



**UNIVERSITY OF  
KWAZULU-NATAL**

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**INYUVESI  
YAKWAZULU-NATALI**

**EXPLORING “BREAKING NEW GROUND” AS A JOB CREATION  
MECHANISM FOR WOMEN IN LOW-INCOME HOUSING  
CONSTRUCTION: A CASE STUDY OF KINGSBURGH WEST HOUSING  
PROJECT IN THE ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY**

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**Exploring “Breaking New Ground” as a job creation mechanism for women in low-income housing construction: A case study of Kingsburgh West Housing Project in the eThekweni Municipality**

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*A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Housing in the School of Built Environment and Development Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study explored women's participation in the construction industry, as well as their access to economic freedom in the same context. The study also sought to examine injustices and gender inequalities in the construction industry from the perspective of the Marxist, radical and liberal theorists. This researcher adopted a qualitative research strategy to assess the views of respondents in relation to the "Breaking New Ground" policy as a tool to create jobs for women in low-income housing. The researcher collected the data by conducting in-depth interviews with women-owned construction companies, government officials, employees, and independent organisations.

The researcher used one of the low-income housing projects in Durban in the eThekweni Municipality as a case study for this research to establish if the "Breaking New Ground" policy enabled the delivery of housing, and whether it is a suitable job creation strategy. The researcher achieved this by asking participants about the challenges they were encountering in the construction industry. This study also examined policies and regulations in place that drive the economic transformation of women in the construction industry in South Africa. Despite having more policies and regulations, the findings of the study revealed that the construction industry is still a male-dominated space. Furthermore, the findings exposed economic injustices and gender inequalities, which pose more challenges for women in the construction industry.

The study, in this regard, recommends that the implementation of these policies and regulations be monitored as women in the construction industry are vulnerable and are often victims of patriarchy and gender inequality. This becomes a mandate for all stakeholders involved to improve monitoring guidelines to ensure the proper implementation of these policies. To this end, the study also recommends that the government make funding available for the training of emerging women contractors in management and tendering processes – as all work in South Africa is secured through the tendering process. Government must, in this regard, enter into agreements with financial institutions in South Africa to assist emerging women contractors with funding to their projects with low interest rates. It is, thus, the researcher's view that establishing these recommendations will ensure the long-term sustainability of more women contractors in the construction industry.

## DECLARATION

I, Anathi Xuma (216072550) declare that the dissertation, **Exploring Breaking New Ground as a job creation mechanism for women in low-income housing construction: A case study of Kingsburgh West Housing Project in the eThekweni Municipality** is my own work, and that all the sources that I have used, or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete reference list.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to the Xuma family, especially my late father Gipson Sipiwo “Ndodembi” Xuma for his teachings that instilled moral values in me. I also dedicate this dissertation to all the women in the construction industry, who have suffered oppression and discrimination, and have waged the struggle and fight against gender inequality.

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## ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
BBBEE	Black Broad Business Economic Empowerment
BNG	Breaking New Ground
CANSA	Campaign Against Neo-Liberalism in South Africa
CEDAW	Convention on Ending All Discrimination Against Women
CETA	Construction Education Training Authority
CGE	Commission on Gender Equality
CIDB	Construction Industry Development Board
CMDA	Cato Manor Development Association
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CSD	Central Supplier Database
DoH	Department of Housing
DoHS	Department of Human Settlements
EMEs	Exempt Micro Enterprises
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
FEM	Federated Employers Mutual
GEAR	Growth Employment and Redistribution
GNU	Government of National Unity
HSDG	Human Settlements Development Grant
IDT	Independent Development Trust
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KZN	Kwazulu-Natal
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MKMVA	Mkhonto Wesizwe Military Veteran Association
NDP	National Development Plan
NHBRC	National Home Building Regulation Council
NHF	National Housing Forum
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency
PGCIA	Practical Gender Construction Inequality Act
PPFA	Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act

