel frustrated, because the men will not change,
The men have not changed,
Women in this union, especially African woman, also come from conservative
families and homes,
No matter how politically active we are, there are certain male and female roles that
are accepted,
And many of us will continue to play these roles.

(Appendix 3, Poem 25, No. 3)

³⁷ Advancing gender equality in SADTU

African feminists would argue that it is acceptable to maintain certain cultural traditions that incorporate the dual-sex roles as long as they do not impact negatively on women. However, in this instance, the women fail to identify their gender oppression within their cultural values and also fail to understand how it has seeped into the culture of the union and how this culture devalues women. The women leaders' consciousness has evolved enough to alert them to these dichotomies that constrain women in general.

6.2.9 Married Women

Women in unions are often discouraged from participating in union activities owing to a number of gender-related constraints. These include lack of child-care facilities, activities often held at night, and frequent travel that impacts negatively on their reproductive roles as wives and mothers (Chaison & Andiappan, 1989, p.153). These observations resonate with the experiences of the women leaders in this study. Poem 6.2.4, No.3 provides details of the patriarchal attitudes and cultural beliefs of male leaders towards married woman in the union. Married woman leaders are confronted with barriers when they challenge the male stereotype of women's domestic and reproductive roles within the family. The union's culture of patriarchy and traditionalism create a hostile environment for married women, often retarding their participation in union activities. Married women with children are perceived as unfit mothers and a nuisance.

The woman leader's status as a wife and mother and her aspiration to be treated as an equal in the union greatly challenged the male leaders. The male leaders' prejudicial behaviour reflected the radical feminist's belief in the hegemonic grip of patriarchy on women's lives. The male leaders' reaction to a married woman in union meetings reflected their ambivalence towards the dual responsibility of working mothers. There was a strong feeling that married women with children who participated in union activity after normal work hours were neglecting their families. Male union members believed that women's participation in union activities made them independent (independence being a negative characteristic that removes women from the control of their men) and disrespectful and encouraged them to develop adulterous relationships, thus causing unnecessary trouble.

As one woman reflected:

The guys are saying "can't you see why men don't want their wives to come into the union and participate at this level?"

When women get into the union they break up their own families and this is exactly what she has done"

(Appendix 3, Poem 24, No. 3)

Consistent with views of radical feminism, male members in the union extend control over women members in their public world of politics and their private world of family. The women reflected that the hostility expressed by the men made them feel unwelcome and shook their self-confidence. Such attitudes impacted on the women's psyche and self-esteem; however, the women leaders' heightened consciousness buffered them from internalising such negative stereotypes. The stereotype that respectable women stay at home and take care of the children is still very prevalent in the union. Consistent with Marxist and socialist views of class and its impact on male and female teachers' value systems, men in the union strongly believed the union was not a place for women, and in particular married women with children.

6.2.10 Gender Desk

The women leaders' interaction with the Gender Desk illustrated the complexity of union politics, the contradictions that surrounded the perceptions of gender equality, and the shifting power blocks that either advanced or stunted the desk's agenda for gender equity in the organisation. The rationale for the establishment of the Gender Desk in SADTU is grounded in the federation's conceptual shift from a "women's structure" to a "gender structure" and SADTU's Gender Desk suffered similar criticism and constraints as the Gender Desk of the federation (refer to Chapter Two).

Understanding Gender and Feminism

Women's level of gender consciousness and their understanding of the structural drivers of gender inequity and their accompanying power relations are essential for changing gendered organisations. The women leaders displayed varied understanding of gender issues, with the majority revealing an awareness of the structural nature of women's oppression and the need for substantive gender equality that promotes not only equality of access and opportunity but also equality of outcomes with their male counterparts. The example below illustrates the women leaders' view that the Gender Desk was premised primarily on gender that was not confined to women but also included men.

Gender issues are not women's issues,
(Appendix 3, Poem 22, No. 1)

We are very vocal in saying a gender portfolio is not only for women.
For instance, we once had a male gender convener because of what we believed.
(Appendix 3, Poem 22, No. 2)

It has been a hard road while we are trying to mainstream gender in the organisation
You find that gender issues ended up becoming women issues.
(Appendix 3, Poem 22, No. 10)

At times, the women leaders display confusion and misunderstanding of the various theoretical concepts related to gender, women's issues and feminism. This reflection concurs with Meena's (1992) and Orr's (1999) observation that women in trade unions and in southern Africa in general possess limited understanding of gender issues related to feminist theories. The women leaders indicate that women and male members display a superficial understanding of gender, ignoring the power relations that fuel the patriarchal culture of the union, while others understand gender as a synonym for women and a few relate it to stereotypes, bias and the quota system. As one participant explained, "We need to eradicate the stereotypes of both women and men in terms of activities, boy and girls or whatever."

As discussed in Chapter Three, feminism enjoyed modest popularity in African countries. The evidence suggests that feminist ideology has fomented change across a minority of the women leaders. Meena (1992, p.4) asserts that the association of feminism with western feminism and the ideology of the petty bourgeoisie creates a hostility that effectively intimidates many African women and prevents them from openly embracing feminism. Hence, it is no surprise that most of the women leaders interviewed did not identify with feminists. Others crudely associated feminism with lesbianism. This indicates that although the women leaders possessed a heightened gender consciousness they were strategic in their public adoption of feminism. They

had invested heavily in their feminine identity but in their private spaces admitted their leaning towards feminisms. These experiences are consistent with the challenges raised by African feminism, which often interprets resistance to patriarchy as an anti-male stance.

Navigating Patriarchy in the Union

There is ample evidence in this study that illustrates the failure of the union to take the struggle for gender equality seriously. Male leaders were identified as the major stumbling block to advancing the vision of the Gender Desk. Those women leaders who attempt to advance this vision are severely constrained by the patriarchal organisational culture. As one woman argues (Poem 6.3.1, No. 2), the “bosses” (male leaders) limit the Gender Desk to superficial activities that do not challenge the gender status quo. Similar comments are consistent throughout the research. The women leaders accuse the men of using their power to place limitations and conditions on the operation of the Gender Desk. Hence, the Gender Desk continues to find itself at the mercy of its male leadership, who thwart the struggle for gender equality.

The women leaders observe that the desk takes on an event-orientated focus, celebrating Women’s Day, rather than a consciousness-raising and awareness role that influences the policies and practices of the union. One woman reflects, “I want more substantive issues discussed in terms of gender; they should not only come out to celebrate women’s day” (Appendix 3, Poem 23, No. 15). Similarly, Cockburn (1996, p.11) argues that, although special structures for women in trade unions are valuable, they have little effect on improving the number of women in union structures nor on guaranteeing a gendered analysis of policy making and collective bargaining. It appears that the SADTU Gender Desk suffered similar criticism.

The women leaders complain bitterly that the Gender Desk has lost its focus once HIV/AIDS had been incorporated into the desk. They argue that the focus on HIV/AIDS was a distraction from real gender issues. Similar to the COSATU experience discussed in Chapter Two, the Gender Desk fails to address and challenge the gendered dimension of HIV/AIDS that correlated closely with gender inequality in the union and in society in general. HIV/AIDS is increasingly becoming a feminised disease in South Africa, with more women infected and more women affected by the disease. According to the women leaders, the SADTU Gender Desk has not engaged in discourse on the gendered implication of HIV/AIDS. Instead it has been preoccupied with prevention interventions that fail to consider the unequal power dynamics that drive the epidemic. The women leaders concur that the HIV/AIDS programme has crowded out the gender programmes and has hence reduced the Gender Desk’s focus on gender issues. The women leaders’ critique of the union’s response to the gender drivers of the HIV/AIDS pandemic reveals a heightened level of consciousness.

The women leaders make the following comments about the inclusion of HIV/AIDS into the Gender Desk programme:

The problem is,
The whole HIV/AIDS is a distraction,
Suddenly the Gender Desk sees its role in terms of the HIV/AIDS campaign.
There is no work done in SADTU any more to understand the concepts around the
gender struggle.

So when we come in it is just a simplistic gender understanding, we don't look at gender.
(Appendix 3, Poem 23, No. 17)

Or
Putting HIV/AIDS into the gender portfolio!
I don't know whether it is deliberate or unconscious
I think it is deliberate because it says lets keep them busy.
And so they do not challenge them,
(Appendix 3, Poem 23, No. 18)

Or
To a large extent the Gender Desk of SADTU has become more an HIV/AIDS desk rather than a Gender Desk.
And I think that's my only regret about being a gender activist.
(Appendix 3, Poem 23, No. 22)

Or
And on the issue of HIV/AIDS,
Through the commitment of the Gender Desk and the programmes developed
Much has been done for the plight of educators infected and affected.
We also managed through the desk to bring the issue of HIV/AIDS to the forefront
(Appendix 3, Poem 23, No. 20)

SADTU Gender Policy

The SADTU Gender Desk has adopted much of the earlier version of the COSATU gender policy (COSATU, 1999) and has still to develop its own comprehensive policy that reflects the gender struggles within the union. The earlier version of the COSATU gender policy was premised on gender rhetoric and guidelines for integrating gender issues into union structures. It was technical in its approach and failed to provide an ideological motivation for a gender policy. The SADTU gender policy suffers the same criticism.

The mission statement of the SADTU gender policy (SADTU, 1999, p.1) states:

To conscientise and empower SADTU membership and women in particular on women and gender issues and the importance of mainstreaming some in all union programmes.

The SADTU gender policy fails to provide a radical theoretical framework that underscores the structural and ideological drivers of gender equality and falls short of arguing for the transformation of SADTU into an engendered organisation. The aims and objectives cited below illustrate the narrow, liberal and technical approach to gender mainstreaming in the union. Little mention is made of concepts such as patriarchy, women's subordination, and the sexual division of labour and its impact on men and women in the union and education system.

Aims and objectives of the SADTU Gender Policy (SADTU, 1999) are:

1. To develop and implement women empowerment programmes
2. To promote gender sensitivity and awareness
3. To conduct research on gender awareness issues
4. To integrate gender in mainstream education
5. To network with other structures

The NALEDI Organisational Report (2006a) on SADTU contends that the national and provincial gender structures of SADTU lack a clear vision that defines their role in the union. Similarly the SADTU gender policy (1999) fails to provide an organisational expression of the gender struggles within the union. The women leaders observe that the consequence is the lack of targeted programmes that advance gender equality in the union. The observation made by one of the women leaders illustrates the ineffectiveness of the Gender Desk in providing a robust, gendered critique of the union's performance in advancing gender equality.

Most of women do not understand how important it is for them to have a voice and participate in robust gender debates.

Today we all have a simplistic understanding of gender,
We don't discuss gender, Marxism in gender, we don't evaluate feminism.
(Poem 6.2.5, No. 8)

The women leaders' criticism underscores the theoretical gap in the understanding of the power dynamics in gender discourses in the union. The experiences of the women leaders illustrate how men often manipulate this gap to further their interests and agendas. The following observation demonstrates this clearly,

How do we want to transform society based on gender issues?
Rather we have accepted that men must lead and women must follow.
And what is sadder is that we use gender issues to exploit personal agendas.
(Poem 6.2.5, No. 6)

As argued earlier, the men in the union have exploited these gaps and silences in the gender policy to perpetuate their power and dominance in the union. This practice is common among unions in COSATU and reflects, among others, the organisational inertia of the federation to challenge patriarchy and advance equality among its affiliates (Jafta, 2006).

Operations of the Gender Desk

As explained in Chapter Three, formal authority and the control over resources, information and knowledge are important sources of power in the union. The amount of money allocated to a particular programme in an organisation is often an expression of its commitment (Sharp, 2007; Orr, 1999). The NEC has the decision making power over its programmes and spending. Poem 6.2.5, No. 5 illustrates the constraints experienced by the Vice President for Gender in the NEC in motivating for a dedicated budget for gender programmes. What follows is a vivid description of her frustration in sustaining the gender programme:

“So it means you actually want us to just die and not breathe in this union.”

And she concluded,

“They³⁸ mean to kill the union's programme on gender.”

Poem 6.2.5, No. 5 in this chapter describes the NEC as an obstacle to the optimal functioning of the Gender Desk and accuses the NEC of using its powers to thwart the operations of the Gender Desk. The women leader explains that, although the Vice President for Gender belonged to the highest level of NOBs, the position was stripped of its power by the patriarchal influence of the NEC. She stated:

“I know in the NEC every Gender Vice President came with a huge ball and chain

³⁸ The male leaders in the NEC

around her ankle”

And

“She couldn’t speak on issues because she was shouted down or made to feel that she was approaching the issues the wrong way”

(Appendix 3, Poem 23, No. 18)

These statements vividly describe the oppression and powerlessness experienced by the Vice President for Gender in the NEC. Another woman observes (Poem 5, No. 7) that “There is no capacity and political will to lead on gender issues.” Gender debates in the NEC and other national meetings are often deferred, dismissed or followed by ridicule or strong resistance. As another states,

The gender report was usually put as the last item on the agenda and we won’t even discuss it.

Or if there was a recommendation, either there will be a very strong heated debate on the recommendation or they will just give in for the sake of peace.

(Appendix 3, Poem 22, No. 10)

The women leaders observe that it is not very common for these structures to engage in gender debates and that when they do it is usually not in the best interest of the women. They observe that the tendency for the union to put gender issues last on the agenda is a dangerous one. Such practices have a detrimental impact on worker solidarity. The neglect of gender issues results in women remaining unequal partners in the labour movement and in the labour market. This is evident in the experiences of the women as members of the union and as teachers.

Furthermore, a comparison of programme fund allocations in the SADTU budget over the past four years reveals a progressive decrease in the gender budget. The Gender Desk budget continues to be crowded out by the union’s HIV/AIDS programmes. The Gender Desk, compared to its counterparts in the education and sports, arts and culture portfolios, has been allocated the least amount of money. Overall the budget for gender comprised a mere 1.98% of the union’s total expenditure for 2004 to 2006 (SADTU National Budget 2004-2006³⁹). The picture at the provincial, regional and branch levels is far bleaker. In short, the Gender Desk was severely constrained by the lack of financial resources to implement its programmes during this period.

6.3 CULTURE AND POLITICAL CONTESTATIONS

SADTU, like most organisations, is political in its attempt to create order and direction among potentially diverse and conflicting interests. Focusing on the relationship between interests, conflict and power, particularly in relation to the enactment of dominance and subordination between male and female leaders in the union reveals the union a highly political entity.

³⁹ The SADTU budgets were made available to me and can be accessed directly from SADTU

6.3.1 Yes and then I saw Patriarchy

1

Yes and then I saw patriarchy.
At the provincial level it is open and there all the time.
Patriarchy identified the super positions,
There are also strong traditional and cultural values in our provinces
When they (men) are delivering speeches on podiums it is politically correct rhetoric that
people want to hear.
But in their heart of hearts they don't believe that women can serve equally and can lead
equally.
All over the world we are going to take up the most powerful leadership positions and the
real traditionalists are feeling threatened.

2

They (men) would gang up against strong women.
I lost at the provincial conference because I was a strong woman
They wanted a woman who will not disagree with them
They will make it difficult for me, they will watch for mistakes
So now they say that I'm in love with whomever and it is affecting my work.
They said that I am bringing the union into disrepute,
I'm putting SADTU on the line.
So they went about their plan to remove me
They always got what they wanted
The only way we're going to have gender balance is when we have a revolution,
And we need to take that revolution seriously.

3

But you can't be a chairperson or a provincial secretary because you're not African;
And you're not male, right.
They cannot see a woman in the role of the general secretary. No way!

4

The position of secretary is a position of power
It's about earning money and power.
These positions are valued and therefore must be held by men and not women.
You have women in the vice president positions because they are not valued.
The valued position will be given to men until we stand together as women.
Anything with money is a man's domain.

6.3.2 Insults, Guns and Kisses

1

I remember in a policy conference,
One male comrade almost hit me for saying in a commission, "SADTU is just a boys' club",
I was forced to retract the statement.
After the plenary this comrade started following me through the corridors,
He wanted to beat the hell out of me.
They even threatened the women who supported me.
They were calling the women at night, being violent, shouting insults.
The women were scared and others didn't really understand what was going on.

2

At one point he threatened us, he threatened me.
Yes, physically,
He threatened that he was going to shoot us, because we wanted to destroy him,
That when we went outside, he will shoot us!
It is really ugly.

Most of my experiences in SADTU have been negative

3

On the first day that I attended the NEC as the Vice President,
One of the guys wanted to kiss me, you know, during lunch.
To kiss me, kiss me like really!
We did not have that kind of relationship and I said no
Since then he hated me.
He even organised a campaign at Congress to get me out of office,
He definitely didn't want me in.

6.3.3 I was Really Invisible

1.

At first the men acted like I wasn't there.
They never asked my opinion.
I was really invisible.
I think I just kept quiet for a long time because of the men
Even if I raised my hand to make a contribution they would just ignore me and continue with
the discussion and their debate.
SADTU still needs to travel an extremely long road before we can really say we are free as
women in SADTU

2.

I remember one woman who spoke in that forum.
Oh! The comrades laughed!
But this woman was not phased out at all.
I was so scared, I wanted to say something.
But when I heard that laughter, ridiculing her, I thought, my God, I will never say a word in
this forum

6.3.4 We Could Do Better

If you look at the NEC, the men are the majority.
So we are doing very badly in terms of the leadership.
When it comes to the negotiations I think we are doing well,
Like in salary, conditions of service, in terms of your maternity leave, for example.
But when you look at the rationalisation and redeployment we didn't consider how it would
impact on individual teachers.
Most of the people who suffered were women because the majority of our membership are
women
It is hard for women to leave their family in one place and go and work in another place.
It has a very negative impact on the family structure and these things were never considered.
Also the new curriculum and IQMS has increased teachers' workload and it affects women
more.
So I would say we are not doing as well as we could.
We could do better.
Including issues like fighting on the Higher Education front
We are not doing enough in terms of ensuring gender equality in management structures
Access of women into science and other technical fields is not sufficient,
SADTU can do more.

6.3.5 Nothing is a Lost Cause

2

But we are always at the mercy of men and their agendas.
As a woman leader you are there because

The men thought you would fit into their vision or plan.
The men are looking at women as fillers.
So you fill in where we need to reach the quota,
They don't fit you in because they think you are a good leader,
The quota system undermines women leaders
They don't associate me with ability or capability,
They only associate me with my gender.
They put you in because of the quota.

3

But nothing is a lost cause
The quota system has its merits
Remember the General Secretary had to support the change
He became President of Education International and was too ashamed to have such a poor
showing of women in the SADTU leadership
It was not good for his international image

6.3.6 Mediating Power

Politics in organisations are often demonstrated in the way officials and members mediate power and formal authority to maintain and promote interests. The experiences of the women leaders reveal that often the public enactments of these mediations are influenced by the agendas of male “buddy” networks that operate to promote their own agendas.

In the hierarchy of the union bureaucracy, the formal authority of the union's president, chairpersons and secretaries is accompanied by considerable power and benefits. These elected positions afford their holders substantial material gains and opportunities for personal advancement. The women leaders observe that these positions are aggressively courted and defended by male leaders:

“Patriarchy identified the super positions,” (Poem 6.3.1, No. 1) and
“They cannot see a woman in the role of the general secretary. No way!
You see, the guys play their own game here,” (Poem 6.3.1, No. 3)

These positions were held by women early in the history of the union. The women leaders maintain that this changed once the power of the secretaries moved beyond institutional frameworks and rules to include material gains like economic benefits, access to influential networks, and opportunities for enhancing skills for career advancements. According to Heery and Kelly (1988), this is a common trend in trade unions globally, where paid union work remains, in a very large measure, a male preserve. The consequence is the separation of union leaders from the realities and insecurities of their membership. Hence, union leaders often differ from their membership because “workers’ ideas are actively determined through practice and understood as struggle but the ideas of union officials are passively determined by highly material interests” (Kelly, 1988, p.166).

The experience in SADTU appears to be no different. The women leaders spoke in concert about intense contestation among male union leaders fighting for positions that promise material gain and political power. Although election processes appear to be democratic, their experiences tell a different story. The constitution of SADTU is explicit that union elections must follow a formal democratic process overseen by the NEC in terms of nominations, lobbying and caucusing for leadership positions. However, the women leaders argue that in practice the process is often manipulated

by male leaders who exploit their majority in the NEC to maintain their power bases. As one woman leader explains:

You see, the guys play their own game here,
They protect the male comrades.
The men do the nominating.
Male comrades will only vote for men.

It is not because they have capacity but because they are male.
(Appendix 3, Poem 15, No. 3)

According to the women leaders, the men also use their influence and mobilise informal networks to support their nominations. Morgan (1986) maintains that informal formations in organisations are an important source of power. Men use the authority of their positions and their informal networks to fulfil their agendas. The pervasive patriarchal culture of the union prevails at elections and it is accepted that decision making is a male prerogative.

The women leaders reflect in detail on the way interest, conflict and power converge during elections. Women are often used as pawns to secure patriarchal interests. Male leaders resort to unsavoury, sexist and, in extreme cases, violent means to gain access to positions of power. A women leader describes her experience: “He threatened that he was going to shoot us, because we wanted to destroy him” (Poem 6.3.2, No. 2). These observations concur with the views of radical feminism (refer to Chapter Three) that patriarchy is systemic, hegemonic, and driven by dominance and competition, and that it expresses itself as discrimination, disregard, control, violence, and exploitation.

The following observations made by the women leaders support the view expressed above:

The position of general secretary is a position of power
It's about earning money and power.
We have had women as provincial secretaries in the past.
But now it is linked to money.
Anything with money is a man's domain.
So when women are doing these things no value is attached to it,
As soon as somebody recognises what they are doing and they want to put resources
into it,
The men kick them out.
You can go anywhere in Africa it's happening,
It's not unique to South Africa

(Appendix 3, Poem 15, No. 6)

Poem 6.3.1 explains the influence of gender in such powerful positions. The women leaders argue that men are voted into leadership positions on the basis of their gender rather than on merit or capacity. However, they argue that the quota system compels the addition of women and only a particular type of woman is generally elected. They maintain that the potential woman leader has to fit into the conventional notion of a “good” woman for her to make it into leadership positions in the union. The women leaders’ critique of the power of patriarchy in the union and its exploitation of the quota system reveals a heightened consciousness that correctly reads the conflict between the union’s public democratic intent and its private gendered

enactments. Furthermore, the women are also conscious of their complicity in maintaining the status quo through selective interpretation and strategic compliance to patriarchal norms. The experiences below provide nuanced insight into this ambivalence.

They choose me as Vice President although they have an idea they could control me
But I was the lesser evil.
Between the other two
The other two lost out because of their relationships with male leaders.
(Appendix 3, Poem 25, No. 5)

This woman leader explained the reason she was elected as Vice President at the National Congress. Her view illustrated the strong cultural message of the “proper” role for women in society and in the union. She believed that the men at the Congress chose her because she was a “good woman”, meaning she was not in an adulterous relationship and was passive and easy to control. Similarly, Acker and Van Houten (in Mills and Tranced, 1992, p.27) conclude that often patriarchal organisations selectively recruit women who are passive and dependent and in this way perpetuate gender stereotypes in the organisation.

It is significant to note that the two women competing against her lost the election because they failed to fit into the masculine ideal of a good unspoilt woman. They were rejected because of their relationships with male leaders in the union. However, the women leaders chose not to see the double standards in the condemnation of the women leaders in question.

Another woman leader responds to such behaviour:

They (men) have double standards,
And we have the whole double standards’ debate – how is it okay for a guy to have
an affair,
And when a woman does the same you are ready to crucify her!
(Appendix 3, Poem 24, No. 3)

Interestingly, these values and moral standards are reserved for women only. Extra marital relationships do not prevent men from being elected as leaders. Hence many of the values and standards about the ideal and proper behaviour for males and females are selectively applied. The behaviours of men who transgress them are ignored while women are punished. Of significance is that women continue to vote for men without subjecting them to the same criticism. This behaviour could be attributed to internalised patriarchal values and false consciousness. As the woman below explains:

The male leaders tell you all kinds of stories about the potential woman leader,
That she was having a relationship with a national leader,
I think I have a problem with that, quite frankly, that she was having this
relationship,
I was thinking about what’s good for the union
I mean how can you take decisions if two people are lovers?
And you listen to them (the male leaders)
(Appendix 3, Poem 24, No. 1)

The above poem illustrates the manipulation of patriarchy and false consciousness by men to dissuade women from supporting a potential woman leader. They created the impression that the potential woman leader was immoral and hence would bring the union into disrepute. They evoked the woman's internalised patriarchal prejudices that made her doubt the woman's suitability for the position. The woman leader was aware of the double standards fuelling her false consciousness. She made her decision on the basis of the male idea of a "good" woman. In this way the men succeeded in manipulating her support for a potential woman leader. This was an excellent example of how women, although conscious of their manipulation, apply strategic compliance to advance individual agendas.

6.3.7 Towards a Quota System

Several authors and commentators have maintained that the quota system has the potential to redress gender inequality and mainstream women's work in patriarchal organisations (Kelly, 1988, Daphne et al., 1997, Trebilcock, 1991). Liberal feminism views the quota system as an important vehicle to break down the barriers preventing women from competing equally with men. However, the women leaders' experience of the quota system reveals challenges in its implementation in patriarchal organisations like SADTU.

The figure below provides a striking illustration of the overwhelming majority of women members in SADTU and the unfair disproportional gender representation in the union leadership structures.

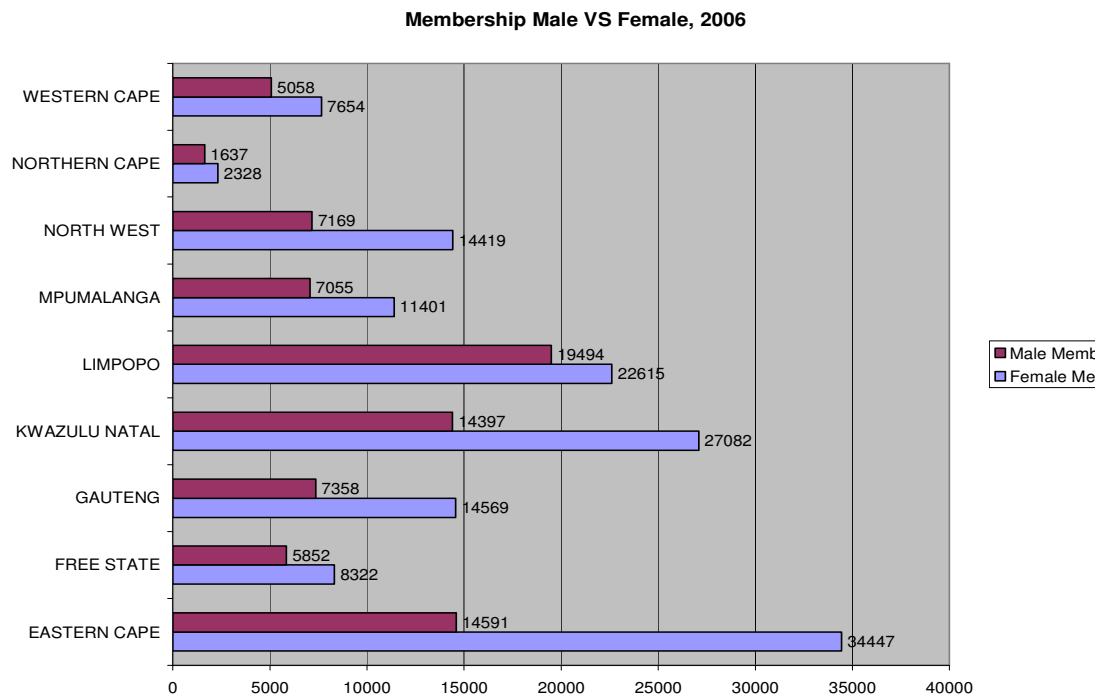


Illustration 2: Gender breakdown of SADTU membership (2006)

Figure 2: SADTU membership: Male vs female, 2006

Source: SADTU IT HOD, Craig Nichols (2006)

Approximately 65% of SADTU's membership is made up of women. In contrast its highest leadership structure, the NEC is close to 85% male, which skews the union's gender leadership overwhelmingly in favour of males. Women leaders are a painful minority in the NEC. One women leader explains that she felt invisible in the sea of male leaders (Poem 6.3.3, No. 1) in the NEC. Govender (2004) illustrates similar positions in other teacher unions in South Africa.

Govender (2004) maintains that women occupy a meagre 25% of the leadership positions in the South African Teachers Union (SATU) and the National Association of Professional Teachers of South Africa (NAPTOSA). In all the teacher unions in South Africa, women enjoy proportionally greater representation in leadership structures at lower levels particularly at branch level. Thus, while women do occupy leadership roles in teacher organisations in South Africa, they are often underrepresented at higher levels of the union bureaucracy. Similarly many trade unions in South Africa, though dominated by women, fail to reflect this in their national leadership structures (refer to Chapter Two). This appears to be a global phenomenon. Ledwith and Colgan (1996, p.152) observe that women comprised more than half of the British workforce but less than one-third made it to positions of power in their unions.

