Gender Struggles in Contemporary South Africa: Examining African Women's Traditional

Spiritual Roles in isiXhosa Culture

By

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis on gender struggles in contemporary South Africa: Examining African women's traditional spiritual roles in isiXhosa culture is my own work and that it has not been submitted for a degree at any other University. All sources and quotes cited have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Bizo Bomela   **217079593**   **December 2019**

Signed: ███████

ABSTRACT

Debates on how societies organise in contemporary ought to be inclusive of gender. As much as these debates are not new, the gender discourse is escalating to levels never imagined. Discourses on gender tackle and confront inequalities between males and females; and are manifested in diverse traditional, cultural and religious practices across South Africa and the continent of Africa. It is in such institutions and spaces that, in South Africa, most women continue to be marginalised despite the attempts by the 1996 democratic government constitution, aimed at protecting human rights and dignity, including that of women. Such embedded gender inequalities affect the way of life of the African people because most women are no longer considered as the backbone of society as it was prior colonisation. Thus, gender relations not only affect women's dignity but also undermine traditional spiritual protocols of amaXhosa, which often put women on the same pedestal as men. It is within such context that thesis adopted African feminism, social constructionist and intersectionality perspectives to examine roles that amaXhosa women in the Eastern Cape play in traditional spirituality that guides their cultural practices, which are highly patriarchal. The key objective of this research study was to examine traditional spiritual roles played by African women in isiXhosa society, in South Africa. The study asked the key question: What traditional spiritual roles are played by women in isiXhosa culture? The study used qualitative research methods to discover traditional spiritual roles that women have in isiXhosa society. Using one on one individual interviews, data was collected on traditional leadership roles, traditional healing roles of diviners and faith healers, similarities in tasks performed by men and women, and the impact of the roles women have in their communities. From qualitative data analysis, the study found that some women have traditional spiritual roles, which make them at the same equal footing as men. They play these roles as *oodadobawo* (senior sister with a status higher than that of a male) Queen mothers, faith healers and prophets and sometimes wearing all these "hats" depending on how gifted one is. However, the entrenchment of male-dominated western systems in most African societies, including South Africa, play a huge role in extending patriarchy, which contributed to pushing most African women to the margins and stripping them of their traditional roles. That was done by making males leading figures in society, at home, in the church, in state institutions etc. The study thus recommends that decolonised curricula focused on traditional systems of organizing society is need and that gender policies should look at traditional spirituality in its purest form to eradicate the evils of patriarchy.

DEDICATION

This study is a dedication to my late grandmother Nomntu Nofanelekile Bomela, my mother Nomfusi Bomela, my uncle and a 'father' Campbell Bomela, the late great Mackenzie Bomela *(unozala wemfundo kwindlu ka*Bomela), to the Methodist feminine ancestors who shone the light on my spiritual path so that I could follow the right path, *makudede ubumnyama kuvele ukukhanya. Camagu!!*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

UKZN	University of KwaZulu Natal
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
CE	Common Era
BC	Before Christ
PTH	Participant Faith Healer
PIYA	Participant Imbumba Yamakhosikazi Akomkhulu
PDV	Participant Divine Healer
POW	Participant Ordinary Women
PhD	Philosophy of Doctorate
EC HTL	Eastern Cape House of Traditional Leaders
CONTRALESA	Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa

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CHAPTER 1

CONTEXTUALISING THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Gender inequalities embedded in socially constructed gender role differentiations are still issues of gender struggles in Africa and the world at large (Mkhize, 2015; Taiwo, 2010). In most African societies, although mainly patriarchal, women have always been at the heart of societal wellbeing since time immemorial (Mkhize, 2012; World Bank, 2010; Apofo et al., 2008; Mikell, 1997). Most African women not only function as backbones of many clans, families, and children, but some also possess traditional spiritual powers. Awuah–Nyamekye (2012) illustrates African traditional spirituality as rooted in beliefs and worship of the supreme being revered all over African cultures, such as *Qamata*, in the context of isiXhosa culture, *uMvelinqangi* in isiZulu culture and *Onyame* in Ghanaian culture. African spirituality is also rooted in "traditional ideas, beliefs, values, and institutions", acquired and disseminated, where societal, cultural groups and individuals order their lives and interpret their experiences, giving them a unique identity (Raiter and Wilson, 2005). Hence traditional spirituality, specifically in this research, refers to ultimate IsiXhosa traditional (not religious) spiritual values and commitments upon which the Xhosas base their lives (Kourie, 2000).

A study conducted by Booi and Edwards (2014) shows that the Xhosa female diviners (*amagqirha*) mentor young men and women during spiritual initiation (*ukuthwasa*) and lead patriarchal clans during ritual ceremonies. Even so, Guzana (2000) contends that such Xhosa traditional and/or cultural customs and practices play a pivotal role in marginalising and silencing women. It is within such a context of marginalisation and silencing of women that this research study wants to find out about African women's traditional spiritual roles in isiXhosa culture. The research argues that even though the Republic of South African Constitution (1996) recognises the rights of women, it somehow fails to articulate gender struggles and entirely omits spiritual roles in the context of African cultures (Guzana 2000). Thus, grounded on (African) feminist thinking, this research project is aimed at examining and reviving traditional spiritual roles of women that are often silenced and marginalised in the Xhosa culture because of deepened patriarchal 'norms' and beliefs. The study further intends to promote African women's traditional spiritual roles and their function in society to contribute to women's empowerment and agency in

isiXhosa culture and society at large. Also, the study is an Afrocentric project aimed at promoting non-gendered indigenous knowledge by dismantling afro-colonial based patriarchal approaches which continuously oppress many women not only in South Africa but also in most African cultures. Centred on women's personal narrative through individual interviews, the study used qualitative research methods to understand women's traditional spiritual roles in isiXhosa culture.

Background of the Study

Even though Africa has been mostly patriarchal than matriarchal, colonialism, imperialism and apartheid (in South Africa) intensified patriarchy by restricting women to domesticated roles (Mkhize, 2012). Similarly, Nkomo's (2013) study in Zimbabwe found that unequal traditional gender roles assign women to perform house routines and men to unrestricted arenas. Historical studies provide useful understandings of the nature of the roles of women in Africa in relation to colonial and apartheid African societies, which were not only gendered but also racialized (Van Onselen, 1982; Hansen, 1989; Cock, 1980). Just like colonial legacy, postcolonial African social institutions continue to undermine women's roles and reinforce patriarchy and masculinities (Mamndani, 2018; Amadiume, 2015; Mkhize 2012; OgundipeLeslie, 1994)). In that way, the system of patriarchy continues to be promoted globally (Johnson, 2004) and is deepened in postcolonial African societies and cultures. Kilsby's (2012) study on gender norms among religion found that culture has effects on gender inequalities and contribution of women in communal tasks. Hence other studies confirm African women as known for their pivotal role in the sustainability of many African families according (Johnson, 2010; Mkhize, 2012; Mikell, 1997)).

1.2 Problem Statement

Most women continue to be dragged to the margins in patriarchal African societies and cultures (Mokhoati, 2017). In contemporary South African cultural societies such that of isiXhosa, the majority of African women continue to be marginalised from most public roles, a reinforcement of patriarchal domains and gender inequalities. Ojong (2015) and Mkhize (2012) contend that patriarchal systems are still deepened and normalised in the democratic South Africa; thus, gender struggle continues. Such normalised patriarchal systems often silence and marginalise women's diversified traditional roles that they aptly play for their societal and family well-being (Mikell,

1997). Booi and Edwards (2014) put emphasis on the view that female diviners in isiXhosa culture have the spiritual gift of mentoring men on their spiritual journey of healing and lead patriarchal in the event of ritual performances. Even so, Guzana (2000) contends that in most Xhosa traditional and cultural customs and practices, women are often treated as the 'other'. This objectifies and devalues women's centered epistemologies and their contribution to families and societies at large (Mkhize and Mgcotshelwa, 2019). It is within such a context of objectification and marginalisation of women's knowledge and contributions that this study researched about African women's traditional spiritual roles in isiXhosa culture. This research argues the Republic of South African Constitution (1996) falls short in its attempt to articulate gender struggles and entirely omits spiritual roles in the context of African cultures (Guzana 2000).

1.3 Broader issues to be investigated and key questions to be asked.

1. Finding out about women's traditional spiritual roles in Xhosa culture.
2. Understanding functions and significances of women's traditional spiritual roles in isiXhosa culture.
3. Finding out if there are any similarities or differences in traditional spiritual roles for women and women in isiXhosa cultural practices.
4. Examining if traditional spiritual roles promote or hinder women's empowerment in isiXhosa culture.

Since study intended to examine African women's traditional spiritual roles in isiXhosa culture. Thus the key questions included:

1. What are women's traditional spiritual roles in Xhosa culture?
2. What are the functions and significances of women's traditional spiritual roles in isiXhosa culture?
3. Are traditional spiritual roles and their practices for women similar to or different from those of men in isiXhosa cultural practices?
4. How do traditional spiritual roles promote or hinder women's empowerment in isiXhosa culture?

The participants were asked in their home language, isiXhosa. Since isiXhosa is a mother tongue language to the researcher, it was easier for him to rephrased or explain further to make questions more understand to the participants. In this context, the researcher was able to obtain rich data from the participants. As a result and part of findings, participants appreciated the research and voiced that it was difficult for them to practice their spiritual rituals and for most people to embrace their gifts because of *ingqobhoko* (western civilization); this would be further presented in the research results chapter. They also stated that at times they, because of the virtue of being women, are alienated from *ingxelo* (gathering of the clan aimed at discussing a ritual to be performed as a method of alerting and reminding members, and the youth about traditional spiritual protocols and procedures). Conducting this research was not an easy task but a learning curve with challenges. For instance, travelling to different parts of the Eastern Cape Province, walking from one village to the next because of lack of transport and attempting to make appointments was very challenging. Some women were hesitant at first to participate because of the fear that they were being trapped into giving information that might be incriminating, and trying to explain and convincing them was fruitful even thought, at times, some were irritated. For instance, one of the women vehemently told me that the study was not beneficiary to her, I should be interviewing members of IYA (Imbumba Yamakhosikazi Akomkhulu) only. Nevertheless, from the interview questions asked (check appendix A), all the objectives for the study were met; the research evidence is outlined in chapter 4 of the thesis.

1.4 Rationale and Significance of the study

Studying spirituality has always been my passion, spiritual and intellectual journey. In this journey, the lack of existing studies on traditional spirituality, especially that capturing the experiences of women and their narratives motivated me to conduct this research. I was also driven by the need and the hunger to expand my knowledge in the field of academia, as a person with a spiritual gift of healing. The need to understand the roles of women under the culture of amaXhosa, also the researcher's culture, concerning traditional spirituality from an Afrocentric perspective stood out; hence the objective of this researcher. The literature on Afrocentrism, gender and indigenous knowledge systems state that women occupied traditional and spiritual positions of power in precolonial African societies (Soetan, 2001). Most existing related literature

focuses more on African women's roles in Africa before colonisation and the impact of colonial Christian missionaries in perpetuating the oppression of women (Mokhoati, 2017). While there is plethora of studies on the subject of religious spirituality in Africa (Ver Beek, 2000), there is not much on traditional African spirituality. Hence its gender struggles are omitted. It is within such literature gaps, omissions and interests based on the researcher's spiritual journey that this study is necessary and significant as it intended to contribute to understudied African women's traditional spiritual roles in contemporary African cultural settings, with a special focus on isiXhosa culture. Moreover, the research objective was aimed at addressing patriarchal roots, which continue reinforce normalisation of African cultures as a male domain. The study thus intended to further contribute to knowledge production and depatriachalization of indigenous knowledge and cultural practices and promote gender equality, women's epistemology, agency and empowerment.

8. Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation consists of six chapters as informed by the basic format of a dissertation.

Chapter 1 is the introduction and background of the study. This chapter introduces the study and the background by looking at gender inequalities as socially constructed and the impact that they have had on women in the precolonial Africa and in the present. It also covers the study problem, objectives, questions, rationale, and significance of the study, including a summary of thesis structure.

Chapter 2: Literature review – introduces literature that concentrates on the brief sketch of selected African women leaders, the outline of traditional spirituality, women leaders in African, the genealogy of selected of African nations as a method of tracing and analysing gender discrimination. Most importantly, the chapter covers African women and their roles in precolonial and post-colonial era. Finally, it critically discusses the theoretical framework that underpins that study and challenges the existing theories for the failure to include traditional spirituality theoretical framework and its input to the current scholarship.

Chapter 3: Methodology and data analysis – overviews and critically presents the qualitative strategy adopted in conducting this study. It also looks at data collection methods and the research

instruments used to extract data in the form of in-depth interviews, the research design and their relevance to the study. What the chapter also covers are the population, sample and the sampling procedure, analysis of data, trustworthiness of the study, the researcher's role, ethics to be considered and the limitations of the methods adopted in this study.

Chapter 4: Research Discussions and Findings – this chapter analyses women's traditional spiritual roles, experiences and perspectives unearthed in the interviews. The chapter looks at gender struggles that African women are faced with in isiXhosa culture studied, the source of the problem and approaches needed to address those challenges.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations – summarizes research findings in relation to objectives, provides a conclusion and recommendations. This chapter also presents solutions to the gender problems that African women have been facing for centuries. The chapter outlines how the study contributes to knowledge production, presents the limitations and strengths.

CHAPTER 2:
LITERATURE REVIEW: A CRITICAL REVIEW
OF TRADITIONAL SPIRITUAL ROLES OF AFRICAN WOMEN

"Spirituality is central to many of the daily decisions people in the `South' make about their own and their community's development, including that of whether or not to participate in risky but potentially beneficial social action. Despite its importance, development literature and development practices have systematically avoided the topic of spirituality. This avoidance results in inferior research and less effective programs, and ultimately fail to provide participants with opportunities to reflect on how their development and their spirituality will and should shape each other." Kurt Alan Ver Beek

2.1 Introduction

The thesis is grounded on research conducted in South Africa among the Xhosa nation in order to understand African women's traditional spiritual roles in isiXhosa culture. This chapter presents literature review and related theories. First section of the chapter attempts to review the literature on the traditional spiritual roles played by African women in isiXhosa society. The second section of the chapter presents theoretical frameworks adopted to specify the key variables which influence a phenomenon of interest. It is also to highpoint the necessity to scrutinize by what method those fundamental variables might differ and in what conditions. The research results

revealed that that traditional spiritual roles of women within the nation of amaXhosa vary from clan to clan and from household to household, hence the saying *"imizi ayifani ifana ngeentlanti kuphela."* While with some clans it is the family of *umakoti* (bride) that dresses umakoti, before she leaves her home for the home of *umyeni*, with some homes it is the role of *udadobawo* (aunt) of *umyeni* (bridegroom) to dress *umakoti*. However, when it comes to execution of rituals, the study teaches us that spirituality dictates that women do and should lead and guide clans across African nations because in spirit, there is no gender. Thus, literature reviewed demonstrates that Africa was genderless in the precolonial era and that the concept of gender is a western motivated ideology, very confusing, at some point, to most African descendants. Hence, even though broader, the context of literature is focused on amaXhosa society in exploring the roles women in traditional spirituality. The literature further explicitly evaluates concepts such as gender inequality as informed by traditional spirituality of what it means to be human in relation to other human beings and culture regardless of gender. In this context, traditional spiritual roles refer to African spiritual practices rooted in "traditional ideas, beliefs, values and institutions" that are acquired and disseminated. And by which societal cultural groups and individuals facilitate their existence; and decode their experiences, giving them a distinctive identity (Raiter and Wilson, 2005).

Reviewing literature assists to detect what needs to be researched and improved in the area of study. Some of the literature reviewed shows that studies done on gender and development have been carried out around the world. After having reviewed literature for this study it has come to my attention that there is less literature available on traditional spiritual roles of African women and women around the globe, in particular the Xhosa women. The researcher identified some strengths, weaknesses and cracks in knowledge production in prior studies which the study seeks to bridge. The following passages will provide a critical review of traditional spirituality of African women in isiXhosa culture by looking at the following: brief sketch of selected women leadership in Africa in the pre-colonial and post-colonial era (women leaders in Africa), an outline of traditional spirituality, African women and their roles in pre-colonial and post-colonial era, genealogy of selected African nations as a method of tracing gender and then review literal studies done on African women. Patriarchal practices, gender discrimination and women leadership in Africa are a highly contested space in the field of academia, and in writing about women roles, this study finds it essential to revisit the history of women leaders in the continent.

2.2 A Brief Sketch of Selected African Women Leaders and an Outline of Traditional Spirituality

2.2.1 Women Leaders in Africa

One of the arguments that African feminist scholars explicate as advocates of decolonisation is that gender is categorised according to biological foundationalism of Western logic about a society based on biological determinism and that conception is not a worldview (Oyewumi, 2005). The history of the African continent has recorded contributions of influential women, who led men with distinction. Amongst many, were Queen Katyi who fought British colonisers alongside her husband Nkosi Jongusmsobumvu Maqoma in what is called the province of the Eastern Cape, the Ghanaian Queen Mother Yaa Asantwa who led and protected her chiefdom against British colonialists. There was also Queen Manthantisi of baTlokwa during the growth of the kingdom of the Zulu nation in the 1700s and Empress Uelete Rutael from Ethiopia was also a strong leader in her own right, Queen Aminatu and daughter of Bakwa Turunku who was a great Hausa warrior. The amaXhosa Prophetess Nontetha Nkwenkwe of eQonce, Queen Mother Yaa Asantewa of Ghana, Queen Ana Nzinga and Queen Maselekwane Modjadji of Northern BaSotho in Khetlhakone Village who played a traditional spiritual role of being a rain maker. In North American and Western studies there is a growing number of writings about women leadership and unfortunately that is not the case with Africa where there is scarcity of gender literature focusing on women leadership, and the case is no different from the context of amaXhosa. Afrocentric scholars like Ngunjiri, 2009; Oyewumi, 2008; Nkomo and Ngambi; 2009, Nkomo and Ngambi (2009) propose that scarcity of African women from Afrocentric literacy studies and dialogues necessitates the need to study and publish about them. They further contend that available talent must be netted and developed for purposes of addressing a pool of matters facing Africa.

Those Queen Mothers were indigenous leaders practising their indigenous African religions - which Olupona (2015) during an interview on *"The Spirituality of Africa"* contends that native African creeds refer to "the indigenous or native religious beliefs of the African people before the Christian and Islamic colonization of Africa." All the Queens mentioned were guided by the Spirit of the creator that is uQamata / uMvelingqangqi/ Zimu/ Modimo / God and guided by the spirit of their ancestors. Their gifts of leading, healing, seeing the unseen and praying was linked to

their way of being, their cultural, and traditional spiritual practices which speak to their everyday life and of their people. The ability to communicate with the ancestors who offer them advice is seen in Prophetess Mama Nobonginkosi, who got a message from Mamosindiso Elizabeth Spalding popularly known as umama uSpolding (Elizabeth Spalding). She asked her to warn abaThembu King Buyelekhaya Dalindyebo to stop smoking dagga and repent (Daily Sun, 2015).

Amongst many of the amaXhosa women prophets in the Eastern Cape was mama Nontetha Nkwenkwe, whose calling was not only limited to preaching, healing and hand-laying, she worked towards peace attainment and conflict resolution. That occurred after amaXhosa's spiritual, cultural, and social life was disrupted by colonial forces – calling for people to unite until the apartheid government captured her and threw her into a mental institution in Pretoria, after judged of being a threat to peace and order. Dantley (2005) contends that prophetic spirituality, which is viewed as the spirituality of the African people instills in leaders a kind of confidence to challenge structural inequalities and to challenge the status quo.