QSEs	Qualifying Small Enterprises
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SAWIC	South African Women in Construction
SARS	South African Revenue Service
SCM	Supply Chain Management
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEDA	Small Enterprise Development Agency
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SME	Small Medium-Size Enterprise
SMME	Small Medium Micro Enterprise
UKZN	University of Kwazulu-Natal
WB	World Bank
WID	Women in Development
WAD	Women and Development

# **CHAPTER ONE: STUDY CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND**

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides an overview of the dissertation and its organisation. It provides the background to the research, presents the research problem, and explains the significance of the study, research objectives, motivation, location, and scope of the study. This study argued for a need to explore women's participation in the construction industry. This interest has been sparked by Section 7 of the 2004 Breaking New Ground (BNG) policy, which states that housing delivery also contributes to the alleviation of income poverty as it creates direct and indirect jobs in the construction sector. However, the construction industry had not yet experienced a commensurate change in its feminine footprint, especially concerning the employment and promotion of women's participation in the construction industry. Since women are more likely to be under-represented in the construction sector, the study aimed to provide a useful context for analysing the BNG policy as a job creation strategy in low-income housing construction.

The study further aimed to explore the role of the BNG policy as a strategy for job creation for the benefit of women playing their trade in the low-income housing construction in the Kingsburgh West Housing Project in the eThekweni Municipality. The eThekweni municipality was used as a case study as Kingsburgh West is in this municipality in which the Kingsburgh West Housing Project was rolled out. The study concludes by making recommendations on how women can exploit the BNG policy on job creation to their advantage to ensure their participation in low-income housing construction in South Africa.

This chapter is divided into six sections. Section 1 provides the background to the study and makes justifications for the study. Section 2 presents the problem statement. Section 3 presents the aim and objectives of the study. Section 4 presents the main research question and the sub-questions. Section 5 discusses the hypothesis of the study, while section 6 outlines the structure of the dissertation.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY**

Numerous legislations have, since the inception of the Government of National Unity (GNU) (1994-1999) to date, been enacted and policy frameworks formulated on women's empowerment and low-income housing provision in South Africa. Enormous progress has so far, been made in the provision of low-income housing; however, opportunities for empowering women remain limited, and so are

scholarly debates. This is attributed to the fact that gender scholars were committed to understanding women's participation and representation, as well as empower them to participate in political decision-making structures, paying less attention to male-dominated industries such as construction (Hassim, 2006; Madikizela, 2008; Fielden *et al.*, 2000; Myeni, 2014, 2017). However, some scholars have most recently, conducted studies on women's participation in state-subsidised housing programmes in Durban (Myeni, 2020; Khumalo, 2020). They argue in this regard that the formal planning system has given scant recognition to African women, and further that initiatives must be taken that would challenge the hegemony and a tendency to show insensitivity to people from diverse backgrounds, and encourage the participation of beneficiaries in the delivery of their own houses. Thus, this study aimed to explore BNG as a job creation strategy for women in the construction of low-income housing. The study sought to explore solely the job creation strategies adopted to empower women in low-income housing construction in KwaZulu-Natal.

According to Adeyeni (2006: 568), empirical findings of studies on women's participation in the construction industry in developed countries have revealed several socioeconomic and cultural constraints that hinder women's entry into the construction industry. The scholar states that the construction industry was not only industry in the world that was dominated mostly by males, but that it appeared to exhibit the greatest degree of vertical segregation as well. Numerous scholars have confirmed that many women were principally engaged in clerical, secretarial, personnel, and protective services, with a high percentage employed in part-time positions (Madikizela, 2008; Fielden *et al.*, 2000).