However, the representation of women in union leadership in South Africa is changing. According to Orr (1999, p.42) ten years ago the majority of COSATU affiliates lacked women national office bearers. However, the representation and visibility of woman leaders at the national level of COSATU affiliates has improved in the past five years. NEHAWU made history in 2006 when it elected its first woman President making it the first union in the public sector to break the glass ceiling. A handful of COSATU affiliates have adopted a quota policy to increase and retain women in leadership structures. COSATU Gender Officer, Jafta (2006, p.7) maintains that the quota system was implemented not only to secure women in leadership positions, but also to include women in the federation's developmental programmes. She claims that the quota policy has improved the representation of women in the COSATU leadership. The federation has two women in its highest decision-making structures, occupying the positions of Treasurer and Second Deputy President.

The quota system has the potential to redress gender inequality and mainstream women's work in patriarchal organisations (Kelly, 1988; Daphne et al., 1997; Trebilcock, 1991; Jafta, 2006), but the experiences of the women leaders expose challenges facing women who benefit from the quota system. SADTU had an eight-year struggle to introduce the quota system in the union. The process came to a head at the SADTU National Congress of 2002, when women members challenged male dominance by aggressively lobbying for the inclusion of more women in the national leadership in the union.

The Gender Desk had chosen the 2002 National Congress as a strategic constitutional gathering, to launch their "Women in Leadership" campaign. They planned a women's roundtable to build positive gender consciousness among Congress delegates. The intention was to influence Congress delegates to support the nomination of women and vote them into national leadership positions. However, the roundtable was fraught with problems, and riddled with disagreements among the women themselves, thus weakening their resolve and making them vulnerable to patriarchal influences. The women leaders argue that the behaviour of the women during the 2002 Congress perpetuated stereotypes of women and dealt a major blow to the struggle for gender equality in SADTU. The roundtable failed to convene and was shelved by the union NEC in favour of more "pressing" political issues that had

engulfed the National Congress. The women leaders' assessment of this failure is significant. It reveals their level of consciousness and their reading of gender challenges facing the union.

One of women leaders provided the following explanation for the shelving of the women's roundtable at the 2002 National Congress:

I think the NEC were constantly shifting the women's roundtable at Congress
because it was not an important thing for them
I don't think it was deliberate.
It's just it's a blind spot that they have.
I don't think it was malicious, because we have to deal with the things in the City
Press article
(Appendix 3, Poem 30, No. 3)

This woman leader viewed the failure of the roundtable as an unintended oversight on the part of the male leadership, given that they did not consider it to be important. Her response illustrates that she had read the union's masculine culture correctly. It was indeed a "blind spot" on the part of the male leadership, given their patriarchal and conservative value systems. The woman leader interpreted the failure of the women's roundtable as a direct action of the male-dominated NEC, which was gendered, and the dismissal of the women's roundtable as an indication that they were not committed to gender equality.

Similarly, another woman leader perceived the subsequent refusal of the NEC to convene a pre-Congress women's roundtable at the 2006 National Congress as a deliberate tactic to thwart the possibility of women being elected to the national leadership structure. She makes that significant observation that the Congress failed to discuss issues that impacted on women, even though the union membership was two-thirds female. She explained:

Even before Congress there was a fight in the NEC.
As the Gender Desk we wanted a women's roundtable as a pre-Congress activity,
Where we would have had our own content for the roundtable
We would have invited one or two powerful women in South Africa.
But we did not succeed,
The NEC was completely hostile to the idea, it was unnecessary to be so hostile.
I asked the Secretariat what women issues were discussed at Congress
Remember women constitute almost 65% of our members.
And for four days we discussed everything except the issue of women's
empowerment.
Women's issues did not feature in any discussions
I don't think anyone who would call themselves a woman leader or a gender activist
would be happy with the SADTU Congress
The issue of women died there, in the President's introductory remark.⁴⁰
(Appendix 3, Poem 30, No. 7)

⁴⁰ The president of the union made a remark on gender equality in the union in his address to the 2006 SADTU National Congress.

However, the union finally adopted the quota system at the 2003 National General Council after years of mobilized struggle. The litmus test of SADTU's quota system was the 2006 SADTU National Congress. As pointed out earlier, the National Congress is the highest constitutional gathering in the union and meets every four years to elect leaders to the national structures of the union. It is the most powerful gathering and is characterized by political contestations and fraught with tension. The table below provides a gender breakdown of the provincial delegations to the 2006 National Congress.

Province	Females	Males	Total	%Females ⁴¹	%Males ⁴²
Mpumalanga	26	60	86	30	70
Northern Cape	21	24	45	47	53
North West	35	80	115	30	70
Free State	24	72	96	25	75
Limpopo	50	118	168	30	70
KZN	64	105	169	38	62
Eastern Cape	68	109	177	38	62
Western Cape	21	54	75	28	72
Gauteng	23	76	99	23	77
Totals	332	698	1030	32	68

Table 2: SADTU National Congress (2006): Gender breakdown per province
Source: SADTU Congress Documentation (2006)

Of the 1,030 delegates who attended the SADTU National Congress in 2006, 332 were female and 698 were male. This made the Congress close to 70% male. Of the nine provinces, only one province, the Northern Cape, came close to a 50/50 quota of male and female delegates, followed by KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape, with close to 40% females in their delegations. The remaining six provincial delegations were approximately 70% male, making men the overwhelming majority. These figures can be interpreted as a bleak reflection of the union's commitment to gender equality and the failure of the quota system in SADTU. Chaison and Andiappan (1989, p.160) argue that the under-representation of women is a major embarrassment to unions that claim to be progressive. The Congress gender breakdown illustrates the patriarchal power bases in the provinces and reveals the strength of male resistance

⁴¹ Percentages have been rounded off.

⁴² Percentages have been rounded off.

to gender equality in the union. One of the woman leaders makes the following comment on the National Congress:

All the men want to go to Congress.
They are valued there in terms of issues of the union.
Anything that is valuable men want to have it for themselves.
Then they will go through all lengths to block women from going to Congress.
(Appendix 3, Poem 30, No. 6)

Although the women leaders are critical of the union's poor performance at the last Congress, they do agree that the 2006 Congress shows the largest percentage of women delegates at a constitutional meeting in the history of SADTU. They argue that, although a minority, women are nevertheless still part of the National Congress.

Some of the women leaders maintain that more has to be done to advance gender equality in SADTU than merely adopting a quota system. They argue that the male leaders have used the quota system to pursue their agendas and that the quota system is often perceived as patronage. One of the woman leaders explained:

“Sometimes the women who come to the Congress are not even branch leaders, maybe somebody has a relationship with somebody and they are the ones who get to go to Congress,”
(Appendix 3, Poem 30, No. 1)

If patronage is perceived as a ticket to the National Congress then it would be unlikely that the women would challenge the dominance of males in these gatherings. Such practices could potentially undermine the intention of the quota system and perpetuate stereotypes about women or result in the quota system becoming a superficial tool that amounts to tokenism. Furthermore, this perceived patronage could potentially raise doubts about the potential of women to lead. Similarly, the women leaders explain that those who do make it to leadership positions are often accused of reaching the top because of the quota system, or because they slept their way to the top, or because they are easy to control and are passive.

Another woman shares her thoughts on the quota system:

We don't have the power,
We have absolutely no power,
All we are is a quota for the public.
It says to the internationals that we have women in leadership.
But those women are only as valuable as they fulfil the agenda of men.
(Appendix 3, Poem 33, No. 5)

The women leaders are obviously troubled that the quota system has been manipulated by men in the union to serve their interests. Their critique of the quota system cautions that unless it is accompanied by structural changes that institutionalise equality it has the potential to be used as a tool in powerful patriarchal organisations to further marginalise women leaders and give credence to stereotypes of women. However, despite the women leaders' ambivalence towards the quota system, they view it as catalytic to the advancement of gender equality. They agree that the adoption of a quota system by the union, together with the changing national and regional politics, creates an enabling environment for women

to take on leadership positions. According to one women leader (Appendix 3, Poem 23, No. 19):

A few years ago there was only one woman out of 26 men in the NEC.
Now there are four women in the NEC
Some provinces managed to come with a 50% women representation to the 2006
Congress
This has never happened before

The women leaders concur that regardless of their critique of the flaws in the implementation of the quota system it still has the potential to make a positive contribution towards gender equality in the union. Despite having benefitted from the quota system, the women did not employ false consciousness to justify their benefits; instead, their honest and authentic assessment of its limitations to advance gender equality indicates a shift towards a collective consciousness that resonates with the struggles of women in general. The conflict between their public and private realities experienced as women leaders in a predominantly male-dominated organisation triggered progress in their evolving consciousness, away from individual agency and gender consciousness towards a willingness to embrace a collective consciousness as women.

6.3.8 Institutionalised Sexism

Two types of institutionalised sexism have been identified in this study. The first is embedded in the culture and politics of the union, and is often subtle and indirect, such as that manifested in organisational rules, rituals, symbolisms and cultural messages about women's roles in society (Neuman, 1995). The other is more direct and often manifests in intimidation, physical and verbal abuse, sexual harassment and sometimes even rape.

Ample evidence has been provided that confirms the collusion of male leaders to maintain their positions of power. The women leaders maintain that male leaders regularly exploit the formal system of trade union governance in the union to out-manoeuvre any opposition or threat to their power and interests. They speak of several experiences where constitutional rules were selectively applied to keep women out of the male preserves.

The example below highlights the selective interpretation of language and position to deny women speaking rights at the National General Council (NGC) and the National Congress.

When women are invited to the NGC they are called the part thereof⁴³,
As if the part thereof doesn't have speaking rights.
So the way we categorise representation becomes a barrier in terms of who gets to
speak.
(Appendix 3, Poem 30, No. 7)

Furthermore, the women leaders explain how undemocratic rulings made by provincial leaders often prohibit delegates from participating in the deliberations. The ruling at the Congress was that only identified leaders responded to issues emerging out of Congress resolutions. Conveniently, identified leaders were the

⁴³ "Part thereof" refers to a percentage of the provincial delegation.

provincial chairpersons and secretaries, and hence only men spoke, given their majority in these positions.

In the 2002 Congress and those before
I know for a fact that women were told that they will not speak at Congress
The speakers from their provinces will be the provincial secretaries, provincial
chairpersons and the negotiator.
They don't want anybody else to raise their hands to speak.
(Appendix 3, Poem 30, No. 7)

The culture of constitutional meetings is very male, simply because the majority of delegates are male. The women leaders speak in accordance of their marginalisation and othering in male-dominated spaces in the union. Kanter (1976) maintains that being the only woman or part of a small minority makes one paradoxically both invisible and extra-visible. Poem 6.3.3, No. 1 in this chapter describes the experience of a young woman leader in the NEC. The woman explained:

“At first the men acted like I wasn't there, I was really invisible”

And

“Even if I raised my hand to make a contribution they would just ignore me and
continue with the discussion and their debate” (Poem 6.3.3, No. 1).

According to Kanter (1976), the tendency to disregard and ignore the woman is a consequence of the males expressing solidarity in reaction to the presence of an outsider. Hence, the male leaders chose not to acknowledge the woman leader's presence and totally disregarded her. They perceive her as the “other”, an intruder in a man's domain. This treatment made the woman leader feel unsure and doubt her presence. She states: “I was really invisible”. This statement creates a powerful image of the alienation that women leaders endure as a minority in male-dominated leadership spaces. The lack of role models and peers often results in women leaders experiencing a magnified sense of isolation and marginalisation, which impacts negatively on their sense of self and on their psyches.

Acker and Van Houten (1992) maintain that organisations that have a few women in leadership tend to treat them as tokens. Tokens are often treated as representatives of their category and viewed as symbols rather than individuals. Hence their behaviour is interpreted as a sign of what one could expect from all women in general. The men in the NEC (Poem 6.3.3, No. 1) have effectively silenced the woman leader by deliberately ignoring her. Her silence is then interpreted as her lack of confidence and assertiveness, thus fulfilling the stereotype that women lack confidence and cannot be good leaders. This further fuels the “blaming the victim” syndrome.⁴⁴ In this way, male leaders in the union are granted gate-keeping powers, thus privileging and universalising the male experience, while “othering” the female.

The women leaders observe that, even when women are given the platform to speak, they often express their acceptance of patriarchal hegemony and are apologetic for their intrusion. This is a powerful description of the conditioning of women into consenting to their own oppression. The poem below vividly describes women's internalisation of the patriarchal order.

⁴⁴ These are arguments that women through their socialisation develop difficulties with self-esteem, and blame themselves rather than outside events for their failures.

Who speaks in Congress, who speaks in conferences?
Who stands up in any regional or provincial conference to speak?
When women do stand up they are always apologetic about speaking.
If you watch and listen, they say “sorry”.
(Appendix 3, Poem 29, No. 7)

These observations are consistent with the views of Chaison and Andiappan, (1989, p.158), who argue that women are frequently unwilling to run for office because of their feelings of inferiority, fear of failure, and belief that it is more appropriate for men to be union officers and to serve on negotiating committees. However, of significance is that they are often socialised into believing that they are weaker and inferior to men.

The women leaders’ sense of exclusion in constitutional structures in the union is further exacerbated by the isolation and stress they experience as a minority in the leadership. One woman reflects on her experiences in the SADTU NEC that:

“You are left to your own peril.
You need to find a way for yourself”
(Appendix 3, Poem 22, No. 13)

However, Poem 6.2.5, No. 4 explains that women leaders resist these exclusionary practices by infiltrating informal male networks and by embracing the masculine culture of the union. They apply strategic compliance in projecting masculine values as a tactic to penetrate male networks. They view the entry into male circles as a challenge to the power of male networks and as an effective tactic to take forward the gender struggle. The woman leader explains that this strategy led to male leaders being co-opted into the gender struggle. The woman leader explained:

So we have to re-strategise and go to the men in order to advance the issue
We went to them directly, we formed groups with them, and we drank with them,
We went to pubs with them.
Yeah we have to do that, we have to do that.
We have to socialise before meetings, after meetings over weekends.
It was all part of the strategy to win them over.
(Appendix 3, Poem 23, No. 1)

The strategy to draw men into the struggle is aligned to the African feminist notion of “cooperation or complementarity”, which places men as potential allies in the struggle for gender equality (Arndt, 2002a). However, Orr (1999, p.22) argues that the involvement of men in the gender struggle should be underscored by men possessing a positive gender consciousness and a commitment to allowing women to take the lead. The evidence emanating from the woman leader’s experience reveals that men took the lead while women followed, thus perpetuating the status quo rather than challenging it. The woman leader explained:

And then your biggest allies actually became male comrades who advanced the
struggle eventually.
If truth be told a lot of the men took on the voice of the women because in the
leadership the women are too few. (Poem 6.2.5, No. 4)

It is questionable whether the men in SADTU genuinely acknowledge or appreciate the significance of the gender struggle, or whether they patronisingly co-opted it as a

favour to the women. The women leaders' experiences tend to support the latter. Poem 6.4.1, No. 1 highlights the rhetorical nature of the commitment to gender issues, as one woman maintains, "How I see it is that we shout slogans," and "But in practice we don't do it." The women leaders declare their resistance to institutionalised oppression within the union and their critique of their complicity in maintaining it suggests a heightened level of consciousness that has shifted from its initial stage of strategic compliance to institutional norms towards willingness for irreversible change for women in general.

6.3.9 Overt Sexism

hooks (1992, p.57) observes that most black women are "punished" and "suffered" when they make choices that go against the prevailing societal sense of what a black woman should be and do. The experiences of the women in this study resonate with hook's (ibid) observations. Those women who finally made it into leadership positions often refuse to be passive or docile. They are vocal about gender discrimination and often outperform their male counterparts. As a consequence some became unpopular while others are sexually harassed as a means of control (Poem 6.3.2, No. 3). The women leaders indicate a tendency among the men to view the women as sex objects. Their experiences are consistent with Thompson and McHugh's (1995, p.150) assertion that sexual harassment is often a display of power, especially when men perceive a threat to their identity or material interests. These experiences often evoke a sense of siege and oppression among the women.

The women leaders spoke in accordance with their oppression; they stated:

"They would gang up against strong women" (Poem 6.3.1, No. 2)

And

"They will make it difficult for me, they will watch for mistakes" (Poem 6.3.1, No.2)

And

"He wanted to beat the hell out of me" (Poem 6.3.2, No. 1)

And

"He threatened that he was going to shoot us because we wanted to destroy him"
(Poem 6.3.2, No. 2)

And

"One of the guys wanted to kiss me, you know, during lunch," (Poem 6.3.2, No. 3).

The collective oppression experienced by the women in this male-dominated arena created a sense of "psychological terrorism" (hook, 1992, p.54) that caused them great distress. Ferguson (1984, p.18) maintains that terror and fear experienced by women in such bureaucracies eliminate political activity that might give rise to active and concerted resistance. However, although the women employed strategic compliance to navigate some of these obstacles, they harbour an internal resistance. Such acts can be interpreted as an awareness of the need for collective action but a practical response to an oppressive situation, thus giving them a critical edge to

agitate for substantive change. Hence, although they employ a strategic self to advocate for change, this created a tension between gender consciousness and an impelling call for collective consciousness which was triggered by conflict between ideological aspirations and practical realities in the union.

6.3.10 Collective Bargaining

The symbolic significance of SADTU's inception at the onset of democracy in a country divided by apartheid heightened its membership's anticipation of its potential to transform the teaching profession. Poem 6.2.1, No. 1 highlights the women's expectations when they first joined the union. There was great disparity between the salaries of male and female teachers at the time of the union's launch and this gender disparity was further differentiated on racial lines, positioning black female teachers at the lowest end of the salary scale. The sexual division of labour in apartheid South Africa resonates with Marxist and socialist feminist conceptions of the exploitation of labour in capitalist society.

Black female teachers were severely disadvantaged during apartheid. For example, black female teachers, regardless of their marital status, endured unpaid maternity leave. Maternity leave was accompanied by a "temporary" status, which reduced their years of service. In addition, this temporary status translated into loss of pension and disadvantaged their prospects for promotion. Men, however, were advantaged by uninterrupted years of service. Furthermore men, regardless of their marital status, were eligible for government housing and medical aid subsidies, while only single or divorced women were entitled to this benefit. This effectively discriminated against married women and perpetuated the perception that a wife was under the ownership of her husband and not entitled to property rights. However, this changed when SADTU was established. The union was influenced by the critical mass of its women membership and was responsible for several gains that benefitted women teachers economically. Through its bargaining achievements, the union has produced material gains for women teachers. The union's collective bargaining achievements have included pay parity between the sexes, paid maternity and paternity leave, and equalised eligibility of all teachers to housing subsidy and medical aid. However, this came to be regarded as a ceiling to which women aspire and no further.

However, the women leaders observe that, despite the fact that SADTU services a predominately female membership, its collective bargaining structures and negotiators' task team fails to include women representatives. Chaison and Andiappan (1989, p.160) maintain that increasing the numbers and influence of women officers in these structures are beneficial for women members, whose presence often lead to greater emphasis on women's concerns in both collective bargaining and grievance handling. However, until recently, SADTU's collective bargaining team has been predominately male. Ledwith and Colgan (1996, p.2) maintain that the very presence of women as leaders in a traditionally male-dominated arena inevitably brings new perspectives to the organisation and questions the existing split between public and private spheres within society. The women leaders highlight the neglect of women's issues in collective bargaining in the union. Even though in the past three years women have been successful in breaking into this male preserve, they continue to remain a tiny minority. However, the union made history in 2005 when it appointed a woman as the chief negotiator.

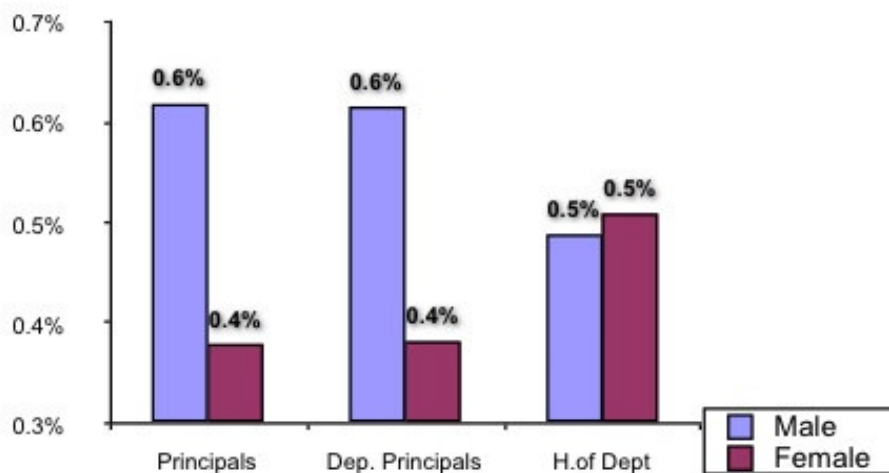
Besides including women in its collective bargaining structures, a union's commitment to its women members is evident in the extent to which its collective

bargaining includes women's issues (Heery & Kelly, 1988). The women leaders agree that the union has not made gender a central principle in its collective bargaining processes. One of the women notes that the collective bargaining also fails to consider how agreements impact differently on women. She cited the negative consequences of the 1999 negotiated rationalisation and redeployment process on women teachers (Poem 6.3.4). She argues that the all-male collective bargaining team had neglected to consider the domestic and care-giving roles played by the majority of women teachers, which make it difficult for them to accept redeployment. The consequence was that they reduce their chances of promotion. Although, women teachers were afforded the opportunity, their gender largely prevented them from accessing these outcomes.

In another example, a woman leader highlights the poor response of the collective bargaining team to the intensification of teacher work and the increasing culture of managerialism sweeping through the schooling system (refer to Poem 6.3.4). These reforms, the women argue impact on women disproportionately. Furthermore, Thompson and McHugh (1995, p.91) argue that rationalisation and intensification make the experience of teachers increasingly comparable to those of workers in the private industry. The consequence is that state practice in the education sector increasingly aligns itself to practices in the business sector, which often affect women negatively.

Several researchers have been critical of the slow progress of unions to improve women's conditions of service and promotion to higher positions (Ledwith & Colgan, 1996; Lawrence, 1994). Similarly, the women leaders are also critical that the union did not advocate strongly for the implementation of the South African Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998), which makes gender equality compulsory. Such observations and critiques of the union's collective bargaining performance reveal a developing heightened consciousness among the women leaders that is aware of the collective disadvantage of women teachers.

A glance at the statistics below reveals that, although women are the majority in the teaching profession, men are the majority in middle and senior management positions at schools. The gender representation of the bureaucracy in most South African schools reflects the male-dominated bureaucracy in the union. Men disproportionately occupy positions of authority (62% of school principals are male),



Department of Education PERSAL data, October 2004
(cited in Teachers for the Future, 2005)

Figure 3: Gender distribution by ranking in South African Public Schools (October 2004)

thus maintaining the patriarchal nature of the profession. This confirms that teaching in South Africa reflects the social divisions of labour, knowledge and power in our society.

It is interesting to note that the majority of male leaders in the union, especially those in the highest constitutional structure of the NEC, are principals or part of school management teams, thus positioning them as part of the middle class in South Africa. In contrast, the majority of teachers, although ideologically positioned in the middle class, overwhelmingly straddle working- and middle-class locations (refer to Chapter Two). I argue that SADTU, as a patriarchal organisation, together with state capitalism, can be accused of complicity in maintaining the sexual division of labour in teaching on account of its complacency with the current status quo. The union has a mediocre record in pursuing gender equity in management structures in schools, even when it is supported by legislation.

SADTU's collective bargaining achievements are concentrated mainly on bargaining traditional issues like teacher salaries. The women's heightened consciousness has awakened an awareness of the potential for the union to effect change that would explicitly benefit women as a gender. The women leaders argue that the collective bargaining team has failed to incorporate the recognition of differences in the way women and men experience life. As stated throughout this study the male reality is the norm and the union has universalised this norm. Thus, the union has failed to take on issues that negatively affect women, such as the gendered division of labour, the question of sexuality at the workplace, the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on women teachers, sexual harassment, child-care, and the integration of paid and domestic labour. The women contend that this requires a radical departure from traditional, economic collective bargaining, towards an engendered approach to collective bargaining.

6.4 GENDER CONSCIOUSNESS AND RESISTANCE

Ledwith & Colgan (1996) argue that consciousness and awareness of gender politics are important strategies for women to survive and progress in gendered organisations. This section reveals the level of complicity, resistance and awakening of collective consciousness in the women leaders.

6.4.1 We Shout Slogans

1

I don't think the national struggle gave equally to the issues of gender
We did recognise that there was a need to fight on women's issues,
But those women's issues would only be discussed among us as women,
And then there are these big broader issues
Those were happening with the men in the boardroom
We needed to be part of that as well,
So I think that the national issues and everybody felt the same way,
It was about liberating the country,
It was about defeating the enemies of apartheid,
It was about keeping communities and families together, and bringing everybody home.
Even in the ANC the issue of women empowerment and the position of women in society

only began to feature in the processes leading to the 1994 elections in the country.
It was the first time that people started to discuss the role of women and everything
concerning women.

But today,
How I see it is that we shout slogans,
We talk of one leader mentor a woman,
We talk of NDR in which we talk of race and gender
But in practice we don't do it.

6.4.2 We Have to be Victims

1

When it comes to Jacob Zuma I want you to remember
I am a gender activist but I am also a cadre of the movement.
It was going to be very difficult to answer this question
Because this was such an emotional thing
What I am afraid of is that you have put Zuma into the interview
So I may not give you what you want.
Switch it⁴⁵ off!

3

So it's the whole question of how society perceives us as women.
We have to be victims,
We should always be victims even if sexual harassment has happened
Whether they (women) are honest or
They are making it up to bring down a powerful man.
I think what becomes key is that you have to break the silence
But as you break the silence you have to be strong in terms of the consistency of your story.

4

What he said in the courts about women!
I don't think any gender activist in her right mind would support a leader who would say
such things about women
He used all the stereotypes we are trying to erase from the minds of the people.

5

I was silent about the rape case
Because it was said that the federation and the union will speak on the matter
Individual leaders should not speak on the matter in public.

6

You assess the political terrain in which this is happening
Because you are a union with a large per cent of women members
Women who can be abused like this woman was
As a union we play a key role in society because we are educating young children
And when we stand up at a political level and at a public level and pronounce that the man is
innocent.
That is unacceptable!

6.4.3 It is a Collective

1

Of course I had a strong team of women behind me,

⁴⁵ Tape recorder

So I always had something solid to present at national level,
That was why I was one of the two comrades considered for a national position
I think initially when we started we were very united.
But the stronger you were as a woman the more resistance there was towards you.
Yes I experienced resistance from the women as well.
And I think you are not appreciated for the youth you carried
You have to be one of the leaders who were involved for a longer period than the others.

2

From 1998 to 2002
We were very much in opposition within the Gender Desk
We wanted to advance women leaders at different levels of SADTU
But there was resistance from the women themselves
They felt it could not be done.
We were facing an up hill battle with our male comrades.

3

Women in leadership positions don't understand that they are there because of our struggles.
They are individualistic about the way they understand things,
They need to understand that it is a collective.
They think that because they have a Vice President position they are unique.
It does not work like that,
We need to work together,
Unity of women across portfolios is crucial
Women must support each other

4

From where I started in SADTU
We started with almost zero per cent of women in Congress
The last Congress,
If I have to take that as a SADTU landscape
Then we have made dramatic progress.
Although it's not the ideal
But it is a big improvement
We can do better

6.4.4 None are Free until we all are Free

1

The challenge is to spread the message more widely amongst women.
That woman will have to take the lead;
They should be standing up for themselves.
The biggest challenge in SADTU will forever be the traditionalists, and unfortunately they
are the NEC members,
Either they refuse to understand the issues of gender or they are ignorant of the issues of
gender.
Also women, ordinary women members need very serious conscientisation.
They need to understand how the internalisation of gender oppression has made them victims
Male leaders and men in general exploit women's ignorance
Women must become aggressive in lobbying.

6.4.5 Reflections

1

Yes it⁴⁶ eventually did have a positive impact on me.

⁴⁶ The experience of being a woman leader in SADTU

But it was a painful process.
But I think it has been good for me.
That's how I feel about it.
Also I have been able in my personal life to say no.
And that's good; I don't vacillate between positions anymore.

2

It was very difficult,
Sometimes I will cry alone and try to let out my frustration
Sometimes I will know what's wrong but I won't talk about it.
I learnt to accept it and to face it.
I know I will expect resistances but I will force debate
I will ensure that if I present a report it was well written with clear recommendations
That's how I have built myself

3

The fight we took up as women originally,
We have moved a long way.
We have begun to accept women for who they are despite not wanting to accept them
personally.
But we accepted the fact that women are here, that they are no longer around the corner as
the union saying used to be in the past.
They are ready to lead and I just think it requires a few more years
And you will find women occupying key strategic positions.
I'm very positive about it

6.4.6 Complicity

The evidence in this study is punctuated with examples of false consciousness among women members, illustrating their participation in their subordination. The influence of socialisation and culture and the role of apartheid and capitalism are considered as contributing factors to their conditioning as the second sex. Furthermore, the study provides compelling empirical evidence of the patriarchal grip on the union and its complicity in the women's othering. The women leaders speak in accordance with the deceptive practices of male leaders, who collude with each other and manipulate the union's constitution and its organisational culture to maintain their power bases. Although the women in the union are often used as pawns in these political battles, their participation is not always innocent or naïve, particularly when they employ strategic compliance as a tactic to promote gender equality.