What mama Nontetha advocated for was not inimitable to the South African context. In Kenyan feminine spiritual leaders, what is seen as also imperative in them performing their duties successfully, is a quantity of bravery as a necessary (Dantley, 2005; Ver Beek, 2005; Paris, 1995; Reava, 2005; Ngujiri, 2010) ingredient to empower them to express their discomforts and challenge social, economic, political and cultural injustices against their constituents. This kind of bravery was seen in mama Winnie Madikizela Mandela, where she asserts that "women must challenge patriarchal systems that ostracize them in male-dominated society, by declaring that "Nothing about us without us" and continue to fill the ranks of all social and political organizations, where patriarchs discuss the future of nations (PANW, 2010 as cited by Okrah, 2018). Women's leadership in Africa was and is not limited to Queen Motherhood, prophecy and hand laying. Africa had and still has women who are amagqirha / izangoma (divine healers) whose status is on the same level or above that of men and vice versa, depending on how spiritually gifted an individual is. In emphasizing the significance of spirituality in folks' welfare, (Ver Beek, 2005; Mbiti, 1970; Chengu, 2015; Mndende (2007); Masondo, 2017) demonstrate how third forces which side-line spirituality affect the human and that this marginalization robs people of the chance to determine the value systems and priorities. They infer that this act is anti-developmental. Switzer (1993) as cited Camaroff & Camaroff (1989) in Masondo (2017),

explicates that instilling complexes of inferiority among Africans was part of the process of othering African indigenous knowledge systems.

However, there are a lot of debates as what accurately this traditional spirituality that Africa prides itself with is. I should also highlight that spirituality is not only unique to Africa. Traditional spirituality is still a part of life indigenous Asian nations, South Americans and Australia. The next section provides an outline of traditional spirituality drawing knowledge from Africa with parallels from indigenous South Americans and Asia.

2.2.2. An Outline of Traditional Spirituality

"Spirit is the vital animating force traditionally believed to be, in the world's spiritual and religious traditions, the intangible, life-affirming force that is present in all human beings. Spirit is that aspect of one's being that gives rise to the possibility of self-transcendence and deepening connectedness with all things in the universe. Deepening awareness of the Spirit often involves cultivation of inner practices such as contemplation, prayer and meditation, which serve to refine individual and social identity so as to include the 'other'." Kurtz & Ketcham etal

In positing an undiscussed and unarticulated metaphysical basis of sexism imposed on women in Africa, Ukhun (2003) contends that from an African perspective - the idea of existence of spirits is not an illusion as the universal point view or metaphysics suggests. Fairly, people of African descent feel the presence of the spirits in their lives and thus, it is evident that how they conceive of the worldview (Ukhun, 2003; Ver Beek, 2000; Masondo, 2017) is informed by the belief in the deeds of spirits.   Ver Beek (2000) posits that "spirituality is central to many of the daily decisions people in the `South' make about their own and their community's development, including that of whether or not to participate in risky but potentially beneficial social action". Traditional spirituality as an essential part of knowing of the world is central to decision making about who a woman gets married to, about who should assist a woman when giving birth and also about who treat an ill child and who should speak *exhantini* (kraal gate). About who address the ancestors during a ritual, who should 'spear' (ukuhlaba) the goat or an ox, who should be *intlabi*, and who should create the traditional necklace for boys going for initiation and who smears boys with *ifutha* (butter) or *imbola* (red ochre) when they are back from the initiation school. All of these speak to how Africans organize their lives in the South, North, West, East and Central part of the continent being guided by spiritual protocols as men and women.

But African spirituality has long been misunderstood by the West and its scholars who contend that it is controversial because it is different (Levy-Bruhl, 1989 cited by Ukhun, 2003) from their own as minds of Africans are not appropriate to rational thought. Levy Bruhl is no exception from the list of Western scholars and African scholars who take a view of African philosophy using western lens and methods of interpretation. However, I should point out that not all western scholars fell into the same trap as Levy Bruhl.

Even though the importance of centrality of traditional spirituality, is widely known across the world, it is precisely the importance of that centrality that led to the spiritual destruction of the African people by the West. It further led to the marginalization and "otherdness" – that in turn led to Christian indoctrination of the indigenous African people. This, according to Paris (1993), happened because that profound cultural multiplicity has been threatened continuously by the countervailing spirituality of European domination evidenced in three and half hundred years of trans-Atlantic trade slave of the African people (both women and men). Indoctrination of the African and colonial Christianity is what is viewed by Chengu (2015) as the roots of the subjugation of African women – in a continent where women enjoyed no inferior status to men. Those women who contributed to the civilization of the world, women who led matriarchal societies, established cities and churches. In the same line Mndende (2007) contends that the spirituality of indigenous African people is supressed and for it to find true meaning and freedom, African traditional religion would have to be given the due recognition that it lack as a consequence of colonial marginalization. The native people are still deprived of their apposite spirituality, which they only get to experience in part when they affirm loyalty to Ibramic faiths (Mndende, 2000; Onuzulike, 2008)

In "Capitalist Origins of the Oppression of African Women", Chengu (2015) contends that early men were not conscious of the connection between coitus and child labour, out of their own thinking men conceived the idea that women alone were creators of life. This view is supported by Segueda (2015), who posits that in pre-colonial Africa, respect for women was an integral part of the culture and that things like childbirth were considered enigmatic, and that led to women enjoying great prestige. In "The Image of Woman in African Cave Art" Rosalind Jeffries (1992) introduces us to the concept of the Supreme Mother where she demonstrates that "it is not only God who is female in Africa, the key guardian spirits and sanctified ethics are women". It should

also be understood that matriarchy operates not as a "mirror image of patriarchy" (Camara. 1992), and this happens because of scholars who are not conscious of their "androcentric and Eurocentric bias". These scholars according to Camara (1992), are in denial of the fact that the matriarchal system once existed in Africa. And therefore, the predominant thinking in the African continent which suggest that "women's role is in the kitchen", childbearing, and any other domestic-related work is as a result of the influence of Islam and Christian dogmas that steered to an escalation of domestic patriarchy in the colonial and post-colonial era.

However, just as social scientists and practitioners have become aware matter like "gender, class, and ethnicity", though conflictual, are essential mechanisms of people's identity and must be taken entirely into account in development struggles. Accordingly, spirituality and religion, since they are so fundamental in the well-being of people living in poverty, must also be tackled. To disregard some of these concerns will not eradicate possible struggle, but merely contribute to a dearth of understanding, a lack of voice, and a strengthening of those who believe themselves wiser or more `developed. For one to have a clear understanding of the nation or nations and the behaviour of its people, it is essential to look at their historical background. The following discussion traces the genealogy of selected African nations of the Bantu people, which amaXhosa people are part of.

2.3 Genealogy of Selected African Nations as a Method of Tracing and Analysing Gender Discrimination

Figure: 1 Map of Africa
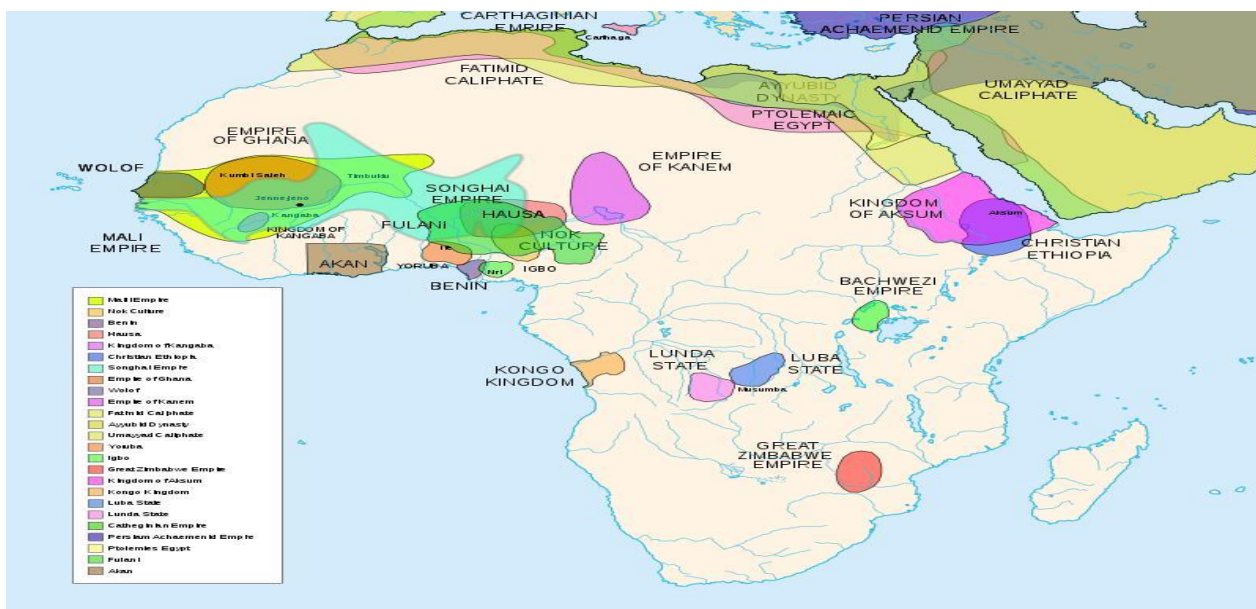
In demystifying and rebuking the prejudices written of what they call the real history of the African continent, UNESCO (1989) argue that African history is virtually unknown and characterised by genealogies that are mended, dates that are missing and sequences that appear to be irrational because all that comes prior has been destroyed. The attempt by UNESCO (1989) is reified by Hegel (1975), who contend that the study of the past has a purpose. And that purpose is to discover "how we have become who we have become" in a world dominated by Western European ideals that glorify the history of the Europeans, methodologies and value systems. Chinua Achebe (1958) reminds us that "until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunts will always glorify the hunter." It is therefore important for Africans to narrate their own tales and rebuke the myths that have led to distortions about African history. It is for this logic that the thesis focuses on traditional spiritual roles of African women whose history has over centuries have been told, "mistold", distorted or narrated to relegate women to the margins. In his thesis of "The History of a Xhosa Nation", Peires (1976) posits that it's the victors who record the history in oral societies even more than in literate societies. He further questions the genealogies for their inaccuracy in chronicling the genetic relationship than relative political standing. The thesis by Peires (1976) is no different from other patriarchal historical canons where stories about women are left out consciously or unconsciously by authors. Moreover, this section looks at the genealogy of the Bantu people where abaNguni before became amaXhosa, amaZulu, amaNdebele and amaSwati who originated from the East of the continent of Africa. In recording the history of the Bantu, Schoenbrun (2004) analyses the history of gender in Africa on a chapter titled "a companion to gender history", using an iconographical approach. He points out that the idea of kingship in East African history demonstrates a failure to change the order of a royalty whose core reposes on the duality of male and female. Schoenbrun (2004) further contends that groups of men and women, connected through matrilineality, controlled their inheritance of luxurious stone homes.

Great Zimbabwe sat at one of the nuclei of regional trade systems and gender affairs might have formed a fundamental alliance along which merchandises and supplies flowed. Conceivably, men and women called on spirit-mediums and healers to ensure reproductive success and the welfare of children, as more and more men and women seeking to have and to raise more children.

"Questions of gender in the history of gender in Southern Africa before the fifteenth century CE still largely lack answers, but that could change once scholars use historical linguistics and comparative ethnography to reconstruct inheritance practices and health, healing practices, and theories across the full range of Shona dialects" Wienser- Hanks (2008).

The approaches adopted by anthropological and historical scholars in recording the great Mapungubwe in Zimbabwe is no different from how gendered social history of the Congo Basin has been recorded by scholars - using a combined archaeological, art historical record with comparative linguistics, historical ethnography and even oral traditions. And with other nations mentioned in this section, the approach was not different.

However, what these scholars have missed in researching and writing the history of the Bantu people is finding parallels between gender patterns of the Bantu people where amaXhosa descend and locating the source of the origins of African people. From these studies, similarities can be drawn between nations from East Africa (Bantu people), Central Africa like Congo's Lemba nation where it is argued that Nguni people once migrated over the lakes of Tanganyika, the West Africa where Oyewumi and the likes of Obgomo & Ogbomo (2008) has consistently argued that the precolonial West African Yorubas "do not do gender". Roberts (2013) contends that the Luba women in the Democratic Republic of Congo have for centuries, been central in traditional leadership systems and are represented prominently in Royal arts, which date from the 18th century.

Not only those women were recognised as being capable of leading their nations of birth, but they were also the founding ancestors of Luba royalty and keepers of secret royal knowledge. The Luba royalty is about "pairing, cycling and alternating" of women and men capacities in ways that rendered royal symbolic and discursive power which, according to Schoenbrun (2004) is ambiguously a gendered one. This historicity of gendered interpretations is questioned by Oyewumi (2005), arguing that the writing of Yoruba history has been from oral traditions that by origin were free of gender categories and that it was seniority but not the gender that was the language of the status. The Luba people's traditional leadership practices were shaped around the dualistic of power of men and women when it took form around 950 and 1250 BC.

The archaeological evidence exhibits that the tradition took a break with a new coming of a new formation of empire and more imperialist government. However, later on they made coalitions with powerful women who served as ambassadors and advisors. It was in the 18th century when the mercantile world (Oyewumi, 2005; Obgomo & Ogbomo, 2008) emerged on the East Coast of the continent that gendered social relations and ideologies began to shape up the Swahili history. Swahili dialects belong to the Bantu people of which amaXhosa are descendants of, and gendered power on the Swahili comprised prominent roles for both male and female political leaders - with a distinctive matrilineal source of titled leadership positions in Kilwa. Marriage practices brought the man to live in his wife's family house and the rights to land ran through groups affiliated with each other through common mothers or groups of sisters.

Historian records also reveal that Arabian mercantile men sought to gain access to political titles and the use-rights to land and resources by marrying the daughters of local rulers. It is argued that it was the first Sultan of Kilwa who married the daughter of chief Mrimba and later persuaded the daughter of Mrimba (Sudarkasa, 1986) to tell her father that it was best to leave Kisiwani because it was not suitable for him to live in the same place with the father in law. With the culture of amaXhosa it is shunned upon for a man to visit his wife's homestead and any men who do that is called *usibayeni* (a derogatory term used to discourage men from visiting their wife's households). In North African nation like the Aksumites, principal evidence shows that Aksum clans were matrilineal clans come from a compound name in the royal title.

In examining the way of life of the Egyptians and Nubians, which modern history claims that they are of King Kush, Sudarkasa (1986), demonstrates that indigenous African women played an important role in many African cultures where Nubian women were very mighty so much that they ruled as Queens in their own right. Sudarkasa further postulates that by 750 BC Nubia controlled Egypt with Nubian kings having adopted the tradition of assigning their daughters as 'God's wives of Amun representing the dynastic interests in Southern Egypt.

In this section, we look at the genealogy of selected African nations as a method of tracing and analysing gender discrimination during the arrival of imperialists, by looking at the history of African nations and the lands where Abantu people once migrated. "By viewing gender as a social construction, it is possible to see descriptions of other cultures as evidence for alternative but real

conceptions of what it means to be woman or man. Yet paradoxically, a fundamental assumption of feminist theory is that women's' subordination is universal" (Oyewumi, 2005). In developing this view, Oyewumi (2005) further postulates that there is a need for investigation of the diverse cultural or architectural sites where gender was created, recognise various groups that were part of it and in the same vein acknowledge that there was an era when it was not created. And for society to construct a "historical history" African societies, scholarship must thoroughly scrutinize mistranslations, dogmas and ideologies (gender) that were forced (Adeeko, 2005).

2.4 African Women and their Roles in Precolonial Era and Post-Colonial Era

"Women are a key to development, and gender is crucial to development policies. However, Western development organisations often promote gender equality as something valued in the West, or even as a new idea altogether, rather than taking the time to research how it was rooted in African societies. The same holds true for many Africans who frequently argue that gender equality is a Western idea." Wendpanga Segueda

African scholars who have researched on gender often argue that one of the heritage of colonialism was corrosion of gender relations, which branded customary African society (Oyewumi, 2008; Mndende, 2007; Adeeko, 2005; Taiwo, 2010; Chengu, 2015; Segueda, 2015). Ogbomo and Ogbomo (2015), in "Women and Society in Pre-colonial Iyede" informs us about how poorly researched the precolonial historical status of women in Africa has been, hence this thesis has taken focus on the traditional spiritual roles of African women in isiXhosa society – spirituality being the subject of "otherdness" and marginalization. It is also argued that lived experiences of women are a subject of marginalization and neglect, and only viewed as "embodiments of disease and depravity (Allman, Geiger and Musisi, 2002, Matovu, 2016). Colonial patriarchal legacies are still evident in the African continent, despite the changes attempted by the democratic government to ensure that gender inequalities are eradicated and patriarchal practices that come with degrading and violating women are history (Mvimbi, 2009; Commission for Gender Equality, 2005).

More often gender scholars accuse each other of creating communities from an era before colonialism, where gender did not exist. Amina Mama (a Nigerian feminist scholar) who accused Oyewumi of gender fabrication contends that there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that gender has since time immemorial been of one the fundamental organising codes of African

societies (Mama, 2001). Regrettably, thoughts or valuation of the real situation of the African woman are often (Mama, 2001) flawed by very convincing contentions that reject the reality of sexism directed against the African woman. There seems to be misunderstanding between gender scholars from Africa and the Diaspora on whether gender existed prior colonisation or whether it is a product of colonialism. This thesis also argues that Afrocentric scholarship needs to let go of colonial lenses of understanding and deciphering African epistemologies, to avoid gender edifice and misinterpretations. Amongst other arguments is the tendency by scholars to rely on existing colonial epistemology and ethnographic approaches which are not African oriented - rather than producing African episteme, critiquing notions of what it means to know, using spiritual view to knowledge and social systems – bearing in mind that for the West to conquer African nations they had to temper with spiritual and cultural heritage. On the song titled "Zundiqondisise" from the album "The One Love Movement on Bantu Biko Street", Simphiwe Dana (2006) argues that "ndinendlela yam yokuthetha, ndinendlela yam yokucinga" (I have my own way of talking and thinking, I have my own way of doing things, I have my own way going out and my own way coming in). One of the key arguments is that the study of gender and language in the West spurred in the early 70s when Women's' Movement erupted had been guided by Western feminist approaches (Atanga, Ellece, Litosseliti and Sunderland, 2012). From this argument Atanga etal (2012) asks the question: "to what extent can a 'Western'-feminism-informed gender and language study therefore underlie the study of gender and language in sub-Saharan African contexts?" And this question was answered during the data collection process by one of the participants (PTH 1) who is a diviner.

1. When PTH001 was asked what women's traditional spiritual roles in Xhosa culture are, this is what she posited:

> *"Our language is neutral, for example in English…if you are my sister's child now I must call you nephew and if you have a sister call her niece. In isiXhosa we don't draw a distinction between nephews and nieces because you are my sister's child, umtshana (niece or nephew). And if you look at pronouns, in our language we don't have a he and a she. I could sometimes find myself in a position where I address you as a she because our pronouns are determined by the class of a noun. Dogs, boys and girls have one pronoun because they are in one class of nouns. What I am trying to say is that even our language is not an oppressive or discriminatory language."* PTH001

In an interview on the Spirituality of Africa with Anthony Chiorazzi, Olupona (2015) explicates that "African spirituality simply acknowledges that beliefs and practices touch on and inform every facet of human life and therefore African religion cannot be separated from the everyday or

mundane." And I will extend this argument by positing that spirituality has always been the guide that informs every facet of human life and its connection to the environment, governing the way of life and being devoid of social constructions and systems like gender. African systems of understanding affirm that reality is beyond human comprehension. The Akan people of Ghana have a proverb that says: "Wisdom is like a baobab tree and a single man's hand cannot embrace it" (Opoku 1993). This is an acknowledgement that reality is vast and complex, and no one or a single group can claim to understand it all. In other words, no particular method of thought is capable of providing solutions to all social enquiries.