Therefore, women's under-representation in the construction industry continues unabated. Consequently, they were under-utilised in the construction sector – since, traditionally, the construction sector is stereotypically regarded as a “male” domain (Abidemi, 2015). However, according to the World Economic Forum (WEF) (2016), in 2016 women made up, on average, 33 per cent of junior-level staff, 24 per cent of mid-level staff, 15 per cent of senior-level staff, and only 9 per cent of them were Chief Executive Officers (CEOs). The industries with the highest uptake of junior-level staff included mobility, information and communication technology (ICT), energy, and basic infrastructure. On the one hand, a higher proportion of males between 2008 and 2014 were concentrated in occupations such as crafts and trade, as well as plant and machine operators (with averages of 88% and 86%, respectively). On the other hand, females were mostly concentrated in occupations such as clerical and technician, with averages of 69 per cent and 57 per cent respectively (Statistics South Africa [StatsSA], 2018). This was followed by Indian males (with an average of 65.8%), coloured males (an average of 57%), and white

females (an average of 54.6%). Black African females maintained the lowest employment rates both in 2001 and 2014 (StatsSA, 2018).

Thabo Mbeki's Cabinet adopted the BNG policy in September 2004 as a revised framework for the development of sustainable human settlements. Section 2.3.1 of the BNG states that to promote the participation and contribution of the private sector in housing construction, the existing three subsidy bands (R0 – R1 500; R1 501 – R2 500, and R2 501 – R3 500) must collapse to enable households earning below R3 500 to access a uniform subsidy amount. The increased demand for housing, coupled with an attempt to remove significant bottlenecks would create new opportunities for private sector participation in the housing programme. The BNG policy's vision is to promote a non-racial integrated society through the development of sustainable human settlements and quality housing (RSA, 2010). This was a direct call from the BNG that regardless of company ownership, women must be involved in the construction of housing units for the poor. This also meant that women-owned companies would participate in the construction industry – either as main contractors or sub-contractors.

The Breaking New Ground policy states that the property could be accessed by all as an asset for wealth and empowerment, whereas, BNG programmes aimed to eradicate the struggle for radical socio-economic transformation. Tissington (2010) argues in this regard that the BNG was based on the principles espoused in the White Paper on Housing, as promulgated in 1994, and outlines the strategies adopted to ensure that government achieve its aim of providing low-income housing to the poor. Much of the literature on gender in the context of low-income housing acknowledges that inadequate housing will greatly impact women, who spend more time at home and in their immediate environment, than it would men (Venter & Marais, 2006). The scholar probed the effectiveness of the South African housing policies from a gender perspective, using a range of conceptual questions on racial capitalism and gendered oppression (Venter & Marais, 2006; Krige, 2011). It is clear that most scholars were concerned with women as beneficiaries of low-income housing, and not as producers of these units. Therefore, this study closes that knowledge gap, as it remained crucial to understand the level at which women participate in low-income housing construction.

Women must be empowered to formulate policies and programmes that consider their welfare and access to resources and power. Section 26 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) guarantees everyone the right of access to adequate housing. To this end, several laws were promulgated and policies adopted to enforce this right (RSA, 1996). Moreover, section 9 of the Constitution (1996) and the housing legislation provided a framework for equitable access to housing.

McLean (2017) asserts in this regard that state-assisted housing does not offer the poor an asset, which promoted their socioeconomic development. Despite the good intents of the South African Constitution (1996), the legal and social framework within which housing is delivered has not been able to address this inequality in accessing housing. To this end, the Department of Human Settlements (DoHS) has acknowledged that gender inequality remains a challenge for them (Mc Lean, 2017). The scholar notes that the BNG considers these inadequacies in more detail by examining the practical experiences of poor women in their quest to secure housing for themselves. Furthermore, some studies addressed the under-utilisation of female talent (or untapped from the onset), nullified by a lack of progression (Myeni, 2014). To this end, Ozumba (2012) concludes that the construction industry has not experienced a commensurate change in its feminine footprint, especially in the employment and promotion of women in industries such as construction.