The level of consciousness among the women membership is instrumental in determining their collusion with patriarchy in the union. A pertinent example is given by one woman leader in advocating more women in the leadership of SADTU. She states:

“There was resistance from the women themselves.
They felt it could not be done.”
(Appendix 3, Poem 23, No. 1)

In addition, some of the women members' acceptance of the entrenched gender patterns in the union and in society creates challenges for the women leaders advocating gender equality. A woman leader explains:

“We found that the very women who were involved in the issue went and acted in
collaboration with the male comrades.
As a result you were isolated as the rabble rousers.”
(Appendix 3, Poem 23, No. 1)

It seems apparent that many women members participating in gender structures and gender debates have accepted their unequal status as the norm, thus placing themselves as traditional women in Ledwith and Colgan's (1996, p. 25) categorisation. Advancing the gender struggle is often retarded by the emergence of a false consciousness among the women members. False consciousness converged with socialisation and patriarchy to evoke contradictory and conflicting attitudes towards gender equality. This was further magnified by the different class, racial and cultural backgrounds. Many of the women members in the union have internalised their subordinate position and articulated it as an expression of their culture and tradition.

Poem 6.2.3 highlights this challenge:

At the national level when you advanced the gender struggle then women from other
cultural divides found they couldn't subscribe to that.
There was a ganging up of issues like race and culture

The common experience of "blackness" that had united the women during the liberation struggle was challenged by differences in race, class, and cultural and traditional beliefs regarding the role of women in society in the union. These differences often complicate and constrain the advancement of gender equality. One woman leader explains:

Women in this union, especially African woman, also come from conservative
families and homes,
No matter how politically active we are, there are certain male and female roles that
are accepted,
And many of us will continue to play these roles.

(Appendix 3 Poem 25, No. 3)

Similarly, Mohanty (1988) argues that African women's conflicts and contradictions must be understood within the context of apartheid, patriarchy and the class structure of capitalist society. The women members occupy a contradictory class location, where they identify ideologically with the middle class but find themselves on the fringes of that income stratum. The women leaders are conscious that women in the union appear not to appreciate fully that their oppression was a societal issue embedded in unequal power relations between men and women in a capitalist society. Thus, they fail to expand the gender equality discourse beyond rhetoric to interrogate substantive issues like the sexual division of labour and the power between men and women in the broader society (refer to Poem 6.2.5, Nos. 1-6). The women leaders contend that the narrow understanding of gender politics make it easier for men to manipulate their false consciousness and gender conditioning. In this way women are complicit in their oppression. The women leaders have progressed to a heightened consciousness and are able to read correctly the complicity of women members' false consciousness in perpetuating their oppression. This reveals a radical shift from victimhood towards willingness for a collective response to gender oppression in the union.

Orr (1999, p.15) observes that confining the gender discourse only to the union downplays women's subordination in other sites such as the home and the workplace. The women's heightened awareness of the politics of institutionalised gender

equality and equity made them aware of the union's failure to effect change for women. They contend that the failure of the union to consider other spaces occupied by women illustrates the union's blindness to the influence of the private-professional split in the subordination of women (Poem 6.3.4). The women leaders, having shifted to a heightened consciousness, argue that, if the root causes that affect women negatively go unchallenged, the status quo will remain. Hence they look to a collective commitment towards aggressive feminist conscientisation to raise women's level of gender consciousness. These strategies they argue go beyond narrow gender sloganeering towards an enactment of substantive gender equity.

6.4.7 Resistance

The women leaders' willingness for a collective response to tackle gender oppression illustrates their agency in the collective rejection of gender inequality in the union. They acknowledge the need to transcend individual activism towards collective agency in pushing for change in the union and in the teaching profession. Their experiences tell of the symbolic violence they are subjected to by the men in the union. However, they acknowledge that the pain associated with this journey is necessary for moving their evolving consciousness towards heightened awareness. By developing strategies collectively to support each other, they are able to mediate their gendered experiences, and resist gender discrimination and oppression in the union.

The women leaders explained in Poem 6.4.3. No. 1:

Of course I had a strong team of women behind me,

Ledwith and Colgan (1996, p.2) maintain that women challenging the status quo provide a potential force for change within organisations. One of the women leaders describes how women used their agency to effect positive change for women in the union. She states:

I received comradely support at Congress
As women we are able to take the position not to vote.
So we organised people not to vote in the Congress or on the Congress floor.
You remember that they were shocked at so many abstentions.
So those were the things we were doing to stand up against the men in Congress
(Appendix 3, Poem 30, No. 2)

The study reveals the high levels of discontent among the women leaders in the union. The women speak of their collective disappointment and frustration with the male and female leaders who collude to keep women oppressed. Although they tolerate this, they refuse to accept it as part of union culture. The example below describes how women worked as a collective and used the power of their agency to force the NGC to adopt the quota system, which had been rejected for the past eight years.

The quota had been kicked out of SADTU for eight years in a row.
You could not open your mouth about the quota,
It was kicked out vehemently
The NGC of 2003 adopted the quota,
The women took over that NGC and they said they are not going to be silenced
again.
(Appendix 3, Poem 23, No. 19)

The union and its members were deeply involved in the national liberation struggle and are active in the politics of post-apartheid South Africa. It might be fair to state that the union invested much time and energy engaging in national politics, often blurring the lines between union priorities and the priorities of the ruling party. The women leaders were also active in national politics within the union and outside in provincial political structures of the ANC and the SACP.

The women's emerging consciousness reveals their growing realisation of the depth of gender inequality in the union. However, their patriotism and commitment to nationalism conflicted with their identities and challenged the gender activism. These are vividly portrayed in Poem 6.4.2, which depicts the women's response to the gender challenges that emerged during Jacob Zuma's rape trial.

When it comes to Jacob Zuma I want you to remember
I am a gender activist but I am also a cadre of the movement.

The woman's response is consistent with others (refer to Chapter Two) that spoke of the dilemmas encountered by women gender activists during apartheid when the struggle for liberation was given priority over the gender struggle. It also resonates with the sentiments of the woman leader in Poem 6.4.1, who explains that gender equality was secondary to the commitment to liberate the country from apartheid. The women leaders in this study are supporters of the ANC and support its President, Jacob Zuma. The questions about the gender dimension of the Zuma rape trial put their loyalty to the ANC party and their patriotism in conflict with their evolving heightened gender conscience. The Jacob Zuma rape trial was clouded by conspiracy theories⁴⁷ that are not the focus of this study. However, of significance is the mood and voices that emerged during this trial. I argue that those voices that were heard, those silenced, and those dismissed exposed the complicity of culture, national politics and patriarchy in the oppression of women in the union.

Former ANC MP, trade unionist and feminist, Pregs Govender, had admonished COSATU for its silence on the misogyny displayed by Zuma supporters during the rape trial (Breytenbach, 2006). The women leaders agree that their statements and public demonstrations eroded much of the progress made in promoting gender equality. They, however, refrained from publicly commenting on the trial. Their responses are similar to those of many high-profile female politicians and union leaders (The Star, 2006, p.6). The women provide the following explanation for their silence during the rape trial.

I was silent about the rape case
Because it was said that the federation and the union will speak on the matter
Individual leaders should not speak on the matter in public.
(Poem 6.4.2, No. 4)

A few of the women leaders who did answer the questions agree that the trial had unleashed gender stereotypes that demean women and support their oppression. They argue that the selective use of tradition, culture and fixed gender roles in society to justify rape could potentially contribute to increasing misogyny in this country. They

⁴⁷ Zuma supporters believed that the complainant had colluded with his detractors to prevent him from running for presidency.

explain that they are uncomfortable with the questions related to the rape trial. Such questions foreground the public-private split they encounter in their lives as leaders and as women. However, they contend that the experiences in the union had culminated in a shift away from the individual self towards a shared consciousness, evoking solidarity with the collective of oppressed women.

The women's experiences illustrate how national identity, built through struggle and activism, colluded with the patriarchal culture of the union to silence women even in the face of blatant misogyny. The dichotomy they experience as gender activists and political leaders evoke strong feelings of nationalism and patriotism and, hence, they employ strategic compliance to deal with the conflict. The experiences of the women leaders provide nuanced insight into the complexity of resistance and struggle in the union. They reveal the tensions that emerged when historical legacies clashed with heightened collective consciousness during the Jacob Zuma rape trial. This experience of irreversible change in the women and the emergence of willingness for collective consciousness are a significant learning for feminists in general and African feminists in particular. The women argue that, although African men are part of the problem, they are also an integral component in overcoming the oppression of colonialism, apartheid, and neo-colonialism. Striking the balance between these components that often collude with each other to maintain patriarchal hegemony is still a challenge for African women. However, the ability of women to transcend historical legacies, context and self to embrace willingness for collective self is integral to women's agency. Such transformatory growth releases the potential to evoke a deeper understanding of the latent power of women's agency and to re-configure gender relations in the broader society.

As one woman leader explained:

Women in leadership positions don't understand that they are there because of our
struggles in the Gender Desk
They are individualistic about the way they understand things,
They need to understand that it is a collective.
They think that because they have a Vice President position they are unique.
It does not work like that,
We need to work together.

(Appendix 3, Poem 34, No.1)

I argue that the weight of patriarchy and the accompanying dynamics of a gendered organisation have challenged the women leaders to re-examine their consciousness and activism. Thus creating the opportunity to trigger a heighten consciousness that strengthens women's potential for agency and catalyses gender activism to broader sites of struggle.

6.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

I argue that the women leaders' experiences in the union illuminate that gender inequality has taken on an organisational form in the union. Their experiences reveal paradoxically that the women were empowered, having penetrated previously male-dominated spaces, but that their experiences of these spaces were often fraught with gender challenges that denied them equality of experience with their male counterparts. This creates a dualism that troubles and thwarts their enactment of collective agency. Furthermore, the tension between gender consciousness and a

heightened consciousness triggers a conflict between their private and public realities.

I argue that, although the women are often complicit in their oppression and causalities of patriarchal hegemonies, they aspire to women's agency. Furthermore, I maintain that their earlier strategic compliance to gender oppression has shifted from a victimhood mentality to a growing resistance to gender oppression in the union. By the end of their journey in the union, their level of consciousness has also moved towards willingness for transformation to a shared collective consciousness.

The women leaders reveal a heightened awareness of the politics of institutionalised gender equality and equity, and acknowledge the need to move beyond individual strategies to collective strategies to resist patriarchy and unlock trapped transformative agendas. They reveal a heightened level of sophistication in reading the experiences of women in the union and their agitation for transformation in the union. They acknowledge that their journey in the union had been a baptism of fire but one that fuelled their intellectual, political and emotional growth.

One woman leader captures their evolution to heightened consciousness when she articulated her aspirations for SADTU:

Okay the wish list would be
That we don't elect women just because we have to have women,
We elect leaders, men and women.
That we have participation,
That we allow for women's participation at every level
And when I say participation I don't mean just attendance.
I mean genuine participation.
That we as women open up the space for each other to engage in debate
And we must be able to do this without it coming to what we think is men's speak.
We don't need to be men,
We know what we want and we can express it!
We need to remember that
None are free until we all are free

(Appendix 3, Poem 31, No. 4)

The chapter that follows synthesises the arguments made in the previous six chapters and argues the thesis of this study.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SYNTHESIS: DOMAINS OF EVOLVING CONSCIOUSNESS

*I think I have learnt tolerance at SADTU,
I have learnt to be tolerant
I think I started as an absolute radical and I am much calmer now
I know we have planted the seed,
It is just about allowing the germination to happen.
I would want us to work together.*

(Appendix 3, Poem 31, No. 4)

7.1 CHAPTER OUTLINE

In this chapter, I synthesise the main arguments in the thesis and attempt to depict graphically the trajectory of gendered consciousness (cf. Table 3) that women embark on as they negotiate their gendered identities and experiences in the various domains of the family, school, the workplace and the teachers' union.

I argue that women's gendered experience is central to building knowledge for generating substantive societal change and attempt to develop theory on their evolving consciousness of change, encapsulated in the construct of "domains of evolving consciousness".

Using the theoretical lenses of organisational imaging and feminist theory, I argue that the different domains that women paradoxically occupy at different points in their lives contribute towards the development of an emergent collective self. The different domains, starting with the *divided self* in the domain of home and moving to the *socialised self* in the school, to the *strategic self* in the union, and culminating in the *emergent collective self*, simultaneously embody elements that constrain their individual emancipatory impulses, while moving them to potentially heightened levels of consciousness that look to agency for advocating change.

7.2 INTRODUCTION

This study has sought to understand how women who have accessed previously male-dominated leadership spaces in SADTU have experienced gender equality. As argued in previous chapters, the intention is to provide an explanation of social phenomena that are aligned to the domains that women experience and to unearth and put up for public scrutiny these experiences embedded in their narratives. The research interrogates their gendered experiences to expose levels of gender consciousness that often divide, disrupt and transform their lives. The study makes a significant contribution by providing empirical data that places women's experiences and consciousness in a historical and social context and illuminates their experiences of gender equality in a teachers' union which espouses a progressive ethos. The

union's constitution proclaims it to be a site committed to:

“Eliminating all gender and class based discrimination in education in South Africa” and “endeavour[ing] to inculcate the values of egalitarianism and social justice among its members and the broader society.”

(SADTU Constitution, SADTU, 2006b, p.5)

Exploring the critical question of how women leaders experience gender equality in SADTU, the research first explains the influence of history, context, race and class on the development of the women leaders' gender consciousness. This explanation illuminates the structural drivers of gender inequality, and interrogates selected experiences of gender socialisation, traversing childhood to womanhood. Particular emphasis is placed on the way women experience inequality. The aim is to anchor the study in the women's evolving gender consciousness and illuminate how this shaped their experiences of the union's bureaucracy, culture and politics.

Given the history of neglect of the voices of women, often silenced by the dominance of the patriarchal voice in organisations in general (Mills & Trancred, 1992; Silvestri, 2003), this study attempts to uncover the submerged and often concealed experiences of women in unions (Orr, 2006; Ledwith & Colgan, 1996). The study offers one lens on the experiences of women leaders and does not claim to be a comprehensive account of the history of the gender struggle in unions. The intention is not to be definitive about the totality of their experiences but rather to illuminate the tensions, silences, paradoxes, challenges and triumphs of a diverse group of women leaders in a teachers' union.

Much has been written about gender inequality in the teaching profession, in schools and in unions. However, the connections between the position of women in schools and their teacher unions have rarely been part of empirical investigations. Furthermore, there has been insufficient empirical research conducted on the experiences of women holding leadership positions in their unions. The dearth of empirical studies has resulted in untested assumptions about women in leadership positions in unions, often homogenising their experiences without engaging with the diversity of experiences. This research responds to the empirical gap by providing evidence of evolving gender consciousness in a particular group of women leaders in a particular context and organisational space.

The study uses feminist research methodology to uncover the experiences of women and uses these experiences as resources for social analysis. In doing so, this research proclaims women as agents of knowledge production as they proceed from one domain to another, carrying with them accumulated knowledge of self and society. The analysis is anchored in the women's gendered experiences, with particular emphasis on their experiences as leaders in the union. Furthermore, the study applies an innovative technique of data representation to overcome the ethical challenge of the women leaders' preference for anonymity. The study uses the technique of levels of harmonisation of their narratives as a filter to conceal their identities while at the same time honouring their voices (refer to Chapters Five and Six for details).

The research commences with four haikus in the Foreword. The evolution of the women's consciousness within the different domains, from childhood to adulthood, resonates with the haikus that depict the dualism in the journey of a rose through the

four seasons. Similarly the data represents the women leaders journey as one voice in the form of poetry and makes visible significant levels of consciousness reflected in the women's experiences. My choice of poetry was a conscious decision to select a mode of representation which expressed the women's complex experiences in a way that is accessible to the public in an authentic form. The poetry speaks in the actual words of the women as a symbolic claim to an alternative political discourse that is framed by the voices of the women. Although simple in form its metaphorical intention was to magnify the dualism, create awareness, and raise consciousness. Thus, my intention was both political and epistemological.

7.3 DOMAINS OF EVOLVING GENDER CONSCIOUSNESS

This study understands women's experiences to be mediated by their levels of consciousness. Hence, women's consciousness determines the level of gender activism in organisations and the evolution of gender consciousness is significant to this study. Silvestri (2003, p.154) maintains that gender consciousness is essential for the development of a feminist consciousness that has the potential to catalyse the force for change in gendered organisations. She argues that the **willingness to transform into a shared consciousness** reveals the initial shift towards a feminist consciousness.

The study illustrates that women's response to gender challenges in their different domains of the home, school, union and life in general is determined by the progressive development of gender consciousness accompanied by the emergence of a heightened willingness to collective consciousness. This study considers this as the initial shift towards a feminist consciousness.

The haikus in this study symbolically represent the dualism in the evolution of the women's consciousness from childhood to adulthood. The four seasons in the life of a rose resonate with women's progression from childhood, inhabiting the divided and socialised self, to adulthood, inhabiting the strategic self, and to the birth of an emerging collective self.

Table 3 depicts graphically the vertical and horizontal progression towards an emergent feminist consciousness.

Table 3: Domains of evolving gender consciousness among the women leaders

Domains of Evolving Gender Consciousness			
HOME	SCHOOL	UNION	SOCIETY
<i>The Divided self</i>	<i>The Socialised self</i>	<i>The Strategic self</i>	<i>The Emerging Collective self</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Socialisation into patterns of historical inequality embedded in apartheid ideology ▪ Genesis of patriarchal agency and conservative norms ▪ Gendered roles inscribed ▪ Compelling aspiration towards liberation through activism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Schools as sites of patriarchal conditioning ▪ Socialised gendered othering enacted through overt and hidden curriculum ▪ Gender hierarchies reproduced by systemic-gendered organisational structures ▪ Teachers' gendered and class location colludes with organisational discourse to reinforce gender hierarchies ▪ Episodes of ideological resistance and contestation of gendered roles and identities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The union as a paradox: conflict between espoused and actual ideological orientation to gender equity ▪ Union organisational structure is engineered to thwart women's enactment of an emancipatory value system ▪ Declared resistance to institutionalised oppression within the union but complicit in maintaining the status quo through strategic compliance to institutional norms ▪ Tension between gender consciousness and an impelling feminist consciousness triggered by conflict between private and public realities ▪ Agents' transformative agendas trapped at the level of rhetoric: un-enacted and unrealised in present context ▪ Heightened consciousness arouses awareness of potential for agency in broader societal contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Heightened awareness of the politics of institutionalised gender equality and equity ▪ Ability to transcend historical legacies and barriers towards a redefined sense of self and agency ▪ Awareness of the need to blur public/private boundaries mediating agency ▪ Acknowledgement of the need to transcend individual activism towards collective agency in the public domain ▪ Commitment to aggressive feminist conscientisation beyond narrow gender sloganeering towards an enactment of substantive gender equity ▪ Acknowledgment of the pain associated with the journey towards self-realisation, but that it was a necessary journey ▪ Realisation that they need to enact change at a systemic level in government bureaucracies ▪ Conceding their intellectual, political and emotional growth, but that new spaces of opportunity demand re-centring the gaze towards gender equity ▪ Deeper understanding of their latent power to re-configure gender relations in the broader society

7.3.1 THE HOME: The Divided Self

I have labelled this domain the *divided self* to emphasise the women's initial confusion and struggle with their gendering as children. The agency of family, where the patriarch reigns, is the initial socialisation into a gendered world and the site where gender roles are inscribed. The data provides compelling evidence that the family is the first instance of women's subordination, as argued by Marxist, socialist and radical feminism. Their gendered othering further intensified their racial othering. Apartheid shaped the women's identity. Of significance is their early

experience of racial harmony shattered by the violence of forced removals and the pain and dehumanisation associated with apartheid's laws. Clearly, the injustices of gender oppression and apartheid stirred a sense of social justice and awakened political resistance. However, although their childhood experiences of patriarchy and apartheid converged to intensify experiences of inequality, they were catalytic in raising their consciousness and awareness of the power of agency as oppressed people. Hence, the domain of the family was catalytic in developing consciousness among them as children.

7.3.2 THE SCHOOL: The Socialised Self

I have labelled this domain the *socialised self* to emphasise the gender socialisation, both overt and covert, that occurs in schools. The women concur that schools are sites of patriarchal conditioning and the reproduction of the sexual division of labour. Schools transmit powerful messages of male dominance and sex-type socialisation. Their experiences speak of the collusion of the hidden curriculum and the patriarchal organisational culture of schools that reinforce gender hierarchies. The women leaders' experiences illustrate that gendered lives experienced in the family are also replicated in the teaching profession (refer to Chapter Two). As teachers, they are aware of the sexual division of labour in the profession where women are a majority in primary schools, reinforcing their domestic and nurturing gender roles, while men dominate management positions, reinforcing their leadership roles. These responsibilities generate different chances for rewards in the system. The majority of women teachers occupy the lowest level of the occupational structure, receiving lower salaries than their male counterparts.

The initial experience of patriarchy was in the family and the school, often reinforced by society's culture and traditions. As teachers the women experienced gender discrimination in the workplace, often sponsored by teachers' contradictory class location. This illustrates that schools in South Africa reinforce conventional views of women in society and that teaching generally reflects the gendered norms of society. Male teachers dominate management positions, further reinforcing gendered models of power in the education system. Hence, the women's unequal status in the union is exacerbated by the domination of men, not only as patriarchs in the home but also as patriarchs in the workplace. Male teachers benefit from the sexual division of labour in education and, similarly, male leaders benefit from the bureaucracy and patriarchal culture of the union bureaucracy.

To build knowledge and theory from the experiences of women, it is necessary to acknowledge that women are both complicit and victims in their oppression. This is evident in their false consciousness. In addition, false consciousness also prevents women from effectively utilising feminist principles to challenge gender oppression and advance gender transformation. These criticisms are also valid for the education system. Similarly, there is ample evidence that teachers are also wary of feminism. The social acceptance of feminism has not progressed sufficiently nor has it penetrated the consciousness of teachers in general (Acker, 1994). Consistent with the responses of teachers, the women leaders initially distanced themselves from feminism and favoured equality in general terms.

However, the women leaders did not experience gender inequality in the school setting as passive participants. Their evolving gender consciousness resisted such subjugation, initially as students and later as radical teachers. They give compelling accounts of their ideological resistance and contestation of gendered roles in schools

as young radical students resisting fixed gender roles and later as young radical teachers fighting for the rights of the girl child.

7.3.3 THE UNION: The Strategic Self

I have labelled this domain the *Strategic Self* to indicate that the women had reached a higher level of gender consciousness and, hence, were often strategic in their response to gender inequality. As “women in transition” (Ledwith & Colgan, 1996, p.23), they often read correctly the organisation’s dynamics and their ability to effect change. Thus, their responses were shaped by the critical edge of their higher level of consciousness, but often tempered by their practical realities. Although their responses were often individualistic, they aspired to a collective consciousness as women. Hence, they were not passive victims in a patriarchal world.

The patriarchal dominance of organisational theory (Mills & Trancred, 1992) and the symbolic significance attached to the bureaucracy, culture and politics of organisations (Morgan, 1986) constitute a significant motive for feminist research methodology in this study. As stated in Chapter Four, feminist research methodology attempts to uncover and proclaim as valid the experiences of women in this study. Hence, the study is biased towards the subjectivities of the women leaders and embraces their multiple realities and evolving consciousness as they experience their gender in the union. The evidence presented by the women leaders and the literature reviewed places emphasis on the gendered organisational dimensions of the union. Of particular significance is their evolving gender consciousness in resisting and mediating the cultural patterns, conflict, interest, and power. These were important in understanding the women’s experiences of gender inequality in the organisation.

The findings in this study raise the important theoretical point that gender inequality in SADTU often takes an organisational form that contradicts its espoused policy and public pronouncements, making it a paradox. In the following section, I explore this paradox, demonstrating how patriarchal organisations such as SADTU engineer and embed gender inequalities by institutionalising them. This is reinforced by women’s strategic compliance to institutional norms, resulting in conflict between their private and public selves. However, rather than entrench their subjugated positions, their heightened awareness of self and organisation serves to unlock their trapped agendas, and heightening their potential for agency in broader societal contexts. Armed with the maturity to transcend their individualised gender consciousness, they emerge with a potential for collective consciousness that seeks systemic change to break down the barriers to equality at the structural level.

The Union as a Paradox

SADTU was born out of struggle and espoused its commitment to an emancipatory vision of a transformed society underpinned by social justice and egalitarian values (SADTU Constitution, SADTU, 2006b, p.5). However, the experiences of the women in this study reveal that, despite the union’s public pronouncement on equity, organisational it enacted a value system and culture that were patriarchal and deeply discriminatory. Paradoxically, the union mirrored the sexual division of labour in the teaching profession, where women, despite being in the majority, were a minority in leadership positions. The analysis indicates that the class and gender structure in the teaching profession reproduces the patriarchal authority in the union, where male union leaders overwhelmingly dominate positions with power and privilege.

The research findings indicate that racial and cultural cleavages still exist in post-apartheid South Africa and continue to fragment women's identities that challenge their agency. Similarly, earlier in South Africa's history the resistance of women coalesced around race rather than gender (Walker, 1991). The union constitution is explicit in its aim for unity:

...a non-racial, non sexist, just and democratic system of education in a free and democratic South Africa. It shall observe and act in accordance with the spirit and principle of democracy in all the Union's activities.

(SADTU Constitution, SADTU, 2006b, p.5)

However, subtle barriers created by racial, class and cultural cleavages often thwart women's agency to challenge gender oppression. These barriers are reinforced by male leaders' explicit claim over culture and tradition that affirms fixed gender roles. There is a general acceptance that the highest positions of power in the union are reserved for the black African male. Women in the union recognise their gender oppression; however, racial and cultural differences make them vulnerable to male influences, constraining potential for unity on the basis of sex alone. Paradoxically, women members are complicit in their sub-ordination and often associate men with agency and power. Hence, the othering of the women leaders is also magnified by false consciousness among traditional women members in the union.

This study argues that the class location of teachers is a contributor to the unequal gender relations in the union. The majority of teachers in SADTU are from lower-middle-class backgrounds and hold conventional views on women's position in society. The level of conservatism stifles gender activism in schools and in the union. The findings indicate that teachers' contradictory class location, history of patriarchy and acceptance of sexual division of labour contribute to the women leaders' experiences of gender inequality in the union.

Engineering and Embedding Gender Inequalities

Leadership positions in the union are maintained by men through the manipulation of union bureaucracy, governance, exploitation of culture, adherence to traditional values and, in extreme cases, through threats of physical and sexual violence. The women's experiences illustrate vividly that patriarchy has taken on an organisational form and provides a powerful sub-text to organisational decision making. In so doing, it often masks its gendered enactment and maintains the unequal power relations between men and women in the union. This is evident (among other ways) in the women's experiences of election procedures, the gate-keeping of resources, and the selective interpretation of constitutional rules and procedures in favour of male agendas.

The findings reveal that the union's interventions to address its poor performance in gender equality have failed to provide equality of experience for its women members. The union has neglected to analyse its patriarchal organisational culture. Nor has it provided a wider social and economic analysis of women in the teaching profession that is necessary to interrogate women's unequal position in society. Paradoxically, the union, although built on Marxist socialist intention, employs liberal feminism, an ideology of individual choice, to deliver gender equality. As explained in Chapter Three, liberal feminists believe that no fundamental difference exists between women and men and emphasise the development of "fair" bureaucratic procedures, such as the quota system, to deliver equality (Ledwith &

Colgan, 1996, p.158). Given the contribution made by liberal feminism to explaining women's disadvantaged positions, however, I argue that it ignores the depth of sexism in the power relationships between men and women in the union.

The quota system in SADTU has given women access to previously male-dominated leadership structures. The women leaders' experiences indicate that technicist liberal interventions have become an end in themselves. Although necessary, they have failed to transform the structural causes and ideological drivers of gender inequality in the union that are presented by radical Marxists and socialist feminisms. While these interventions have permitted positive action to redress past discrimination, they have made no substantive contribution to gender equality because they have failed to challenge existing gendered organisational paradigms. Such surface interventions are consistent with the current market-driven managerial servicing relationship within capitalist paradigms and are often perceived as advancing gender equality while employing false consciousness to reinforce masculine paradigms (Heery & Kelly, 1994).

Thus, the women leaders continue to experience gender discrimination and inequality. The women give compelling testimony that access to previously male-dominated arenas of power does not translate into equality of experiences when compared to male leaders. Consequently, it conceals their marginalisation and contributes to the dualism they experience as women and as leaders. Their public visibility as women leaders often masks their private struggle against patriarchy and male domination within the inner circles of the union. They provide ample evidence of institutionalised sexism and patriarchal organisational culture that maintain the power and dominance of men.