However, the counter argument imposed by Mama (2007) is that African scholarship has remained ill prepared to address the challenges posed by gender, class, ethnic and other divisions that characterise social reality in the African continent. Despite the efforts to rebuke western notions of gender, where scholars are vehemently criticized for looking at African social reality using western lenses. Amana (2007) continues to challenge arguments that deny existence of gender discrimination without using African tools of analysis. This then puts an emphasis on the need for decolonization of the African scholarship which will help the African to return and reconnect fully with the spirit or soul, which Paris (1993) and Olupona (2015) argue that the West tempered with so that they can conquer Africa) so as to radically elevate the consciousness and eradicate afro-pessimism through an Afrocentric epistemological methods.

However, spirituality has been systematically avoided by development of literature and practices of development - leading to studies that are superficial and lack substance, and giving people an obscured view of how their development and their spirituality will and should shape their living conditions (Ver Beek, 2000). This fiasco ultimately leads to ineffectiveness and possible growth and intercessions, and recognizing the centrality of women's' spirituality which further denies women a chance to tap into whatever power, strength and hope that spirituality has offered them. This debacle according to (Ver Beek, 2000) deprives people the opportunity to react and control how their development and spirituality shape each other. Dana (2006) further argues that "that does not make me better than you or any lesser than you, it just makes me and who I am deserves your respect". What we are today is not what our ancestors were precolonial and what we are now is a consequence and a reflection of western imposition of imperial conquest. These

misconstrues are a result of poor understanding of what constitutes gender in an African context. For academicians to draw valid and sound inference, they will have to decolonize their minds, move beyond approaches and methods that confine them into already existing methods. They should engage on the spiritual view of what it means to be fully human, which are informed by the findings from thesis which demonstrate that in spirit there is no gender.

And therefore, for gender and feminist scholars like Hussein (2005) to look at gender ideology and semantics using colonial tools of analysis is tantamount to intellectual recolonization. This according to Adams (2006) occurred because studies on connections between African women and colonialism have been conducted through the lens of domesticity. Thus, this study builds on existing literature and contends that traditional spirituality is the missing link in academic, social and political debates on marginalization and violation of women's rights in society. The data collected for this study shows manipulation of traditional spiritual norms and culture by men to oppress women isiXhosa society. This manipulation disempowers women, whose source of power in the world is the Spirit. To support this argument, a study that was done in KwaZulu Natal on the status of traditional healers found that women are highly spiritual than men (Ojong and Ogana, 2015).

In trying to understand why izangoma are mostly women, Ojong and Ogana (2015) contend that western epistemologies have tended to misrepresent the realm of African beliefs by dismissing them as mere superstition and thereby constructing margins of intellectual ghettoization by considering African belief systems as what they call "cognitive false consciousness". To build on this argument, I would posit that within the province of KwaZulu, diviners are either called "Gogo" or "Makhosi" – terms which denote that these diviners are guided by feminine spirits of women who were healers or that they are possessed by spirits of feminine ancestral healers. In isiXhosa traditional healers are called "Mhlekazi" (the most beautiful one) irrespective of their sex and sometimes called "Makhosi" (of royal ancestral healers) and both these terms show that these diviners come from a lineage of matrilineal royalty hence the prefix "ma" in "Makhosi". In the genealogy section I demonstrated that amaXhosa nation as descendants of the Bantu nation from East Africa come from a precolonial matrilineal lineage. The prophets and mediums discussed in this context were not commoners (Kagwa, 1905 as cited Rigby, 1975) but they were and are associated with the chiefs and royalty. "These prophets would to be seated in a row behind

the chiefs and dignitaries (abaami). They were distinguished by their gear, wearing bark cloth robes tied with knots, goatskin garments tied about their waist, leopard skins flung over their backs, and holding flywhisks made from animal tails (Kagwa, 1934).

The status of women in Africa altered as a result of contact with the West through colonialism (Hunter, 1973 as cited by Ogbomo and Ogbomo, 1993). Hunter (1973) further posits that women began to suffer from patriarchal oppression informed by colonial legal shackles, custom, religion and attitudes that forced women to play second-fiddle. One of the scholars who accurately articulates how the status quo of women was downplayed is Hunt (1990), who in examining the links between gender and domesticity in the Belgian Congo discovered that the Belgian colonial project's aim was to "refashion gender roles and instil a western family ideology into African urban life". Women's roles were then downplayed to decorating contests, graduation ceremonies, home visits as attempts (Hunt, 1990) to redefine gender roles and tame African women, whose status was equivalent to that of Kings, prophets, (Chengu, 2015) divine healers, faith healers, hunters and warriors.

Not only did Africa experience gender balance through female autonomy. The Pre-Colonial South Asia even with the gradual reinforcement of the influence of Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and Confucianism (Reid, 2008), women continued to enjoy their status that was not equal to that of men. Women played different roles which included transplanting and harvesting but their reproductive role offered Southeast Asian women magical and ritual powers that were challenging for man to contest.

The fact remains that no degree of stereotyping against women existed in traditional Africa. The woman possessed the power to organize the family and the society at large. There was an enormous task and responsibility conferred on womanhood. In fact, the responsibility of both men and women were seen as complementary to one another, there was a co-dependency and a balance that existed (Taiwo 2010:230). Oyewumi contends that the group of women scholars in colonial scholarship and also in Western feminism inevitably delineates an mediocre locus that is only demarcated in bad terms in relation to man. She claims that in precolonial Yoruba society, differences in sexed bodies did not translate into this kind of pecking order. She also criticises Western feminism for assuming the existence of this hierarchical gender scheme when analysing

Yoruba society, thereby reproducing and perpetuating this foreign scheme in Yoruba society (Oyewumi as cited by Coetzee, 2017) in African feminism as a decolonising force.

However, gender roles in Africa is a highly contested subject where some scholars contend that even though there were also unambiguous leadership tasks such as Queen Mother, the authority of those positions was often restricted to an advisory capacity and to representing women rather than an entire community. Some studies exhibit the use of cultural protocols to prohibit women from assuming political roles. Women in Iyede could not inherit patrilineal system of inheritance, they did not have lands and fishing ponds while they could perform what Atsemu-Diera (1998) terms conspicuous roles. An evaluation done by on gender inequality by Fofack (2014) contends that gender inequality in the African continent was widespread, in resource ownership and distribution, sexual division of labour in agri-farming and production process. Fofack (2014, Guyer, 1978, Hay 1976) puts emphasis on the view that husbands in Cameroon, irrespective of the colonial powers had absolute power of trading over goods production.

The scholarly work on gender struggles in precolonial Africa also bring to our attention to different systems of living practiced by various societies in different African nations – where some tribal groups acknowledged the power of women - whereas others have always thrown women to the margins even before colonists invaded Africa. In Nigeria, men and women in Igbo society combined wealth and generosity with the ability to speak well (St Clair 1994, Hanson 1976; Mndende, 2000). Igbo culture and religion did not deter women from enjoying their freedom of movement, worship and partaking in economic activities (Chukwu, 2015;
Green, 1964; Meek, 1957) – playing their economic roles as great petty traders. The idea that gender inequality in Africa was widespread in contested in Joseph Diescho's (1993) Troubled Waters where the author demonstrates the unparalleled power of Chief Mathombo who was a female leader – a leader that was respected by both men and women in her village and lead dialogues (imbizo) and give direction (umkhombndlela) on what the needs on the needs of her village troubled by colonialism. Marginalization of women from dialogues is not an inherent African view but a creation of colonialism and it then became entrenched within a "masculinist state by virtue of their patriarchal inheritance from African traditions (Maathaai, 2015).

The case of Igbo women was different in comparison to other countries (Kilsby's, 2012) despite the fact that studies on gender norms among religion found that culture has implications on gender inequalities and participation of women in community tasks. Emphasis on this point is made by Van Allen, 1972; Victor, ; Forde and Jones, 1950 on "Sitting On A Man" : Colonialism and the Lost Political Institutions of Igbo Women" who posit that "there were no specialized bodies or offices in which legitimate power was vested, and no person regardless of his status or ritual position, had the authority to issue commands which others had an obligation to obey. However, there are contradictions in Van Allen's (1972) argument when a contention that even though a woman might rank higher among women than her husband was among men, a limited number of women could acquire the highest titles. Another one is the view that at village gatherings women would only speak on matters that concern them while men dominantly engaged the dialogues and as much as this was the case, there were no spiritual or cultural protocols that forbade women from contributing on the engagements.

In "Talitha Cum Hermeneutics", Dube (2009) reminds us that various scholars have recorded that African women rose to become church founders, prophets, faith healers and bishops and they did that based on the Spirit that ordered them to occupy positions of power in society and in church. The spirit that Dube (2009) introduces us to is the Spirit canon that devalues patriarchal texts found in the bible. It is African Spirituality that (Ngunjiri, 2015) augments idiosyncratic dimensions of the application of spiritual leadership. Whether women spiritual leaders are possessed by ancestral spirits, Karl Marx (1844) argues that it is the supernatural that takes control and they submit to spiritual heights that are beyond reproach of natural authority and therefore altering the unchangeable in a quest for more just and inclusive communities. Whatever these women denounce or demand as divine charge, it is taken as authoritative through the woman agency or medium (Berger, 1976). This was the case with Mama Nontetha Nkwenkwe

In many pre-colonial societies, cultural norms prohibited women from assuming most political roles but in Iyede, women, like their men participated in fishing. It was also their role to appease the gods and goddesses of their rivers to release many fish. While women performed conspicuous roles, they did not have lands and fishing ponds of their own nor could they inherit them because of the patrilineal system of inheritance which did not make any provision for such. The laws of inheritance made it explicit that only sons could inherit their father's property, and their daughters

their mother's (Madam Atsemu-diera 1988).In matriarchal societies, maternal values of caring, courage, compassion, nurturance and fecundity were predominant and this means that respect was given to women because of their medicinal knowledge of flora and fauna in relation to healing of the communities they lived in.

Literature review conclusion

This section I reviewed literature on the traditional spiritual roles of women in the African continent, as traditional leaders, diviners, faith healers and ordinary women. The purpose was to highlight the centrality of women's in the precolonial era, the destruction of traditional spiritual systems of living by colonialism and how it is important to look back (sankomfa wisdom) when understanding women's struggles in the age of decolonisation. It important that we draw parallels between the past and the present when we are seeking wisdom for the struggles that we are facing. Literature is integral part intellectual development for seekers of knowledge and wisdom inspired by desire for knowledge production within and outside academic spaces.

Literature was reviewed to help the researcher grasp an understanding of gender inequalities, development of patriarchal ideologies and institutions hindering women's sense of being as informed by traditional spirituality. That was done by looking at the concept that is spirituality, women in traditional leadership and the genealogy of the Bantu people. Literal studies reviewed display evidence of the importance of traditional spirituality in ensuring that women under the nation of amaXhosa regain their dignity and reclaim their position in society. However there is dearth of literature that explicitly focuses on the traditional spirituality and about women in the African continent. Thus, the study intends to fill the gaps found in literature, build on existing knowledge and encourage scholars to consider Afrocentric tools of analysis, when challenging existing African epistemologies.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

2.5.1 Introduction

"I should go to insist that every man and woman should be a feminist, especially if they believe that Africans should take charge of African land, African wealth, African lives and the burden of African development. It is not possible to advocate independence of African development without also believing that African women must have the best that the environment can offer. For some of us this is the crucial element of feminism." Ama Ata Aidoo

This study is underpinned by three theoretical frameworks which are the African feminist theory, intersectionality and social construction theory because of the lived experiences, the identity and spirituality that shapes the traditional spiritual roles of African women in isiXhosa society. All of these theories are overlapping as the history of African women is influenced by the history of imperialism, colonialism and neo-liberalism, and these all inform race, racism and gender discrimination that women faced and are still facing today. It should be understood that this study exhibits the lived experiences of women marginalized not only culturally, politically, economically, because of the race that they belong not only ethnically but spiritually.

It is therefore, the objective of this study to demonstrate how women have been disconnected from the spirit, spiritually marginalized and how theories adopted for this study have over the years not attempted to tap on spirituality as the organizing and uniting force of humanity. Bateson (1972) posits that it is crucial for researchers to be conscious of the adopted frameworks, assumption on which they are based and to look for inconsistencies of logic. Thus, the significance of considering epistemology is enhanced when it is considered that the present thesis constitutes a paradigm shift.

2.5.2 African feminist theory

Feminist scholars such as Josephine Ahirike (2008) describe African feminism as the pot that is sweltering, containing diversity of discourses and courses of action. Gwendolyn Mikell as cited by Ahirike (2008) posits that African feminist approach originates from various dynamics when compared to those that generated from Western feminism. This argument branches from the contention that African feminist theory is shaped by the resistance of the women of Africa from western supremacy and that it does not develop from capitalistic selfishness and patriarchal

control over women within industrial developing societies. It is a call and a scream for total emancipation of women shouting "womandla" (a claim for dignity and spiritual power of women), an old urgent squawk and a discourse that concerns itself with matters of gender difference, an advocacy for women to find equal sitting as men in a society beleaguered by patriarchy. It is an inclusive paradigm not only concerned women's rights in Africa but also those in the diaspora.

African feminism is also viewed as a strategy that African women have developed and adopted to fight for their survival, claiming that "true feminism is an abnegation of male protection and a campaign for women to be resourceful and self-reliant" (Steady, 2010). African Feminism is viewed as originating from a variety of source and amongst those is Western Women's Movement (Atanga, 2013) however, those women have remained conscious of 'positive' African values. Amongst those movements is Womanism, which is based on the model of identity development to describe experiences of how women move from external societal definitions of womanhood. Womanism also emphasizes how women come to value themselves as a women in whatever role they may choose for themselves. Womanism is however challenged by African feminist scholars such as Ebinoluwa (2009) contending it is a product of feminism that has inadequacies and asking to what extent does Womanism describe the indigenous African women's experiences, worldviews and perception.

Amid this criticism of women movements like Womanism, Gqola calls for a rejection of what she calls the Cartesian dualism embedded in the artificial separation between theory in the academia and the praxis found outside of the academia. Gqola (2012) critiques the heartening propensity in much African based theory where theory and analysis are coordinated by activists and academicians. This study combines literature that has been researched, relevant feminist theories and raw data from women, whose lived experiences informs this study, and it is from this raw data that the study combines theory and praxis to produce empirical evidence on traditional spiritual roles of women. Evident in this study is that African feminist theory involves re-recording of African women's identities not only as inactive victims of male dominance and patriarchy or as bothered by Western sister's concerns (Dosekun, 2007 & Atanga, 2013).

It is the role of African feminism to destabilize patriarchal status quo and it's oppressing social systems, which require women and deter them from realising their capability beyond their

customary roles as hard-working income-generating wives and mothers. What the theories adopted in this study fail to realise is that; it is the traditional spiritual roles that gave precolonial women equal recognition and traditional leadership powers as men, because traditional spirituality does not discriminate and ostracize women but views them as equally capable. And thus, there is a need for scholars to research traditional spirituality and attain an elevated understanding of the potential power it has to radically challenge patriarchy and shift paradigms. The point of departure for theories that celebrate and endorse African cultures and diversity should be the interrogation and engagement of traditional spirituality that propelled and still propels women to become Queen Mothers, prophets, diviners and medicine women that were never vilified in African societies until colonialism showed its face and disrupted the status quo.

African women identities include movements like Womanism and Stiwanism. African feminism is relevant to this study as it celebrates and promotes African cultures and diversity. While this theory does not despise men (Oyewumi, 2005), it condemns patriarchy and emphasizes paying attention to women's voices and their roles as cultural, political and historical actors (Oyewumi, 2005), making it applicable to this study as it is interested in women's spiritual roles. Scholars like Oyekan (2014) reminds us of African scholars who contend that there is a need to look at the injustices done on female folk not using the Western methodology which fantasizes universality, but Afrocentric lenses, for them to sufficiently mirror the reality of the African woman (Oyekan, 2014).

It should also be highlighted that early African feminist scholars were averse to adopt the term feminism because of the contention that it places White Western women at the centre and play a part in the marginalization of the (Arndt , 2000) problems focused on African women. Arndt Mohanty (2000) further postulates that western feminism plays a role in the marginalization and oppression of women from the so called third world countries, because the conceptual paradigm from which they operate is informed by racism and cultural imperialism of their colonising countries. In her essay, Mohanty argues famously that Western feminist theory presents itself as a universal phenomenon in ways that disguise its profoundly Western concerns and biases. As a post-colonial theory, Chandra Mohanty (2003), Uma Narayan (2008), Sandra Harding (2008), Aihwa Ong (1998) and Gayatri Spivak (1996) as cited by Mkhize (2012) in her thesis on understanding feminism contend that it is important to acknowledge dissimilarities and various

forms of oppression that women experience which are informed by the past and present colonial history and culture – and their roles in shaping contemporary developing countries. Intersectionality focuses on these different forms of oppression that women face in the democratic era.

2.5.3 Intersectionality Theory

Intersectionality was introduced by Kimberly Crenshaw to critique ideologies already dominating in antiracist feminist thought with the purpose of analysing and understanding the situations of women. Crenshaw reveals that boundaries of sex and racial discrimination are depicted by White women's and Black women's experiences. Intersectionality is used in academic literature as a reference to theory and methods of identifying, studying and analysing real universal phenomena of structural, political and representational intersectionality. Carastathis' (2014) examination of intersectionality as a paradigm for contemporary theory argue that intersectionality unearth power of relations that are oppressive and pervasive, as knowledge drawn from and about societal groups that are oppressed. It is against this backdrop that this study has adopted intersectionality, to try to examine and understand traditional spiritual roles of African women of amaXhosa nation in a democratic era as oppressed, marginalized black women by colonial intersecting patriarchal systems enforced on Africans. Intersectionality advocates for the social justice action agenda and (Symington, 2004) is rooted in the premise that people occupy multiple, layered identities that form their sources of oppressions (Mkhize, 2015; Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1991). Intersectionality allows an understanding of multiple forms of women's oppressions as derived from racial, gender and class identities, including social relations, history and the operation of structures of power in society. It helps build arguments for substantive equality from women's historical, community and cultural case studies (Crenshaw, 1991). That is, women writing/speaking from their experiences of specific intersecting identities by extracting theoretical statements and overarching principles.

The theory unveils according to (Carastathis, 2014; Collins, 1990) the "structural, disciplinary, hegemonic and interpersonal dimensions of power" and how oppression is created and sustained through various identity facets. It apprehends the manner in which oppressions occur simultaneously through race, gender and sexuality, looking at the nature of being, contending that

the theory can hypothesize the "convergence, constitution or how systems of oppression are interwoven. It focuses on essentialist constructions of unitary groups pieces the experiences of Black women because of the interest in race and gender that take separate slices of our lives. It is therefore imperative that intersectionality troubles itself with analysing Black struggles as a theory rooted in Black feminism and critical race theory (Crenshaw, Carbado, Mays and Tomlinson, 2013). Despite its efforts to tackle issues of ethnic and racial groups, genders, sexual orientations, nationalities and disabilities, intersectionality is criticised for focusing too much on Black women. Intersectionality feminist theory is a useful strategy in this study for examining isiXhosa African women's traditional roles on the grounds of isiXhosa women's gender struggles (e.g. race, gender, etc.) as linked to the Xhosa culture. Hence intersectionality is preferred for this study for it allows valuation of the impact of identities that are converging on gendered opportunities and access to cultural roles and rights in the context of the Xhosa culture. Amid its critics are scholars who deracialize intersectionality and those adhere to a method that is race sensitive but still worry that anti-racism has been "too concerned with Blacks".

Intersectionality theory has been celebrated as the 'most important contribution that women's studies has made so far' (McCall 1771). Intersectionality theorists bring into the discourse the idea that feminist rebellion tactics will constantly duplicate and strengthen the people of colour's subordination because of the failure of feminism to interrogate race. The second argument that they present it is also the failure of feminism to interrogate patriarchy means that antiracism and if patriarchy is not interrogated this means that antiracism will frequently reproduce the subordination of women.