One of the limitations of economic and social programmes is that women and men's participation is largely along traditional gender lines. The failure to think about gender explicitly means that little has been done to close the gender division of labour. For example, 92 per cent of job placements were secured or reserved for men, largely because the bulk of placements were in the construction industry – against the backdrop that women were not trained in this field, even though the incorporation of women in construction was a key recommendation of gender planning committee (Moser & Peake, 1987). According to Beall (2004), Cato Manor Development Association (CMDA) have a policy that advances women contractors, but that contractors responded by using women as fronts. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to illuminate the mechanisms that the BNG use to address women at work, as well as job creation mechanisms for women in low-income housing construction, and the impact that these variables have on women's empowerment. Thus, the findings of this study have illuminated women's participation in the construction industry, using the lens of women in relation to the urgency of their challenges, against the backdrop that they have a history of minimal participation in the construction industry and the housing production systems. The Kingsburgh Housing Project was selected as a case study because the building contractor-owner was a woman. The project inspired hope and left many curious – that since the main contractor was a woman, one would assume that the project would afford opportunities to other women contractors to ensure their participation as subcontractors in the project.

The Kingsburgh West Housing Project was rolled out after a case study was conducted on the BNG policy objectives, and the low-income housing scheme. Several reasons compelled me to choose the eThekweni municipality as my study area. The first reason is that I have a personal interests in the municipality. For instance, I worked in housing projects which were rolled out in the eThekweni

municipality from when I started my career in the construction industry in the early 2000s. The Kingsburgh West Housing Project is one of those housing projects. This project also engaged women contractors and youth volunteers in the construction phase. The case study can be either a single case or a case bounded by time and place (Williams, 2007). Thus, this case study was purposely selected due to its nature, as articulated in the title of this study.

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

It has emerged that for centuries women globally have been trying to change how people perceive them economically, politically, and socially. They have been demanding equality and justice, especially in the workplace (Smallwood, 2008). Discrimination against women widens the developing gender gap in terms of job opportunities, behaviour, salaries, promotions, and even employment as a whole. Women have to contend with sexist attitudes daily in the construction industry. According to Tissington (2011), the White Paper on Housing aimed to "ensure the participation of emerging, large black contractors" by providing financial assistance to enable the scheme to credit such contractors, despite a lack of access to resources or a good track record. The scholar argues in this regard that there were multiple problems, including the collusion of tenders, which have led to the failure of the programme. She also argues that this has brought a shift from a private developer approach to a local government-centred and state-driven approach, a move that saw the private sector refraining from participating in the delivery of low-income housing. To this end, private developers struggled to make profits from building low-income housing because of the regulations put in place (Tissington, 2011).

Although the national legislation (Women Empowerment and Gender Equity Bill) has provided room for the empowerment of women, this has not been easily translated and enforced across the board, suggesting a non-existent correlation between policy and practice (Dlamini & Shakantu, 2015). The scholars argue in this regard that this tendency hinders the formulation of workplace policies and frameworks to support work-life balance initiatives – because the main focus is on the implementation of strategies aimed at increasing women's participation in sectors that were previously reserved for men (Dlamini & Shakantu, 2015).

### **1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main aim of the study was to explore the role of the “Breaking New Ground” policy as a job creation strategy to the benefit of women playing their trade in the low-income housing construction in the Kingsburgh West Housing Project in the eThekweni Municipality. The objectives of the study were as follows:

- to assess the extent to which women play a role in the transformation of the construction industry in South Africa;
- to analyse government policies and how they contributed to the creation of jobs for women in low-income housing construction in the Kingsburgh West Housing Project;
- to examine the challenges faced by women in low-income housing construction and the impact of these challenges on the sustainability of their careers in the construction industry;
- to explain the linkage between programmes run by government for women and their performance in low-income housing construction in Kingsburgh West; and
- to recommend strategies to create jobs for women in low-income housing construction, whose involvement is minimal.

Notably, although the study focused on the Kingsburgh West Housing Project, challenges faced by women in low-income housing construction may also be encountered by women in other provinces and countries. To achieve the aims and objectives of the study I posed the following main and subsidiary questions:

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

### **1.5.1. Main Research Question**

To what extent does the “Breaking New Ground” policy contribute to the job creation of women in low-income housing construction in Kingsburgh West?