The union's narrow reformist and liberal interventions spawn a deficit "blame the victim" model to explain women's lack of visibility and success in leadership structures. Women are accused of poor self-esteem, low aspiration, and a lack of ambition as motives for their minority in leadership circles. In addition, the conceptual confusion that accompanies the gender discourses generally restricts the development of gender consciousness and fuels women's false consciousness in the union. The level of gender consciousness determines their level of gender activism. Often women themselves are complicit in their subjugation. Other evidence underscores the domestic responsibilities of women and the informal male networks as barriers to gender equality in the union. The union bureaucracy operates within a masculine paradigm, projecting the male as the norm. Many women internalise the dominant male ideology, embracing male behaviour patterns that inadvertently devalue the feminine.

In contrast to liberal feminism, Marxist, socialist and radical feminist schools of thought are concerned with the underlying causes of unequal gender relations. Radical feminism views the operation of patriarchy as the fundamental reason for observed gender patterns. However, I argue that, although patriarchy expresses itself in union culture, institutional sexism and sexual politics, it is not the sole determinant of gender inequality in the union. I concur with the Marxist and socialist feminists' argument that the labour market, the family and school reproduce women's unequal position in institutions. The women's experiences provide explicit examples of resistance to such gendered conditioning.

Significantly, the findings indicate that equality of opportunity for women in the

union does not translate into equality of outcome with their male counterparts. Despite enjoying titles as leaders, they are unable to exercise meaningful leadership roles as their unequal access to power and resources undermine their performance relative to their male counterparts. However, the women leaders' evolving gender consciousness has been troubled by the dualism that has accompanied their rise to leadership positions, thus creating the potential for action and agency.

Strategic Compliance to Institutional Norms

Initial evidence suggests that neither women leaders nor men (implicit in the patriarchal values) possess an in-depth understanding of the construct of gender and its accompanying power relations. Women's resistance in the union resonates with African feminisms' notion of cooperation and complementarity. However, their failure to analyse this notion on a conceptual and theoretical level meant that their engagement was often counter-productive. For example, in desperation to get their voices heard, some women leaders resorted to strategic compliance, projecting patriarchal attitudes and patterns of behaviour, to justify their inclusion into male power enclaves (refer to Chapter Six for examples). Although such acts can be interpreted as a form of resistance to feminine stereotypes, they often contribute to the devaluation of the feminine. The very act can be interpreted as an acceptance of the male norm and its accompanying sexist values.

Women also employ strategic compliance in their resistance to patriarchal hegemonies. They consciously calculate the consequence of speaking out against male leadership decisions actions. Their accumulated years of experience influence their levels of activism. Some would argue that they are hence complicit in their oppression while others would argue that they employ their experience and strategic self and read accurately that individual agency is inadequate to resist entrenched patriarchal hegemonies. However, this level of calculated and strategic compliance indicates a heightened awareness of patriarchal hegemony.

Conflict between Private and Public Selves

The women's gender consciousness was troubled at a tender age by the injustices of apartheid which has culminated in a heightened consciousness of history, oppression and social justice. As a minority in the union they are acutely aware of their secondary status and as "women in transition" (Ledwith & Colgan, 1996, p.23) they struggle against their internalised patriarchal values that dilute their activism. Significantly, their evolving gender consciousness creates a discrepancy between their public and private personas. Although, publicly, they are not vocal enough in their objection to the gendered division of labour in the teaching profession or the subordinate status of women in the union, however, privately they are outraged by their experiences of gender inequality. Such public-private splits increase their awareness of false consciousness and their complicity in their oppression. They practise a strong internal resistance to their subordination revealing that although they publicly appear to accept dominant male ideologies, they only do so with a critical edge, an internal insubordination that separates them ideologically from their male counterparts and the traditional women in the organisation. In this way they activate their strategic self to look to transformative agendas as a collective (e.g. their collective push for the quota system in 2003).

The dual identity of the union as a recognised labour union and as a respected political entity engaging actively in national politics challenges the women leaders.

At the public level, they are respected as powerful political union leaders and as the celebrated few who have shattered the glass ceiling in trade unions. They are regarded as role models and mentors for other women, a role they cherish and carry with pride. However, their private gender struggles within the union remain invisible and hidden from their public persona. As a result, the women leaders suffer a public and private schism. Having penetrated male power bases in the union they are often caught in the contradiction between their subordinate positions within traditional gender roles in the union and at home and a contradictory public identity as empowered women enjoying respect and equality with male counterparts.

Male leaders often employ false consciousness to exploit women's loyalty to the union and co-opt them into accepting decisions that conflict with their private beliefs on gender equality. The women leaders often publicly support union decisions although privately they oppose them. Public opposition or rejection of the union's directives is not a choice given the grave consequence of alienation and loss of identity. Many interpret this public-private tension as a recurrence of similar experiences during the liberation struggle. This often magnifies their awareness of the continued marginalisation of the gender struggle in South Africa. Their strong objection to male dominance and their experience of the liberation struggle indicate a shift in their level of consciousness.

The women's understanding of the depth of patriarchy in the union displays a heightened level of consciousness, alerting them to the inadequacy of personal agency for confronting patriarchal hegemonies. Hence, they advocate consciousness raising programmes, activities and campaigns to create a collective force to challenge male dominance. This signals a willingness to shift towards a feminist consciousness.

Unlocking Trapped Transformative Agendas

The women leaders' interpretation of their gendered experiences reveals that although they are "women in transition" they aspire to feminist consciousness. Their experiences of gender discrimination, sexism and patriarchy in the union, while illustrating their frustration and anger, strengthen their resolve to change the status quo. Once they have moved beyond the initial shock and disappointment in the union, they come to a place of awareness, to consciousness and then to engagement. Reflecting on their journey in the union, they argue their progress from a negative space to one that affirms them as women. Hence, although their experiences are often projected as harsh, they concede that their resistance have ultimately been empowering and have enabled them to develop a deeper consciousness. Such heightened consciousness has exposed them to the often subtle influence of masculine paradigms in shaping their perceptions of themselves and other women. Employing heightened conscious results in irreversible change to the strategic self and unlocks potential to advance gender equality and other transformative agendas.

The women's final reflections indicate an emerging collective consciousness that recognises the potential of women's agency to shatter the patriarchal grip on the organisation. They acknowledge the strength in women's agency, and solidarity with other women's formations as vital for pushing for change as a collective and for creating a critical mass that challenges male power blocs. They are conscious of the need for substantive change to transform the union into an engendered organisation, one that is motivated by women and is transformatory in its aspiration (refer to Chapter Six, Poem 6.4.1-6.4.5).

Heightened Potential for Agency in Broader Societal Contexts

Several studies have shown that after prolonged periods of struggle against gender inequality within organisations many women decide to “take control of their lives” by exiting the organisation (Ledwith & Colgan, 1996, p.40). While others argue that women would leave because they lacked the patience, the political skill or the will to advance their own ambition within such organisations, or that they might find the weight of patriarchy too profound to resist (Cockburn, 1988; Mills & Trancred, 1992). However, Ledwith & Colgan (1996) argue that women leaving would probably have read accurately patriarchal organisations and their role within them

The women in this study have been part of the union’s history for a decade or more and have been instrumental in agitating for gender reform. All of them, except one, including myself, have now left the union to become part of larger bureaucracies in government, research institutions and international development agencies. Our exit from the union could be interpreted as individualistic strategies enacted to liberate us from the pervasive patriarchal hegemony of the union. However, I argue that this exit from the union is not a sign of impatience or a form of flight; rather it signals a heightened consciousness and a maturity to look beyond the union to broader sites of struggle where we can effect systemic change. We all share a collective aspiration for substantive gender transformation in the union.

The women leaders willingness to transform towards shared consciousness and their call for agency indicate a shift towards a heightened collective consciousness and a potential for feminist consciousness. The women are no longer passive victims but have made conscious decisions to be active participants and nurture an emergent collective consciousness in new and broader sites of struggle. They have read the union politics correctly and have been strategic in utilising their individual agency to aspire for collective agency. I argue that by the time of their departure they had come to a realisation that narrow technicist liberal gender interventions and reforms were ineffective in challenging the structural drivers of gender equality and producing substantive change. Furthermore, they came to understand the need for transformation, one which would bring about irreversible change. They have been the catalysts for improving gender equality in the union but have matured beyond their individual gender consciousness to an emerging collective self, aspiring to break down the barriers to gender equality at structural and ideological levels.

7.4 SOCIETY: The Emerging Collective Self

I have labelled this domain as the *emergent collective self* to capture the women’s evolution from false consciousness to dualism to heightened gender consciousness and to a heightened willingness to transform through a shared consciousness. The latter progression indicates a potential shift towards a feminist consciousness and an acknowledgement of the need to transcend individual activism towards collective agency in the public domain. This emerging collective self espouses a deeper understanding of women’s latent power to re-configure gender relations in broader society. This is accompanied by the realisation of the need to enact change at a systemic level, often in government bureaucracies and research institutions.

Gender experiences are mediated when levels of consciousness interface with the power dynamics of organisations, and contested historical and contextual forces. These experiences are also mediated by socialisation in the home and school, and the

social structures and ideologies of society. Thus, women's accumulated experiences of self and organisation, experienced through pain and dualism, have potential for heightened awareness of the politics of institutionalised gender equality and equity. The women's emerging collective self indicates an intention to transcend historical legacies and barriers towards a redefined sense of self and agency. Hence, the potential for agency and gender activism is embedded in the levels of women's consciousness and characterised by their intellectual, political and emotional growth. Such growth is necessary to challenge barriers between public and private boundaries and re-centre the gaze towards gender equity. This growth signals a renewed commitment to aggressive feminist conscientisation beyond narrow gender sloganeering to the enactment of substantive gender equity.

Towards Engendering Organisations

The domains of gender consciousness are essential to mapping the women's journey to feminist consciousness and agency and significant to engendering organisational theory. Significantly, they emphasise that the willingness to transform to a collective consciousness is critical for women's agency in challenging hegemonic patriarchal spaces in organisations and in the broader society. I have argued that a multi-dimensional and expansive critique of gendered experience within these domains is essential to transform gendered organisations.

I want to extend my argument by advancing the notion of an engendered organisational theory that acknowledges the inescapable reality of masculinities and patriarchal hegemonies. Resisting these is no longer helpful in bridging the gender divides inherent in most organisations. I argue also for the consideration of a male consciousness that empowers men to rise beyond their patriarchal enclaves to a heightened ethical consciousness that propels them to an awareness of their complicity in their symbolic violence against women. Similar to African feminism that espouses the notion of "cooperation or complementarity", I argue that substantive in-depth critique of men's roles and women's roles in achieving equality does not undermine the potential of feminism to change women's lives for the better. I concur with Okome (2001, p.4) that: "One of the most valuable contributions of feminism as a movement is that it lays out the nature, form and extends the evidence that exist of man's inhumanity to women." Furthermore, feminism encourages unions to appreciate the specific interest of women workers and facilitate the expression of their interest (Heery & Kelly, 1998, p.486). I maintain that there will always be a need for feminism as long as women are excluded and "othered" in organisations and in society in general.

However, I argue for a deeper analysis to understand persistent gender inequalities in teacher unions that incorporate socio-economic forces in the political economy and analyse their collusion with market imperatives to perpetuate the sexual division of labour that affects women disproportionately. Similarly, such an analysis has to incorporate differences between the sexes, i.e. men and women. Although men and women construct their identities differently, they are developed out of the cultural, class, gender and social patterns of a particular society. However, special care should be taken to prevent the delineation of differences from evolving into inequalities. Furthermore, I argue that significant consideration be given to the diverse experiences of men and women in developing countries in particular, specifically to the shifting emphasis of capitalism and patriarchy, the history of collective oppression and the subtle influence of nationalism on identities within progressive organisations.

The thesis motivates for organisations, like patriarchal trade unions, to take advantage of women's evolving consciousness to agitate for women's agency to engender organisations. Hence, reflecting back, engaging the domains of evolving gender consciousness creates impetus to transform gender relations in organisations. Reflecting back catalyses consciousness-raising that initially troubles and disrupts but moves towards willingness to a collective self, thus creating the catalyst for transformed, irreversible, and substantive change. Such expansive and in-depth interrogations of gendered experiences are essential to advance gender equality and equity, and engendering of organisations.

Furthermore, organisations would benefit by adopting an expansive view to advance gender equality, employing more radical approaches to engender organisations. Advocating in-depth qualitative organisational analysis, similar to this study, targets change at structural and ideological levels. Thus, organisational analysis moves beyond inclusive practices of equal representation towards substantive change, emphasising equality of experience for both men and women. Given dominant patriarchal cultures and politics that inhabit most organisations, such an approach solicits buy-in from men and women given its argued benefits for both sexes. Radical departure from traditional organisational reform that advocates quick fixes and superficial changes is necessary. Rather organisations should engage calculated and strategic vision, employing and exploiting domains of evolving consciousness to disrupt structural barriers embedded in their organisational bureaucracies, cultures and ideologies. Such a commitment to transformation would mobilise a critical mass, pushing for transforming gendered relations in organisations and society at large.

This study has illustrated that narrow liberal reforms fail to change women's experience of inequality in the union. Therefore, an expansive approach to gender equality aspiring to fundamental transformation necessitates multi-dimensional targeting that incorporates the union, the workplace, economy, socio-cultural forces and other systems of hierarchy in the broader society. Organisations benefit by looking to other progressive formations to broaden the struggle for gender equity ((Ledwith & Colgan, 1996). Such approaches incorporate engendered organisational analysis that aims to intervene directly in organisational practices to achieve fair representation, distribution of rewards and equal status among women and men, while simultaneously implementing strategies to raise the gender consciousness of both men and women. This gives visibility to the structural drivers of gendered politics and gendered enactments and advocates for the engendering of organisation.

7.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study began as an expression of my resistance against the masculine hegemony in the SADTU but solidified into something far more significant as I confirmed that my colleagues in the union shared similar concerns. Although the research laid bare the experiences of the women leaders as a testimony that equality in the union has been defined in men's terms, the research marked the first attempt by women in SADTU to make a political and epistemological contribution towards their emancipation. It epitomised our activism as women while contributing to the development of knowledge and theory. We enacted Lather & Smithies's (1997, p.169) argument that research "is activism and a contribution".

The women in this study enacted their activism, their collective self and their

willingness to transform when they put their trust in another to reveal their private and public struggles and triumphs of being women in an organisation troubled by its masculine hegemony. Hence, the research activated women's agency to make visible and disrupt the patriarchal grip on the union. The women's narratives laid bare their gendered experiences as an act of resistance. hooks (1992, p.59) argues that such honest confessional narratives by black women struggling to be self-actualised and become radical subjects affirm our fellowship with one another. They affirm our agency to resist our othering and to enact our power to transform. By collectively bringing our knowledge, resources, skills and wisdom to one another, we make possible the development of collective consciousness and nurture a move towards transformatory social change that will address the diversity of our experiences and our needs as women (Hooks, 1992, p.60).

Although I do not envisage any feminist revolution in SADTU in the immediate future, I maintain that the last 17 years have been important years of cumulative experience, learning and irreversible change for women in the union. As one woman states, "We have begun to recognise that women are an intrinsic part of the organisation"; we have claimed our voices in the union. It is my proposition that our awakening collective selves are the initial steps towards feminist consciousness. As captured in the Foreword, it is a starting point.

Similar to the "Seasons of Struggle" that framed this research, the domains of evolving consciousness have progressively traversed the different sites of gender oppression. The culmination of self, experience and the shift to heightened collective consciousness are our season of winter – a season of hidden growth and potential. It is here that the rose, symbolising individual agency, disappears and emerges as a rosebush, bare but reaching out to the sun, thus symbolising our willingness for transformation and collective agency. Similarly, although the majority of women leaders have exited the union, the experiences in the union that fostered the evolution of gender consciousness have not been lost. I argue that our emerging collective selves are far more radical in the recognition of our latent power to re-configure gender relations in the broader society. Such heightened awareness, although still vulnerable, has the potential to solidify into a developed collective consciousness of women's oppression that will elevate gender activism beyond narrow sloganeering towards an enactment of substantive gender activism in the union and at a broader systemic level.

Seasons of Struggle

Spring

Bright bursts of colour
Wafts of delicate perfumes
Promising futures

Summer

Visions of beauty
The smile of a blooming rose
Confident, hopeful.....

Autumn

Anaemic slumber
Shadows of yesterday's hope
The death of a rose?

Winter

Petals in the wind
The rosebush bare but sturdy
Reaching to the sun

REFERENCES

- Acker, J. (1990). Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: A theory of gendered organizations. *Gender and Society*, 4(2), 139-158.
- Acker, J. & Van Houten, D.R. (1992). Differential Recruitment and Control: The sex structuring of organizations In A.J. Mills & P. Trancred (Eds.), *Gendering Organisational Analysis*. Thousand Hills: Sage.
- Acker, P. & Wilkinson, A. (Eds.). (2003). *Understanding Work and Employment: Industrial Relations in Transition*. New York. Oxford University Press.
- Acker, S. (1994). *Gendered Education: Sociological Reflections on Women, Teaching and Feminisms*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Adler, G. & Webster, E. (Eds.). (2000). *Trade Unions and Democratization in South Africa, 1985-1997*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- Alvesson, M. & Billing, Y. (1997). *Understanding Gender and Organisations*. London; Thousand Oaks; New Delhi: Sage.
- Andrade, S. (2002). Gender and 'the public sphere' in Africa: writing women and rioting women. *Agenda*, 54, 46-50.
- Arndt, S. (2002a). Perspectives on African feminism: defining and classifying African-feminist literatures. *Agenda*, 54, 31-44.
- Arndt, S. (2002b). *The Dynamics of African Feminism*. Trenton: Africa World Press.
- Annot, M. & Weiler, K. (Eds.). (1993). *Feminisms and Social Justice in Education*. London: Falmer Press.
- Apple, M.W. (1989). *Teachers & Texts: A Political Economy of Class and Gender Relations in Education*. New York: Routledge.
- Bakare-Yusuf, B. (2003). Beyond Determinism: The Phenomenology of African Female Existence. *Feminist Africa*. 2. Retrieved 2004/03/15, from <http://www.feministafrica.org/02-2003/bibi.html>
- Ballard, R., Habib, A. & Valodia, I. (Eds.). (2006). *Voices of Protest: Social Movements in post-apartheid South Africa*. Durban: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.
- Barret, M. (1980). *Women's Oppression Today*. London: New Left Books.
- Beasley, C. (1999). *What is Feminism? An Introduction to Feminist Theory*. London: Sage.
- Bendle, R. (2003). *Gendering Organisation Studies: A Guide to Reading Gender*

Subtexts in Organisational Theories. *The Finnish Journal of Business Economics; Special Issue on Gender Organisation and Society*, pp.373-393

Benhabib, S. & Fraser, N. (2004). *Pragmatism, Critique, Judgment: Essays for Richard J. Bernstein*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Benhabib, S., Butler, J., Cornell, D. & Fraser, N. (1995). *Feminist Contentions: A philosophical Exchange*. London: Routledge.

Bennett, J. (2002). Exploration of a "Gap": Strategising Gender Equity in African Universities. *Gender and Women's Studies E-journal Launch Issue*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town, African Gender Institute. Retrieved 2004/03/15, from <http://www.feministafrica.org/fa%201/01 - 2002/jane.html>

Blackmore J. & Kenway J. (1993). (Eds.). *Gender Matters in Educational Administration and Policy*. London: Falmer Press.

Blackmore, J. (1993). "In the Shadow of Men": The historical construction of educational administration as a "Masculine enterprise". In J. Blackmore. & J. Kenway (Eds.), *Gender Matters in Educational Administration and Policy*. London: Falmer Press.

Bolman, L.G. & Deal, T.E. (1984). *Modern Approaches to Understanding and Managing Organisations*. London: Jossey-Bass.

Bowers, F. (Ed.). (1996). *The Classic Tradition of Haiku: An Anthology*. New York: Dover Publications.

Bozzoli, B. (1983). Marxism, feminism and South African studies. *Journal of African Studies*, 9(2), 39.

Breytenbach, K. (2006). Zuma case highlights misogynistic culture. Retrieved 2007/05/11 from http://www.iol.co.za/?set_id=1&click_id=3011&art_id=vn20060420011415161C300002

Brooks, H., Shisana, O. & Richter, L. (2004). *The National Household HIV Prevalence and Risk Survey of South African Children*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Brown, K. M. (1985). On feminist methodology. *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 1, 76-79.

Bryson, V. (1992). *Feminist Political Theory: An Introduction*. New York: Paragon House.

Buhlungu, S. (2000). Trade Union organisation and capacity in the 1990s: Continuities, changes and challenges for PPWAWU. In G. Adler & E. Webster (eds.), *Trade Unions and Democratization in South Africa, 1985-1997*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.

Bush, T. & West-Burnhan, J. (Eds.). (1994). *Principles of Education Management*. London: Pearson Education.

Canaday, M. (2003). Promising alliances: the critical feminist theory of Nancy Fraser and Seyla Benhabib. *Feminist Review*, 74, 50-69. Retrieved 2006/12/8, from <http://www.feminist-review.com>

Carlin, N. (1986). *Women and the struggle for socialism*. London: Laneridge.

Carrim, N. (2003). Teacher identity: Tensions between roles. In K. Lewin, M. Samuel & Y. Sayed (Eds.), *Changing Patterns of Teacher Education in South Africa*. Cape Town: Heinemann.

Canadian International Development Agency, Internet Site. Retrieved 2004/12/13, from <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/>

Cavan, S. (1977). Review of J.D. Douglas (1976) Investigative social review: Individual and team field research. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 83(3), 809-11.

Chaison, G.N. & Andiappan, P. (1989). An analysis of the barrier to women becoming local union officers. *Journal of Labour Research*, 10(2), 149-161.

Charles, N. (2000). *Feminism, the State and Social Policy*. London: Macmillan.

Chisholm, L. (2003). *Evaluating Gender Equality and Curriculum 2005*. Paper presented at the University of London Beyond Access seminar, 16 September 2003.

Chisholm, L. & September, J. (Eds.) (2005). *Gender Equity in South African Education 1994-2004: Perspectives from Research, Government and Unions*. Conference proceedings. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Chisholm, L. & South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU). (1999). *Obstacles to women's participation in SADTU leadership positions*. Unpublished report.

Chisholm, L. & Napo, V. (1999). State and bureaucracy – symbolic access? *Agenda*, 41, 32-36.

Chisholm, L. (2002). *Evaluating Gender Equality and Curriculum 2005*. Unpublished report.

Christie, P. (1985). *Right to Learn: The Struggle for Education in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Christie, P. (1992). *Right to learn: The Struggle for Education in South Africa*. Johannesburg: SACHED Trust.

Cockburn, C. (1996). Strategies for Gender Democracy: Strengthening the Representation of Trade Union Women in the European Social Dialogue. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 3(1), 7-26.

Cohen, L., Manion L. & Morrison, K. (1998). *Research Methods in Education*. London: Routledge.

- Cohen, L., Manion L. & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research Methods in Education*. (4th ed.) London: Routledge.
- Connell, R.W. (2003). *Gender*. London: Polity Press.
- Constitution of South Africa Act, 108 (1996).
- Cook, J., Roberts, J. & Waylen, G. (Eds.). (2000). *Towards a Gendered Political Economy*. London: Macmillan.
- COSATU Gender Policy. (1999). COSATU 7th Congress. Johannesburg: COSATU.
- COSATU. (2000). *Understanding Gender: A Struggle within a Struggle: COSATU Political Education Booklet*. COSATU Johannesburg. Retrieved 2007/03/16, from <http://www.cosatu.org.za/docs/2000/struggen.htm>
- COSATU. (2001a). *Gender – A Struggle within a Struggle. Engaging Our Theory, Assessing Our Practice*. Revised discussion paper presented to COSATU CEC. Johannesburg: COSATU National Gender Committee.
- COSATU Gender Policy. (2001b). COSATU 9th Congress. Johannesburg: COSATU.
- COSATU. (2004). *COSATU Affiliates Working Towards A Shared Vision to Realise Gender Equity*. Johannesburg: COSATU.
- COSATU Gender Policy. (2006). COSATU 14th Congress. Johannesburg: COSATU.
- Daphne, J., Daphne, C. & Orr, L. (1997). COSATU Congress: Did women reject the quota? *Agenda* 35, 24-29.
- Davis K., Leijenaar, M. & Oldersma, J. (Eds.). (1991). *The Gender of Power*. London: Sage.
- Davies, M. (1983). *Third World Second Sex-Women's Struggles and National Liberation. Third World Women Speak Out*. London: Zed Books.
- De Beauvoir, S (1989). *The Second Sex, Women as Other*. London: Vintage.
- Denga, S. (2003). *Building Effective Union Service Delivery: The Results of a Survey of 4 Affiliates*. Johannesburg: NALEDI.
- Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.). (2003). *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. London: Sage.
- Department of Education (SA). (2002). *Education Statistics in South Africa at a Glance in 2000*. Pretoria: Government Printers
- Department of Education (SA). (2005). *Teachers for the Future – Meeting Teacher Shortages to achieve Education for All*. Pretoria: Government Printers
- Department of Education (SA). (2006). *Report of the Ministerial Committee on Gender Equity in Education*. Pretoria: Government Printers. Unpublished report.

- Department of Health (SA). (2004). *National HIV and Syphilis Antenatal Seroprevalence Survey in South Africa 2003*. Pretoria: Government Printers
- Dhunpath, R. (2003). *Archaeology of a Language Development NGO*. A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Education. University of Durban Westville, Durban.
- Dieltiens, V. & Vally, S. (2001). *An Overview of Developments in the Education Sector in South Africa 1998 – 2000*. Paper commissioned by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, Education Policy Unit.
- Duelli Klein, R. (1983). How to do what we want to do: Thoughts about Feminist Methodology. In G. Bowles & R. Duelli Klein (Eds.), *Theories of Women's Studies*. London: Routledge.
- Education for All Global Monitoring Report (2004). Education For All. Retrieved 2005/12/15 from portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=29317&URL_DO=Do
- Education Labour Relations Council (SA). (2002). *Annual Report 2002: Ensuring Quality Public Education for All*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Ehrenreich, B. & Ehrenreich, J. (1979). The Professional-Managerial Class. In P. Walker (Ed.), *Between Labour and Capital*. London: Harvester Press.
- Elwell, F. (1996). *The Sociology of Max Weber: Verstehen*. Max Weber's Homepage. Rogers State University. Retrieved 2007/08/13, from <http://www.faculty.rsu.edu/~felwell/Theorists/Weber/Whome.htm>
- Employment Equity Act, 55 (SA) (1998).
- Employment of Educators Act, 76 (SA) (1998).
- Essof, S. (2001). African Feminisms: histories, applications and prospects. *Agenda*, 50, 124-126
- Evans, M. (1997). *Introducing Contemporary Feminist Thought*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Ferguson, K.E. (1984). *The feminist case against bureaucracy*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Fine, M. (1994). Working the Hyphens: Reinventing self and other in qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp.70-82). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Fraser, N. (1997). *Justice Interruptus: Critical reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition*. New York: Routledge.
- Fraser, N. & Honneth, A. (2003). *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange*. New York: Verso.