"Black women are sometimes excluded from feminist theory and antiracist policy discourse because both are predicated on a discrete set of experiences that often does not accurately reflect the interaction of race and gender. These problems of exclusion cannot be solved simply by including Black women within an already established analytical structure. Because the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated. Thus, for feminist theory and antiracist policy discourse to embrace the experiences and concerns of Black women, the entire framework that has been used as a basis for translating "women's experience" or "the Black experience" into concrete policy demands must be rethought and recast" (Crenshaw, 1989)

Intersectionality theory in the context of marginalization of African women from performing their traditional spiritual roles, addresses the inequalities brought by colonialism into the African nation. But as much as intersectionality is necessary in an attempt to analyse Black women's struggles which are as a result colonial imposition, intersectionality like other theories that the

study adopted fails to interrogate traditional spirituality as an empowering tool for emancipation of women of colour. And this study finds it imperative to adopt traditional spirituality which is a genderless approach as a feminist discourse for full emancipation of women within the society of amaXhosa. This comes with the understanding that gender is a social construction that needs to scrutinized using a social constructionist approach.

2.5.4 Social Constructionism

Social constructionism is an attempt to articulate what we consider as reality and how to make sense of the social world. Social construction concerns itself with how human beings develop knowledge and how they know what they claim to know as a theory based on grounded theory. In this theory, knowledge is viewed as constructed by human interactions (Schwandt, 2003), hence Berger and Luckman (1991) view society as existing both as objective and a subjective. The theory is used in this study as an effort to understand traditional spiritual roles of amaXhosa women and the impact those roles have in uplifting or suppressing them in society. Social constructionism is therefore fitting for this research project that tries to understand the social reality of women, (Galbin, 2014) in a world where we never know what is universally true or false because societies know stories about "true, false, good, bad, right or wrong". Gergen (1985) as cited by Galbin (2014) postulates that a great deal of human existence exists as it does, due to social and interpersonal interactions and genetically inherited aspects play a part. And this study has discovered that interactions between the people of the west and Arabs has a damaging impact on the traditional spiritual lives of the women of amaXhosa women. Social constructionism is deeply concerned with what anthropologists call culture, what sociologists call society, challenging what human being call it common sense knowledge about ourselves, cultures and traditions of the world we live in (Burr, 1995).

Social constructionists view gender not as a trait of the individual but rather as a process that is external to the individual, as defined by interactions between people, language and by discourse of a culture. This theory cogitates that human beings construct their knowledge and identities that thereafter are viewed and practised as "norms" through daily interactions in society (Delamater and Hyde, 1998). The theory is relevant to this study as it presupposes that people's experiences are informed by social constructions, through which culture reinforces socially constructed

gendered norms, practices and stereotypes that are centred on male domination. The culture of amaXhosa in the Eastern Cape, its knowledge and practices, is highly patriarchal as result of social construction. Further the theory is more suitable for the study as it argues that reality is socially constructed, thus phenomena such as patriarchy are social constructions, a product of a culture, language and institutions.

This point of constructivism implies that all stories or interpretations that 'work' are equally valid and that no single 'truth' or interpretation exists (Dickerson & Zimmerman, 1996; Doan, cited in Rapmund, 2000). The constructivist view consequently contrasts with postmodernism regarding the belief that interpretations have equal validity, but corresponds with postmodernism with regards to the belief in the existence of many possible 'truths'. Social constructionism is a theory that rests on the belief that reality is socially constructed and further acknowledges that there is a subjective reality, hence it is concerned with how knowledge is constructed (Delamater and Hyde, 1998). In addition, Berger and Luckman (1991) contend that it is through interactions of individuals with a society that knowledge is created and that all aspects of humanity and society are produced, sustained and destroyed through the interactions over time; this includes the social construction of gender. The experience of society as subjective reality is achieved through primary, and to a lesser extent, secondary socialisation. The former involves being given an identity and a place in society. Indeed, Burr (1995) suggests that our identity originates not from inside the person but from the social realm. Socialisation takes place through significant others who mediate the objective reality of society, render it meaningful and in this way it is internalised by individuals (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). This is done through the medium of language. Burr (1995) comments that within social constructionism, language is not an unproblematic means of transmitting thoughts and feelings, but in fact makes thought possible by constructing concepts. In other words, it is language that makes thoughts and concepts possible and not the other way around. Language predates concepts and provides a means of structuring the way the world is experienced.

It is apprehensive with how understanding is fabricated and understood. Thus, it has an epistemic logic not an ontological perception. Criticisms and misunderstanding arise when this central fact is misinterpreted. This is most evident in debates and criticisms surrounding realism and relativism. The words of Kirk and Miller (1986) are relevant when they suggest that the search

for a final, absolute truth be left to philosophers and theologians. Social constructionism places great emphasis on everyday interactions between people and how they use language to construct their reality. It regards the social practices people engage in as the focus of enquiry. This is very similar to the focus of grounded theory but without the emphasis on language. Social constructionism that views society as existing both as objective and subjective reality is fully compatible with classical grounded theory, unlike constructionist grounded theory which takes a relativist position (Tom Andrews, 2012).

2.5.5 Theoretical conclusion

The three theories adopted for this study to understand a gendered social phenomenon have given the researcher an opportunity to better conceptualize the project and understand the depth of the study as informed by experiences of traditional amaXhosa women. This section of the chapter addressed post-colonial, intersectionality and social constructionist approach as frameworks that underpin this study. The presentation helps the researcher to better understand and connect to the participants and the views that they expressed which are informed by their socially constructed realities of gender, sex and racial oppression. In societies socially constructed and divided according to race, gender, sex, class, culture, religion, sex, nationality and many other tools used to perpetuate inequalities and injustices, it is justifiable to for this study to adopt these theories and the overlaps they present. The data extracted from participants which will be analysed in the next chapter is evidence that the theories are aligned to this study.

Chapter 3:
Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Research methodology is the chapter in this study which covers strategies and a design to collect and analyze data. This study adopted qualitative research method to extract meticulous data on traditional spiritual roles of Xhosa women. What this study intended to do was to discover women's traditional spiritual roles, understand core functions and vitality of women's traditional spiritual roles in isiXhosa culture. Amongst other objectives, is the need to find out if there are any similarities or differences in traditional spiritual roles for women and interrogating obstacles that might hinder empowerment of women in isiXhosa culture. The intended outcome was to

provide context to the necessary data. According to Sage (2008) detailed data can expose the indiscernibility of everyday life and exotic otherness, layers of lived experiences and the implication they bear on everyday life. This scientific methods for qualitative analysis allowed the researcher to exhume rich data by conducting one on one interviews with participants who carry wisdom as informed by their cultural surroundings (Patton. 2001).

3.2 Qualitative Research Strategy

For purposes of this study a qualitative research approach was utilized. Because of its groundedness, qualitative research method takes place in natural settings as undisturbed by the researcher as possible. This therefore leads to a researcher extracting thick descriptions in cultural contexts and thick descriptions offer an understanding of traditional spiritual realities of lived experience of Xhosa women as they are subjectively perceived, experienced, created and shaped by women's spiritual roles. In support of this notion, Anderson (1989) contends that some of the case studies are radical or postmodern and that helps in exposing power structures, gender imbalances and their effects as is the case in Geertz's (1973) critical ethnography. In addition, Guest & McQueen (2012) are of the view that qualitative research as a method that is inductive allows interface between researcher and the participant and from this intimate interaction with women from isiXhosa culture, intertwining and overlapping themes can be identified.

With this method data centered on subject's perceptions, deep understanding and practice on traditional spiritual roles of women in isiXhosa culture was gathered. The method involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject (Sage, 2008) matter, meaning that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret occurrences in terms of the connotations that participants provide. Therefore, the study adopted the best approach because qualitative approach problematizes its findings, asks questions such as "to whom is this real or true" and "according to which (Sage, 2008) notions of reality?" This according to the Sage Handbook (2008) is an attitude of openness about truth or reality which pushes toward depth of understanding, propelling investigation to a profound level. Research questions were drawn and posed to amaXhosa women to learn about their lived experiences and their concepts of reality.

3.3 Research questions

For one to understand what enlightens the traditional spiritual roles of African women in isiXhosa society, the following questions were probed: What are women's traditional spiritual roles in Xhosa culture? What are functions and significances of women's traditional spiritual roles in isiXhosa culture? Are traditional spiritual roles and their practices for women similar to or different from those of men in isiXhosa cultural practices? How do traditional spiritual roles promote or hinder women's empowerment in isiXhosa culture? An effort is made to bring to the front voices and lived experiences of African women in isiXhosa culture who live in a patriarchal society that marginalizes them.

To ensure that the researcher extracts the richest data for the study, demographic area of the study was considered. That was done to with the purpose of understanding the traditional spiritual position and recognition of African women in isiXhosa society and their roles as informed by traditional spirituality. Qualitative approach was drawn to elicit in-depth knowledge and to put the findings into context. This chapter provides an explicit description of how the research questions will be answered. It further sketches and outlines the qualitative methodology together with its sampling techniques deemed appropriate for the study, data collected and the procedure used to collect, analyze and interpret the case study data, and the ethical considerations perceived in conducting the study.

3.4 Research Design

This case study is based on experiences of African women's traditional spiritual roles in isiXhosa society at Amathole district in the province of the Eastern Cape in South Africa. A case study according to Flyvbjerg (2011) has existed since time immemorial and have its origins in qualitative approaches used in various disciplines such as anthropology and social sciences in the early 21st century when lengthy, detailed ethnographic studies of individuals and cultures were conducted using this design. This study scrutinized amaXhosa women's lived experiences, the manner in which they understood the social and cultural context of their society in which they exist. The intention was to unearth insight on how amaXhosa women interpreted and attributed meaning to their experiences and the way they create their world (Johansson, 2003; Simons, 2009). Yin (1984) as cited Ngalo-Morrison (2012) views it as an empirical inquiry which

investigates a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evidenced where multiple sources are used. This undoubtedly deepens the understanding of interface between women experiences and traditional spiritual roles, and mostly the gap that breaks the link between women's traditional spiritual roles being recognized and the patriarchal notions of women marginalization. It is important that the researcher look at the study in depth, to put its content and activities to scrutiny to critically develop an understanding of traditional spiritual roles of African women in isiXhosa society. The area of the study and methods of data collection will be discussed in the next section.

3.4.1. Explanatory research design

Explanatory research design is piloted about an enquiry when there are few or no earlier research to refer to or rely upon to predict an outcome. The primary objective is on gaining acuities and familiarity for later investigation, when research difficulties are in a initial stage of examination. This kind of research design is usually used to launch an understanding of how best to proceed in studying an issue or what methodology would best in collecting data about the issue (Cuthill, 2007).

3.4.2. Relevance of the Research Method

As an exploratory, descriptive and explanatory method, qualitative method is an ideal method when the aim of the research is to study contemporary events and to find answers to questions such as 'why' and 'how'. For this study it was adopted to specifically analyze contextual details where the phenomenon is not distinct from context. Hyett, Kenny and Dickson-Swift (2014) contend that qualitative research design is vital for qualitative research studies since it utilizes naturally existing information sources such as people and interactions between people within the scope of the case. It offers an opportunity to study a phenomenon within its real-life context and thereby develop a deep grasp of how it relates to its context (Halinen & Törnroos, 2005). An explanatory method is considered qualitative, hence it studies a smaller sample of something and the method of data collection, for each case study depends upon the purpose of the study. They are according to Flyvberg (2006) a context dependent, in-depth investigation of a simple example of a phenomenon, an empirical investigation of an individual case which is unique and usually

addresses a problem of some sort. Siggelkow (2007) views it as a persuasive way of motivating or falsifying an argument or a theory and the persuasion lies in the fact that the motivation or falsification comes from a real life situation, and a way of inductive theory building.

Qualitative research is concerned with constructing clarifications of social occurrences and aims to help us to understand the social world in which we live, and why things are the way they are. The approach is concerned with the social aspects of our world and seeks to answer questions about (Hancock and Winridge, 2007) complex social issues that have been explored and not fully explored. Qualitative research attempts to scrutinize and reify our understanding of how things came to be the way they are in our social world. If the research question involves exploring how people experience something, or what their views are, exploring a new area where issues are not yet understood or properly identified observing 'real-life' context, or a sensitive topic where one needs flexibility to avoid causing distress. And thus, the population of the study was properly sampled to ensure that the study produces valid and a reliable outcome for future use and reference.

3.5 Population, Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study used purposive sampling method which is best suited for qualitative research studies (Palys, 2008). Patton (2015) demonstrates that the logic and power in purposive sampling is depended on selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study and the term applies to qualitative studies. This is a qualitative strategy that according to Gentles, Charles, Ploeg and McKibbon (2015) is used to indicate that participants are selected on the basis of their knowledge and verbal eloquence to describe a subculture they belong – in this case it is amaXhosa women. Purposive sampling is best effective when a researcher is curious about studying a certain cultural field with knowledgeable experts. The researcher is thus obliged to analytically reason about the boundaries of the populace and then choose the sample case accordingly, identify and formulate a criteria for the selection of respondents (Yin, 2000).

3.5.1 Population and Sample

The population sample of this study was limited to only 22 women composed of Imbumba Yamakhosikazi Akomkhulu, daughters of the royal houses in the Eastern Cape Province, amagqirha (traditional diviners) and traditional spiritual healers. The sampling strategy informs the procedure of discovering if African women in isiXhosa society have traditional spiritual roles to play. The population of the study was limited to 22 because of time, costs and accessibility which often prohibit data collection from every member or about every item. The researcher managed to make contact and interview the intended sampled population. Efficient and reliable data was extracted from the 22 participants sampled to address the research objectives and there is evidence of redundancy from the themes

Table: 1 Interviewee's Profile

Participant's Category	Participant Codes	Age	Sex
7 Imbumba Yamakhosikazi Akomkhulu	PIYA 1 – 7	35 - 80	Females
5 Traditional Diviners	PDV 1 -5	25 - 50	Females
5 Traditional Healer	PTH 1- 5	25 - 77	Females
5 Ordinary Women	POW 1 -5	37 - 55	Females

Patton (2001) states that in qualitative study the researcher extracts data until there are no emerging themes, when there is evidence of redundancy and therefore this study sample size is large enough to meet the requirements of a qualitative strategy. The researcher has knowledge about the culture of the population sampled and that made it easy to find knowledgeable and reliable informants (Tongco, 2007) who are most efficient. The researcher is a spiritualist and the custodian of the culture of participants that will be interviewed. Also, the age chosen is informed by Punch (2014) who posits that it is important to consider the age that can provide research with experiential, lived and practical knowledge and wisdom for successful execution of the study. Themes were then extracted for purposes of data analysis which will be briefly discussed below.

3.5.2 Data collection

The study used in-depth interviews which are considered useful for data collection for a qualitative stud. "In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews (Boyce and Neale, 2006) with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation" . It is best suitable when a researcher intends to ask open ended and probing questions which were posed to informants to elicit rich data from relatively few subjects. For instance, informants were asked what the spiritual roles are for African women in isiXhosa society and if there are similarities in roles women and men in isiXhosa society.

Data collection in qualitative studies consumes a lot of time and the researcher took all data as potentially useful. Patton (2002) shares the same sentiments with Boyce and Neale (2006) in that in-depth interviews can be a time demanding assessment activity because of time consumption, data transcribing and data analysis. Data was recorded thoroughly, accurately and systematically using audio-recorder and field notes – having observed all the ethical principles of research. Leedy and Ormrod (2001) reminds researchers of the importance of ensuring that data is recorded accurately and that methods of data collection observe the ethical principles of research. Informants were either excited or nervous to take the interview, doubting if they have knowledge of the subject matter. Some thought that the topic was too complex and that they are no longer have rich knowledge of traditional spiritual practices of women because traditional rituals are rarely performed in their homes. They blamed this to colonization, introduction and imposing of Christian dogmas which marginalized the way of life of Africans – labelling it as barbaric. The research topic had to be broken down and simplified to change mental approach that made informants see data collection as a media interview where their views on traditional spiritual roles of women would be aired through electronic media platforms. That happened despite the fact the researcher had explained to informants that data collection principles and protocols have been observed and no rights to privacy will be violated. The conversation that happens prior to the interview contributes to time consumption and some interviews took longer than 20 minutes and the longest was two hours with an ordinary (not from the royal family) woman in the village who is also an anthropologist. Among some of the questions that were asked was women's traditional spiritual roles in isiXhosa society. One participant responded:

Our roles as women focus on the affairs of the home being crop farming, weeding and cooking but we also have imigalelo (stokvels) and burial societies. PIYA001.

PIYA001 mentioned stokvels and burial societies as work that women and the researcher had to probe with the intention of getting deeper understanding what was stated. Probing was applied not only on the following set of questions but throughout data collection process.

: How are stokvels important in your lives and what roles do women play in these stokvels and burial societies?

Response from PIYA 1:

> *"Stokvels create unity amongst women more especially in homes where there are no men who are employed or where there are no men at all. They are created to ensure that those families don't struggles more than they do in times of need for example when during time of bereavement and when a boy has to be go for initiation and graduation from initiation. All of these events require one to have source of income to ensure that there is enough food and alcohol for abazimasi (people) from different villages and districts who come to celebrate). It is during these times that women support each other instead of gossiping about their struggles and not contributing to the welfare and well-being of others." PIYA001*

PTH001 was asked how do traditional spiritual roles promote or hinder empowerment of women in society? Response from PTH001:

> *First and foremost we need to tell the truth. Colonization has destroyed us. Christianity has destroyed us - that conversion. When reverends marry our children, they say: you will leave your father and your mother and be united with your wife (genesis 2:24). A son will never leave his father and mother, who will build his home? That kind of teaching promotes individualism while our culture promotes communal way of life. But they don't that a wife will leave their parents and hold on to the husband. Colonization and evangelization has destroyed our way of life. I have read a thesis by a white man on "ihlonipha" custom arguing that the "ihlonipha" custom is oppressive to women. Which hlonipha custom is oppressive when hlonipha custom is created by women? Your wife for example does not shake hands with her father in law and her brother in law but can shake hands with the grandfather in law. This was done to avoid incest because unscrupulous men with raging hormones might want sleep with your wife. There is no biasness here because when men visit his wife's home he practices the custom of ukuhlonipha.PTH001*

"Probing question: Do you think that these roles have a way in the disempowerment of women?

> *"It would be hard now to restore all that has been messed because we start from the unknown. It then becomes difficult for me to answer this question because of the colonial system that changed our indigenous way of leaving. We need to decolonize our minds first because we are operating in a colonial mentality."*

Response from PTH 1:

> *There is a mistake that people make by thinking that ancestors are men, ancestors are spirits and there are no genders in spiritual realm and I still maintain that there is no gender in the spiritual world. If you are a healer and you believe in ancestors, you don't tell udadobawo (a sister to one's brother) that she is not an ancestor because of her gender. There is something that I do not understand about you*

man; why is that men slaughter an old cow instead on an ox when doing the inkobe ritual for women?
PTH001

From the questions asked and the responses received from informants, the researcher was able to draw empirical evidence of the lived experiences of amaXhosa women and draw an understanding of their traditional spiritual roles, and their struggles in contemporary South Africa.

Table 2: Participants' Demographic Details

MARITAL STATUS	NUMBER	CATEGORIES
Widowed	3	Faith Healer
Single	2	Ordinary Women
Single	4	Traditional Healers
Married	2	IYA
Married	3	Ordinary Women
Divorced	1	IYA Princess
Divorced	1	Traditional Diviner
Divorced	2	Faith Healer
Widowed	4	IYA

Figure 3: Demographic Graph

Job Position :
Queen , Traditional Healers and Beaders, Traditional Healers and Academic Scholars

Ethinicity/ Race :
Black

Marital Status
Widowed: 3
Single: 10
Married: 7
Divorced: 2

Age ranges :
25 - 80

Traditional Healer and Academic Scholar: 1

Ordinary women also academic scholars (PhD): 2
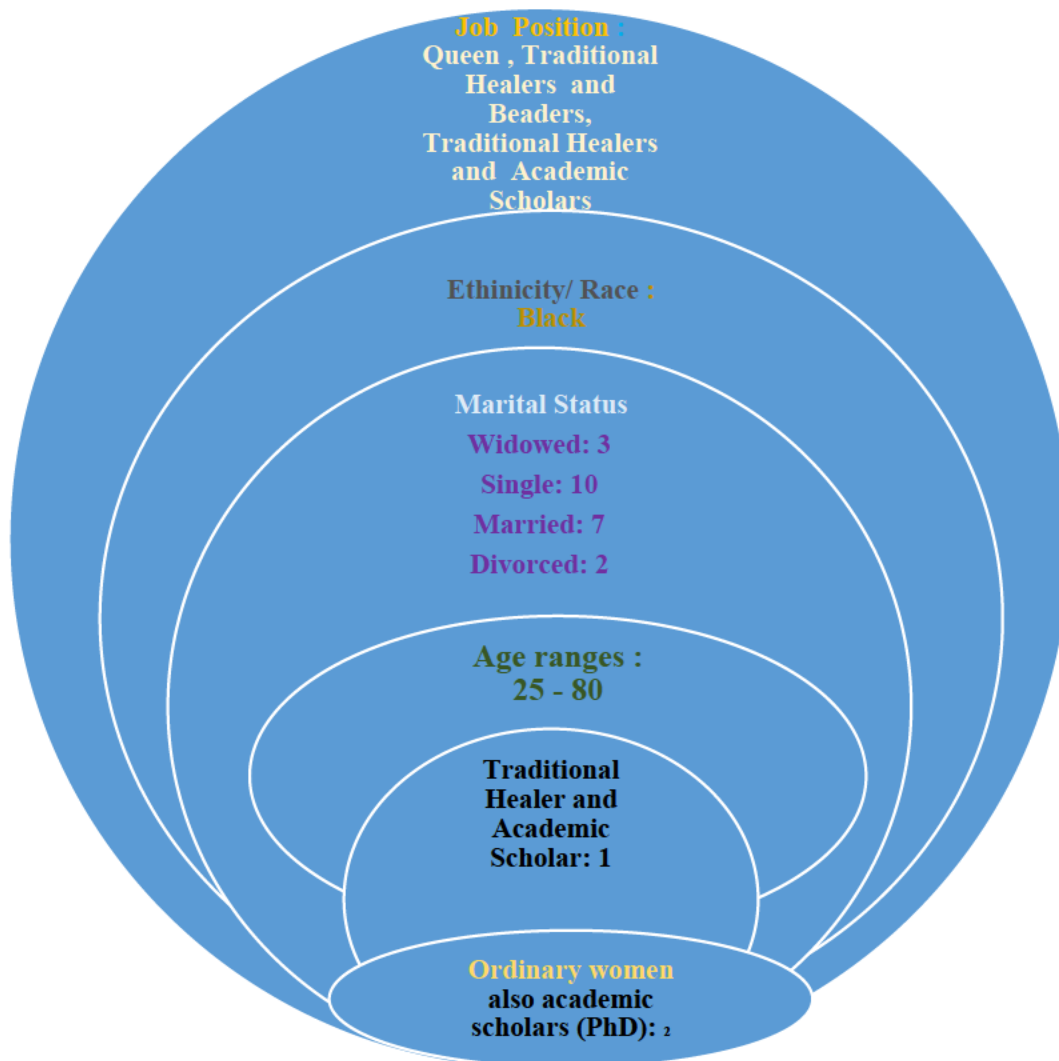
1.5 Data Analysis

Burns & Grove (2003:479) define data analysis as a mechanism for reducing and organizing data to produce findings that require interpretation by the researcher. For this study a qualitative method of analysis called the thematic content analysis was carefully chosen. Thematic analysis is defined by Braun and Clarke (2006) as a procedure of pinpointing arrays or themes contained in qualitative data pattern that captures something significant or interesting about the data and/or research question. This involves non-numerical examination of phenomena as compared to quantitative research method as it focuses mainly on the underlying meanings and patterns of

relationships – objective being extract latent themes. In attempting to analyse data, the researcher transcribed the audio tapes and familiarised himself with data collected in order to describe the content. Themes were searched across different interviews and the researcher looked for emerging or themes but looked beyond that in order to find latent themes. This was done to look beyond what has been said but also to identify underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualisations. What is tricky about extracting themes is determining if themes make sense, finding overlaps or if they are really separate themes and finding themes within themes.

On the table below is a sample of themes and subthemes taken from data that was analysed and they will be discussed in detail and critically engaged in the fourth chapter.

Table 3: Summary of Themes and Subthemes

THEMES	SUBTHEMES
Women's' Spiritual Knowledge	Healing, Intersession, Diagnose, Mediators, Prayer warriors
Women Providers	Caring for children, Support structures, Comforters, Prosperity, Fecundity
Knowledge dissemination	Teaching, Mentoring
Spiritual women leaders	Spiritual Knowledge bearers, Healing

Thematic analysis as a qualitative method of research is commonly used across disciplines, a range of epistemologies and research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and as a tool for identifying, analysing, organizing, describing and reporting themes within a data set. Trustworthy and

meaningful findings are produced through the use of a rigorous thematic analysis (Boyatzis 1998, Braun & Clarke, 2006).

5. Trustworthiness of the study

To address trustworthiness, the researcher will demonstrate that: Institutional research ethics, protocols (disclosure of research intentions, confidentiality and anonymity) of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal were followed when conducting this study. The gatekeepers letter was requested from Imbumba Yamakhosikazi Akomkhulu (IYA) and the Eastern Cape House of Traditional Leaders (EC HTL) and letters were sent to potential informants narrating the purpose of the study together with consent forms as a proof that consensus was granted. The IYA assisted with ensuring that its members participate in the project. Objectives of the study were clearly explained to the informants and follow up calls were made to confirm availability of participants, place of meeting and time. Ensuring credibility is one of most important factors in establishing trustworthiness (Shenton, 2016).

For trustworthiness to be ensured in qualitative research, consideration of the personal, relational and contextual aspects of the research is crucial (Shenton, 2016). What also is crucial is credibility and dependability which are significant for a researcher to keep trustworthiness in relation to data collection, its report and findings (Shenton, 2016). Thus, qualitative research requires to be conducted with considerable rigour in order to demonstrate and maintain credibility and dependability. Also, trustworthiness requires checking of the appropriateness of the theories in relation to the data collected and analysed for the study. Theories are applied to make sense of data collected and its application to the complexities of the research analysis, results and findings. Rigour and credibility of explanation of the research process are necessary qualities for qualitative research (Kumar 2004). To maintain trustworthiness for this research, it was the researcher's role to avoid biases in data collection, by posing open ended questions to produce authentic research data. Following are examples of the questions that were posed to informants:

2. What are women's traditional spiritual roles in Xhosa culture?
3. What are functions and significances of women's traditional spiritual roles in isiXhosa culture?

4. Are traditional spiritual roles and their practices for women similar to or different from those of men in isiXhosa cultural practices?

5. How do traditional spiritual roles promote or hinder women's empowerment in isiXhosa culture? In qualitative studies, the researcher's role is to be an instrument for collecting data – coming to the field as an outsider or an insider with or without basic or in-depth knowledge of the phenomena being studied.

6. The Researcher's Role

Even though the researcher is an insider who is a spiritual practitioner with in-depth knowledge about the field of study, the researcher had to be mindful so that he can be aware of his thoughts about previous knowledge, rather than coming as a knower. Gurney (1985), Pini (2005) and Horn (1997) contend that gender plays a significant role in the research process, impacting on the ability of the research to create rapport with participants. All research participants were mature village women who warmly welcomed me not as a male researcher because to them I am a young university student who is inquisitive about culture and how it impacts on the lives of women in society. Strangers in villages are still appreciated and welcome with great enthusiasm, and my level of education to them was viewed as inspirational in an era where the youth is trapped in substance abuse. The multiple identities that I carry are viewed by Troyna (1998) as being constantly negotiated in the course of interviews in ways which might strengthen the insider/outsider status of the researcher.

7. Ethical Considerations

The institutional research protocols of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal were observed when conducting the research. Prior to collecting data, the consent letter was written to the House of Traditional Leaders which governs Imbumba Yamakhosikazi Akomkhulu explaining the purpose of the research project together with the requirement to sign consent forms provided they were available for participation. The House of Traditional Leaders and Imbumba Yamakhosikazi Akomkhulu assisted in facilitating the process of inviting research participants. The extent of the research project was discussed using isiXhosa language to ensure that participants understood the purpose of the project. Ethics were considered during data collection and analysis included:

numeric codes to keep anonymity of the participants, participants were listed in alpha numeric order, demographic profiles are presented in the analysis chapter and a copy of informed consent provided as Appendix D by the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal ethics committee and the Registrar in order to proceed with data collection. Permission was granted in April 2019 and procedures were honoured for the protection of rights of participants, and therefore identity of informants is not disclosed in data presentation.

8. Limitations of the study's research methods

The research design for the study is aimed at planning and constructing a research project in a manner that will ensure validity and reliability of the research findings. Methods adopted by the study are qualitative, explorative research design and structured interviews and thematic analysis was used to analyse information collected to obtain substantial inferences and recommendations. These methods broadened the core issues that need to be tackled regarding traditional spiritual roles of African women in isiXhosa society. For example one of the informants vehemently pointed out that in traditional spirituality, ancestors don't have gender – hence traditional diviners who are women do lead and guide men during ritual ceremonies. The tools managed to provide data that is detailed which is vital in understanding traditional spiritual roles amaXhosa of women.

Even though methods used for this study demonstrated numerous advantages, there were limitations. Some informants for instance felt that the topic was too complex, and they thought that they did not have the expertise in the field, and some would end the interview because they felt that the questions were too difficult. This happened despite the attempts to try to rephrase the questions and making the informants understand that knowledge that I was seeking for is general. This happened mainly because people are no longer in touch with their roots and some informants blamed colonialism for the loss of indigenous knowledge system and the lack of interest.

PTH 1:
"Colonization has destroyed us. Christianity has destroyed us - that conversion". PTH001

9. Conclusion

This chapter has given a detailed account of the methodology and research design. What it explored was the research questions which informed the outline of the study together with the research design adopted as a framework for implementation of the research. An explanatory study design was used. Twenty-two participants were interviewed, and in-depth interviews were carried out to examine traditional spiritual roles of African women in isiXhosa culture.

Chapter Four:

Research Discussions and Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to analyse the research findings of this thesis on the traditional spiritual roles of African women in isiXhosa culture. The nation of amaXhosa in the Eastern Cape is no different from other African nations where women suffer from gender oppression, race, class, poverty and several other forms of subjugation as a result of male supremacy. Despite the change in regime, abolishment of oppressive laws from the brutal apartheid government followed by gender inclusive policies aimed at empowering women in a democratic South Africa, these women still face marginalization in a male dominated society.

Even though Queens and amakhosikazi have a structure under the banner of Imbumba Yamakhosikazi Akomkhulu, it is unfortunate that they don't have premises to perform their duties while the Kings and iinkosi have offices at the House of Traditional Leaders in Bhisho. In this chapter I also demonstrate that African women isiXhosa society have traditional roles to play – equivalent to those of men if not more. This is not to say there is competition for power, but a need to rebuke patriarchal stereotypes constructed and perpetuated to reduce women to mere mistresses not worth of partaking in the societal development. There are still bearers of indigenous knowledge of living as informed by traditional spirituality that is still on the grip of many of amaXhosa women, both the young and the old. Traditional spiritual knowledge provides wisdom and courage that drives harmony and peace in African societies. It binds and moulds societies together and regulates systems of living where women have always played a central role. It is against this backdrop that the African feminist theory is dedicated to capturing of African

women's identities not only as wounded goddesses of patriarchy or as bothered by western concerns (Dosekun, 2007).

The study was qualitative in its approach and used in-depth interviews with 22 amaXhosa women from ages 25 to 80, single and married women, royal, ordinary women, diviners and prophetesses. The women interviewed in the study were happy to share their lived experiences as queens, princesses, diviners and prophetesses. Women interviewed in this study indicated that women have traditional spiritual roles to play in the nation of amaXhosa and their traditional spiritual roles are essential for the optimum societal development. They were illustrative of the aspects of their traditional spiritual roles and they gave their responses by narrating oral history and current practices, demonstrating the use of praxis that most key institutions lack. In cases where the researcher found key information, respondent's own words were used followed by translation. In the following passages, analysis that lures a whole range of interviews together with the researcher's personal knowledge as a traditional spiritualist (diviner and a prophet), an insider of amaXhosa nation will be done. Themes that came out of the data collected are discussed below and the findings are summarised into ten principal themes that are presented on figure 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Themes emerging from the findings

Themes	Subthemes
Women's Spiritual knowledge	Healing, Intersession, Diagnose, Mediators, Prayer warriors
Women Providers	Caring for children Support structures Comforters Prosperity Fecundity
Knowledge dissemination women leaders	Teaching Spiritual Knowledge bearers

Women and traditional spiritual gifts	Spiritual leadership Mentoring Healing Ukuthwasisa Laying of hands Designing beads Designing traditional attire
Women in mentorship and spiritual development	Mentoring Spirit Guardians Referrals
Birth right	Recognition Acknowledgement Respect Dignity
Women in Central roles	Decision makers Power Determine lineage
Ritual leadershi roles for women	Imbeleko Ukuthomba Ulwaluko Utsiki Lobola
Effect of Colonization on women's traditional spiritual roles	Distortion of gender roles Destabilization of the status quo
Masculinity and traditional practices	Men's dominance and Dictatorship Lack of empathy for women

4.2 Women's Spiritual knowledge

Women interviewed were asked in this study if they have traditional spiritual roles to play in isiXhosa society. The study and the literature that reviewed revealed that spiritual knowledge is key towards to the development of society in entirety, because of the major role that women play in traditional spirituality – as a unifying force and a drive during times of joy and when faced by common spiritual challenges. Women are and have always been the custodians of cultural rituals and belief systems hence rituals in isiXhosa society can't be performed without the presence of *udadobawo* who is the mediator and an intercessor between the living and the "dead" (*makhadzi* in a vhaVenda context) and without *udadobawo* having said a word *exhantini*. The data that this chapter analyses came out of in-depth, structured, semi structured and probing questions to elicit the richest data possible. For instance, when participants were asked to give examples of the traditional spiritual roles that they play, a female iNkosi replied: We do what is known as *ukurhudula* (cutting grass) for the hut for the initiates - which is built by women. Udadobawo is the one who crafts the *ubulunga / intambo* (sacred necklace) for the initiate.

Ubulunga is created for protecting the initiate from evil spirits and as a way of connecting him with the ancestors for protection. *Udadobawo* is also responsible for *ukubeleka intonjana* (a practice during where *intonjana* walks behind *udadobawo* covered in a blanket) (PIYA 002). Onyioha and Nwagbara, 2009 as cited by Onkra (2017) postulates that because of the various ways in which diverse societies are constructed, gender roles are reared and tasks given on either gender. From these conversation the study found out that women's roles are different from those of men but role differentiation does not translate to gender discrimination. Role differentiation emanates from the era of hunters and gatherers where women were left home to nurture children as givers of life or bearers of children and as the best people to look after children looking at the best interests of the child. In support of this view is Amadiume (1987) postulates that gender in the Igbo culture was dual and flexible.

In addition to this, some roles within the Xhosa culture were and are still shared roles. For instance, men and women work the maize fields, make mud bricks, and men even assist their wives and mothers with fetching water when water tanks have gone dry. The milking of cows was and is still a shared role in homes that still

have life stocks. However, women can only milk the cows outside the kraal if they are married, and inside if they are descendants of that household. This practice varies from one culture to the next, and in cultures where women are not allowed to enter the kraal. Nevertheless, there are circumstances whereby they can enter the kraal, such as when a child is under threat from cattle or a snake, or when there is livestock that needs assistance with giving birth.

One informant stated:

As iNkosikazi (wife to an iNkosi : CONTRALESA abolished the term chief as a way of decolonising the institutions of traditional leadership and going back to our original titles and not used the title that were used by the colonial regime and the apartheid government) I call villages to meet here in my home so that we can talk about issues that affect us. And as a leader in my community I would call upon women about things that need to be done to develop our community. We have societies that are aimed at building each other, supporting each other during the time of death. We also focus on poultry farming where grown chickens and then sell them for purposes of accumulating profit. We teach children about family values, respect, culture and respect for one another. As a mother in-law I am the one who gives umakoti a name and words of wisdom. Umdlezana as the mother of child is the one who applies the red ochre on the body of untemekane (new born child). We do what is known as ukurhudula (cutting grass for building the hut for the initiates) which is built by women. We do ukuyeyezela (ululating) as a way of celebrating this event and motivating the boy so that he may not be afraid, and know that people are behind him. Udadobawo is the one who crafts the ubulunga / intambo (sacred necklace) for the initiate. Ubulunga is created for protecting the initiate from evil spirits and as a way of connecting him with the ancestors for protection. Udadobawo is also responsible for ukubeleka intonjana (a practice during intonjana where intonjana walks behind udadobawo covered in a blanket). PIYA 002

It is Okrah (2017) who provides clarity on the roles that women played in precolonial Africa, arguing that they played critical roles of dissemination of various cultural knowledges. The roles extend to preservation of traditional rituals (a role played by udadobawo in the culture of amaXhosa and makhadzi in the Venda culture), social cohesion, birthing, nurturing of babies, their upbringing, economic growth and teaching mores and norms. The precolonial South Asia acknowledged the reproductive role of women and believed that it gave them magical powers that men could not match. Reid (1988) further contends that from this assertion one may conclude that this is the reason daughters' value was never questioned in Southeast Asia, India, Middle East. It is not only Africa that put women on the throne (Brooke, 1848), precolonial Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic and Chinese, Indonesia and Madagascar traditions. Social constructionists contend that nations construct their own reality from social interpersonal and contact with other nations, due to migrations (Burr,1995). Hence gender is viewed not as a feature of human beings but as a product of the outside world, constructed through culture, language and institutions.

Another participant narrated it as follows:

They say "what is a home without a mother". A woman is isikhukhukazi, she is a protector to her children. Even when the father has died, children wouldn't make it without a mother. When they are sick, women are the healers because of their spiritual knowledge of indigenous medicines and herbs. As udadobawo I am the one crafts ubulunga for girls with abnormal periods and for boys going to initiation schools. It is me who stands exhantini together with men and speak to the ancestors appealing for healing when children are sick at home, and for those who have a spiritual calling of healing. As a healer I diagnose illnesses and

*tell the person if for example they have a calling to become traditional healers. As igqirha (traditional healer) I am a "thread" and ithwasa is a "needle", we listen to amathwasa and follow what they say as instructed by the ancestors.*POW001

The narratives of the women roles reviewed in the literature are not different from those that I interviewed both in the democratic era and those recorded in the precolonial and post-colonial studies. Similarly, to the women in precolonial Yoruba, Iyede, Lemba, Nubia, Igbo, Swahili and the Massai, the amaXhosa women in the Eastern Cape still perform duties of mothering, nurturing, protecting and teaching children. They perform these duties either as mothers*, oodadobawo, iNkosikazi / iNkosi* (a female royal leader can either be called *inkosikazi or inkosi* without putting emphasis or focus on the feminity or masculity of one's gender), traditional healers or faith healers. Some of the participants are faith healers and diviners who diagnose illnesses of adults and children, some specialise in child medicine, and they heal through prayer and hand laying. Their powers are derived from both God and ancestors and they communicate with either God or the ancestors to diagnose and heal illness. From this practice it should then be understood that in free gender systems like the precolonial Africa, semantics or morphological gender assignment as understood by Heine (1982) in his survey of gender systems in African languages, exist at least for some nouns. Intersectional theory concerns itself with analysing gender struggles as a theory rooted in Black feminism   Metz (2008) as cited by Ngujiri (2009) when she wrote on Servant Leadership and Motherhood in Kenya was wary of the Western discourse on motherhood in African which is focused and is dominated by academic dialogues on work-family conflict, family friendly policies, cultural stories and policy decisions. From that discourse key matters like mothering from the sidelines like the working class or racial and sexual minorities.