- Friedman, S. (2004). Just Placing Women in Top Posts is not Empowering. *Business Day*, 5 May, p.3.
- Freire, P. (1972). *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. London: Penguin Books.
- Freire, P. (1985). *The Politics of Education*. New York: Bergin & Garvey.
- Foucault, M. (1991). *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Ginsberg, A.E. (2002). Building on student knowledge: A new frame for gender equity in education that transcends the sameness/difference dichotomy. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 5(1), 24-37.
- Ginwala, F. (1990). Women and the African national Congress: 1912-1943. *Agenda* No.8, 77-93
- Giroux, H.A. (1988). *Teachers as Intellectuals: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of learning*. New York: Bergin & Garvey.
- Goetz, A.M. (1995). Institutionalising women's interests and gender-sensitive accountability in development. *IDS Bulletin*, 26(3), 1-10.
- Gouws, A. (2005). The State of the National Gender Machinery: Structural Problems and personalized Politics. In *State of the Nation: South Africa 2005-2006*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Govender, L. (1996). *When the "chalks are down": A historical, political and social interpretation of teacher militancy in South Africa*. Pretoria: HSRC Publishers.
- Govender, L. (2004). Teacher Unions, policy struggles and educational change, 1994-2004. In L. Chisholm (Ed.), *Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-apartheid South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Govindin, B. (2004). *Knowledge and Women's Interests: Issues of Epistemology and Methodology in Feminist Sociological Research*. Paper prepared for Doctoral Students Seminar April. Durban: University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. New York: International Publishers.
- Group Areas Act, 41 (SA) (1950).
- Guba, E.G. & Lincoln, Y.S. (1989). Judging the quality of fourth generation evaluation. In E.G. Guba and Y. Lincoln. *Fourth generation evaluation*. USA: Indiana University-Bloomington,.
- Habasonda, L.M. (2002). Pitfalls of gender activism in Africa. *Agenda* 54, 99-105.
- Habib, A. & Valodia, I. (2006). Reconstructing a social movement in an era of globalisation: A case study of COSATU. In R. Ballard, A. Habib & I. Valodia (Eds.),

- Voices of Protest: Social Movements in Post-apartheid South Africa*. Durban: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.
- Hammersley, M. (1995). *The Politics of Social Research*. London: Sage.
- Harding, S. (Ed.). (1987). *Feminism and Methodology*. Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- Harding, S. (1993). Rethinking standpoint epistemology: What is strong objectivity? In L. Alcoff & E. Potter (Eds.), *Feminist epistemologies* (pp 49-82). New York: Routledge.
- Hassim, S. (2005). Terms of engagement: South African challenge. *Feminist Africa*, 4. Retrieved 2006/06/12, from <http://www.feministafrica.org/04-2005/Hassim.html>
- Hassim, S. (2006). *Women's Organisation and Democracy in South Africa: Contesting Authority*. Durban: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.
- Hearn, J. (1982). Notes on patriarchy, professionalization and the semi-professions. *British Sociological Association*, 16, 184-202.
- Hearn, J. & Parkin, P.W. (1983). Gender and organisations: A selective review and critique of a neglected area. *Organisation Studies*, 4(3), 219-42.
- Heery, E. & Kelly, J. (1994). A cracking job for a woman – a profile of women trade union officers'. *Industrial Relations Journal*, 20(3), 192-202.
- Heery, E & Kelly, J. (1998). Do female representatives make a difference? Women full-time officials and trade union work. *Work, Employment & Society*, 2(4), 487-505.
- Hellberg-Phillips, A., van Schalkwyk, L. & Banks, W. (Eds.). (1999). *Ideas for a change: Ways of seeing organisations*. Durban: Olive Publications.
- Henning, E., Wilhelm, W.V. & Smit, B. (2004). *Finding your Way in Qualitative Research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- hooks, B. (1992). *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. Boston: South End Press.
- Human Rights Watch. (2001). *Scared at School – Sexual Violence Against Girls in South African Schools*, March. Retrieved 2008/12/13. from www.hrw.org
- Hoppers, C.A.O. (2002). *Gender and Education Policies in Africa: The Struggle Continues*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.
- Immorality Act, Act 23 (SA) (1957).
- Institute for Black Research (IBR). (1990). *Black Women Worker: A Study in Patriarchy and Woman Production Workers in South Africa*. Durban: Madiba Publishers.
- Isaacs, S. (1995). No women No cry Zabazola. *Shop Steward: Special COSATU 10th Anniversary edition*. Johannesburg: CDC for COSATU.

Itzin, C. & Newman, J. (Eds.). (1995). *Gender, Culture and Organisational Change: Putting Theory into Practice*. London: Routledge.

International Labour Organisation. (2002). *Report on Gender Mainstreaming in the ILO*. Geneva: ILO.

Jansen, J. (2003). Image-ing Teachers: Policy Images and Teacher Identity in South African Classrooms. In K. Lewin, M. Samuel & Y. Sayed (Eds), *Changing Patterns of Teacher Education in South Africa*. Cape Town: Heinemann.

Jafta, M. (2006). *Critical Assessment of COSATU's Approach to the Achievement of Gender Equality* Unpublished report. Johannesburg: COSATU.

Jensen, V. (2004). *Making Education Policies in Asia Gender Responsive: UNESCO's Experience in Building Gender Mainstreaming Capacities of Ministries of Education in Asia*. Paper presented at the Conference on Gender Equity in Education 18-20 May 2004, Villa Via, Gordon's Bay, Cape Town, South Africa.

Kallaway, P. (Ed.). (2002). *The History of Education under Apartheid 1948-1994. The Doors of Learning and Culture shall be Opened*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

Kallaway, P. (Ed.). (1984). *Apartheid and Education: The Education of Black South Africans*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Kanter, R. M. (1976). The impact of hierarchical structures on the work behaviour of women and men. *Social Problems*, 23, 415-30.

Kathard, H. (2003). *Life Histories of People who Stutter: On becoming Someone*, a thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Education. University of Durban Westville, Durban.

Kelly, J. (1988). *Trade Unions and Socialist Politics*. London: Verso.

Kelly-Gadol, J. (1976). The social relations of the sexes: Methodological implications for women's history. *Signs*, 1(4), 809-23.

Kimmel, M. (2004). *The Gendered Society*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kolawole, M.M. (2002). Transcending incongruities: rethinking feminisms and the dynamics of identity in Africa. *Agenda*, 54, 92-98.

Lather, P. (1991). *Getting Smart: Feminist Research and Pedagogy within the Postmodern*. New York: Routledge.

Lather, P. & Smithies, C. (1997). *Troubling the Angels: Women Living with HIV/AIDS*. New York: Westview Press.

Lawrence, E. (1994). *Gender and Trade Unions*. London: Taylor and Francis.

Ledwith, S. (2006). Feminist practice in a trade union gender project. *Industrial*

Journal, 37:4, 379-399.

Ledwith, S. & Colgan, F. (Eds.) (1996). *Women in Organisations: Challenging gender politics*. London: MacMillan.

Lewin, E. (Ed.) (2006). *Feminist Anthropology: A Reader*. New York: Blackwell.

Lewis, D. (2002). *Gender and Women's Studies in South Africa. A Review Report*. Review Essay for the African Gender Institute. Cape Town: University of Cape Town.

Retrieved 2004/03/15, from

<http://www.gwsafrica.org/knowledge/sareview//mainpg.html>

Lewis, D. (2003). *Feminist Africa: 2*. Retrieved 2004/03/15, from <http://www.feministafrica.org/02-2003/editorial.html>

Lehulere, O. (2003). Road to the Right: COSATU Economic Policy in the Post-apartheid Period. In T. Bramble & F. Barchiesi (Eds.), *Rethinking the labour movement in the 'New South Africa'*. London: Ashgate.

MacDonald, M. (2006). *Why Race matters in South Africa*. Durban: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.

McDonald, M., Sprenger, E. & Dubel, I. (1994). *Gender and Organisational Change*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Mayoux, L. (2005). *Gender and Empowerment concepts*. Retrieved 2008/11/08, from <http://www.lindasweb.org.uk/Page1-Development/gender/gender.htm>

McKinley, D.T. (2003). COSATU and the Tripartite Alliance since 1994. In T. Bramble & F. Barchiesi (Eds.), *Rethinking the labour movement in the 'New South Africa'*. London: Ashgate.

Magno, C.S. (2002). Minding the political gap: The educational imperatives of NGOs. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 5(1), 38-50.

March, C., Smyth, I. & Mukhopadhyay, M. (2005). *A Guide to Gender-Analysis Frameworks*. Oxford: Oxfam.

Martin, J. (2002). Feminist theory and critical theory: Unexplored synergies. In M. Alvesson & H. Willmott (Eds.), *Critical management Studies*. London: Sage.

Mama, A. (1996). *Women's Studies and Studies of Women in Africa During the 1990's. Feminist Knowledge – Review Essay, CODESRIA Working papers Series 5/96*. Johannesburg: CODESRIA.

Mannah, S. (2002). South Africa: The complex role of teaching about HIV/AIDS in schools. *Prospects: Quarterly Review of Comparative Education*, 32(2), 155-170.

Mannah, S. (2005). The state of mobilisation of women teachers in the South African Democratic Teachers' Union. In L. Chisholm & J. September (Eds.), *Gender Equity in South African Education 1994-2004 – Perspectives from Research, Government*

and Unions. *Conference Proceedings*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Meena, R. (Ed.). (1992). *Gender in Southern Africa: Conceptual and Theoretical Issues*. Harare: Sapes Boks.

Meer, F. (1985). *Women in Apartheid Society*. Retrieved 2005/05/05, from <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/misc/fatima.html>

Meer, S. (2000). *Which workers, which women, what interests? Race, class and gender in post apartheid South Africa*. Draft paper. Cape Town: University of Cape Town, African Gender Institute Associates Programme.

Meintjies, S. (1996). Women's struggle for equality during South Africa's transition to democracy. *Transformation* 30, 47-65

Mertens, D.M. (2005). *Research and Evaluation in Education and Psychology: Integrating Diversity with Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Methods*. (2nd ed). London: Sage Publications.

Mies, M. (1996). Towards a Methodology for Feminist Research. In: Hammersley, M. (ed.). *Social Research, Philosophy, Politics and Practice*. London: Sage.

Mills, A.J. & Trancred, P. (Eds.). (1992). *Gendering Organisational Analysis*. Thousand-Oaks-London: Sage.

Mohanty, C.T. (1988). Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses. *Feminist Review*, 30, 61-88.

Moorosi, P.C. (2006). *Policy and practice related constraints to increased female participation in Education Management in South Africa*. A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban.

Morgan, W. (2003). *Electronic Tools for Dismantling the Masters House: Poststructuralist Feminist Research and Hypertext Poetics*. School of Language and Literacy Education, Queensland University of Technology, Australia. Retrieved 2006/09/17, from w.morgan@qut.edu.au.

Morgan, G. (1986). *Images of Organisation*. London: Sage.

Motala, S. & Vally, S. (2002). People's Education: From People's Power to Tirisano. In P. Kallaway (Ed.), *The History of Education under Apartheid 1948-1994. The Doors of Learning and Culture shall be Opened*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

Msimang, S. (2002). African Feminisms II: reflections on politics made personal. *Agenda*, 54, 3-15.

Musgrave A. & Evans J. (2006). "Zuma's story "laughable, fanciful" *Mail and Guardian*, 2006, 26th April), Retrieved 2008/12/18, from <http://www.mg.co.za/printformat/single/2006-04-46-zumas-story-laughable-fanciful>

Muthwa, S. (2004). Breakthrough Leadership: A Review of Women's Positions in the

State and Impact on the Everyday Lives of Women. In E. Pieterse & F. Meintjies (Eds.), *The Politics, Poetics and Practices of Social Change in South Africa*. Sandown: Heinemann.

NALEDI (2006a). *SADTU's Organisational Review*. Report to SADTU 6th Congress-2006, held at Midrand, 30th August – 2nd September.

NALEDI (2006b). *Labour Pains-Women's leadership and gender strategies in COSATU*. Johannesburg: NALEDI.

Neuman, W.L. (1997). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. (3rd ed.) Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Newman, J. (1995). Gender and cultural change. In C. Itzin & J. Newman (Eds.), *Gender, Culture and Organisational Change: Putting Theory into Practice*. London: Routledge.

Nxesi, T.W. (2006). *Summary of the Secretariat Report, SADTU 6th National Congress held at Midrand, 30 August – 2 September 2006*.

O'Farrel, C. (1999). Postmodernism for the Uninitiated. In D. Meamore, B. Burnett & P. O'Brain (Eds.), *Understanding Education: Contexts and Agendas for the New Millennium*. Sydney: Prentice Hall.

Oakley, A. (1981). Interviewing women: A contradiction in terms. In H. Roberts (Ed.), *Doing Feminist Research* (pp.30-61). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Okome, M.O. (2001). African women and power: Reflections on the perils of unwanted cosmopolitanisms. *JENDA: A journal of Culture and African Women Studies*. Retrieved 2007/06/04, from <http://www.jendajournal.com/vol1.1/okome.html>.

O'Neill, J. (1994). Organisational structure and culture. In T. Bush & J. West-Burnhan (Eds.), *The Principles of education management*. London: Pearson Education.

Orr, L. (1999). *Assessing Gender Structures in COSATU*. Johannesburg: NALEDI.

Orr, L. (2000). *Draft discussion document: Socialism and Gender Equality: What lessons have we learned?* Johannesburg: NALEDI.

Orr, L. (2003a). Gender struggles 'We need a Revolution'. *National Labour and Development Institute Bulletin*, 6(2/3), 12-13.

Orr, L. (2003b). Dealing with "This thing called Gender: Democracy, power and gender relations in Trade Unions" In T. Bramble & F. Barchiesi (Eds.), *Rethinking the labour movement in the 'New South Africa'*. London: Ashgate.

Orr, L. (2006). *Gender struggles and silences in COSATU and beyond*. Unpublished draft document.

Oyewumi, O. (2002). *Conceptualising Gender: The eurocentric foundations of*

feminist concepts and the challenge of African epistemologies. *JENDA: A journal of culture and African women studies*. Retrieved 2007/06/04, from <http://www.jendajournal.com/vol2.1/oyewumi.html>

Pandor, N. (2005). The Hidden Face of Gender Inequality in South African Education. In L. Chisholm & J. September (Eds.), *Gender Equity in South African Education 1994-2004 – Perspectives from Research, Government and Unions. Conference Proceedings*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Periera, C. (2002). Between Knowing and Imagining: What Space for Feminism in Scholarship in Africa? *Gender and Women's Studies E-journal Launch Issue*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town, African Gender Institute. Retrieved 2005/09/17, from <http://www.feministafrica.org/fa%201/01 - 2002/pereira.html>

Perumal, J.C. 2005. *Enacting feminisms in academia*. Thesis (D.Ed)--University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa.

Piercy, F.P. & Benson, K. (Jan 2005). Aesthetic forms of data representation in qualitative family therapy research. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*

Population Registration Act, 30 (SA) (1950).

Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, 55 (SA) (1949).

Rabinow, P. (Ed.). (1991). *Foucault reader: An introduction to Foucault's thought*. New York: Penguin Books.

Ramagoshi, M. (2005). National Department of Education Initiatives. In L. Chisholm & J. September (Eds.), *Gender Equity in South African Education 1994-2004 – Perspectives from Research, Government and Unions. Conference proceedings*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Ramphele, M. (2008). *Laying ghosts to rest: Dilemmas of the transformation in South Africa*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.

Reiger, K. (1993). The Gender Dynamics of Organisations. In J. Blackmore & J. Kenway (Eds.), *Gender Matters in Educational Administration and Policy*. London: Falmer.

Reinharz, S. (1992). *Feminist Methods in Social Research*. New York: Oxford.

Richardson, L. (1997). *Fields of Play: Constructing an Academic Life*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Ryan, G.W. & Bernard, R. (2003). Data Management and Analysis Methods. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. London: Sage.

South African Council of Educators (2004). SACE Code of Professional Ethics for Teachers. Retrieved 2006/10/08 from www.sace.org.za

SACP 10th Congress. Johannesburg, 1 - 5 July 1998. Documents. Declaration of the

10th SACP Congress, Johannesburg 5 July; Congress Resolutions. Retrieved 2004/02/12 from www.sacp.org.za/main.php?include=docs/conf/1998/index.html - 24k -

Samuel, M.A. (1998). *Words, Lives and Music: On becoming a Teacher of English*, a thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Education. University of Durban Westville, Durban.

Seidman, G. (1994). *Manufacturing Militance: Workers' Movements in Brazil and South Africa, 1970-1985*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Separate Amenities Act, 49 (1953).

Sharp, R. (2007). Commission on the Status of Women Fifty-first session, New York, 26th February – 9 March, Panel “Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women” United Nations. Retrieved 2008/10/14 from www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/wom1607.doc.htm

Silvestri, M. (2003). *Women in Charge: Policing, Gender and Leadership*. Devon: Willan Publishing.

September Commission (1997). *Report*. Johannesburg: COSATU.

Shishana, O., Peltzer, K., Zungu-Dirwayi, N. & Louw, J.S. (2005). *The health of our educators: a focus on HIV/AIDS in South African public schools*. Report commissioned by the Education Relations Labour Council. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Smart, B. (1983). *Foucault, Marxism and Critique*. London: Routledge.

South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) (1995). *Secretariat Report to the Third National Biennial Congress*, held at Johannesburg.

South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) (1998). *Meeting of the National Executive Committee, Reports for Congress*. Johannesburg: SADTU.

South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) (1999). *Draft Gender Policy*. Johannesburg: SADTU. Unpublished.

South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) (2002a). *Secretariat Report, Book 2*. 5th National Congress, Durban ICC, Durban

South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) (2002b). *5th National Congress. Women's Roundtable*. Unpublished report.

South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) (2006a). *Secretariat Report, Book 2*, 6th National Congress, Gallagher Estate, Johannesburg

South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) (2006b). *SADTU Constitution*. Johannesburg: SADTU.

South African Schools Act, 84 (SA) (1996).

- Speak and COSATU Wits Women's Forum, (1992). *No Turning Back-Fighting for Gender Equality in the Union*. Johannesburg: Lacom (Sached).
- St. Pierre, E.A. (2000). Post structural Feminism in Education: An Overview. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 13(5), 477-515.
- St. Pierre, E.A. (1997). Methodology in the Fold and Irruption of Transgressive Data. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 10(2), 175-189.
- Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research. Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park CA: Sage.
- Subrahmanian, R. (2003). *Gender Equality in Education: Definitions and Measurements* Background paper for UNESCO GMR 2003-043. Retrieved 2008/11/14, from http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/file_download.php/daa3a7d75587a9ae6c90e68d961a5229Gender+equality+in+Education.doc
- Tong, R. (1989). *Feminist Thought*. New York: Westview Press.
- ILO. (2005). *Teachers for the Future report: Meeting Teacher Shortages to Achieve Education for All* Department of Education. Government Printers
- Trebilcock, A. (1991). Strategies for strengthening women's participation in trade union leadership. *International Labour Review*, 130(4), 407-425.
- Thompson, P. & McHugh, D. (1995). *Work Organisations: A critical Introduction*. (2nd ed.) London: Macmillan.
- UNESCO (2004). *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4: Gender and Education for All – The leap to Equality*. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved 2005/10/04, from <http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL-ID=23023&URL-DO=DO-TOPIC&URL-SECTION=210.html>
- UNESCO: Unit for the promotion of the Status of Women and Gender Equality. (2000). *Gender Equality and Equity: A Summary Review of UNESCO's Accomplishments since the Fourth Conference on Women (Beijing 1995)*. Paris: UNESCO.
- U.N. Fourth World Congress on Women, Beijing, Aug-Sep (1995). Retrieved 2005/10/04, from <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/28/index-aa.html>
- Unterhalter, E. (1999). Globalisation, gender and Curriculum 2005. *Agenda*, 41, 26-31.
- Vavrus, F. (2002). Constructing Consensus: The Feminist Modern and Reconstruction of Gender. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 5(1), 51-63.
- Walker, C. (1991). *Women and Resistance in South Africa*. New York, Monthly Review Press
- Walker, P. (Ed.). (1979). *Between Labour and Capital*. London: Harvester Press.

- Walters S. & Manicom L. (Eds.). (1993). *Gender in Popular Education Methods for Empowerment*. London: Zed Books.
- Webster, E. (1988). The rise of social movement unionism: The two faces of the black trade union movement in South Africa. In P. Frankel, N. Pines & M. Swilling (Eds.), *State, Resistance and Change in South Africa*. London: Croom Helm.
- Webster, E., Buhlungu, S. & Bezuidenhout, A. (2004). *Introduction to Sociology: Work and Organisations*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Weiler, K. (1988). *Women Teaching for Change: Gender, Class and Power*. Boston: Bergin and Garvey.
- Weiner, G. (2000). *Critical Review of Gender and Teacher Education in Europe*. *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, Volume 8, Number 2, pp 233-247.
- Wolf, N. (1997). *Promiscuities: The Secret Struggle for Womenhood*. Toronto: Random House.
- Wolpe, A.M., Quinlan O. & Martinez, L. (1997). *Gender Equity in Education: A Report by the Gender Equity Task Team*. Pretoria: Government Printers
- Wolpe, A.M. (2005). Reflections on the gender Equity Task Team. In L. Chisholm & J. September (Eds.), *Gender Equity in South African Education 1994-2004 – Perspectives from Research, Government and Unions. Conference Proceedings*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Wright, E.O. (1979). Intellectuals and Class Structure of Capitalist Society. In P. Walker (Ed.), *Between Labour and Capital*. London: Harvester Press Limited.
- Zavella, P. (2006). Feminist Insider Dilemmas: Constructing Ethnic Identity with Chicana Informant. In E. Lewin (Ed.), *Feminist Anthropology A Reader*. Boston: Blackwell.

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRES

First Interview

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The face-to-face interviews would be conducted in accordance with an interview schedule agreed upon by the research participants and the researcher. Each interview would be approximately two to three hours' long and each research participant would undergo two sets of interviews each. The first interview will focus on baseline life history data that is envisaged to reveal key critical moments or incidents in the research participants' life and experience that they consider transformational in promoting gender equity. The second interview will use the critical issues identified in the first interview to further research the experiences of women leaders in SADTU. The second interview will be scheduled before the National General Council of SADTU that will be convened in October 2005. A transcript and brief analysis of the interview will be submitted to the participant days after each session. Each analysis would include areas that I would like to explore and expand in the next session. The participants would be encouraged to reflect on the interview process and critique the brief analysis. They would be requested to submit written comments on their reflections, analysis and make recommendations for the next interview session. I will then incorporate this into my next interview session.

Possible focus areas for each interview:

1. Setting up rapport and baseline life history data
2. Role in the union
3. Gender agendas
4. Constraints
5. Impact of reflection on future direction in relation to gender equity.

FIRST INTERVIEW

Name of Research Participant:.....

Date of Interview:.....

Time of Interview:.....

Place of Interview:.....

Date of next interview:.....

1. The Research Study

- ◆ I will explain the purpose of the research study and obtain permission from participant to tape the interview.
- ◆ How do you feel about being part of this study? Why?
- ◆ What made you agree to be a research participant?
- ◆ What would you like to change in this study? Why?

- ◆ What would you like to see coming out of this study for yourself?
- ◆ What would you like to see coming out of this study for SADTU?
- ◆ What would you like to see coming out of this study for education in general?

2. The Researcher

- ◆ What are your thoughts about me conducting such research? Why? If not, who do you think is best placed to do a study like this?
- ◆ Who else would you have involved in the study and why?

3. Baseline Life History data

- ◆ What is your age/religion/first language/living arrangements (married/divorced etc) etc.?
- ◆ Tell me about your self. What adjectives will you use to describe yourself?

Parents/Grandparents

Siblings

Social grouping

Which member of the family had the most impact on you? Why?

Children, etc.

- ◆ Where did you grow up and go to school?
- ◆ What was your attitude towards school?
- ◆ What did you think about your teachers?
- ◆ Which teacher made the strongest impression on you? Why?
- ◆ How were boys and girls treated in your school? What did you think of that at that time? What do you think of that now? Has this shaped your world-view in any way? Explain.
- ◆ Why did you decide to become a teacher?
- ◆ Where and how did you study to become a teacher?
- ◆ What did you think about your preparation to become a teacher?
- ◆ Tell me about your teaching career? (First school, grade taught, subjects etc.)
- ◆ What were some of your experiences as a women member of staff in the different schools? How did you respond to these experiences?
- ◆ Did you enjoy being a teacher? Why?
- ◆ What were your politics as a learner in school, in a tertiary institution, as a teacher during apartheid and now?

- ◆ Tell me about yourself
- ◆ What are the key/critical moments/incidents in your life that shaped your life?
- ◆ What incidents in your personal life have impacted significantly on your public life?
- ◆ Why did you get involved in the union?
- ◆ How did you get involved in the union?
- ◆ Who is our role model? Why did you choose this person?
- ◆ Do you have a favourite poem, song, book etc.

Second Interview

Section A:

(To ascertain their understanding of the concepts of gender equity, equality and gender justice)

1. What is your understanding of the term “gender issues” and what do you associate this with?
2. Can you give me some examples of this in your personal life?
3. Can you give me examples of this in SADTU?
4. What have been your experiences as a woman in SADTU and as a woman leader in SADTU in terms of these gender issues? Was there a difference?
5. How have your prior experiences and beliefs about gender been confirmed, challenged or rejected in your stay in SADTU?
6. What are the attitudes, beliefs etc. that you recognize you have developed as a consequence of being a woman leader at SADTU? Do you think the male leaders would have had similar experiences? Why?
7. How do you think the union has performed in terms of gender equality, gender equity and gender justice? How has this been understood and communicated to members in SADTU? How have you experienced this as a woman leader in SADTU? To what extent have you engaged with these issues and how where you received?
8. Do you think that the union should prioritize issues of gender? Why and how do you think we should achieve this?
9. What would you consider as the greatest challenge facing SADTU in terms of gender? To what extent have you initiated transformation in this regard? If not, why? If yes, how and what impact did this have? (discuss SADTU Congress resolution on sexual harassment and gender equity)
10. Why do you think we have not had a woman provincial secretary or general secretary in the past ten years?
11. What would you want for yourself and other women leaders in SADTU?
12. What is your opinion of the Progressive Women’s Movement?
13. Progressive Women’s Movement

Section B:

General Reflections on the last SADTU Congress

1. What did you think about the programme of the Congress? What would you have liked to have seen included and or excluded as topics for presentations and discussions? Why? Who would you have liked to be included as a speaker on the programme? Why? (The programme will be made available to them)
2. Would you expect Congress to be representative of the overall percentage of women in the union? Why do you say so? Give them the percentage and ask their response.
3. In your experience at SADTU Congresses what is usually the level of participation by women leaders and delegates at the Congress? Why do you think this is so?
4. Have you spoken at any of the Congresses? What topic were you covering and how was it received? How did you feel standing up and speaking to the delegates at Congress? Why?
5. What is your overall impression of the women elected in national positions at Congress? Why do you think they were successful in being elected in this position? How do you think they will fair in the union and in their respective portfolios?

Section C:

The Zuma Saga

1. As a nation we view ourselves as living in a democracy, how has this democracy fared in terms of gender? (Does democracy require social equality etc.?)
2. What is your overall view of the position of women in South African society i.e. economically and socially? Why do you say this? Give examples.
3. What did you think about Zuma addressing the SADTU Congress? Why?
4. What do you think is the most significant things that have come out of the Zuma rape trial?
5. What challenges do you think the entire rape trial has put on the issues of gender in South Africa?
6. How did SADTU engage in the rape trial? Where you pleased with this? Why? How do you think SADTU should have responded to the rape trial?
7. Article on: "Zuma's story "laughable, fanciful" by Amy Musgrave and Jenni Evans (Mail and Guardian 26th April 2006)

The questions below will be asked before they read the article:

Questions

There are several reasons given for sexual harassment and sometimes for rape, what do you think of the following reasons:

- She deserved to be raped because she was wearing a short skirt?
- She was asking for it by going into his bedroom, home etc.
- She was willing because she was having a few drinks?

Research participants will then read the article and give their comments about the gender dynamics that the trial has exposed. They will be told to ignore

that the person was Zuma (it could be any other powerful man) but to look at it from a gender perspective.

- How are women represented in this article?
- What ideas/perceptions/attitudes do you think these issues will elicit in society (from men and women) about women in general, i.e. how do you think this article is likely to be interpreted?
- Do you think this article could have been communicated differently? Why and how?
- Explain what impact and challenges you think this trial has had on gender issues in SADTU in particular and South Africa in general.

Section D:

Possible questions for questionnaire/creative writing/collage exercise:

On being woman

Creative Writing:

1. Write about your personal journey as a woman to this point in your life.
2. Write about your public journey as a woman leader in SADTU.
3. Choose a poem/song/movie etc. that best describes you as a woman.
4. Write a dear sister letter to a young female unionists aspiring to become a leader in the union.
5. Write a letter to an aspiring young woman leader advising her on her quest.

Collage:

6. As a woman I am expected to be.....
7. As a woman I am expected to do.....
8. As a woman leader in SADTU I am expected to be.....
9. As a woman leader in SADTU I am expected to do.....
10. But this is who I want to be and this is what I want to do.....

Open-ended questions:

11. What would I want for myself and other woman leaders in SADTU?
12. State the women you regard as role models for women in South Africa. Motivate why you have chosen these women.

APPENDIX 2: NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Zuma's story 'laughable, fanciful'

AMY MUSGRAVE AND JENNI EVANS | JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA -
Apr 26 2006 17:55



The state pulled out all the stops on Wednesday to prove that Jacob Zuma raped an HIV-positive woman, saying his version of events was "laughable" and "fanciful".

Prosecutor Charin de Beer described Zuma's details of November 2 last year as "recent fabrication" to enhance his claim of consensual sex.

De Beer, who read the state's closing arguments from a thick file, said the woman would not have had sex with him without a condom, to protect her health. If she had wanted to have sex, she would have made sure one was handy.

The woman had also described herself as a lesbian, saying her last sex with a man was in July 2004. Before that, it was 1999.

She rejected Zuma's explanation that he went ahead with condom-less sex because, in his Zulu culture, he could be accused of rape for leaving a woman sexually aroused.

"This is such an absurd reason to continue without a condom that it ought to be rejected out of hand as false. At the most it may be the Zuma tradition."

De Beer also cast doubt on Zuma's HIV status, saying the result showing he was HIV-negative was not submitted as part of court documents.

She said the woman would not have had sex with him because she viewed him as an uncle and had great respect for him. "He played a supportive and advisory role."

On November 2 the woman went to Zuma's Johannesburg home after hearing that a relative had been bitten by a snake in Swaziland. She says Zuma invited her, Zuma says she invited herself. De Beer said it was important for Zuma that the woman be seen to have invited herself over.