The other emphasized that:

> *We are the one who bring genealogy, we are the people of a clear lineage (sithi abazisa umnombo). If I have two men how am I going to find out who the father is when I have two men. When I have one man then I will know which clan this child belongs to. Let's look at iinkosi (royal house) for example, in the royal family it is the woman from the royal family whose son becomes the successor. But if we look at the amaXhosa great place in Nqadu, it is the fifth wife who gave to the heir. The woman plays a huge role because she is the one who determines who will be the successor and not the man because of her ability to give birth. Secondly, you could be a ceremonial head because if we get into a conflict and then you decide to take another woman you will then be compelled to build a home for that wife on a different site. A woman plays a central role, she is the one who determines who will be the successor. Our language is not discriminatory, but it is there to describe masculine and feminine gender. PTH001*

Even though matrilineal societies died with the advent of colonialism, Schoenbrun (2008) reminds us that the the spirit of a king is carried by a "spirit of a female medium's body" because the understanding was that it is only a body of a female that is strong enough to retain the royal spirit. It also has spiritual powers to endure the danger of the presence of the spirit when it possesses her and speaks through her body from the land of the dead. When writing on womanism, Ikechukwu (2011) reminds us of the stability of the dual-sex political system in Africa, positing that each gender managed its affairs independently. When the king ruled, the queen

also had her roles which included sorcery and herbalism. In a good number, African societies employ the matrilineal culture in which a offspring's legacy derives not from the father and his family as in most cultures, but from the matrilineal lineage and her maiden family. This practice, which is justly prevalent in Ghana and some societies in Nigeria, executes additional tasks on the womenfolk. For, in such societies, in addition to the general female roles, the women must see also to the upkeep, training and signeural entitlements of their children. Interestingly, the girl-child in matrilineal societies is as valued as the boy-child, if not more so.

When I asked her what she means by the above assertion, the is what she had to say:

Our language is neutral, for example in English…you are my sister's child now I must call you nephew and if you have a sister call her niece. In isiXhosa we don't draw a distinction between nephews and nieces because you are my sister's child, umtshana (niece or nephew). And if you look at pronouns, in our language we don't have a he and a she. I could sometimes find myself in a position where I address you as a she because our pronouns are determined by the class of a noun. Dogs, boys and girls have one pronoun because they are in one class of nouns. What I am trying to say is that even our language is not an oppressive or discriminatory language.
Even when it comes to rituals when men are stuck with performing a ritual they have to call udadobawo to speak to the ancestors. And the ox would bellow after udadobawo has spoken. You also need to fix the lie that says a woman is not allowed to enter the kraal, which is a lie. In my father's kraal I have a right to enter. PTH 001

INkosikazi / iNkosi (a female royal leader can either be called inkosikazi or inkosi without putting emphasis or focus on the feminity or masculity of one's gender), traditional healers or faith healers. From this practice it should then be understood that in free gender systems like the precolonial Africa, semantics or morphological gender assignment as understood by Heine (1982) in his survey of gender systems in African languages, exist at least for some nouns. In this chapter I also demonstrate that African women isiXhosa society have traditional roles to play – equivalent to those of men if not more. This is not to say there is competition for power but to rebuke patriarchal stereotypes constructed and perpetuated to reduce women to mere mistresses not worth of partaking in the societal development.

4.3 Women as providers

Fofack (2014) reveals to us a difference between the Victorian notion of separate spheres for women and men and the idea of gender from a Yoruba context. The Victorian context viewed men as strong, rational, economic providers and women as weaker, emotive group with their primary duties as wives and home-makers. The Yoruba people shared roles which were not determined by domestic settings seen in commerce, production, and the service industry (Bakare-Yusuf, 2003 & Fofack, 2014). With Victorian notions of gender, Christian

women had activities that were never aimed at generating income. However, the Victorian gender system was ignored by Asano who persevered in her economic activities, despite objections from the Church Missionary Society.

The resistance by African women to sustain food production – despite the restraints imposed on them by institutions of colonialism, is evidence that they were always strong intellectually and physically as they capability of economic independence. Gaidzanwa 2003; & Akyeampong and Fofack 2014 assert that what stifled the capabilities were traditional and colonial practices of land and crop control together with system of education which pushed women out of political, public and economic activities. This resistance and drive is seen in women of amaXhosa from the Eastern Cape that this study interviewed, who continue to work hard and claiming their status despite the impact of colonial policies being visible in the democratic south Africa. They still work the land for subsistence and commercial farming, breed chickens and sell sheep wool for them to provide for their families. The role of women as providers is discussed in Acholonu's writing of women's freedom through motherism, where she emphasizes the impossibility of severance of issues of motherhood from the African woman. Acholonu posits that women African descent cannot live without the significance of motherist concerns.

This is typical of African society that employed matrilineal cultural notions where inheritance from the mother and her maiden family as opposed to patriarchal linages in western societies. For such societies, it was and it is still the role of women to train the children and girl children were valued as they boy child, if not more. POW001 stated the following:

There is a belief or a wish that in a home a man should die first and when a woman dies first, people become worried. A woman is a pillar of a family. I laughed when I went to a panel beater to fix my car where the mechanic who is a man told me that I should wait for his wife (who is a book-keeper) for me to know if my car will be fixed or not. A home's stronghold is dependent on the woman because it is assumed that there would be stability and more often that is the case. Udadobawo sees her position as superior to that of his brother (inkulu), she would expect her brother to do something that she approves of. However, if dadobawo is unmarried she is usually seen as a problem because she wants to approve everything and she assumes a place of a mother in-law where the mother in-law is no longer alive. POW001

To ascertain the view by POW1, Adams (2006) posits that women's influence in the public sphere were reduced consciously or unconsciously by definite colonial practices that looked down upon traditional matrilineal bases of authority. It is argued that it is true productive and reproductive roles that women derived their authority but the introduction of colonial administration on cash crop agriculture and its preference for recruiting men to civil service posts undermined the status of women. It is only in the democratic era that we find gender policies that seek to raise participation of women in public life. It must be pointed that Achelous's (1995) motherism views the traditional role of women as a spiritual because

of their contribution in instilling ethical and leadership values in the family. Motherism further emphasizes the point that the woman cannot be a man and neither a man cannot be a woman.

PIYA005

There is a huge role that women play at home, roles that men wouldn't be able play because there can never be a home where there is no woman. Women make means to ensure that families are fed, we are the ones who work the land and produce food for our children. This happens sometimes when men are working but would spend it with other women instead of taking care of their families or when they refuse to withdraw money from the bank. We teach children to talk, we teach them social values and go as far as taking precarious work like cleaning in other homes to ensure that children are fed. Women's roles are very significant in society, they protect and support each other in times of need and that helps in the spiritual upliftment of others. During ritual ceremonies, women are mostly needed because that ceremony would never go successfully. Women are the most powerful within society. Udadobawo for example has the most significant role, she is the father of the family. Without her presence a lot would go wrong. Ngutata walapha lowo. PIYA005

Women's contribution is society in incomparable and unrivalled, traditionally, they are and have always been all-rounders in African societies. They have always played the leading role at home and in their respective communities, teaching children family values and community mores under the phrase that "it takes a village to raise a child". Attempts by colonists to divide men and women affected the African nation but from these conversations with the women show that there is still co-operation, a spirit of love and unity that drives women of amaXhosa to work together for the optimum development of society. In studying Tongan women, Bujis (2007:3) as cited by Matshidze (2013) discovered that it is mainly women who exercised social authority throughout our lives, as sisters. As sisters that would have authority over their brothers and their brother's children. This was done under the Fahu custom that dictates that spiritual superiority of sisters and sister's lines over brothers and their lines and the brother/sister relationship to a large net of social relationships even though not always visible.

PIYA002 commented by saying:

Women spiritually support their husbands in times of bereavement and by being the pillar of strength when they need support. Part of the roles we play as women is washing the blankets of the deceased at the river and burn old clothes at night after the day of the funeral (one of the most crucial rituals after death). Women build strong households by being healers because they have knowledge of the herbs that are used for healing. Izibazane (mother of the initiate) has to prepare traditional beer, cook for the people and sing songs while beating ingqongqo (cow skin used as an organic instrument when boys go to initiation). During intonjana women are the ones who give direction to men on what should happen as intonjana is a spiritual ritual done for young women. PIYA002

4.4 Knowledge dissemination

Knowledge sharing has always been part of African culture and it has always been the role of knowledge bearers (women) to educate and teach their offsprings social, ethical and moral values which were part of the cultural standards for evaluating societal behaviour that is considered proper. When someone from the nation of amaXhosa people prides themselves for being good at something, be it extraordinary in speaking the language, they would say: *"ndaluncanca ebeleni"* (I learnt from my mother). In kwaZulu when they speak of the mother tongue, they refer to it as ulimi lebele and that saying is associated with the fact that children learn their language from their mothers. Whereas amaXhosa nation call it ulwimi lweenkobe and this phrase is assoiated with the fact that it is women who cook and feed children hence *iinkobe* (boiled mealies). Lieth (1987) postulates that the language, culture, history, oral culture, music, the dance and artisanal knowledge was transmitted by women and several other forms of knowledge.

PIYA001

We teach younger women about the traditions and customs in her new home, and why it is important for her to walk far away from the kraal as sign of showing respect to the ancestors. Respect for men by newly wedded women goes as far as not cleaning the side of the house where men reside. In an event where makoti is only left with the father in-law at home she pushes the dish to him there is a boundary that she should not cross. We teach the ukuhlonipha custom together with oodadobawo. When the child is born it is umamazala (mother in-law) who buries the umbilical cord behind the door. Umdlezana (mother of the newly-born) and udadobawo are the ones responsible for feeding the child with umoshwamo but the mother eats umoshwamo behalf of the child in a case where the child is still much younger.
Women are teachers in their homes, they teach family values. Men do play a part but women play a central role. Women are the ones who keep an eye on everything and everyone. They are also healers in the family because of their spiritual knowledge of indigenous herbs healing children. Families without the presence of women and their contribution would die. There are no homes where are no women. Women are able to go and do casual work to ensure that they are children are fed.
PIYA001

Nineteenth-century explanations by German priests noted that the Anlo anticipated a wife to know a great deal about her spouse's tribe. It was her obligation to familiarize their children with the culture of the father's clique. Failure to do so could lead to potentially harmful consequences for those children. This education imperative seems to have affected how the Amlade peoples managed the marital affairs of their daughters (Sandra E. Greene, 1999). Horrel (1964) noted that education in the African functioned to uphold some african cultures where lifetime acquisition of knowledge was instilled with the values, interests and behaviour patterns learned at what Horrel describes as the knee of the Bantu mother. "The past guides our present and in our present we must consider the generations to come" (Absolona, 2010:74-87). Indigenous knowledge lies in our stories and narratives and within our oral traditions told by women in isiXhosa society. It exists in our relationships to one another and to all of creation. Indigenous knowledge exists in the animals, birds, land, plants, trees and creation (Absolona, 2010:74-87). The role women as constructors and disseminators of knowledge to their children and society at large is affirmed by social constructionist theorists and African gender movements like motherism, stiwanism and womanism which contend that it is through language that cultural and traditional

knowledge is disseminated by women in society. Acholonu (1995) extends this point by positing that essentially, the traditional role of African women has always been that of a social nurturer and a matriarch.

4.5 Women as leaders

Prior to the start of colonial rule in, African queens sometimes exercised administrative control which surpassed that of actual monarchs. Famous queens and queen mothers, such as Nandi of the Zulu, and the queens of Egypt, which are also well documented (Aspern, 1998). Shwartz-Bart (2001) praises and summarizes about African that. "These women rulers, warriors, and heroines include Amanirenas, the queen of Kush who battled Roman armies and defeated them at Aswan; Daurama, mother of the seven Hausa kingdoms; Amina Kulibali, founder of the Gabu dynasty in Senegal; Ana de Sousa Nzinga, who resisted the Portuguese conquest of Angola; Beatrice Kimpa Vita, a Kongo prophet burned at the stake by Christian missionaries; Nanda, mother of the famous warrior-king Shaka Zulu; and many others." Women leadership can also be witnessed from studies by UNESCO (1994) where it is argued that it was through matrilinity that women had a dominant status and by which descent and inheritance by the children of the same mother were determined. In addition, children were identified by the names of their mothers and considered as owned by their mothers' families because the Bantu ethnic groups accorded great power to matriarchs.

POW002 narrates the importance of women:

Women are important because they are the providers and builders of their homes and she is an advisor. Women unlike men have strong backbones, they don't go sleeping around like men do because they are more concerned about their families. It is only married women who are not allowed to access the kraal where they are married, however there are instances when they are granted permission to access it. But when there are rituals emzini wakhe (where she is married) she is not allowed. Where she was born she is allowed and at home as an unmarried or married woman I am allowed. The problem is the fear of the unknown that comes with the myth that when women are menstruating that will impact negatively with animal growth.
It is also the role of women to assist other women during the birth of a child and other rituals related to birth like imbeleko and ukungcwatya kwenkaba (hiding of an umbilical cord). We are also the ones who notice if the boy child will have problems with impotency or not by looking at the reaction of the penis when the child is urinating. It is then us who help male children with overcoming infertility. We are also the ones who build the grass hut for boys before they go to initiation school. It is also women who tell their husbands when boys are ready for initiation because they come inform their mother so that the mother can inform their husband. It is udadobawo who creates the spiritual necklace for initiates and it is done inside the kraal. POW002

The view coming from African feminist theories is that gender activism, decolonization of feminism and the reconstruction of gender relations in Africa are a not a call to wage war against men as radical feminists are notoriously known for, but a strategy towards a society driven by harmony. For that transformation to come to life, both men and women must come together as one and work towards building a society that they envisage

(Adebayo, 1996). This would mean that leadership roles among men and women are shared instead of being contested as was the case with the Queen Mother among the *Akan* of Ghana. The Queen Mother among the Akan of Ghana also had very important role in terms of ensuring the well-being of the women and children of the nation. Therefore, she and her staff were responsible for designing and implementing the educational system of the land. As you can see, the nation was entirely comfortable with the Queen Mother (Okrah, 2017, Chengu, 2015, Mndende, 2007) and her staff being in control of the structure, organization, some content and day-to day running of the educational system which all their children were affected by.

PIYA002

*Women's roles are very significant in society, the protect each and support each other in times of need and that helps in the spiritual upliftment of others. During ritual ceremonies, women are mostly needed because that ceremony would never go successfully. Women are the most powerful within society. Udadobawo for example has the most significant, he is the father of the family. Without her presence a lot would go wrong. "Ngutata walapha lowo.*PIYA002

The iconographic study by Roberts (2014) on Hemba and Tabwa corresponds with Schoenbrun's (2000) study on gendered themes in the early African history, where it was discovered that the king is commonly referred to as the wife of a deity and that Kings had a certain element of the power of women which embodies both male and female elements. It also argued that women and the ancestors have a link that is exceptional and with the source of life. Women leadership was noted within the Luba nation whose male traditional leaders would put a female figure on the staff to prove that his kingdom comes from a woman. This according to Roberts (2014) was a sign or memory that a woman brought royalty to the kingdom. Women in Robert's study are reminded that it was women who shaped the minds of the entire nation. Among the Buganda of Uganda, the wife of the King has powers that were significant. However, black feminism (Kolawole, 1997) vehemently ascertains the view that African are not longing to be men look like men and even act like men as it is the case with western feminism. What African women are doing is fearlessly attacking inequality which is an outcome of multiple forms of oppression that intersectionality scholars aim to eradicate. Okrah (2017). Contemporary women in the African continent should recall that not too long ago, the quixotic women moulded the minds of the whole people. Often the Queen mother was also in control of childbearing, coming-of-age and matrimonial rituals. In some states, the King's wife also played the role that the Queen mother played. For example, among the Buganda of Uganda, the Kings wife had significant authority. But usually, the King's wife either had as much supremacy as the Queen but typically had less.

PIYA004 said the following:

> *Women's spiritual roles are very significant in society because she is the one who teaches   children about values, norms, culture and tradition of the family.Part of the roles that women play is taking or accompanying a bride to the home of her husband and give words of wisdom known as ukuyala. During intonjana it is udadobawo teaches intonjana about life, what is expected of you and what is not expected of you. Intonjana is taught about taking care of herself including avoiding pregnancy before marriage.* PIYA004

"Africa's women have led in the past, and will lead in the future; Africa has been home to some of the world's only matriarchal societies, and history has promoted women across the continent to positions of power by our continent's most revered leaders" In African societies women interacted with political structures by mobilizing and organizing themselves to impact the state, society, and challenges and struggles for their rights and their impact on their countries' laws and policies has a long history**.**

4.6 Women and traditional spiritual gifts

In his study of "Dreams and Medicines: The Perspectives and Novices in the Eastern Cape, Hirst (2005) reveals that within the Nguni diviners of amaXhosa nation, the number of female diviners is more than that of men and the multitude of women is explained in terms of the peripherality of women in male dominated social groups. The study by Hirst further suggests that of all Bantu women of the South, the most peripheral are women within a rigid, chauvinistic societal boundaries that govern behaviour between men and women. A thesis by Lewis (1978) where Hirst (2005) drew some of the knowledge for his study cannot explain why a lower number of men become diviners. However, the question is answered by Ojong and Ogana (2015) on their study "Literature on the Essence of *Ubungoma* and Conceptions of Gender among Diviners" where they concluded that female diviners outnumber male *izangoma* and that the "organizing principles of patriarchal leadership are to an extent blurred" because of female diviners dominating the field of traditional healing in the province. These women are addressed as *makhosi* irrespective of their gender, a method of address that challenges patriarchal norms of what it means to be gendered.

The spiritual gifts that women possess rebuke gender stereotypes, the notions of power in leadership and decisions taken by men that affect women's social status in contemporary society. These gifts of healing also are seen amongst Lenca women of Meso-American indigenous people of South-Western Honduras who are midwife healers using treatments that they believe they were given to their people by God (Ver Beek, 2000). And these gifts given to women by God extend to healing through prayer, laying of hand by *abathandazi,* crafting of beads, traditional attires and mentoring initiates through the process of *ukuthwasa. Abathwasisi*

mentor patriarchs, the young and the old as it is the function of women with a traditional spiritual gift of healing to guide men and women regardless of their age, gender or sexual orientation. Intersectional studies understand that women carry multiple intersecting identities, hence its focus on essentialist constructions of unitary groups and experiences of Black women's gender struggles. The theory attempts to deal with the inequalities brought by colonialism into the African continent, which deter women from enjoying their multiple spiritual gifts as mothers, healers, leaders and prophets.

Nevertheless, contradictions arise when men who would not allow women in their homes or households to assume their traditional spiritual roles because of being women would then be forced to be led and guided by women when they have to accept a calling as healers, or when there is a ritual that needs to be performed at home. More often it happens that the diviner or the prophet who is an expert in ritual performance is actually a woman. In some instances, it is ancestors who speak in dreams of clansmen and women and appoint a female diviner or prophet because ancestors are not gender confined. It is through these contradictions that women's empowerment is hindered to consciously perpetuate patriarchy in society and when men temper with traditional spiritual protocols to side-line women.