She said at this stage Zuma did not have a plan to rape the woman, but saw it as an opportunity to have sex with her. She said that when the complainant arrived, he made her feel at ease to eliminate any resistance.

De Beer rejected Zuma's evidence that the woman wore a skirt, sat inappropriately and later wore a kanga (wrap) without underwear to seduce him.

Questions Zuma posed about boyfriends and her need for a companion were an attempt by him to indirectly probe her availability. Although Zuma testified that the complainant had brought up the boyfriend conversations, De Beer said this was unlikely as she was a lesbian.

"Boyfriends are not the main thing on her brain."

De Beer said that Zuma, by ordering the woman twice to prepare for bed and then showing her the guest bedroom, and the bed she should sleep in, indicated that he wanted her out of sight, and not sharing a room with his daughter, Duduzile.

Zuma told the court the woman had gone to his house as she had something important to discuss with him and mentioned this often throughout the night. He later went to wake her up to allow her to discuss the matter.

This scenario was unlikely and the woman, who has often been described as very talkative, would have been unable to keep the matter to herself for that long.

Zuma claims that after working he went to the woman in the guest room and told her to go up to his bedroom to discuss the matter. This was a test as he suspected the woman wanted to have sex.

"At the time the accused starts a series of monologues with himself," said De Beer, recalling Zuma's testimony that he wondered why she wore the kanga and how she would react to him.

The woman never told him what she wanted to talk about.

"The accused's patience in this regard borders on the superhuman. It is late and she still did not talk about what she wanted to talk about. It is simply not true," she said.

It was "laughable" that the woman did not say anything when Zuma suddenly undressed in front of her. His mixing up of the sequence of events in the bedroom was typical of what happens when "one fabricates a story".

She said the absence of baby oil on the kanga the woman wore to bed also cast doubt on his account of a pre-coital massage. "The whole massage story was to make the complainant look like the initiator in the run up to sex."

Zuma testified that after the sex he had a shower and she left his room.

He went to the guest room afterwards because he was worried and thought he might need to do some "damage control".

It would have been normal for a man to phone a woman after they have had consensual sex if the woman had accused the man of rape. Zuma did not immediately do this.

Testimony that he was willing to pay lobola, as suggested by her "aunts", was "to get rid of his problem. It was an obsession to get her to drop the charge."

Efforts to drop rape charge

There was little doubt KwaZulu-Natal finance minister Zweli Mkhize tried to arrange for compensation to get her to drop the charge. "There is little doubt Mkhize tried to broker a settlement," De Beer told the court.

This was substantiated by a lawyer, Yusuf Dockrat, who pushed the complainant to drop the charge. She said Dockrat denied doing this, probably because he wanted to be seen as having behaved ethically.

De Beer agreed with Judge Willem van der Merwe that if the charge was false, Mkhize would have made the same efforts.

She said that on November 9, Zuma tried to phone the complainant eight times. She answered the ninth time after her minder in witness protection told her to. Zuma had asked to see her.

"[This was a] personal attempt by the accused to persuade the complainant to withdraw the charge," De Beer said.

On the medical evidence, the absence of any foreplay and a lack of vaginal lubrication proved there was no consent.

"On her version, it is clear that she was raped," De Beer said.

It is not yet known whether Van der Merwe will allow her past sexual history, which included allegations of numerous false rape accusations, many of which were allegedly directed at ministers of religion.

Van der Merwe said he would place great importance on the testimony of a pastor, who was also her boarding master. Her mother thought he may have impregnated her daughter during one of her blackouts.

She had an abortion at five months.

"A lot will turn on what I make of the boarding master's evidence," said Van der Merwe. "If it was not rape ... what then?"

De Beer said it was very telling Zuma's lawyer Michael Hulley was not called to the stand to back Zuma's claim that he did not point out the guest room as the scene of the crime, as two police officers had testified. -- Sapa

APPENDIX 3: FIRST LEVEL HARMONISED NARRATIVES

1. The Girl-child

1

When I think about myself as a child,
I wonder why I didn't become more forceful,
Why wasn't I strong?
Why was I a vulnerable child?

2

I was growing up, with the fear of sexual predators in our environment.
I felt threatened when he was standing next to me in the middle of the night.
People that were there doing these terrible things could be your own family,
They damaged our psyche, our self-worth.

3

I was fair game because I was a child of an unwed mother,
That's why I had to stand up for myself,
That's what made me speak for myself,
Because no-one else is gonna speak up for me.

2. Father

1

When my father gets home we must feel his presence,
We might be laughing and talking but when he gets home,
We must feel his presence and all of a sudden we must be quiet.
I began to understand why mother was so withdrawn,
Here was the fear he would impose because he was so violent.

2

I think that my father was really a strange kind of person,
Very submissive,
I think it was this whole political thing that he knew he was married across the colour line
He was more afraid of the apartheid regime and police.
Therefore he left everything in my mum's hands,
He never wanted to go to town, to do shopping or to open accounts because he needs to show
his I.D. and he was afraid of being caught.
In those years not withstanding the might of apartheid, these marriages did happen.

3

He treated me differently.
If it was up to him I will be protected in a glass.
I will play with other children when he is not there and when he is there I must be at home.
He always wanted to see me in front of him,
I don't know why?

4

So now that I am grown up and I am a leader,
I now say that I am where I am because of my father,
At a very early age my father would encourage analysis
He built my analytical and critical thinking.

3. Mother

1

My mother is a very passive person,
She comes from a rural community, and married at the age of fifteen,
With very little education

If I talk about my mother's role, she played the typical women, who stayed at home, who raised the children, and who, could not go out into public, without my father or some other members of my family.

Her entire world was very restricted and limited.

2

I was born, when my mother was very young, she was a teenage mother,
I was raised by my grandmother, she was a professional woman, she was a nurse, she did inspire me, and she was a leader

3

My mother believed that the women's place was in the kitchen and that women had to be married.
As I engaged in my pursuit for gender equality I met with opposition from my mother but not from my father.

4

And when I reflect on my mother's view of life I think she faced a tremendous challenge
She was a young woman who was widowed with children and she undertook that responsibility with absolute dignity.
My mother's life shows that the strength of a woman does not necessarily lie in her level of education
But in the strength that she has from within to control her environment or to be in control of her environment.
My mother was the most perfect example.

5

Watching my mother as I was growing up,
In the way I saw it,
I decided for myself that would never happen to me.
I could never live with that kind of restriction,
I could never live with somebody, who could decide on my life, or, on setting limitations on my life.

6

I want to tell you what keeps me going
I decided I am not going to get married,
I vowed I will not get married because I saw the hatred as a child,
I doubt if there was any love between my mother and father.
I realised for me to go where I want there must be no hurdle of a husband

4. Growing up as a Girl

1

When my mother died I saw the doors of learning being closed.
I was the only woman now,
I will wake up and clean, I will cook, I will make the garden, I will chop the wood and I will make fire, while my two brothers did nothing
I then decided to fight for myself.
I refused to cook, when they ask why is there no food, I said because there is no fire because you won't chop the wood.
You chop the wood and then I will make fire and cook the food.
Or else we will all starve
So they all had to take responsibility.
I succeeded at home

2

I started reading novels when I was in standard two, and I went through phases and read all Hardy Boys every one of them.

All of Nancy Drews, every one of them.
I was reading Mills and Boon and my brother saw me
“You don’t read that rubbish, put it away!”
Well with all the sex in there.
I mean, it’s about sexuality, you know, we had to suppress our sexuality.

3

I was so upset and embarrassed and humiliated by it, and then after that he called me and
said he was sorry and he won’t do that again and
I mustn’t say anything to anybody and I didn’t.
But it sometimes made me feel sort of dirty,
Did I do something to encourage it?
It made me feel like, you know, I don’t know, how to say it.
It made me feel yucky about myself, you know, why would he do that to me?
Why me?

4

I felt it was unfair, I remember as a teenager, we went to buy the groceries for the family
And came back around, say, half past five, six,
We’d find that they haven’t closed the curtains, they haven’t turned on the lights, they
haven’t cooked supper, and they are waiting for us.
They wouldn’t do anything until we’re back,
they were all adults, you know.

5

We were told that as good girls
We should be respectful, not have loud mouths as girls.
That is what my mother taught us, we should behave ladylike from a small age.
I questioned her how do you behave when you behave ladylike?
You don’t climb trees like the boys and you don’t play rough like the boys.
I was angry with them for having all the privileges to do what they feel like doing.
We must forever be told we must do things in a specific way.
I had never heard her telling them how they should behave, where they must go and so on.
To me girls were being disciplined all the time.

5. In the Classroom

1

Education was not just for the boys, it was my parents, their inheritance,
What they so bequeathed to us,
So every one of us, all my brothers and sisters, all of us have a university education, there
was a premium placed on that.

The moment I entered my high school, the gender war began
In standard 9 we had to make a choice of careers.
It was then that we saw the complete bias in terms of subjects that the girls had to take and
the boys had to take.
There was no guidance in terms of why girls had to take these subjects and boys take that.

2

My grade 8 and 9 years were very interesting because I found that only around 7 of us
proceeded to standard ten to do mathematics.
Mathematics was considered to be the domain of the boys.
So it became a fight and it became a losing fight for us to take on because most of the girls
who wanted to study maths were complete underachievers.
But this was as a result of their experience and exposure to teachers who taught them, they
created negativity towards the subject, therefore the girls did not have the flare to take up the
subject.

3

I think the same thing happened in the technical subjects.
Here too women were given the last of the share.
The only time you were recognised as a woman is if you achieved and you excelled.
If you were not one of those high flyers nobody paid attention.

I had the worst maths teacher from grade 8 to 12.
I found that particular individual, who was an excellent mathematician but the worst teacher,
He terrified most of my female friends for mathematics.
When I meet them now, almost all of them that he dissuaded to do maths
They are excellent home executives with no academic success behind themselves because of
the negative experience they had at school.
So it did have its effect and I cannot say much for their families because I don't know
beyond that.

4

In school I noticed that the boys were getting a hiding from behind and we were getting a
hiding on our hands.
The teachers will always tell us that the girls must sweep the classroom.
Girls had to do these tasks
The boys would leave and we would have to stay behind for half an hour.
We were given a roster, like this week these five girls will have to sweep the classroom.
I was angry. I was very rebellious. I was angry because I was lazy, I did not want to do that
work.

5

There was a teacher, my mathematics teacher.
He was a chauvinist; I think he did not like girls.
Really he had no respect for a child or human beings.
He was just a brutal man
He was completely negative.
I think everything I knew about math's he destroyed.
I was in standard 6 when he became my math's teacher.
He was fearful, he really instilled fear.
He was just a brutal person; he was not made for teaching.
And he taught for all his life at that high school.
He was a beast of a person.
It was the worst experience for me,
I had nightmares the whole year.

6. Forced Removals

1

We were expropriated in terms of Land act at that time.
And we were removed from our home forcefully, and placed in another area
It happened before I started my primary school
There were no schools in this area and I was forced to travel to a school in the outlying area
until schools did get built in this area.

2

We're talking about the Group Areas Act and the devastation that that brought,
One moment we're there, our home is there,
They knocked the houses down,
That was a very defining moment,
And I remember having to be forced to move,
I didn't understand what was going on
I'll never forget this one little thing, it was a very lovely house with wooden floors, and then

there was a letter to say the compensation is 20,000 and we needed to move. We were
fortunate enough there was money that allowed us to build our own home,
I think that was the point at which, the whole question of race, oppression, the violence arose
in me
If I flashback now, I remember some man running down the street and gets stabbed, and he's
lying there bleeding to death on the street,
I remember the police stopping and chasing kids playing ball on the road, you know those
were all our crimes of the apartheid police, using Gestapo methods,
It got me thinking about what is going on and how do we respond to it,
I also felt a bit annoyed with my father for not being an activist,
He was a businessman, he wanted to play safe, and not be out there on the siege, sort of, you
know, in the firing line,
But there were other people who I knew that were, well involved.

3

It was like death in the family
I remember my parents cried for a long time
My father was never the same person after that.
I think they thought they were going to live there forever until they passed away.
We lived on a small holding, we had cows, pigs, big pigs, and we used to ride them.
It was really like a small piece of heaven for us.
We were told to leave our home in two days time
The worst part of it all was, we took half of our furniture to that place
They had built these sub-economic houses for us
It was a three bedroom house, with small bedrooms and a dining room, kitchen and
bathroom.
Only half of our furniture could get into that house.
Two days later when my father and my brothers returned to our old house to fetch the rest of
the furniture the house was completely burnt down to ashes.
All the animals were gone, the pigs, the cows that little pony of ours, the chickens more than
30 chickens, close to 50 and my brothers had these pigeon caves and bird caves.
All gone, nothing was left.
Oh it was a Horrible, Horrible, horrible experience.
That was the time I started to hate, hate whites with a passion.

4

Why did we have to buy through the window?
I grew up in the age when my mum had to buy groceries through the window of a shop.
You can't go into the main shop because we were not white
If a white person came in they will serve the white person inside the shop first and then
come back to serve the queue at the window
My mum would take us to town and we would stand with her.
Once I remembered she wanted to buy a few bananas,
We stood in the queue for almost an hour.
We were crying because we were hungry, and she just wanted to buy bananas for us. She had
to wait to buy from that small window
She gave us a hiding.
Those experiences really shook me.
On that day I said to myself that my mother looked better than the whites.
She took pride in herself, always dress up for any occasion.
She was a very smart woman.
I asked myself how can they⁴⁸ make a smart woman stand here and wait for hours to be
served through this window.
I thought that it was only people who dressed dirty should buy through the window.

⁴⁸ Apartheid

It was a terrible experience.

7. Culture and Race

1

I was the first of the kind.
Nobody had lost a parent; no first child was a female.
I was the first in the family.
I met with a lot of resistance, particularly from my male relatives
I felt that they viewed me in a manner that made me feel I was less a human being because I
assumed this kind of role
And they overestimated my strength.
I think that became the springboard for my success because the more they expected of me
the stronger I became.
So when you look back on a traditional family you will know that conservativeness and
biasness is an inherent thing.
So it is not something I could run away from, it was very difficult to face traditional
questions and relationships and roles in society and so forth at social gatherings.
As a result I tended to shy away from social gatherings because it kind of demoralised me.
More so I could not engage in the conversations at the level were some of my extended
families where.
So I joined these as less as possible, I did not ignore them.
I respected where they came from because at the end of the day they subscribed to a certain
philosophy and I subscribed to something different.

A lot of the women in my family of my extended family have actually used me as a mentor.
Particularly with the rise in my public profile, a lot of people saw that as an example that
they needed to follow and did so.
The women in my family have become leaders in their own right.
Many of them will phone me to say can we use this from your book and I didn't have a
problem with that.

2

It is a very backward province,
There are strong traditional, cultural and patriarchal values among the men in our province.
I cannot believe that ten or eleven years down the line, our comrades who can read our
constitution, can be so reactionary in the way they think, or so conservative in the way they
think,
They claim that they don't put a woman in a leadership position just because you can put a
woman there,
You must put a woman there because she's good.
So we ask them, whether all the men they have put in leadership posts,
Have been tested and found to be good?

3

They will put in a woman in a leadership position who they have power over.
But I became a leader because I have the history
I am more than all the other women, I am the history.
I have come through the ranks and compared to a lot of them I have the historical perspective
of this union,
I have the respect of other teacher unions,
They know that I am not a pushover, that when I do go and lead a delegation they know that
they can feel comfortable that I'll be doing the right thing,

4

In the province they respect us women because we are both articulate,
And we are strong about our thinking on whatever the issues.

But in the region it's clear that they will elect for the women they know will be subservient,
and will be easily manipulated,
Women that are part of their social ring, so when they are doing visits, then they are not
taking their coals to Newcastle
That sort of thing.

5

I have realised and what the male leadership have learnt through hard knocks
They can wish, they can have their own wish-list
But the people will speak.

6

He was going to mobilise around my name,
He was going to put my name out there
Because they needed to bring in a woman,

As far back as nineteen- ninety when the internationals visited,
They'd walk into the boardroom of SADTU and they used to complain that there were no
women and only men present.

Now the thing is,
The only way we're going to have gender balance is when we have a revolution,
And only now are we taking that revolution seriously.

7

NUSAS joined in block.
We had reservation about joining SADTU.
We thought our militancy will be diluted.
We were reluctant to participate.
So COSATU would try to persuade us at mass meetings
But we had our reservations that the whites, coloureds and Indians would weaken our
militancy.
We wanted to go it alone as NUSA.
But we weighed the pro and cons
We started to actively call ourselves SADTU in 1991.

8. Personality

1

I was a follower, not a leader,
I was the person that when the things were organized I was there
And I would help with whatever needed to be done,
But I was not part of the inner circle.

2

Part of my own limitations, is that, I don't push myself into places,
I don't have the confidence that people think
OK I can stand on the platform and address ten thousand people or whatever
But I mean I cant, I am, I can be quite reserved as a person,
And so I think that limited my participation.

3

Again, its like, I could have been a lot more active had I been tutored or mentored by
somebody. Somebody who was a stronger,
You know, someone who will pull me out of where I come from to where I wanted to go,
Because I couldn't make it on my own.

9. Political stirrings

1

I was in high school when I started getting my political influence
I was at a boarding school
Most of the kids were from different parts of South Africa,
I think that's when I started becoming political,
Even knowing about Nelson Mandela,
Before I went to high school, I never even knew that there was a person called Nelson
Mandela,
So we used to have those discussions in school
Then one of my relatives was killed in a raid in Maputo
One of my mother's relative, he was very close to my mother's family,
He used to love life, so he died there...
I think from that time I became political

2

We had a teacher, who was teaching us mathematics
And well I was useless in maths,
But, he managed to politicise us
And then there was the Wilson Rowntree strike,
We supported the strike and we were no longer buying those products from the tuck shop
until the strike was over

3

I must foreground the fact that we had a political landscape in the country.
I was made well aware of that in my family prior to being schooled
So I went to school with an open mind in terms of how the curriculum was to be delivered to
me because my father was arrested for protest for dealing with educational bias.
So I had my grounding then.

4

I couldn't understand what my father and mother were trying to explain to us about the group
areas act and what happened to our home.
How we were taken out and put to stay where we are currently.
I couldn't understand that until I experienced it myself.
And it was when the social life of my family had no distinction with any colour.
We had white friends to African friends, Indian friends, to coloured friends we had
everybody and when we used to go out on family outings
I can remember a time when we were on a beach on the South coast of Natal
We picnicked as a family with all the races
Later we found that we had unknown to ourselves tress passed on private property
We didn't know that some of the beaches where actually private property and were the
domain of the whites.
So my father and I put up a strong fight
I was nine.
We put up a fight.
We were not given a chance to explain, my father was arrested and he was taken away.
And with him I was bundled away.
I as a kid and put in a separate cell
So it became a horrible experience
but I think it intensified my resistance to the apartheid struggle.

5

And then finally one day we were at the now famous Midmar Dam
And we found much to our disgust there were separate entrances for different race groups.
We were unaware of that
We had white friends who had come down from England and had joined us on the family
picnic. We were told that they have to enter through a separate entrance.
So they must actually go to the section for whites and then we asked how do we socialise?

They replied that in this country you don't socialise with people of different race groups.
It was brutal.
The police was brutal.
So that time I was thirteen and it was the second arrest again with my father
So we got arrested twice.
It was my first year in High school. I think it cemented feelings of rebellion.
It cemented rebellion in high school and my university life.
I wanted to be part of a grouping that subscribed to this philosophy
And that's how I became involved in politics

6

Certainly, 1976 was a defining moment
I think emotionally it burned a hole inside of me, the killings.
I know I went around for a week crying, because I just couldn't believe some people could
actually do that.
Then the activism started on campus, I mean the struggle was heating up, and then, you had
to make the change,
It was frightening but at the same time it had to happen,
I started teaching and when the schools' boycott started
The police came and threatened me, for encouraging the kids to leave the class and join the
boycott.
And of course now I'm in a real core group, a real activist.

10. Identity

I was not a member of that union (**named changed**),
I refused to become a member,
I just think, it was just such an (**race removed**) sort of grouping,
I didn't feel comfortable there at all.

11. Activism

I think another defining moment for my activism, was around the cleaners strike
And I can very proudly say it might be recorded in some corner,
It was myself and Lulama⁴⁹ who started the entire campaign to increase the wages of our
cleaners.
And we mobilised right across the province, just the two of us.
The poverty and suffering of people, I'd always felt it.
You had to do something about it, you can't just sit back and let other people do it,
and working with the right people you know,
I've been able to make an impact on history

12. Student Politics

1

I was part of the SRC.
I became involved in student politics right from campus.
So these were my very formal years of becoming involved in student politics at the
provincial level.
It's when I became very rebellious, I believe very rebellious,
I was involved in the student strikes of 1980, 1981,
I was arrested more than three or four times during that period on campus.
I retaliated most when the security police harassed the women.

2

During the years of apartheid everybody was under suspicion.
It wasn't like open activism, you were very careful not to land into real trouble with the

⁴⁹ Name changed

police.

I came from a conservative family and my parents have sent me to college with the little money they had.

So I was very careful not to play a leading role and land in trouble, the next day your parents hear you are in jail, you are expelled from the college and so on.

So I only attended the meetings, the rallies and be part of the mob

Then the secret police came to our hostel, there were five who were caught.

They came late at night and they were questioning us about the meeting we attended.

I was scared to death.

I really thought “you are a small little thin girl and you are going to jail for the rest of your life. I only thing I was thinking about was Robben Island.”

The secret police can take you away in the middle of the night and you will disappear.

Actually I was thinking they were going to kill us if they took us away from this place.

I was scared about going to jail and of dying

After that I was quiet, much quieter.

But I still had the burning desire to become a real activist like your Patricia de Lille from the PAC or Cheryl Carolus from the UDF.

But it was dangerous if you stayed in the hostel, it was dangerous.

You were exposing yourself.

3

I was a follower, not a leader,

I was the person that when the things were organised I was there and I would help with whatever needed to be done, but I was not part of the inner circle.

Part of that is my own personality, my own limitation

I don't push myself into places,

I don't have the confidence that people think

I can stand on the platform and address ten thousand people or whatever but I am quite reserved as a person,

So I think that limited my participation.

13. Expectations of being a Woman

1

My grandmother wouldn't like the fact that I smoke and I drink

It is more about girls having to behave in a particular way,

What kind of mother are you going to make if you are this and that?

If you are a loose girl and if you don't have proper guidance?

You know,

What kind of a woman are you going to make if you don't have that control?

2

Our male cousins could come back, any other time, any odd time,

I used to complain to my grandmother

Then she says to me “oh they are boys, you can't ask them”

That was my personal gripe.

Well I think I had to sort of try and change things, they couldn't be like that forever.

But I conformed,

However I told myself that I needed to do everything that they wanted,

so that when I'm through with school I can be independent

And I will not have to be constantly under their eye – the parents, the grandparents, the uncles.

14. Taking the Lead

1

In '87 I became a student leader,

They co-opted me to be the deputy chairperson,

I was so scared,

To the extent that I never said a word in those meetings
Because they were all so clever, that was why, and they used to laugh,
When you speak, like in a public forum, in the gallery when you speak
I remember one girl who spoke in that forum.
Oh! The comrades laughed!
But this woman was not phased out at all.
I was so scared, I wanted to say something.
But when I heard that laughter, ridiculing her, I thought, my God, I will never say a word in
this forum
You have to be very brave to speak in a public forum, even worse if it's dominated by men,
you understand?
But there was an added factor that they are going to ridicule you if you don't speak sense,
you understand?
I was so afraid.
But all of that changed I don't know when.

2

I was already an activist in the province
When SADTU was launched
I became the first secretary, of the first branch of SADTU

15. Male Domination

1

My name popped up during election time to oppose a man and an African man at that!
And I said, "oh no, I can never do that I'll be knocked out"
I was told the day before the elections by the chairperson, "You will say yes"
He just said that to me, "You will say yes", and he walked away
I respected him because he was such a good leader,
Then the nominations came and I accepted it,
I had given my opposition a hiding, it was overwhelming.
Everybody was celebrating because they didn't like him,
But the fact that I got that many votes was a huge vote of confidence.
Then at the next round of elections the whole chessboard started,
I should have left then.

2

I was under-utilised in my position
I didn't do any negotiations.
I am pretty good at it,
I've shown my skills in chairing meetings, in being able to speak on behalf of the union
wherever I've been invited,
I don't think that anyone would be disappointed in the work that I've done,
But you can't be a chairperson because you're not African; you're not male, right.
I can't be a secretary either, because the secretaries must be an African male.
Yes that's how they feel, they cannot see a woman in the role of the secretary,
A woman at that,
No way!
But you have to put a woman somewhere.

3

In the last elections I was hoping to challenge one of the men, Ben (name changed)
But it seems as if he had protection
You see, the guys play their own game here,
Ben is being protected by the male comrades.
Everybody, every region will tell you that he hasn't done his work, everybody fights with
him, they don't like what he's doing, but nobody is prepared to move him out. Why?
Somebody's told them to keep him in, and so there is no way I could challenge him for that

post.

4

The guys say that I chair better than he does,
I am more democratic in the way I chair the meetings,
I am more focused and my meetings don't take forever like his meetings,
I'm able to conclude on issues effectively, taking into consideration all the people.
In fact, the leadership complimented me
And so they recognise that I have these skills.
What I think I don't do, which is what they would love me to do more of, is to run up and
down the country, in provinces, visiting here and doing that,
I don't want to do it, I won't do it unless I'm invited, and I don't go unless it's important.
I won't do it.
They must let me know in advance so I can prepare for it,
They can't tell me this morning you need me there, I won't go.
They don't like that kind of thing about me, I said it to them "I don't care."

5

One period they voted me out
Because there was a campaign to bring in an African male,
I refused to challenge another male for another position
"I'm was going to stick to my guns, this is the post I'm in, you must nominate me, so if you
don't want me, don't nominate me, I'm fine",
I lost to this guy, Lesley (name changed).
And not less than two months later Lesley got a post in the department, and he left the union
flat.
And what did they do?
They begged me to come back,
I refused but after much persuasion I came back again.
But there was no space to raise my issues
They just say "the people have spoken"
Finished.

6

We have had women as provincial secretaries.
But now it is linked to money.
Anything with money is a man's domain.
That is how it works.
Even in developing programmes women come together in a community to run a
development programme , the minute the government says it is going to fund the
programme,
They kick all the women out and the people who begin to run are men.
So when women are doing there things no value is attached to it,
As soon as somebody recognises what they are doing and they want to put resources into it,
the men kick them out.
You can go anywhere in Africa its happening,
It's not unique to South Africa.

7

It's a question of people voting for women as provincial secretaries
Male comrades will only vote for men.
People need to workshop male comrades on women in leadership.
You have comrades who put males in leadership, if he does not do well, they will take him
out and just put another male.
Not because they have capacity but because they are male.
But it is not about capacity it's about this position, earning money and power.
It's given that the male is to have that.

8

I think as a woman you can't say I want to be a provincial secretary,
It's a question of who wants you to be whatever.
The men do the nominating.
So whoever is leading the lobby and that is the men.
But you can see the system is not working, but you can't say
They will do away with you and they won't say why, they won't say why you are unfit.
For instances I had my own view on one secretary that I thought was not up to scratch and
then come the conference and the same person was elected.
So its not a true democracy in terms of let us look at all these positions and choose the strong
candidate regardless of gender,
It's about who is lobbying for you and what the politics are

9

It is a question of power.
We don't look at what goes into that power,
What do the provinces say about this person being in this position?
We had other options but it depends where the position comes from.
It is not about whether the person can deliver
It is about where the loyalty lies.
We don't care about the organisation,
It's about who he supports.

10

Yes, because it is valued then it must be men it can't be women.
Therefore you have women in the vice president positions because they are not valued.
The valued position will be given to men until we stand together as women.

16. Teaching during Apartheid

1

1999 was very eventful
The violence in the hostels in Gauteng, Thokosa, Katlehong.
The Zulus were killing everybody.
Ay! It was such a horrible time
In the staff room some of the teachers in that school in Ulundi were so proud of those
killings
They used to have long debates
But when I asked, 'But how can you celebrate such a horrible thing, how can you ever?'
Some of them then became ashamed and the debates would die out.

2

Then, ay, the phone-calls started,
People phoning our school and making threats, and others, you know like cleaners who were
pro-IFP, tried to threaten me,
I said, "No-one is going to make me do anything, not even the big men with the big
stomachs and the knobkerries will make me do anything".
They were saying, "We know there's an ANC person there, and we are going to come and
kill you"
"We are going to come inside your gates and take you one by one."
I knew I won't last there
I resigned the next week.

3

I was scheduled to do the assembly on my last day,
To read the book and facilitate the prayers in the morning,
Well I just opened the bible and the verse that I read was about the angels of god, corrupt

rulers of apartheid and things like that
I said everything that was eating me up, corrupt rulers, anyway they won't last, even the
scriptures tell us, ah!
The kids were so excited they were singing so loud,
That day I packed everything, and I was out of there.