Views from POW003 when asked about whether women have traditional spiritual roles to play:

Elderly women are the ones who are highly involved because of their experience in performing spiritual roles as they are perceived to be closer to the ancestors hence they are even called iminyanya. They are the ones who talk to the ancestors when there is a need to talk to the ancestors. It is elderly women who are called when there is tsiki ritual of welcoming umakoti. Women then are involved in conducting that ritual and ukuyala. They also partake in death rituals and it is women who determine who should sit next the bereaved woman to give support. When it comes to ukuzila (even though wearing the black garments is a foreign concept even though we adopted it). During child labour it is women who perform spiritual roles of hiding the placenta and the umbilical cord. This is also done to protect the child from being bewitched. Ubulongwe (cowdung) is also used by women to ensure fast heeling of the umbilical cord. The use of ash from the fireplace of indl'enkulu is mixed by women with water used as the first drink for the newly born as a way of connecting the child to the ancestors. This comes with the knowledge that iziko (fireplace) is the residing place for the ancestors. During intonjana (rite of passage for girls) it is also women who guide of practice of spiritual protocols and conduct the ceremony working with men, performing different roles. Women ensure the continuity and sustainability of customs and rituals and to maintain the status because change is seen as the cause of instability. Pregnancy and birth are linked to spirituality. Even traditional healers are linked to spirituality whether it's a herbalist, a diviner, a faith healers, a woman or a man. POW003

POWA002 came with this view:

For examples they are also the ones who have knowledge of the medicinal plants that heal children. For instance a piece of a calabash would be used for treating measles and it was administered orally and sometimes applied on the skin. Women have the power to see needs in a home, a strength that men lack. However this differs from one household to the next where women would sometimes have to go and work when their men have passed on. POWA002

The case of amaXhosa female healers is not unique in the African continent, in the Venda culture there is a *makhadzi* whose spiritual powers are derived from the ancestors. In narrating *makhadzi* traditional spiritual roles in Venda culture, Tshiguvho (2008) contends that with the power that the *makhadzi* draws from the ancestors, she can impose to invoke a verdict. Like *udadobawo* amongst amaXhosa she is the chain that connects the dead and the living, the living being the continuity of the clan and the honour for the wisdom of the elders. Rituals that are performed in her absence because of not being informed are usually rejected by the ancestors, they yield ancestral wrath, unless she excused herself for tangible reasons. She can also be a diviner and faith healer whose duties include unifying the clan, peace-making, a mediator within the clan in times of disputes. The knowledge of herbs like treatment measles for babies and *ukumisela* (womb-cleansing) for *umakoti* are known by women and these duties extend to *ukuhesha* (a feminine radical way of communicating with the ancestors appealing for light and blessings).

POW004

On giving birth it is also us who cut the umbilical cord and bury it behind the door so that the child can remember her or his home. The ukumisela herbs are also known by us and we are the one who prepare them for umakoti to avoid pregnancy complications. The ritual that follows seven days after giving birth is imbeleko which is done to introduce the child to the ancestors, and Udadobawo is the one who smears the baby with imbola (red ochre). When boys go to initiation we sing songs and prepare food for everyone, and it is Udadobawo who crafts intambo (sacred necklace) for initiates. POW004

4.8 Ritual leadership roles for women

Traditional rituals involve paying respect to ancestors, whose spirits are invoked during ritual performance. Patriarchal canons usually alienate women from the studies like in Hirst (1997) where he argues that ancestors are typically deceased senior male members of a clan. As an insider and some with a spiritual calling, I would argue that the argued that ancestors are typically deceased senior males is flawed. Ancestors are deceased people irrespective of their gender or sex who are after passing from the physical to the spiritual world return home in spirit to guide, protect and bless their descendants. The blessings are not limited to one's direct lineage, ancestors from other clans or nations (*abezizwe*) do bless those that they were fond of while alive. Women exercise substantial power that ritual features in high relief and upon other authorities, most African ritual confers (Bongmba, 2012) women's innate power. Female amaXhosa diviners, faith healers and *oodadobawo* perform these roles in and outside of their homes as either faithhealers or diviners. Only when *udadobowa* is a diviner and a faith healer or both can she lead ritual performance outside of her clan.

PIYA006 outlines some these ritual:

Umdlezana as the mother of child is the one who applies the red ochre on the body of untemekane (new born child). We do what is known as ukurhudula (cutting grass for building the hut for the initiates) which is built by women. We do ukuyeyezela (ululating) as a way of celebrating this event and motivating the boy so that he may not be afraid, and know that people are behind him. Udadobawo is the one who crafts the ubulunga / intambo (sacred necklace) for the initiate. Ubulunga is created for protecting the initiate from evil spirits and as a way of connecting him with the ancestors for protection. Udadobawo is also responsible for ukubeleka intonjana (a practice during intonjana where intonjana walks behind udadobawo covered in a blanket). PIYA006

It is also the role of women to assist other women during the birth of a child and other rituals related to birth like *imbeleko and ukungcwatya kwenkaba* (hiding of an umbilical cord). We are also the ones who notice if the boy child will have problems with impotency or not by looking at the reaction of the penis when the child is urinating. It is then us who help male children with overcoming infertility. We are also the ones who build the grass hut for boys before they go to initiation school. It is also women who tell their husbands when boys are ready for initiation because they come inform their mother so that the mother can inform their husband. It is *udadobawo* who creates the spiritual necklace for initiates and it is done inside the kraal (POW001). *Ukuphothwa kwentambo* (crafting of the sacred necklace for initiates) is done by udadobawo inside the kraal and this is a spiritual role that is specifically reserved for *udadobawo*. There is a huge difference between what men can do what women can do. Women are the ones who notice when the child is sick and when there is a need to perform a ritual.

PDV003 stated that:

We are the ones who are spiritually stronger than men hence we have a sharp eye on home matters. It is women who constantly remind or tell men on matters that need attention in the household. Udadobawo would then smudge her with imbola ebomvu (red ochre) and she is also the one responsible for feeding intonjana with umshwamo (a piece of flesh cut from the foreleg of a goat, also known as isiphika. We are also the ones who welcome umolokaza (bride) working with intombi yekhaya ( ) who puts a doek on her, teach her the tradition of ukuhlonipha. On giving birth it is also us who cut the umbilical cord and bury it behind the door so that the child can remember her or his home. The ukumisela herbs are also known by us and we are the one who prepare them for umakoti to avoid pregnancy complications. The ritual that follows seven days after giving birth is imbeleko which is done to introduce the child to the ancestors, and Udadobawo is the one who smears the baby with imbola (red ochre). PDV003

The king traces his mythic descent from Pupupu, the female ancestor who was "accorded the rank of a Yoruba king" (Olupona, 1991:26). Women still command both spiritual power and political influence. "The paramount female chief is Lobun, the most revered title in Ondo and also referred to as Oba Obinrin (woman king).

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The king traces his mythic descent from Pupupu, the female ancestor who was "accorded the rank of a Yoruba king" (Olupona, .1991:26). Women still command both spiritual power and political influence. "The paramount female chief is Lobun, the most revered title in Ondo and also referred to as Oba Obinrin (woman king)" (1991:47).I thought it is necessary to draw parallels between the story of mama Nontetha Nkwenkwe and elder Enoch Mgijima because of the similarities in their traditional spiritual calling, which was not limited to only worshipping God, and not restricted by gender stereotypes. but was highly driven to conscientize the masses about the evils of colonialism and apartheid. The narration should also educate people about the fact that gender balances that are recorded in the history of precolonial Africa around the 17th and 18th century were also witnessed in the 19th century generation. The study of literature done by professor Ojong and Ogana (2015) on the essence of ubungoma and conceptions of gender among izangoma within the culture of AmaZulu, interrogates the way African belief systems have been represented in literature and in part questions if women possess more power in comparison with their male counterparts.

Thus, this is all done not to undermine men or perpetuate an already conflict between men and women but to retell stories foretold by precolonial men who viewed women as goddesses and creators of life (Taiwo, 2010; Oyewumi, 2008; Ogboma & Ogboma, 2010 & Chengu, 20007) with powerful spirits – worth admiring hence they enjoyed higher social status than men. Covington Ward (2014) has recorded the history of spirit mediums who used cultural cryptograms to mobilize and challenge colonial authorities. From the study done by Ward (2014) on the Mwari traditional spirituality, this study has learnt that traditional religions united people against colonists as was the case with mama Nontetha Nkwenkwe and elder Mgijima. The history of Southern African traditional spirituality is no different from that of the Central Africa where prophetess Dona Beatrice's movement (influenced by a female prophet known Apollonia Mafuta) threatened Catholic Missionaries in 17th century and was burned alive on 2nd July 1706 by Catholic Missionaries. In this thesis, we borrow from (de Villiers, 1999) who argues that feminist spirituality takes a charge against ideas that are sexist for the sake of spirituality and if such ideas are not scrutinized, spirituality is relegated to an inferior position. Thus relegation of spirituality is tantamount to downplaying of women whose spiritual contribution to society cannot be unmatched

4.7 Women in mentorship and spiritual development

The other method that women conventionally satisfied their determination in life was through motherhood (Oyewumi 2003), that is, the birthing, nurturing, and sustaining of human life (Mbiti 1988). The women in this study have deconstructed and redefined motherhood from being merely a domestic role to one carried out in the public arena, where nurturing and sustaining of life are just as important as in the private sphere. Ms. Kaara was convinced that, whereas the triad of colonialism, Christianity, and capitalism has, to a large extent, washed over these traditional notions of leadership through service, a remnant can still be found amongst some women leaders, though not all, because many of the elite have been co-opted into ruling like men: Those women in parliament have to take a deliberate move to practice politics in the new dispensation which I am arguing is the pedestal of women, a constructive way of doing things. But if you go on the politics of maneuver, of exploitation, of corruption, of men, and we know many women who have perfected that, because the women try to be men, and that is a misnomer.

PFH001 had this to say:

We pray with the sick, we don't pray for them because we are still sinners. Ours is to pray with the sick and ask God to heal them and bring light into their lives. Our role is very big because we don't alienate people from their culture and traditions because they are spiritual connected to them. Our role is to unify and be peace keepers for example we don't tell people who is bewitching them because God is "alpha and omega" so everything starts with God. Our contribution to life is of teaching and bringing out social cohesion. PFH001

PTH003 demonstrated that traditional spirituality rebukes gender stereotypes when she stated the following:

For now, I am focusing on the traditional ancestral part and not prophecy. Part of the roles that we perform is cleansing children and elders including because my mentor Nomntande has taught me herbs. But I don't cleanse men I ask other men to cleanse them, guide them on how they should do the cleansing. I have taken this path after my husband died (I was 22 years old) but I am currently unable to guide other clans and enter the kraal because my husband should do the "ukothulwa iqhiya" ceremony for me so that I can lead clansmen as a female. But here at home - where I was born - I have the prerogative to lead, I am also a man here. PTH003

The African continent has always recognized men and women as ritual experts in West-Central Africa. The study done by Brown (2015) on female *banganga and bangudi a nsimba* (mothers of twins) shows that both women and men's understand and expertise of spiritual knowledge was not restricted by sex or gender. In Mwari culture, ritual experts and spirit mediums were intellectual experts who provided prophetic imagination

and ideological framework. In the review section the thesis tapped (Covington Ward, 2014) into the story of mama Nontetha Nkwenkwe, the prophetess of amaXhosa nation whom in her preaching won the people about colonialism and its instigators. Prophetess Nonkwenkwe's fight against colonialism later erupted in the spirit of elder Enoch Mgijima who had visions. It is argued that his visions disrupted the church because they appeared to be directed against Whites and the mother church in the USA pleaded him to abandon his visions which he refused – barred from the church. He later formed his own church with his followers which is known as the Israelites and is still existing with a distinct identity characterised by its dress code.

4.8 Ritual leadership roles for women

Traditional rituals involve paying respect to ancestors, whose spirits are invoked during ritual performance. Patriarchal canons usually alienate women from the studies like in Hirst (1997) where he argues that ancestors are typically deceased senior male members of a clan. As an insider and some with a spiritual calling, I would argue that the argued that ancestors are typically deceased senior males is flawed. Ancestors are deceased people irrespective of their gender or sex who are after passing from the physical to the spiritual world return home in spirit to guide, protect and bless their descendants. The blessings are not limited to one's direct lineage, ancestors from other clans or nations (*abezizwe*) do bless those that they were fond of while alive. Women exercise substantial power that ritual features in high relief and upon other authorities, most African ritual confers (Bongmba, 2012) women's innate power. Female amaXhosa diviners, faith healers and *oodadobawo* perform these roles in and outside of their homes as either faithhealers or diviners. Only when *udadobowa* is a diviner and a faith healer or both can she lead ritual performance outside of her clan.

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Udadobawo is the one who crafts the ubulunga / intambo (sacred necklace) for the initiate. Ubulunga is created for protecting the initiate from evil spirits and as a way of connecting him with the ancestors for protection. Udadobawo is also responsible for ukubeleka intonjana (a practice during intonjana where intonjana walks behind udadobawo covered in a blanket). PIYA006

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The teachings of Islam and Christianity conditioned Africans to reject their own perceptions of life. They ended up seeing them as primitive, obsolete and not worthy of acknowledgement and thereby impacted on the Afrocentric ways of life. Western and Islamic religions socialized women to become subservient to men. The rubbishing of local traditions impacted negatively on the traditional spiritual roles that women played. Men began to marginalize women from leading and participating in sacred ritual ceremonies because Islam dictates that women in their monthly periods are dirty or impure. Segueda (2014) posits that in countries like Benin, a woman's menstrual blood was seen as sacred with the power to repel evil spirits. Some view woman's ability to menstruate as fertility that is idiosyncratic.

In Africa, children are valued, motherhood revered (Hollos and Larsen 2008). Becoming a parent is part of the traditional conceptions of rites of passage as "a fulfillment of fundamental kinship, religious and political obligations to the community" (Hollos and Larsen 2008:160). Children represent a connection to the ancestors, and their births help in the continuation of the family in a physical and spiritual sense (Mbiti 1969, 1988). In generations past and in some of the more rural and pastoralist communities, children were also necessary for their labor; the economic success of the family was tied to having many. Traditional African religious beliefs tied women's fertility to the deities, such that a woman's repeated childbearing indicated high moral standing and approval from the deities, ancestors, and other spiritual beings (Hollos and Larsen 2008; Mbiti 1969). In spite of the impact of Western education and missionary Christianity on traditional African cultural norms, such beliefs persist.

POW005 stated the following:

"We need to tell the truth. Colonization has destroyed us. Christianity has destroyed us, that conversion. When reverends marry our children they say: you will leave your father and your mother and be united with your wife (genesis 2:24). A son will never leave his father and mother, who will build his home? That kind of teaching promotes individualism while our culture promotes communal way of life. It would be hard now to restore all that has been messed because we start from the unknown. It then becomes difficult for me to answer this question because of the colonial system that changed our indigenous way of leaving. We need to decolonize our minds first because we are operating in a colonial mentality.

There is also a misconception that ancestors are males. That is a lie, ancestors are spirits and there is no gender." POW005

POW005 continued to with the following:

Even traditional healers are linked to spirituality whether it is a herbalist, a diviner, a faith healers, a woman or a man. Roles are recognized and respected, but I bet and I promise you that a woman is in charge because of her emotions, she can control most of the things because of emotions whereas a man is more masculine. A woman can manipulate situations to get what she wants. Before the arrival of traders, women had their autonomy and that was changed by traders who came demanded negotiations with men and women didn't understand that. They started to exclude women from negotiations. It was them who defined roles for women as fixed and private sphere and males being in the public sphere. POW005

PDV003 stated that:

"We are the ones who are spiritually stronger than men hence we have a sharp eye on home matters. It is women who constantly remind or tell men on matters that need attention in the household. Udadobawo would then smudge her with imbola ebomvu (red ochre) and she is also the one responsible for feeding intonjana with umshwamo (a piece of flesh cut from the foreleg of a goat, also known as isiphika. We are also the ones who welcome umolokaza (bride) working with intombi yekhaya ( ) who puts a doek on her, teach her the tradition of ukuhlonipha. On giving birth it is also us who cut the umbilical cord and bury it behind the door so that the child can remember her or his home. The ukumisela herbs are also known by us and we are the one who prepare them for umakoti to avoid pregnancy complications. The ritual that follows seven days after giving birth is imbeleko which is done to introduce the child to the ancestors, and Udadobawo is the one who smears the baby with imbola (red ochre)." PDV003

The king traces his mythic descent from Pupupu, the female ancestor who was "accorded the rank of a Yoruba king" (Olupona, 1991:26). Women still command both spiritual power and political influence. "The

paramount female chief is Lobun, the most revered title in Ondo and also referred to as Oba Obinrin (woman king)" (1991:47).

"Spirituality is central to many of the daily decisions people in the `South' make about their own and their community's development, including that of whether or not to participate in risky but potentially beneficial social action. Despite its importance, development literature and development practices have systematically avoided the topic of spirituality. This avoidance results in inferior research and less effective programmes, and ultimately fails to provide participants with opportunities to reflect on how their development and their spirituality will and should shape each other" (Ver Beek ,2000).

4.10 Masculinity and traditional practice

The intrusion of the West and Islam in the African continent impacted negatively on the spiritual, traditional and cultural lives of the African women. Samntha Kies' (2013) examination of the Igbo women of South Eastern Nigeria's involvement in war upon colonial intrusion paints a picture of how women under traditional matriarchy fought to regain their rights after the imposition of patriarchy by the British. One of the scholars who has written extensively on the biases that favoured patriarchy from Europeans is Amadiume. Amadiume as cited by Kies (2013) further demonstrates the hierarchy that was imposed on women and its current visible impacts despite their aspirations and dreams to change the situation. Colonial powers began to promote their value and belief systems upon African people across the continent – aggravating the status of women.

POW001 clearly stated the following:
"We need to fix this because there was the precolonial and the colonial but we failed to look at the point where things went wrong and that is the conversion. Conversion is when we had to heathens and the converted, the educated and the uneducated, and then we started classing each other. Look what happens in homes when women die before their husbands. Roles are recognized and respected, but I bet and I promise you that a woman is in charge because of her emotions, she can control most of the things because of emotions whereas a man is more masculine. A woman can manipulate situations to get what she wants. Before the arrival of traders, women had their autonomy and that was changed by traders who came demanded negotiations with men and women didn't understand that. They started to exclude women from negotiations. It was them who defined roles for women as fixed and private sphere and males being in the public sphere." POW001

The position of the woman in African traditional societies as a wife and as a mother has generally loft much to be desired. - She is subordinated, not only to her-husband's will, whims and fancies, but also to the will and

power of his kinsmen. In matrilineal societies where the power of the husband is modified by reasons of descent and residence, she is still under the effective, control of male relatives. She is legally a perpetual minor? only in a few societies can she hold important positions or inherit property; divorce practices apply double standards of morality which favour men and in matters of custody of children in the event of the break-up of the marriage by death, divorce or separation, her rights as a parent, are in many cases completely denied.

POW001 demonstrated the following:

We need to tell the truth. Colonization has destroyed us. Christianity has destroyed us, that conversion. When reverends marry our children they say: you will leave your father and your mother and be united with your wife (genesis 2:24). A son will never leave his father and mother, who will build his home? That kind of teaching promotes individualism while our culture promotes communal way of life. It would be hard now to restore all that has been messed because we start from the unknown. It then becomes difficult for me to answer this question because of the colonial system that changed our indigenous way of leaving. We need to decolonize our minds first because we are operating in a colonial mentality. There is also a misconception that ancestors are males. That is a lie, ancestors are spirits and there is no gender. POW001

The sentiments expressed by POW001 depicts an image of the negatives impacts of colonialism and gender struggles faced by African women in a democratic era. From this view we learn that women are conscious of the state of their existence and the causal link between the resultant cause and their struggles. This level of intelligence shows us why it is important to have women at the forefront of nation building to deal with societal ills and avoid future adversities. Intersectionality theory acknowledges Black women experiences that are not included within traditional (Crenshaw, 1989) partitions of race or gender discrimination and the fact that intersection of racism and sexism factors into Black women's lives in a manner which cannot be captured wholly by looking at the women race or gender dimensions of those experiences separately. It is necessary that intersectional theorists should look a traditional spirituality as a method of understanding gender struggles and overcoming those struggles.

5.11 Conclusion

Even though the evils of colonialism attempted to destroy the African traditional spiritual ways of living, in particular the social status of African women in matrilineal genderless societies, women in the African continent resisted and rebelled. Today amaXhosa women still practice some of their traditional spiritual roles despite the patriarchal disruptions introduced by missionaries under Christianity and Islam. And this study seeks to eradicate patriarchal practises which then discourage and hinder women from enjoying their gender

roles informed by traditional spiritual protocols aimed at putting women at the same levels as men. The research subjects informed the study that they still perform central roles in society despite the undermining that they sometimes experience from their male counterparts. Although men know men know and understand the vital roles played by women in their households, the teachings of missionaries that offered men superior status over women still sit heavily on their – clouding the wisdom they inherited from their ancestors. The findings of this study inform us that women are leaders in society with an enormous role to play - whose role is undermined when spiritual protocols are deliberately not observed. Traditional spiritual roles of women in the society of amaXhosa are crucial in restoring the dignity of women and in paving a path towards ensuring that women regain their social position in the age of decolonization.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONTRIBUTION TOKNOWLEDGE, LIMITATIONS, STRENGTHS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study's key purpose was to examine traditional spiritual roles of African women in isiXhosa in the Eastern Cape and extract in-depth knowledge based on their lived experiences looking at gender struggles in contemporary society. Four questions were formulated that the study had to ask: (a) what are the women's traditional spiritual roles in isiXhosa culture, (b) what are the functions and significance of women's traditional spiritual roles, (c) are traditional spiritual roles and their practices for women similar to or different from those of men in isiXhosa cultural practices and (d) how do traditional spiritual roles hinder the development of women's empowerment in isiXhosa culture? Research participants responded to these questions using qualitative approach and conducting 22 face to face, in-depth interviews. The data collected by the study was extracted from the respondents using their voices to share their lived experiences on traditional spiritual roles. Thematic analysis was adopted and used for purposes of analysing data which is a qualitative method of analysis.

Even though the democratic government has introduced gender policies aimed at restoring that dignity of women and ensuring that men and women enjoy equal status as was the case in the precolonial era, women still face gender discrimination due to prevalent patriarchal practices. The study discovered traditional spirituality is still part of isiXhosa culture and it has the power to

destroy patriarchy when its protocols are properly followed. While the Traditional Leadership Framework and Governance Act explicitly rejects sexism and gender discrimination, it appears that there is no proper implantation bearing in mind that traditional spirituality women are not discriminated against in any form.

5.2 Summary of findings

The research instruments for this study assisted the researcher in addressing the aims of the study. The views expressed by women inform this study that amaXhosa women have traditional spiritual roles to play in society, and that traditional spirituality which defies gender biases, put women on the same level as men. In certain cases, it places women above men in the case of the role that is played by *udadobawo*, a role played by diviners and prophets whose spiritual gifts of leading and healing is arguably a gift from the ancestors. Ancestors don't do gender hence they choose women to be healers of nations, knowing that they will have to lead men during ceremonies. In "Yoruba's don't do gender", Oyewumi (1989) as cited by Bakere-Yusuf (2015) posits that historically, gender was never the organising principle in the African continent or a "first order issue". This view is supported by African feminist scholars and those of the diaspora where Oyewumi (1989) argues that Africans did not use biology or that biology was never a tool for articulating or developing social relations, subjectivity, positioning and hierarchy. It is therefore not the anatomy that dictates the position or the status of human beings but seniority.

The study also discovered a link between loss indigenous of knowledge informed by traditional spirituality and the colonisation of the African continent. Colonisation forcefully changed the way of life of the Africans and their view of life. That led to the dearth of *Ubuntu* which promotes respect and harmony between men and women. Amadiume (1997) would contend that western civilization and its evils brought about injustices that changed lives and the status of women, using gender as a tool to divide men and women. The findings also show subtle marginalization of women that still exists in contemporary society within the nation of amaXhosa. Women are seen as not being fit enough to hold positions in sectors such as the government and the private sector. Even in traditional leadership women who are *ikumkani* and *inkosikazi* are acting traditional leaders because their husbands have passed, and are acting until their sons reach the age of

maturity. This is evident that male leaders are still reluctant to let women lead despite the 1996 constitution's protection of women against sexism.

Diviners are the ones who seem to have more powers and respect from men than queens and female *iinkosi* because of their traditional spiritual status than men. The commanding spiritual powers that they get from ancestors offers them unsurpassed respect with leadership that is not questioned. There is correlation between the findings by this study and the indecorous formulation of legislation on traditional leadership, lack of implementation of government policies, the disregard of the decolonisation agenda and the disregard of the decolonisation agenda which comes with literature and research studies that seek to reposition women in society. Matshidze (2013) on the study done on the role of *makhadzi* in Venda culture brings to our attention the fact that the *makhadzi* were left out in crafting of government legislation that recognise the role of traditional leadership. The role of *makhadzi* is equivalent to that of *udadobawo* (senior sister) in isiXhosa culture. Intersectionality theory acknowledges Black women experiences that are not included within traditional (Crenshaw, 1989) partitions of race or gender discrimination and the fact that intersection of racism and sexism factors into Black women's lives in a manner which cannot be captured wholly, by looking at the women's race or gender dimensions of those experiences separately. It is necessary that intersectional theorists should look at traditional spirituality as a method of understanding gender struggles and overcoming those struggles.

This study argues that for women to fully get the recognition that they deserve in isiXhosa culture, traditional spirituality should be the point of departure in policy discourses on gender equality and equity, decolonization and other nuances that affect the dignity and position of women in society. Traditional spirituality should be the framework that underpins these policies and should solidify gender theories aimed at emancipating women, such as African feminism, intersectionality and the Afrocentric gender movements that back up these frameworks. It further argues vehemently that afro-colonial based patriarchal models that continue to oppress women must be dismantled. The second research question is focused on the significances and functions of traditional spiritual roles of African women. Afrocentric gender scholars emphasize the idea that women are the backbone of society. One of the arguments that Ver Beek (2000) in "spirituality as a development taboo" brings forward is that spirituality is central to the development of people. From the findings of this study which emphasize the significances of women's traditional spiritual roles and

functions, this study infers that a society that is serious about its development must have women at the forefront. It must be pointed that Achelous's (1995) motherism views the traditional role of women as a spiritual because of their contribution in instilling ethical and leadership values in the family. Motherism further emphasizes the point that the woman cannot be a man and neither a man cannot be a woman.

The centrality of women's roles to societal development are still downplayed by patriarchs whose power came with colonialism. This gendered patriarchal behaviour goes against traditional spirituality which condemns violation of human beings including women who were stripped off their dignity. The voices of women who are also bearers of knowledge and custodians of the culture and its spiritual practices are negated. The veracity of women's experiences is validated by vast literature on Afrocentric gender narratives which suggests that the work of women faded due to the advent of colonialism. It must be pointed that Achelous's (1995) motherism views the traditional role of women as a spiritual because of their contribution in instilling ethical and leadership values in the family. Motherism further emphasizes the point that the woman cannot be a man and neither a man cannot be a woman.

The third question seeks to understand if traditional spiritual roles of men and women are similar or different in isiXhosa culture. The findings inform this study that there are similarities and differences between roles performed by women to those performed by men and in some instances, they are the same. Women and men work the land together, plants seeds, weeding and harvesting. Female and male diviners perform the same roles of healing people, leading and guiding clans during ritual ceremonies. The same applies to faith healers, but there are some traditional churches that still prohibiting women from preaching in church when, they can only preach when there are no men in church or when they are having their own prayer sessions as women. In times of death the differences in roles are witnessed, men for example are the ones who dig the grave of men and women, it is not women. However, black feminism (Kolawole, 1997) vehemently ascertains the view that African are not longing to be men look like men and even act like men as it is the case with western feminism. What African women are doing is fearlessly attacking inequality which is an outcome of multiple forms of oppression that intersectionality scholars aim to eradicate. Women are spiritually prohibited from performing that task and that of caring the coffin. However, one participant argued that roles can't be compared because she does not want to be equal to a

man and that's she has a problem with the idea of gender equality. Women for instance have the ability to nurture children and have the emotional side which was taken away from them by social construction. The participants in the study view giving birth as a spiritual role that only women are assigned with. Gender theory which states that women should be how they are created, they should not try to be men and should recognize that they have more power was used. Thus, gender theory should be adopted to ascertain the idea that women have the power to lead societies and be encouraged to reclaim their space in society. It should also be used to reconcile the conflict between women and men, that breeds spiritual conflict and confusion when it comes to cultural and spiritual roles. The conflict is as a result of the negative influence of colonialism on the cultures and traditions of the Africans.

The fourth question seeks to understand how traditional spiritual roles promote or hinder the development of women in isiXhosa culture. Using the Afrocentric tools of analysis as a way of decolonising, the knowledge drawn from the participants indicate that traditional spirituality does promote and hinder women's development. Women who are divine healers view traditional spiritual roles as a vehicle for women empowerment because in their field of traditional healing and ritual performance men and women are not stratified according to sex or gender. It thus put men and women as human beings on the same level, enjoying the same status. Whereas the views between ordinary women and women from IYA are conflicting. IYA argue that men use traditional spirituality and culture to marginalize women in the workplace where it is not necessary to do so.

Participants who are ordinary women view traditional spirituality in contemporary society as hindering women's development, however, they argue that colonisation is to blame for dictating that men should be superior to women. One of the arguments was that women cry for emancipation from patriarchy but have difficulty liberating themselves because they have gotten used to the capitalist pattern of life that introduced patriarchy. The solution to the problem as African feminism suggests is that women should provoke the gender social systems aimed at oppressing women and labelling methods in which contemporary patriarchies coerce women and deter them from realising their potential beyond their traditional roles as hard working income generating wives and mothers. Intersectional theory also recognizes the importance of understanding women's struggles as informed by their lived experiences derived from racial,

gender and class identities informed by the history, social relations and operational structures of power in society. It should also be understood that some of the oppressive practices that oppress women are an inheritance of colonial and apartheid legacy.

The role women as constructors and disseminators of knowledge to their children and society at large is affirmed by social constructionist theorists and African gender movements like motherism, stiwanism and womanism which contend that it is through language that cultural and traditional knowledge is disseminated by women in society. Acholonu (1995) extends this point by positing that essentially, the traditional role of African women has always been that of a social nurturer and a matriarchSuch legacies were socially constructed to divide African men and women and control them using the divide and conquer strategy. These are socially constructed subjective realities which the social construction theory suggest that human beings construct their knowledge and identities and thereafter viewed as norms through daily interactions.

5.3 Significance of the study and contribution to knowledge

This study is a decolonial project in a post-colonial period, where patriarchy is still used as a tool to oppress women in society. There is literature that focuses on African women in the precolonial, colonial and post-colonial era, and the impact of Christian missionaries in promoting suppression of women, but those studies do not focus on traditional spirituality hence gender struggles are omitted. Afrocentric gender theories also do not touch on traditional spirituality, looking in the precolonial era, as a method of dismantling patriarchy. Such studies by African scholars and scholars from the Diaspora are not conscious of the power of traditional spirituality in uplifting women in society. It is within this logic that this study is significant and necessary as it intends to contribute to the understudied African women's traditional spiritual roles in the culture of amaXhosa nation. Even though the study is focused on women under the nation of amaXhosa, it should also be understood that this gives insight to other nation's cultural practices in Africa whose women suffer oppression due to colonialism, and further to contribute to the development of indigenous knowledge systems in the Africa.

The study builds on knowledge that is existing as one of the first research project to focus on traditional spirituality of amaXhosa women, bearing in mind that women's is less recorded and

more often written by patriarchs intending to pursue a patriarchal agenda. The thesis extended the theories (African feminisms, intersectionality and social constructionism) adopted for this study, by exhibiting that traditional spirituality. Traditional spirituality can assist in solving the current patriarchal crisis – patriarchy that sometimes leads to gender based violence and that can be done by formulating gender policies informed by traditional spirituality that is not gender bias. There is a need for a praxis that draws knowledge from traditional spiritual epistemology to answer questions pertinent to gender relations in society. Furthermore, the study reveals that despite having a government system that is democratic, with women's rights enshrined in the constitution and gender policies aimed at restoring the dignity of women, narratives and dogmas of colonial institutions continue to plague women. This then informs us that there is no correlation between policy crafters not looking at way of life of Africans in precolonial era and formulation of afro-centred policies. This thesis recognizes research done on gender struggles in African and their findings, but it was interested on the existence of traditional spirituality and how its roles contribute to hindering or promoting women's empowerment.

5.4 Limitations and strengths

The study was limited to studying traditional spiritual roles of women from the nation of amaXhosa' experiences and findings. It excluded other women and men from other nations. The researcher saw urgency in focusing on women's struggles in an era where all humans should be enjoying equal rights and freedom, not only in theory but in practice. While the study interviewed 22 women amaXhosa women, it cannot claim that the women interviewed epitomizes the experiences of all the women in the country even though it qualitative method approves of the number of participants (Punch, 2014). Accessing the gatekeepers' letter was another limitation because the researcher struggled to make contact with the president of IYA who has a very schedule. Travelling between different towns and villages in search of the IYA female traditional leaders was challenging, and having to get contact details for the Royal house of amaXhosa in Nqadu Great Place so that I can set an appointment with the Queens and the princesses.

The project's strength is that the researcher is an insider who is a traditional spiritualist and therefore the understanding of the jargon, spiritual and cultural protocols used while approaching the subjects made it easier. What this study did was to focus on traditional spirituality which

governs how roles should be played while other studies only focus on religion, culture, history and religion as informed by Christian notions of spirituality.

5.5 Recommendations

Future studies in this area of research are recommended to direct their focus on examining policies aimed at addressing gender imbalances in the country. Afrocentric tools of analysis when dealing with gender struggles in the post-colonial era must be taken into account so that we may not use the same methods used to destroy our culture and traditions, aimed at keeping harmony in society. The findings suggest a need to decolonize the current systems that were enforced by the West and the systems we adopted which fail to address the needs of the African people. The study is thus a call for decolonization, a decolonization agenda that has a full representation of women driven by need to destroy branches, the tree and the roots of patriarchy.

"Nothing about us without us" Winnie Madikizela-Mandela

Curriculum renewal projects should incorporate Afrocentric studies that equip learners from ECD to the post-school education sector to conscientise learners and students about gender struggles in our society. Gender awareness campaigns focusing on traditional spirituality as a source of power for women disempowered are and therefore the approach in conceptualising those campaigns needs to change for the benefit of women. That comes with understanding that the benefit of women is the benefit of society. The point of departure for theories that celebrate and endorse African cultures and diversity should be the interrogation and engagement of traditional spirituality that propelled and still propels women to become Queen Mothers, prophets, diviners and medicine women who were never vilified in African societies, until colonialism showed its face and disrupted the status quo.

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"Nothing about us without us." Winnie Madikizela-Mandela

APPENDICES Appendix I: Ethical clearance

Appendix   2:

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

05 February 2019

Mr Bizo V Bomela 217079593
School of Social Sciences
Howard College Campus

Dear Mr Bomela

Protocol reference number: HSS/0015/019M
Project title: Gender Struggles in Contemporary South Africa: Examining African women's traditional spiritual roles in isiXhosa culture.

Provisional Approval – Full Committee Reviewed Protocol

Your application dated 14 December 2018 in connection with the above project was discussed at the HSSREC Meeting held on 30 January 2019. The protocol has been provisionally approved, subject to the following conditions being addressed.

1. Concerns: Some of the change intentions mentioned in background unlikely to be achieved through the study but these are not set as research objectives. PI need to clarify if these are "hopes"/outcomes of the study.
2. Data analysis – thematic analysis: How will the data be analysed.
3. Information sheet must specify anticipated length of interview.
4. Separate out consent to participate and consent to be audio recorded.
5. Authenticated gatekeeper permission letter required.
6. Timelines need to be amended.

This approval is granted provisionally and the final clearance for this project will be given once the above-mentioned condition has been met. Note that data collection may not proceed until final ethics approval letter has been issued after the remaining conditions have been met and approved by the research ethics committee.

Please submit your earliest response as soon as possible to Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair) % ximbap@ukzn.ac.za Research Office, Westville Campus.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)

GatekeepersLetter   .

28 February 2019

The Research Ethics Committee
University of Kwa-Zulu Natal
Howard College Campus
Glenwood

Dear Dr. G. Mkhize

Re: PERMISSION TO GRANT SIZO LUVIWE BOMELA (217079593) CONSENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

This letter serves to confirm that Sizo Luviwe Bomela (**student number 217079593**) have been granted permission by the House to interview members of *Imbumba Yamakhosikazi Akomkhulu* (organisation of female traditional leadership) under the Eastern Cape House of Traditional Leaders, Bhisho. We believe that the study is on traditional spiritual roles of amaXhosa african women as per our conversations via email beginning from 06 November 2018. The study is without a shadow of doubt inextricably linked to our mandate as the organisation.
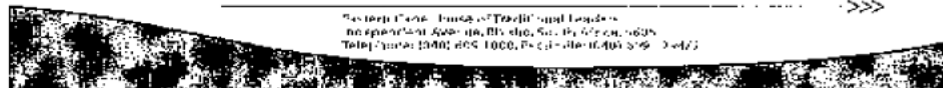
The organisation highly appreciates the candidate's interest in attempting to pursue a study of that nature in a world where indigenous knowledge systems have for years been marginalized and its beneficiaries "othered" by those who consider western knowledge as universal.

We would like to wish the candidate the best of luck with his research and studies.

Kind regards,

...........na
.........tional Leaders Eastern Cape (ECHTL)

Eastern Cape House of Traditional Leaders
Independent Avenue, Bhisho, South Africa, 5605
Telephone (040) 609 1000, Facsimile (040) 549 0473

Appendix III: Informed consent document

Appendix B

Informed Consent Document

Dear Participant,

My name is **Bizo Luviwe Bomela (*217079593*)**. I am a Masters candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College. **The title of my research is titled Gender Struggles in Contemporary South Africa: Examining African women's traditional spiritual roles in isiXhosa culture.** The aim of the study is to (**Grounded on feminist thinking, this research project is aimed at examining and reviving traditional spiritual roles of women that are often silenced marginalized in the Xhosa culture because of deepened patriarchal 'norms' and beliefs.**). I am interested in interviewing you so as to share your experiences and observations on the subject matter.

Please note that:
- The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research only.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your views in this interview will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity will be disclosed in any form in the study.
- The interview will take about 45 minutes depending on the vastness of knowledge from the research participant.
- The record as well as other items associated with the interview will be held in a password-protected file accessible only to myself and my supervisors. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by shredding and burning. The interview will be recorded using an audio recorder should the participant consent to being recorded.
- If you agree to participate please sign the declaration attached to this statement (a separate sheet will be provided for signatures)

I can be contacted at: School of Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus, Durban. Email:217079593@stu.ukzn.ac.za;
Cell: 0787534550

My supervisor is Doc Gabisile Mkhize who is located at the School of Social Sciences, Howard College Campus, Durban of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details:

"Nothing about us without us." Winnie Madikizela-Mandela

email Mkhizeg2@ukzn.ac.z.a Phone number: 013 260 7614

The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee contact details are as follows: Ms Phumelele Ximba, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Research Office, Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za, Phone number +27312603587.

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Appendix V: Interview questions

1. What are women's traditional spiritual roles in Xhosa culture?
2. What are functions and significances of women's traditional spiritual roles in isiXhosa culture?
3. Are traditional spiritual roles and their practices for women similar to or different from those of men in isiXhosa cultural practices?
4. How do traditional spiritual roles promote or hinder women's empowerment in isiXhosa culture?

Thank you for time and your contribution to this research. Again, your identity will be kept anonymously. Also, all the information you provided will be kept confidential and only used solely for this research. Thank you