4

We refused to be crushed by the lackeys of the apartheid government.
Our Principal was reactionary and he had invited the national party Head of Education, to the
official opening of the school,
We, the teachers were not going to accept this.
He was adamant and told us that the school will have to sing National Anthem-Die Stem".
We said we will never sing that anthem, the kids will never sing that anthem, we will not
allow it.
We fought like death, we fought,
So he asked us to write our own school song for the official opening
We wrote the song out, we taught it to all the children, and they sang this song instead of
"Die Stem".
On that day when Krog did come, we all wore black; we refused to be part of the opening,
We stood outside and let him do what he had to do

17. Gender and the National Liberation Struggle

1

I don't think the national struggle gave equally to the issues of gender
We did recognise that there is a need to fight on women's issues,
But those women's issues would only be discussed among us as women,
And then there were these big broader issues that were happening with the men in the
boardroom that we needed to be part of as well,
and so I think that the national issues , and everybody felt the same way, was about liberating
the country, it was about defeating the enemies of apartheid , it was about, bringing
everybody home

18. Teaching Experiences

1

Here I was fresh out of the college into this farm school. I was given a combined class up to
standard one, all in one class.
That was my first experience, I felt very sorry for the kids then,
Then I realised that I should rather have been a social worker than a teacher.
I felt very sorry for the people who could not read and write, they were such humble people.
I think I learnt from them more about life from anyone.
That experienced really shaped me in a big way.
The people taught me about human relationships.
They would come during the lunch break with their heartfelt stories.
They taught me that there is more to life than just wanting to be this educated teacher, to earn
a salary.
I was forced to live with them and I learnt a lot from them about trying under difficult
circumstances.
And the most important lesson in life is to be true to yourself and no matter who you are or
what you might have in life, you are all human beings at the end of the day and we are bound
by destinies.
I really learnt to share what I had.
So I said to myself I should become involved in some way to improve the future life of this
country.
I should become a voice for them in the future.
At that time we did not think apartheid would come to an end.
But I said to myself wherever I am I am going to make a difference and play some kind of
role.

2

Everything I was taught at college just did not apply.
Only the didactics assisted
I was lucky I took all my apparatus from college but I struggled.
It was a battle I cannot put into words.

What made me survive was that I was a teacher
And in that community there were very few role models.
So the happiness was that I was there
So the community accepted my leadership.

19. Expectation of SADTU

1

I wasn't part of the unity talks, we just read in the papers about the formation of SADTU,
We were waiting for SADTU
I was just excited about SADTU
We would say in Zulu 'My heart is just singing for SADTU'

We were ready for the challenge,
We were rubbing our hands and saying "When?"
We were ready to invite anybody,
We were ready to start rolling.

2

SADTU will sort out all the problems,
Remember that time women were still earning less than the men,
We didn't have maternity leave,
You had to resign if you fell pregnant,
All sorts of funny things that people think are ridiculous today.
And also remember the housing subsidy?
Divorced and single women couldn't get a housing subsidy.
All those problems,
SADTU had to do something

3

I had read in the paper about the formation of this new teacher union that was in the pipeline
and in the making.
The different teacher formations in the county are about to launch this new united teachers
union and it will be called the South African democratic teacher Union.
So I was immediately very interested.
When the national organiser came to our school, I was extremely anxious,
I sat in the first row.
He spoke so powerfully and he said everything I wanted to hear all my life.
I couldn't get enough from just listening to him.
We couldn't wait for him to finish the meeting so that we could join this new union.
I wanted to play a leadership role in this union
But once the men started to ask all the questions all the women were silent
At that time I was not that confident to speak in a big meeting
and I could not find the right questions to us.
But I was burning inside to really become very part of this union
also because I was always fighting with the principal of the school.
Maybe it was subconscious he was a man and I was a woman
I didn't want to be treated like the way he treated me.

4

I saw this new union as this big hope I have been praying for.

It was going to be very progressive and was not going to be afraid to tackle anything. And I saw it as my prayers being answered and that through this union I would find a way of addressing this burning issue of discrimination against women

That nobody talked about

Even in the ANC the issue of women empowerment and the whole issue of talking about the position of women in society only began to feature in the processes leading to the 1994 elections in the country.

It was the first time really that people started to discuss the role of women and everything concerning women.

I said to myself this progressive teachers union definitely is going to do something for women and therefore I must attend all their meetings and must learn as fast as I can about them so that when there is an opportunity to be elected I must be elected.

I was the very first woman site steward in the whole of that province.

20. Violence against Girls

1

I wrestled with the issue of violence against girls.

One boy hit a girl in the class,

I just said to him, “hey you are such a brave man you are fighting with somebody who won’t be able to defend herself”,

Everyone laughed and clapped

I tried to conscientise the boys

to ask “how can you hit someone who’s vulnerable?...that you know very well who will not retaliate?”

2

I used to warn the girls about the taxi man and the Kentucky.

I’d say to them, ‘Have a vision. Where do you see yourself after you leave this school? Stick with that, look at that picture and stick with it and focus on it, don’t let anything else deter you’...

It used to kill me to see those girls fall pregnant and leave school,

Some of them were actually very good students,

You could just tell that this one can go very far

3

(Removed and placed in Chapter Six)

21. Support

1

Of course I had a strong team of women behind me,

Those comrades that I mentioned worked with me

So I always had something solid to present at national level,

That is why I was one of the two comrades considered for a national position

2

But that changed when Anna⁵⁰ came on board, because even this layer of women had moved on to other things,

The new women, Anna was a very destructive influence, very, very destructive

For example, one day I overheard her, she doesn’t know this, I overheard her say, ‘Hey, these (race removed) women, they like to lead, but they can’t do anything’,

I just kept quiet,

But they kept giving me so many criticisms about the national leader,

Like you know she was useless, she was useless, useless, useless.

She never prepared reports,

And I’d be like, “I think she was afraid”

⁵⁰ Name changed

We'd say raise this issue and we give her motivation for why we want a particular issue to be raised in the NEC,
It seemed like she was sabotaging
She let us down and made them think we were all useless
Later I heard that she was taking on another powerful male leader about union funds
That's why I think she couldn't do her job.

3

I think initially when we started we were very united.
But we found that in the Gender Desk particularly.
It did deteriorate to actually becoming personality clashes.
The stronger you were as a woman the more resistance there was towards you.
I found that was my experience

Yes I experienced resistance from the women.
And I think you were not appreciated for the youth you carried
You had to be one of the leaders who were involved for a longer period than the others.
So I come right from the grass roots.
I did not just jump in from provincial politics I came from the grassroots.
From a site into a branch, from a branch into a region, region into province and province
back to national
But I think I walked the talk right through when it came to gender issues.
But I become involved in the conflict.
I was the focus of the conflict at one stage.

22. Gender in SADTU

1

Gender issues are not women's issues,
Any person can deal with gender
We need to eradicate the stereotypes of both women and men in terms of activities, boy and girls or whatever.

2

It was very difficult because you would have to be a feminist
We were asking how do we speak gender, how do we perceive gender?
We were saying that we do not see gender as a portfolio that will live long.
But we see gender as part of education but focusing on these stereotypes
We believe that issues of gender are cross cutting issues which can not be driven by women alone.
We were very vocal in saying a gender portfolio is not for women.
For instances we once had a male gender convener because of what we believed.
But something went wrong and the bosses, the leaders made it a women's issue
About celebration and all that.

3

Then I saw patriarchy.
There was patriarchy at the branch but they will camouflage it
But at the provincial level it was open and there all the time.
Patriarchy identified the super positions, the power that lay between the chairperson and the secretary.
Positions below this meant nothing.
They would gang up on the others.
We tried to organise ourselves to say lets deal with those two.
Therefore I lost at the next provincial conference
Because I was a women
They wanted a woman who will not disagree with them
When they raise something I must be fine with it.

But I was brought up to ask what does that mean, to seek clarity
They will make it difficult for me.
They will watch for mistakes
They always got what they wanted

Before the conference I knew they wanted me out.
So I identified good comrades and promoted them
Gave them work and gave them more tools.
And that threatens people.
They then ask “how do we take out this woman?”
When others ask “why you want her out, she is working so hard”
“Yes, but she is not in good terms with the chairperson”
So now they say that she is in love with whomever and it is affecting her work
So they went about their plan to remove me
But I knew about their plans
My comrades said I should not despair.
I should go to the conference and let them do their dirty things, its fine.
They will support me.
After they had taken me out I was still prepared to deliver to the members.
So I continued to do the work but I was not a leader anymore.

4

How I see it is that we shout slogans,
We talk of one leader mentor a woman,
We talk of NDR in which we talk of race and gender
But in practice we don't do it.

5

The ANC said to me go back to leadership don't allow anything to be a stumbling block.
They are doing this because I am not a failure because I am a success.
I did not want to be suppressed like my mother
My mother succumbed, my mother succumbed.
And I would also succumb by resigning
And I woke up, I will not succumb,
I will make a very good leader.

6

I went back to the branch
People were told at the conference to isolate me,
Even my branch was told not to talk to me.
The comrades from my branch did not do that
And they said they will give me support.
They will talk to me in front of those leaders.

7

(Moved to Chapter Seven)

8

The male comrades in the NEC hated her,
She had a relationship with one of the married chairpersons in the NEC and she had a baby
with him.
She would bring the baby to the meetings and they felt she was embarrassing them. So they
hated her because she could stand up for herself.
We even organised childcare for her baby.
They were so angry, why are you bringing the baby here?
They were all embarrassed.

9

One would experience the question of gender when the organisation started to grow. You would experience that when you say something it is ignored
When a man says the same thing that you are saying, they would take that one.
You have originated the idea but with you it is not just taken at face value,
But if the man says the same thing it is taken as important

10

It has been a hard road whilst we were trying to mainstream gender in the organisation
You find that gender issues ended becoming women issues.
The gender report is usually put as the last issue and we won't even discuss it.
Or if there is a recommendation either there will be a very strong heated debate on the recommendation or they will just give in for the sake of peace.
But then gradually with the adoption of the quota at least there is that enforcement of recognising female comrade.
My observation is that it has been very difficult for those male comrades in leadership to make way for at least three women.
In one province we had to redeploy the nominations and elections because they didn't reach the quota.
And there were tensions and they would like to take it up for appeal.
But we won.

11

Gender is about you are either male or female.
Now in the trade union when you have decided to embark on a gender programme and when you accepted a Gender Desk it was with a bias towards women
Because after analysing gender relations in society we realised that there is a completely unequal power relation between the two genders.
And we said we have to work towards bringing equality and equality amongst the two sexes
Therefore my going about talking and education about gender there will always be a bias towards woman and girls.
Talk about the unequal power relations and the fact that they have been discriminated against and have been carrying an unnecessary heavy burden, in terms of household. And so many other issues

12

I am still experiencing this discrimination against me every day
Although I am a gender activist and although I am so educated on gender issues
I am experiencing it every day,
In SADTU in the trade union and now that I am out of SADTU I am experiencing it even more.

13

In SADTU it is a norm, it has become tradition that if a male leader leaves,
Everybody is very quick to organise a very senior post in the department of education for him.
But if you are a woman, nobody cares about you.
You are left to your own peril.
You need to find a way for yourself, like in my own case.
I am a very good example and a victim.
It has happened to all former women leaders; they had to struggle for themselves for a new life after SADTU.
I was promised by the leadership of the province that they will look after me like they look after the men who left before me.
But when it comes to a woman leader who is leaving at any level that woman is really left out in the cold all by herself
I had to make an appointment with the MEC for education and the HOD.

I spoke to them and they said to me they realised that although we are so vocal about gender equality they came to realise that the union is not looking after its woman leaders when they exit the union.

However, they will forward them the name of a male comrade for a position.

14

At first those men acted like I wasn't there.

They just ignored me.

They never asked my opinion.

I was like really invisible.

I think I just kept quiet for a long time because of the men

So they were the ones and they were informative on issues.

And it was like I had lost my tongue again amongst them.

Yes I really felt like I had bitten off more than I can chew.

They just continued without taking me into consideration without taking notice of what I was saying,

even if I raised my hand to add or make a contribution they would like just ignore me and continue with the discussion and their debate.

I was a nuisance to them

I was a married woman and I overheard the one asking the other one "Why can't this woman stay at her home for a change, she is married and she is having two small children and she keeps on coming to our meetings."

It made me feel that I am a burden to them they don't want me there.

It was like I am looking for trouble.

Like I was looking for trouble with my husband

To them it was like this woman is going to land us in trouble with her husband

They might have perhaps tolerated a single woman

More so she can move with them wherever they go to meetings late in the evening. The fact that I was married made them extremely uncomfortable

Her husband is also going to say we are having relationships with her and so on.

So they really did not want me around at all.

15

The road I have travelled in SADTU,

I would say some individual attitudes have changed.

I think some men have come to understand also that the two sexes should be equal should be treated equally, are equally intelligent

But the majority of men that are in leadership position don't believe this

SADTU still needs to travel an extremely long road before we can really say we are free as women in SADTU

Or that we have reached an acceptable level of gender equality and equality,

That we together need to fight this monster called patriarchy that society has imposed on us.

16

I think the woman who wrote the letter about gender had some valid points to raise but in the context of the way the letter was written

She is opportunist.

I don't know who she is,

But if she was so much an activist as she proclaims in constant letters to the union,

I would have loved her to stand up on the Congress floor.

She never stood up on the Congress floor

And if she was such a strong powerful woman who wanted to lead on gender issues and she was not in the Congress

Then she should have been one of the activists outside compelling that.

The very fact that we have got three out of eight position occupied by women

Has not even been the struggle of women in the main

Women have started the debate and it's the men who have carried to its conclusion.

At all levels we are in Africa
 And we are a patriarchal society
 And the position of secretary is a powerful position
 And it's not going to let go easily.
 That is the main reason for no women secretaries

I think women know what they want,
 I think they know in their hearts what they want.
 At the level of the branch you will find women articulate them without fear.
 The branch is non-threatening.
 Many women know each other, they come in and they are able to talk.
 When you go to the next level of the union,
 in the REC you are outnumbered,
 All the old chairpersons will be there all the secretaries, they are all men there.
 They claim at that level they have got political back up,
 That they are the communist the Marxist, they can talk.
 When you come to the level of the province,
 In the PGC you will count on one hand the women who will stand up to speak.
 So she was defeated because she had antagonised men in her region.
 Who does the caucusing?
 So the men made sure she got defeated.
 The men in her region told her don't stand and she was nominated by another branch.
 So you see how the men have the control and power.

23. Gender Desk

1

We were very much at opposition within the desk
 At the time in 1998 and year 2002 the focus of the Gender Desk, we wanted to advance the
 increase of women leaders at different levels of SADTU
 There was a resistance from the women themselves
 They felt it could not be done.
 And they were facing an up hill battle from their male colleagues.
 Every time we attempted to create a forum to discuss this
 We found that the very women who were involved in the issues went and acted in
 collaboration with the males, the male comrades.
 As a result you were isolated to be the rabble rousers.
 I think personally I can say I withstood that kind of challenge.
 We went up to 2002 in 2002 I know a lot of the debate started about how to increase
 women's participation.
 I found we had to change strategies
 who advanced the struggle eventually.
 If truth be told a lot of the men took on the voice of the women because in the leadership the
 women were too few.
 So we had to re-strategise and go to the men in order to advance the issue.
 You had to go and win favour with the men.
 We went to them directly, we formed groups with them, we drank with them, we went to
 pubs with them.
 Yeah we had to do that, we had to do that.
 We had to socialise before meetings, after meetings over weekends. It was all part of the
 strategy to win them over.

2

It was a strategy I absolutely didn't have a problem with it.
 In any struggle you always got to be strategic,
 Not all strategies are the correct one.

You got to strategise you find it wrong you have to ensure a gender focus.
So that's what happens and in the process there are consequences.
If conflict arose it was a consequence.
So we had to deal with it at the time.
I think you become mature over the years.
I think initially when the consequence happen we became involved in it at a personal level

3

I came from the province that had absolute division.
You had women who came from the Indian and coloured grouping and then you had the women who came from the African grouping.

4

No there was not a racial divide with the women.
But there was a cultural divide in terms of what they subscribed to.
Because Zulu women will not take on the struggle as vociferously as the other groupings would.
But nonetheless we became elected to take on the gender struggle.
And when you did that and you came up to the national level and you advanced that kind of issue then women of other cultural divides coming from the 8 provinces found they couldn't subscribe to that.
So you find a ganging up of issues like race and people from one race will gather together and say what this person⁵¹ thinks about them.
So we had that.
And very much of gender issues it was two provinces in the main that led the struggle it was KZN and the Western Cape.
And for obvious reasons these women were more vociferous.
So a lot of the women leaders in SADTU came from those two provinces.

5

The big issue we had to look at was at collective bargaining.
We had to look at parity.
We had to look at bargaining that did not discriminate in any conditions of service for educators between men and women.
So that was a big struggle.
Because we had to deal with issues of leave, to salaries, and pensions, housing, benefits all of it.
Then the next major issue was of cleansing the curriculum.
Because the curriculum post 1994 had to be cleansed and we felt that it was not just the baby of the education desk of the union it had to be given a gender bias because a lot of the curriculum was written with a gender bias and we had to start to look at that. So we got involved in committees in curriculum committees and we did that kind of work as well.
Then it was organisational matters organisational matters in terms of leadership positions within the union
That was the third area of focus. And the last area of focus was our own political involvement within COSATU and outside.
How do we advance the struggle for women representation?
And it was a four-winged kind of approach we undertook for gender.
So if I could give it broadly it would be those issues.
Specifically, ja we can go to the programmes and you would see the kind of issues we are dealing with.

6

I felt very in touch.

⁵¹ Race changed

Because I was now doing what I wanted to do.
And I felt that when I was part of the collective bargaining process that actually brought parity for salaries and brought parity for in terms of conditions of services and I accomplished that and I was part of the accomplishment of that task I felt a sense of accomplishment

7

You do feel disillusioned.
I would say therefore I mentioned to you earlier that I did get involved at a personal level at one stage.
But I later matured; I was mature enough to understand that it was the consequence of the kind of strategy we used

8

In the beginning we had a great deal of liberty to be able to allow for greater participation among women on women's issues.
If you look at what's happening today, if you have a meeting at provincial level, It will be eight people meeting, the gender provincial person and the seven regional people, They meet, they discuss, I don't know what they talk about,
They workshop, which will be on HIV and AIDS
But we don't engage on gender issues, we don't sort of debate issues; we don't begin to take on board women's experiences and the barriers to women participating at the level of the region or the province?
What are the barriers, how do we address those barriers?
We don't deal with that we are few, we accept, we've actually accepted the role men have asked us to play, which is to say, if you can make it to a meeting you make it to a meeting, if you can't, then bugger off or ride off into the sunset.
We are not mentoring women,
I feel terrible myself; I'd love to be able to say that I've had some influence on some women, But I don't think I've had the kind of influence that has made significant difference to many women.

9

I have seen already that the gender that we promote in SADTU it is not what these gender conveners actually practice.
In the meeting they will talk about whatever but in practice they do different things.

10

Priority area is gender awareness
Most of women did not understand how important it is for them to have a voice.
They didn't understand it.
They thought the gender committee women are crazy, deranged, they just want too much.
So we had to do a lot of work on awareness.
So we were able to have workshops in all the provinces then second layer was in the regions and then the branches
We were also able to have an NEC workshop on gender.
Hey but it was a vicious workshop.
We were fighting, when we put up those things the general secretary comes up and crushes those things.
And we had Judy from the SACP facilitating the workshop.
She realised that these people will never get anyway.
Too hard.

11

But nothing is a lost cause
It will happen.
Look we have three women now as national office bearers

Because the General Secretary had to change
He became President of Education International and was too ashamed to have such a poor
showing of women in SADTU leadership
But he was just doing it for the image.

12

We have a Gender Desk but I don't think we are doing much.
I think that while they had resolutions and programmes like mentoring a woman it has all
fizzled out.
Also the resolution that in every workshop we should have a quota of 50-50 men and
women, has been forgotten
I think the support part of it, whilst they have good resolutions but ensuring implementation
is weak.
For instances if there is no instructions from the national office and the national general
council to put three women in the national leadership,
It would not happen.
Or if they do put them, they look for women who will say anything they want.

13

I think as a union we must have a quota system
But the quota system then makes them think that you are only there because of your gender,
They don't associate me with ability or capability,
They only associate me with gender.

14

My own observation is that the Gender Desk is very protectionist
When we have the gender conveners in an education meeting and the male comrades are
present
These comrades feel very uncomfortable with male comrades.
If there is a gender meeting and I am part of it you can feel the tension.
They feel more comfortable with their own so they can say anything without any other
different view.
My own experience is that they are able to only open up when they are alone.
They feel uncomfortable if a different view comes in.

15

I want more substantive issues discussed in terms of gender
And they should not only come out to celebrate women's day,
So if there is no August 9th they won't have anything.
They think HIV/AIDS belongs to them.
But if I say let's have a joint thing with gender on HIV/AIDS, it doesn't happen.
They are just moving by themselves.

16

For instances, four months ago I sent my report to the Gender Desk and I haven't heard
anything from them.
Of course the Gender Desk is supposed to be very vocal in terms of the girl learner and her
rights, but there is nothing.
So the main issues we don't feel like there is support or understanding of how gender
impacts on education and to work with us.

17

The problem is,
The whole HIV/AIDS is a distraction,
Suddenly the Gender Desk sees its role in terms of the HIV/AIDS campaign.
There is no work done in SADTU any more to understand the concepts around the gender
struggle.

So when we come in it is just a simplistic gender understanding,
We don't look at gender, Marxism in gender,
we don't evaluate what feminism is,
Where we come from, where the women's struggle has originated
And how we are going to be advancing the women's struggle and what is the women's
struggle.

Rather than men can lead and women must follow.
I think that in being in SADTU, the intellectual engagement and to some extent an academic
engagement has been reduced

SADTU is supposed to be a socialist trade union,
A trade union for social change at which point do we, and the tragedy is that people quote
Marxism in a fashionable way.

Wearing a Che t-shirt doesn't make you a Marxist, doesn't make you a socialist
And I think that intellectual men and women in SADTU, not all of them,
Very few of them that engage in terms of dialectical materialism and so on.
If they had to push towards engaging in terms of the academic understanding,
I think we will have a foundation on which to build the actions that we want to build.

Right now it is a superficial struggle and
That superficial struggle and understanding of gender equality has been over shadowed
because now that gender is equated to HIV and AIDS.

So what does that mean is that the women's role to defend or protect our teachers from
HIV/AIDS?

18

Putting HIV/AIDS put into the gender portfolio?
I don't know whether it is a deliberate or unconscious
I think it is deliberate because it says lets keep them busy.
And so that they do not challenge them,
I know in the NEC every gender Vice President came with a huge ball and chain around her
ankle,
She couldn't speak on issues because she was shouted down or made to feel that they were
approaching the issues the wrong way.
Who decides what the wrong way to approach the issue is?

19

I think the one thing we achieved is that we succeeded in passing the quota,
When I was elected I was the only woman, I was one out of 26 women in the NEC. Now
there are four women in the NEC-4 woman out of 26.
The quota had been kicked out of SADTU about 8 years in a row.
They didn't want to hear anything about a quota.
You could not open your mouth about the quota and it was kicked out vehemently
It was the NGC of 2003 that adopted the quota,
The women took over that NGC and they said they were not going to be silenced again.
And also I think in the 2006 Congress, some provinces managed to come with a 50% women
representation
Northern Cape and Limpopo
This has never happened before.

20

I would say the greatest achievement of the Gender Desk under my leadership was
The increase in the number of women at leadership levels in SADTU,
And on the issue of HIV/AIDS,
Through the commitment of the Gender Desk and the programmes developed
Much has been done for the plight of educators infected and affected.
We also managed through the desk to bring the issue of HIV/AIDS to the forefront.

21

SADTU has acknowledged gender issues,
As an inherent part of its structural composition,
Content wise now we are still far from the content development.
Content in terms of what is gender,
How do we want to transform society based on gender issues?
We are a transformative union based on mass based democratic union.
And we have a capacity to transform the organisation but we are not doing that.
We have the structures to do that we have the interaction to do that.
Therefore my separation will be at the content level; at the content level we have not made a
marked impact.
If you look at the current course content, even within education at the curriculum issues we
far from it.
And you still find the stereotypes being there.
And as far as the union is concerned as a structure
We have began to recognise that women are part and an intrinsic part of the organisation
We identify with women and not necessarily with women's issues.
To a large extent the Gender Desk of SADTU has become more an HIV/AIDS desk rather
than a Gender Desk.
And I think that's my only regret about being a gender activist.

22

We are SADTU,
We have failed gender
It's not about blaming somebody else,
It's about us not having taken the issues more assertively.
We have lost the debate.

23

The greatest challenge facing gender in SADTU is
Capacity and a political will to lead on gender issues.
Capacity because I have not come across somebody who feels passionately about gender and
is ready to implement it.
I have just come out of the national executive committee meeting and I am sad to say there
was absolutely no gender issues discussed
And even what is sadder we use gender issues to exploit personal agendas.

24

I stared setting up of the Gender Desk, in terms of its vision and mission.
It was about empowering women,
It was about changing and transforming education, content and curriculum in terms of
gender bias.
It was capacitating women towards leadership,
It was about changing the face of the union.
We have achieved that in part and part of my involvement has been through every Congress
in SADTU.
Through every structure of SADTU trying to drive the gender issues
You know if I have to raise the issue, you know we are not raising the issue in the national
executive committee.
And when I sat outside the national executive committee I was given a different picture of
what had happened
And now that I am in the national executive committee I am seeing for myself that we are
our own failures
Because we have the opportunity to raise issues but we don't do that.

24. Double Standards

They, the male leaders tell you all kinds of stories about the potential woman leader,
Like she is having a relationship with a national leader,
I think I have a problem with it, quite frankly, that she was having this relationship,
I was thinking about what's good for the union
I mean how can you take decisions if two people are lovers?
And you listen to them,
But those stories are nonsense,
It's because they don't want her anymore,
She had outlived her usefulness,
That's why she was dumped!
I felt very angry.

2

One of the provinces was asked to explain to the NEC why the newly vacated posts, were
filled with men instead of with women.
I raised this issue with the province; I went to the chairperson and reminded her that these
posts should be filled by women.
Now, we must decide how we're going to do it.
We need to speak to the women from the regions, to put up a woman,
There was a big conflict because the only woman high enough and available did not have the
support of the male comrades.
They wanted to punish her for her affair with a prominent leader.
They said that she was bringing the union into disrepute,
She's putting SADTU on the line.

3

I said to them, whatever she does in her private life has got nothing to do with us. They have
double standards',
And we had the whole double standards debate – how is it ok for a guy to have an affair, and
when a woman does the same you are ready to crucify her?
The guys were saying “Can't you see why men don't want their wives to come into the union
and participate at this level? When women get into the union they break up their own
families”,
This is exactly what she had done.

4

There is this conservative thinking that our women must not get spoilt,
That kind of thinking is very strong.
It's hard to explain to them that if the marriage breaks down, there was a problem with it
before she became a leader

5

There is only so much you can debate with a male leader who describes women as
“Young things are so tasty”
We said to him that we don't appreciate the way he is speaking, and he laughs.
And we have to tolerate it.

6

He spoke about the MEC as 'this thing',
So we said to him that he was being damn sexist.
Would you refer to a man as a thing?
Why is it that a woman is always a thing for you?
And you know your tone, your language needs to be tempered, this is a union, we are all
equal.
I mean we're supposed to be comrades, and you know in terms of the constitution we are
comrades,
And as comrades you should be equal.

7

The president himself is a real traditionalist,
He is that real traditionalist in his belief in his heart of hearts.
What he is saying when he is delivering speeches on podiums is politically correct rhetoric
that people want to hear
But in their heart of hearts they don't believe that woman can serve equally and can lead
equally.
They are experiencing more and more women elected into the most powerful of offices.
And not only in this country but across the globe like your first lady of Liberia for example,
Africa is gearing towards 50% of women in their parliament.
All over the world we are going to take up the most powerful leadership positions and the
real traditionalists they are feeling threatened.
And they will not mention it because they are chauvinists.

25. Women as Leaders

1

I don't know, the women didn't want the Sport, Art and Culture post,
They just didn't want to run for that post.
They were not intimidated because some of the women are quite strong,
They're just not interested,
They wanted a gender post,
The women were fighting amongst each other for the gender post,
That's where they felt comfortable
But they won't go for other posts,
The post of the Secretary they won't touch,
It's too scary for them

2

There were problems there, the balance of forces needed to be sorted out and I couldn't stand
on a platform.
There were tensions; there were so many tensions,
It would seem as if I was putting somebody's name up,
That I'm anti one person and pro some other.
I said to the national leader, "Please refer to the fact that they've got to look at the whole
question of gender",
But he also didn't do it, and we all messed up
I felt horrible.

3

Women are forever going to feel frustrated, because the men will not change,
The men have not changed,
And I don't think they're going to change, you know, for a long time to come.
Women in this union, especially African woman, also come from conservative families and
homes,
No matter how politically active we were, there are certain sort of male and female roles that
are accepted, and many of us will continue to play these roles.

When I think about men in SADTU, and I want to include the national leadership and the
president here,

They unashamedly put forward what they see as their African-ness, their male African
persona,

That requires a certain kind of response from women.

One high ranking national leader once told a meeting "When I go home my wife must have
the food on the table, and that's how it is, I don't care. I know the women are going to get

really angry with me, but she will have the food on the table when I get home, and I would eat, and then I must go and do my work”.
And, if your national leaders speak like that,
Then it obviously gives everybody else carte blanche to continue operating in the way they’ve always been operating.

4

The sad part is that some of our women come to meetings not for the reasons that they should be there,
But for the kind of gravy train that is the trade union experience,
Going to workshops, the over-nighters, the jolling,
And then the sexual indiscretions that take place,
I’m not to sure that they’re practicing safe sex.
Maybe its part of a culture that we need to change,
We talk about socialism and socialism dictates about male or female gender roles.
And I think that is just theory for a lot of male comrades, and we need to find a way in which they begin to show respect,
They can sit down with women and see women as women and respect women. Obviously not all of the men are like that, there are very good men, there are men that are progressive,
But there are those others that are really, really problematic.

5

They (male leaders) choose me although they had an idea they could not control me
But I was the lesser evil.
Between the other two
The other two lost out because of their relationships with male leaders.
One is not sure whether this is happening in SADTU, COSATU or maybe broader political arena.
In terms of you have to be in a particular camp.
If you in a particular camp, even if you do not have the capacity, you are elected.
You have to be in Mbeki’s camp and even if you have no capacity you are elected
I don’t know.
You find people saying that Mbeki gave the Deputy President the post.
It’s about who you are aligned to
So even if you are intelligent, they say that there is a man behind you.

6

I think as a woman leader, you come with knowledge
And that is always by men, particularly men whom you work with who don’t have an appreciation or knowledge of what you are doing.
But men who know what you are doing and have that knowledge will appreciate it you
Because they see you as a compliment to the team
Now the unfortunate part of where I am is that I do not have people, who compliment me,
I have people who want that capacity but don’t want to work for it
But to be a women and to be a women leader requires a lot of hard work
And it requires a lot of reading and grasping of knowledge and information
And I think any woman who relaxes at that level is certainly going to allow the forces of opposition to take over.

7

Well for the first time let us acknowledge that we have a woman chairperson at the province and that has been after a hard struggle
But I would say lets give it the next five or ten years I would see women emerge. Well I am saying 5 to 10 years because our next Congress is in 4 years time.
I would like to work towards that
I am being very much positive.

But I think for the current tenure that we have in leadership,
I am very doubtful about the capacity of those elected currently to lead.

8

Here is this women who is supposed to be one of the voices
She is the only women president in the federation
Her voice is not heard anywhere
And I know from experiences in NEC that when the women do speak they need to be careful
about what they say
Although they have mandates to speak
But they have guns in that room.

9

It is based on how much you know.
Women need to make sure that they do their homework.
That you go to a meeting fully prepared and that you must have the courage of what you are
saying.
You got to believe in something
And if I am not sure I must shut-up because I tend to look stupid.
You don't have to talk because you have to talk,
We need to do our work as well.
Men on the other hand talk even if they have to talk bullshit.
We must make sure that when we speak we know what we are talking about.

10

It's a very difficult time for women in SADTU and in the labour movement generally
What is not happening is the debate; the debate is being quelled,
If you sing the tune of the most powerful group you are okay
If you decide to go with the group that looks like it is getting a beating you are dead
And you can't be neutral.
You got to choose a side otherwise you are going to be pushed out.

We are not empowered,
I say the debate about gender issues must happen from the level of the branches.
You are telling the women at the branches fight HIV and AIDS
But for goodness sake that's not their only trouble
Why aren't the gender conveners running programmes around the domestic violence act or
the sexual offences act?
You have to teach people,
It doesn't come naturally,
You are not born into this I know.
I have gone through the hands of very good women leaders who were my role models who
actually helped me to come to an understanding
And this was the kind of debates, panel discussions and seminars around gender issues that
empowered me
That foundation is gone and it would never come back.
It would never come back.

11

You can't debate anymore.
You can't debate, you have to fall into one camp or the other.
You can't engage people on an intellectual level anymore.
This is what our early struggle,
Our women leaders Nkosazana's and the Pat Horns
People who are in the labour movement or the broader political movement,
The fact that when we sat down we spoke about what it means to be a woman in society.
It's not just the lamenting

It's about understanding what gender issues are,
What is the gender struggles about.
So you need to get people to understand where we are coming from,
You know it's that whole thing if you don't know where you are coming from you can never
chart your way forward.

26. Threats

1

Well I'd always known how the male comrades work,
I remember in a policy conference,
One male comrade almost hit me for saying in a commission, 'SADTU is just a boys' club',
I didn't want this statement to go to plenary because I knew the male comrades will be angry.
But one female comrade said, 'No, no, no, no, we must include it, we'll defend it',
It got so hot in the plenary, because we were talking about perceptions of SADTU,
One male comrade wanted to know who called SADTU a boys club.
The female comrade pointed me out, she was so scared, she was scared for her life
I was forced to retract the statement
After the plenary this comrade started following me through the corridors
Asking aggressively 'Ay, wena, why do you say, wena, that this is a boys club?'
Like you know, he wanted to beat the hell out of me
I said 'Ay, just leave me alone!'

2

At one point he threatened us, he threatened me.
Yes, physically,
He threatened that he was going to shoot us, because we wanted to destroy him,
That when we went outside, he will shoot us!
It was really ugly.
I told the other male leader "This is what this man said to me. My life is under threat, I have
a feeling I should go to the police station and report that this man threatened me!"
His response was, "No don't do that, you know he's mad, just wait"
And eventually I calmed down.

3

They even threatened the women who supported me.
They were calling them at night just being violent, shouting insults.
The women were just scared and others didn't really understand what was going on honestly.

27. Understanding of the Term "Gender Issues"

1

Okay it depends on the context
If we are in a meeting and we are discussing gender issues in terms of how a person's sex
impacts on whether its men or women then I will say those are gender issues
But sometimes you know you try to trivialise the issues themselves
Well, usually when people say oh gender issues you know, usually guys, usually people who
don't want to deal with the issues,
Who don't want to hear about the issues,
It depends on the context and who is saying it because sometimes it is an issue that is being
raised without seriousness or they raising an issue so that it can be dealt with.
But sometimes they want to deflect whatever is coming by way of a gender issue.
To make jokes
And make fun of the issues to trivialise them
In fact to try to block your discussion.

2

I will make an example of one guy I was going out with for a long time ago,
He wanted to have sex and I gave him a condom.

And he said he was shocked because it was such a bad thing for me to do,
it was like I am a slut because I keep condoms.
He was like “What kind of a women are you? Even guys don’t have these things”
And so it was like that.

3

The fact that society is stereotyped and there is patriarchy
In my own personal life I have experienced that
So I would say that it is necessary for me to identify with those issues
And that has given me my own thinking around gender specific matters.
So I’ve experienced it in life.
When I applied to be a principal of a school it was heavily opposed and by men themselves,
not by the women.
A major part was that I was a woman.
Second major part was that I was a woman plus a leader and that had all kinds of other
ramifications
But it starts out from the fact that it is not easy to challenge the status quo
And to allow patriarchy to continue,
But women who aspire to different positions often are hit with obstacles
I definitely had that.

28. Sexual Harassment

1

Most of my experiences in SADTU have been negative
Like one guy developed a negative attitude towards me,
On the first day that I attended the NEC as the Vice President, he said he wanted to kiss me,
you know, during lunch.
To kiss me, kiss me like really!
We did not have that kind of relationship and I said no
Since then he hated me.
He even organised a real campaign at Congress to get me out of office,
He definitely didn’t want me in.

2

We keep quiet when these things happen in our school,
If we have to blow the whistle it is a question of female teachers blowing the whistle and
male teachers saying that they are jealous.
In all these cases either it is female teachers or it is the parent who exposes the abuse. And
other males they close up they protect each other.
My experience again is that branches are afraid of dealing with the cases of sexual
harassment because they are friends with that male comrade.
They refer those cases to province so that it is not them who are seen to be defending this
animal!
So whilst there is a moral part to it, comrades just can’t act.
They don’t feel comfortable in representing and dealing with these cases.

29. Gendered Experiences

1

A lot of people in the union are openly anti-gender
Even the people who were supporting me they used to laugh at me behind my back.
I think they want to maintain their positions because talking about gender equality, especially
when it comes to sharing leadership, that’s when it becomes serious.
It means somebody must get out of a position because a woman can occupy that position.

2

Before the Congress I was lobbying for more women in leadership positions,

The men were quite vicious, very very vicious
I think these people wanted to put their hands on me but they couldn't do it.
They were just attacking me in the NEC before Congress
They even made up a rumour that I was threatening so and so.
But I did not threaten anyone.

3

The male comrades wanted her because they knew she was useless.
That's why they wanted her.
They did not want our choice, they knew that our choice can stand up to them.
So they got what they wanted.

4

When I started leading at the national level I was really innocent,
I was very trusting,
And when comrades criticised my proposals and made suggestions I used to take them
seriously
And think we were working together
Until I came to realise these suggestions are not aimed at helping me,
They are aimed at derailing me.
So I learnt that I can't take everything they suggest.
That was quite a learning curve for me.

5

Then I gave the NEC the history,
First you didn't want the Gender Desk to have its own budget,
You wanted to share with budget
Now when we are trying to integrate the programmes you don't want to do it.
So it means what you actually want us to just die and not breathe in this union.
I was too angry that day.
In fact I was almost in tears but I didn't want to cry. I didn't want to cry in front of them I
was too angry.
So I realise okay the suggestions are not meant to build the union's programmes on gender,
they are meant to kill the union's programme on gender.

6

At the union level the struggle had been pretty intense.
I think I am still angry about that today.
We are the teachers union with 60% women but we are always at the mercy of men and their
agendas.
When you are there you there not there because you are a woman leader
But because the men thought that you would fit into their vision or plan.
So you don't go into a leadership role at the provincial or national level, the men are looking
at women as fillers.
So you fill in where we need to reach the quota, we don't fit you in because we think you are
a good leader, we put you in because it's the quota.

7

Who speaks in Congress, who speaks in conferences?
Who stands up in any regional or provincial conference to speak?
When women do stand up they are always apologetic about speaking.
If you watch and listen, they say "sorry".

8

When I was asked to become the chief negotiator at the national level there was resistance.
When I first joined the team there was a lot of acceptance,
I was the first on the team and the only woman on the team.

So it was a lot of protection, but I was not leading the team at that stage.
And the very people who welcomed me into the team resisted me when I became the leader
of the team.

That resistance happened for at least a year.
They would basically oppose everything you say, or they will come with issues totally
irrelevant to the agenda of the day.

It is about how you assert yourself, it's about how you drive the skills that you have into
building unity rather than disuniting the team.

The obvious issue is to ensure that you fail.

That you fail at the task,

I think that from my personal experience is where I rise to the challenge.

The more people want me to fail the more I succeed, which have always been the experience
of mine for the many years.

And they realised that the only thing to do is just to accept.

30. Congress

1

Sometimes the women who come to the Congress are not even branch leaders,
Maybe, somebody has a relationship with somebody and they are the ones who get to go to
Congress.

That's the one thing we must look into.

Making sure that people at Congress are elected at a general meeting that is what the
constitution says but that is not what happens in most branches.

So you know that the women who will come there are people who are not au fiat with the
dynamics of organisation.

2

I received comradely kind of support.

Other female comrades made sure that we could talk to the women.

As women we were able to take the position that we were not going to vote.

So we organised people not to vote in the Congress or on the Congress floor.

You remember that they were shocked at so many abstentions.

So those are the things that we were doing
to stand up against the men in Congress

3

I think the NEC were constantly shifting the women's roundtable at Congress because it was
not an important thing for them

I don't think it was deliberate.

Its just it's a blind spot that they have.

I don't think it was malicious, because we had to deal with the things in the City Press article

4

We were responding to the criticism that women don't stand for leadership positions so how
can we say they don't elect them.

So we agreed as the Gender Desk, that they will forward my name for the position of
treasurer

But they didn't do much lobbying for me

They never raised the issue in their caucuses.

It is easy to get a woman into the gender vice president position and if we are fighting for
other position then at least I was there.

But even I knew it wouldn't fly.

Even if I was nominated I wouldn't have got much votes.

5

How can the men present the gender report?

It makes it seem that the leadership is only male.

The programmes show who is serious about gender and who is not serious about gender.
I think because of the period in which we are in the alliance it is very difficult to get a
woman to speak at Congress

I would have loved to see more women but it is hard to get them.

Even in the ANC the GS is male in the SACP the GS is male.

So it is hard to get women.

Maybe we could have got the Deputy President Phumzile, but there are things surrounding
her.

It is a difficult time you know.

6

All the men want to go to Congress.

They are valued there in terms of issues of the union.

So anything that is valuable men want to have it for themselves.

Then they will go through all kinds of lengths to block women from going.

7

And it's not because women don't support other women it's who comrades are told to vote
for.

The women might feel uncomfortable to speak in the bigger venue where we have males and
females.

Gender comrades feel very intimidated.

I am not sure.

If we start from the question of the environment part of it we have the 50-50 resolution in
terms of workshops,

We encourage them to speak then they won't be afraid of speaking.

If you invite them at the NGC they are called the part thereof, as if the part thereof doesn't
have speaking rights in whatever.

So how we categorise, it becomes a barrier in terms of who gets to speak.

So the confidence and the more conducive environment plays a key role in women speaking
at Congress

Even before the Congress there had a fight in the NEC

As the Gender Desk we wanted a women's roundtable as a pre-Congress activity

Where we would have had our own content for the roundtable

We would have invited one or two powerful women in South Africa.

We did not succeed,

The NEC was completely hostile, it was unnecessary to be so hostile.

I asked the Secretariat what it is they are going to discuss in these four days on real women
issues

Remember women constitute almost 65% of our members.

And for four days we discuss everything except the issue of women's empowerment

women's issues did not feature in any discussions

I don't think anyone who would call themselves a woman leader or a gender activist would
be happy with the SADTU Congress

The issue of women died there, the mentioning of women died there in the President's
introductory remark.

I would not know this time around, but the last 2002 Congress and those before

I know for a fact that women were told that they will not speak at Congress

The speakers from their provinces will be the provincial secretaries, provincial chairpersons
and the negotiator.

They don't want anybody else to raise their hands to speak.

8

I was very reluctant to deliver the vote of thanks at the last Congress

I fought with them,

It was embarrassing that the two women leaders were only delivering the vote of thanks and

introducing the Minister of Education
But then they said that the constitution dictates that it is only the two presidents who chairs
the sessions at Congress
Obviously the constitutions need to be changed

9

It's unfortunate that again three women were elected into vice presidents positions. The union was compelled by the quota that three out of the eight national office bearers must be women.

But the disadvantage on the other hand of having the quota is that people are using it from branch level to national level to elect three women into portfolio positions and not into that of secretaries and chairpersons.

And the same applies to the national positions women are now elected into those three vice presidents positions.

10

The woman I would have identified at Congress is very strong,
She comes from a very traditionalist province
She often takes on that hostile chairperson and secretary
And she puts them right in their place where they belong.
They don't like her for that and she is extremely assertive and she can be the chairperson of that big powerful province any day
But when we asked that province to release her for the national leadership position, they refused
Because she takes on the chairperson and the secretary all the male leaders were very clear
They are not supporting her

11

From where I started in SADTU
We started with almost zero percent of women in Congress
The last Congress,
If I have to take that as a SADTU landscape
Then we have made dramatic progress.
Although it's not the ideal
But it was a big improvement
We can do better
But that would have to start with the branch leadership, from where your delegates were drawn.
Your powerful decision making structures in the branches are occupied by men,
And a Congress nationally is what everybody wants to come to
So the space is not there for women to come.

12

In the past no women will speak at Congress,
Just a handful of us that continued to speak at Congress
This time I saw women,
And African women in the main,
That stood up and spoke on the Congress floor which was a very encouraging sight. But Congress did not allow debate for women to speak.
The kind of resolutions that were being taken certainly did not allow for that.

13

Women are reluctant because of the fact there is that level of intimidation.
And sometimes when women speak
They are given that particular aspect to speak on by the men in their province.
So it is not women who want to speak, you understand.

14

We know the dynamics of the union.
And we are so divided as a union, that anything you say or think does not necessarily mean
that it is the way it used to be.
And at times you want to find a platform in which you can actually express how you feel
about some of the things that have happened.
And for me the dangerous part is that there isn't that platform and therefore it is safer to take
it to your grave rather than to articulate it.

15

It is part of the political agenda
The political agenda in SADTU currently,
And I that's my reading I could be completely wrong,
But the political struggle that's being waged,
The broader political struggle, in terms of whose right and who's left and who is at the centre
It is about ensuring that in the campaign that is going to be waged in 2009
There is nobody who is going to challenge the authority of certain leaders in the NWC.
We now have individuals who have hijacked the union to fulfil their own agenda.

31. Challenges

1

The challenge is to spread the message more widely amongst women.
Because I don't think they understand that they have a role.
They don't understand that they should be standing up for themselves.
Once the men understand we are using our voice effectively they will fall into place. Even in
other organisations where there is more parity not just in terms of leadership but also in
terms of the content and the programmes of the union.
It did not happen overnight and SADTU is a large organisation compared to others.

2

Yeah, I think we need to create platforms and more opportunities through gender conferences
and women roundtables.
The biggest challenge in SADTU will forever be will be the traditionalists, unfortunately
they are the NEC members,
Either they refuse to understand the issues of gender or they are ignorant of the issues of
gender.
Also women, ordinary women members they need very serious conscientisation.
We would have gone much further in the gender struggle if all our women members were
really more empowered.
They need to understand how the internalisation of gender oppression has made them victims
To be exploited by the male leaders in SADTU and men in general in the union.
They exploit women's ignorance
The union is not putting its money at the lower structures and empowering women from the
site level up.
None are free until we all are free

3

One of the biggest challenges is that women will have to take the lead
For women to be provincial secretaries and chairperson,
They must just realise that it would never come to them on a silver platter.
They must become as aggressive and progressive in lobbying,
They must really take a leaf out of the books of our men in that regard
Because it is through lobbying that women are elected and women must take the lead and
become 100% part of those lobbying groups.
We must stop agreeing with the names that are pushed down our throats by the men.
And unless women start to behave like that, we will never win this leadership battle.

4

Okay the wish list would be
That we don't elect women because we have to have women,
We elect leaders, men and women,
We elect leaders.
That we have participation,
That we allow for women's participation at every level
And when I say participation I don't mean we just attendance.
I mean genuine participation.
That we as women open up the space for each other to engage in debate
And we must be able to do this without it coming to what we think is men's speak.
We don't need to be men,
We know what we want and we can express

32. The Rape Trial

1

I am a gender activist but I am also a cadre of the movement.
I think what had happened to Zuma, he did not do anything wrong.
I feel that there was a campaign against him so in terms of justice
I think he is lucky to have friends like SADTU who are behind him.
Because the rape issue, I know the girl as well, that thing did not happen.
I blame her for this, she and her handlers have used such an important issue (rape) for their
own end.
She let herself be used as a tool to take Zuma down.
The second problem is in terms of rape law it is going to be a precedent set
People are also going to defend themselves and use this case to say women do lie about
raped
People say they are pro-women but they still use these tactics, use us as tools.
And I don't like it.

2

If SADTU made a point about the rape
It sounds like they are saying Zuma was guilty
So it was difficult to raise those issues.
It's difficult for them being in that position,
I mean I know a lot of people got some mileage from it.
What they did was interfere with the criminal justice system.
South Africans has a long way to go to let the legal process take its course.
They always want to interfere with it, I think in our culture we are activists we make things
happen.
It's like a social thing everyone is an activist in South Africa,
We fought for this we fought for that so some of the things we need to wait for we don't
understand that,
We think we can influence because this is what we have been doing all our lives.

3

Yes I am disappointed with the way the gender activists handled it.
Even Sheryl Carolus,
I understand that she was working on her own business deal and she needed to say
something
Maybe if she did not say these things those deals would not have passed.
So there were people saying these things to feather their own nests through this man. That's
how I see it.

One in Nine

The campaign was silly coming up at that time.
It was silly, but it is an important campaign,

Why they didn't come up in all of these years, I mean really.
It's because they thought that they he was nailed,
He was a goner.

4

It is going to be very difficult to answer this question
Because this is such an emotional thing
That's what they used to bring Zuma down because that's what they do.
It's such a sensitive issue.
You should have used another article because this one is a special case.
This is problematic, you understand that people were picking up issues to highlight,
As a journalist you want hype all the time.
Switch it off.

5

No I accepted the courts verdict on Jacob Zuma
So I did not have any qualms with him addressing us at the SADTU Congress
And SADTU being more female, whatever

6

So it's the whole question of how society perceives us as women.
We have to be victims; we should always be victims even if sexual harassment has happened
Whether they are honest or they making it up
Or bringing down these powerful men.

7

I think what becomes key is that you have to break the silence
But as you break the silence you have to be strong in terms of your consistency and your
story.
For instances, with the Goniwe case there was allegations that she has been pushed to the
part.
You go to the Zuma case, she reported it to Kaserils first
If a person knows his or her rights in terms of what to do thereafter,
You report it immediately to avoid the stigma that you are setting up the person
When we do this education on women empowerment
The period of when to blow the whistle I think it needs to be addressed.
This will deal with the doubt that might surround the alleged rape

8

What I am afraid of is that you have put Zuma into the interview
So I may not give you what you want.

9

Personally I am fascinated
I am fascinated by the support that this union gave to Zuma, including women in this union
I am surprised by the support he receives

10

I think women are supporting him because of the hype in the newspapers and press and
because he says the things that ordinary workers want to hear.
And I think also the majority of women who are supporting are not gender activists and not
well versed in gender issues

11

What he said in the courts about women
I don't think any gender activist in her right mind would support a leader who would stand
up in a court of law and say such things about women

He used all the stereotypes we are trying to get rid out of people's minds.
To say I have the right to rape a woman because she was wearing a short dress or she was
not sitting properly.

And here is a man who is expected to lead the country in 2009 to say such things.
Do you expect any women in her right mind to have respect for such a person in the first
place?

12

There was an objection to putting him on the programme of the SADTU Congress,
It was because of the repercussions the rape case had had world wide
There was heated debate
But there were other politics playing here

13

I was silent about the rape case
Because it was said that the federation and the union will speak on the matter
Individual leaders should not speak on the matter in public.

14

I did not have a problem with Zuma addressing the SADTU National Congress
I just don't think he should have addressed the issue of safe sex
He is equally guilty.
His had unprotected sex with a woman who had disclosed her status.
He has been tried and tested and acquitted on the matter does that not make him any less a
perpetrator than the victim he purported to be on stage.
And I think my personal view is that I was disgusted that he spoke on the issue.

15

The significance of the Zuma case is that women are aware of their rights,
The fact it was defended and there was a public outcry on the matter shows that we have
moved ahead.
Previously black women went through similar experiences and where silenced.
I think this rape case assisted the gender struggle
The last three weeks have been a living example.
There are so many more people in high political positions that have been exposed for sexual
harassment.
The University of KwaZulu-Natal is a classic example yesterday.

16

In terms of SADTU engaging with the rape trial
I was absolutely displeased because I think we contradicted our own position
We have a sexual harassment policy and when we were there to defend the position we
actually took sides
We should actually stood on the side of the road with a neutral position.
But the fact that we are in an alliance and the alliance had taken a position on the matter
And we were drawn into that is a sad day.
As a union we should have waited for the outcome of the legislative process
And to not pronounce ourselves with the individual but with the process,
Which we did not do
We stood on platforms and we shouted Zuma for president whilst he was on trial.

17

You assess the political terrain in which this is happening
Because you are a union with a large percent of women
Women who can be abused like this woman was
As a union we play a key role in society because we are educating young children
And when we stand up at a political level and a public level and pronounce that the man is

innocent.

In other words we concluded the legislative process before the law did.

18

As far as I am concerned he has been a good mentor
I have worked with him in my province as a political leader.
But I do believe on the rape issues I hold a difference of opinion
I am a woman and as a woman myself I believe you don't question my integrity when I come
with a complaint
And you start to test it and test amongst a group that are not activists themselves and want to
preach about the issue
He came to the SADTU Congress wanting to be redeemed and for me to say the least it was
sick.

19

The trial revealed that we had not been able to advance the gender struggle
Even though numerically we have been able to put women in parliament in somewhat large
numbers
But we have not changed people's minds.
That is why I said it is always about the numbers we must meet the quotas,
But that does not seem to translate into work on changing mindsets.
I think the Zuma rape trial hasn't taken us back
We just found out how much work we need to do.
I think that what has revealed itself is that men will not take the struggle forward even if they
claim to be socialists
The women struggle is the same as we said ten years ago
Freedom can never be won until our women are free.

33. Reflections

1

Yes it eventually did have a positive impact for me.
But it was a painful process.
But I think it has been good for me.
That's what I think when I think about it.
That's how I feel about it.
Also I have been able in my personal life to say no.
And that's good, I don't vacillate between positions.

2

It was very difficult,
Sometimes I will cry alone and try to let out my frustration
Sometimes I will know what's wrong but I won't talk about it.
I learnt to accept it and to face it.
I know I will expect resistances but I will force debate
I will ensure that if I present a report it is well written with clear recommendations
That's how I have built myself

3

The fight we took up as women originally,
We have moved a long way.
We have begun to accept women for who they are despite the fact maybe we might not want
to accept them personally.
But we accepted the fact that women are there that they are no longer around the corner as
they used to say
They are now here and they are ready to lead and I just think it just requires a few more
years
And you will find women occupying key strategic position.

I'm very positive about it

4

I think I have learnt tolerance at SADTU,
I've learnt to be tolerant
I think I started off as an absolute radical and I am much calmer now
Because I know that we have planted the seed,
It's just about allowing the germination to happen.

5

Now when I look back and I think how can we do this to ourselves as women?
How can all these women that attend Congress not be able to see that we are still
disempowered?
We don't have the power,
We absolutely have no power,
All we are is a quota for the public.
Which says to the internationals, no we are putting women in leadership.
But those women are only as valuable as they fulfil the agenda of men.

34. What they Want?

1

Respect
I'd want us to work together.
Women in leadership positions don't understand that they are there because of our struggles.
They are individualistic the way they understand things,
They need to understand that it is a collective.
It is a collective, they think because they have a Vice President then they are unique. No it
does not work like that.
Working together,
Unity of women across portfolios
Women must support each other

35. I Feel very Excited to be Part of this Study

1

I think it's going to be very useful,
I do have a long experience in SADTU,
But I also feel that I can also learn, in terms of what other peoples' views are,
I'm very curious about that,
Maybe learn about other things that I haven't really realised or learnt.

2

I always think that such research does have an impact,
It's just that the impact is not felt when you want it to,
It takes a little longer,
It's just been my experience,
When I compare our experience to some of these long established teachers unions in Europe,
and elsewhere,
You can see that even for them it took a long time,
And that's what they always say,
They say you must be very patient

3

I think it's a good thing that the research is coming from within SADTU,
Somebody who understands the union, understands the dynamics,
I think with your background, in terms of your training and study,
I would think that it should be in good hands.
I know that you have been in teaching for some period and then you have moved straight
into the union,

So I think that you would be able to also see the kind of role that we as women played
I mean I'm quite confident in you

4

I don't feel like I am being used as a subject
I have had that experience with teachers doing their masters,
They just want our opinion and then they go,
But I think what you are doing here is also going to challenge me
To look at my own role so far,
And to be able to give you a glimpse of where I'm coming from,
Or what experiences we've had here,
I think that it's also, going to be mutually beneficial,
And it works both ways,
I don't have a problem

5

Yes it's good,
That the research is being done by some body who is not a political leader.
I was also at once as ambitious as you are.
Personally I feel very excited to be part of this study
I don't think anybody has done any research specifically on women in SADTU,
As a teacher trade union
There might have been other studies in COSATU about women in leadership positions and
so forth.
But for SADTU I am very excited
I feel very honoured and privileged to be part of this.
So personally for me it is a kind of victory
It says something about the gender desk of SADTU
That somebody is interested in making use of our experiences in the SADTU gender desk.

6

I am more than comfortable with it.
Also in the past, nobody, not even NALEDI
Has been interested in having this kind of conversation with me as a woman leader

7

There is a lot I would like to see come out of this research.
I would want us to discuss this and see where we can take it
Which platform in SADTU we can share it with the leadership.
What you have experienced through the interviews and what the women are saying about the
environment in which we are operating as leaders in SADTU.
There is a hell of discrimination that women are still experiencing at all the leadership levels
in SADTU.
And really this research can assist us.

8

I am comfortable with it and
Thank you for choosing me as one of the participants,
I think I am relevant in the sense I worked with gender and
Whatever I have to share I am willing to share it with you.
It is an interesting topic,
I will be looking forward to the outcome (chuckles) of this very **grand research**.