### **1.5.2. Subsidiary Research Questions**

I asked the following subsidiary questions to unpack the main research question:

- What role has women played in transforming the construction industry in South Africa?
- How do government policies contribute to shaping women job creation in low-income housing construction in the eThekweni municipality?
- How do the challenges faced by women affect their performance in the construction industry?

- Are there programmes in place to ensure the creation of jobs for women aspiring to enter in low-income housing construction in Durban?
- Does the eThekwing Municipality have in place strategies to create jobs for women aspiring to enter the construction industry that exist within eThekwini Municipality?

## **1.6 HYPOTHESIS**

Construction companies with clear empowerment and gender sensitive policies perform better in relation to mentoring women contractors and sub-contractors than construction companies that do not have clear empowerment and gender sensitive policies.

## **1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION**

This dissertation comprises five chapters:

*Chapter One* introduces the study. It provides the study context, the aims, objectives, and the rationale of the research, and concludes by outlining the structure of the dissertation.

*Chapter Two* provides a theoretical framework and reviews the literature on women in low-income housing construction to illuminate the relationship between women empowerment and the Breaking New Ground policy as a job creation mechanism in the construction industry.

*Chapter Three* outlines the research design and the methodology used and describes the research process, the sampling procedure, and the research techniques used to collect the primary data.

*Chapter Four* presents the findings from the data collected from Kingsburgh West in the eThekwini Municipality and provides analysis and discussions in the context of the problem statement.

*Chapter Five* draws conclusions, based on the findings, and summarises the findings of the study, as well as key issues discussed in the preceding chapters and demonstrates the relevance of this study, and make recommendations for policy makers.

## **1.8 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided an overview of the entire dissertation. It provided a brief background to the study and outlined the objectives of the study and presented the research questions. The chapter also outlined the structure of the dissertation. Chapter Two discusses the conceptual framework, theoretical framework, and review the literature in relation to the research topic.

# **CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTUAL, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, AND THE LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter One provided an overview of the entire study. It provided a brief background to the study and presented the objectives of the study, as well as the research questions. This chapter engages the conceptual and theoretical frameworks and reviews the literature on women in the construction industry. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks form the basis for analysing the principal issues of women's involvement in creating jobs in the construction industry. The literature reviewed justifies the study, against the backdrop of studies conducted previously. Overall, this chapter examines women's participation in the construction industry by presenting existing theories, models, and concepts, and reviewing the relevant literature on job creation strategies implemented in the construction industry.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section presents a conceptual framework that includes a "women's empowerment framework", "gender", "sustainable human settlements", "women and low-income housing", "women's employment", and "feminism". Section Two discusses the theoretical framework that guided the study. The last section reviews the literature on women and housing policy, as well as women in the construction industry. This discussion is necessary as it provides an overall understanding of how relevant policies should be formulated that promote the interests of women in the construction industry. The next section discusses the conceptual framework of the study.

## **2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

This section defines different concepts – namely women's empowerment framework, gender, sustainable human settlements, women and low-income housing, as well as women's employment and feminism. A conceptual framework is primarily a conception or a model of what is in the universe that warrants further research, what constitutes the research problem, and why it is necessary to apply a tentative theory in relation to the phenomenon under study (Mawell, 2012). Miles and Huberman (1994) define a conceptual framework as either a visual or written product that explains, graphically or in narrative form, significant phenomena to be studied, key factors, concepts, or variables, as well as the presumed relationships among them. These theories laid the foundation for the researcher to unpack

policies on women contractors or job creation in the construction industry. The next section interrogates the concept of women's empowerment framework.

### **2.2.1 Women's Empowerment Framework**

When third World feminists and women's organisations first invoked the concept "women's empowerment" in the 1970s, the concept "was explicitly used to frame and facilitate the struggle for social justice and women's equality through a transformation of economic, social and political structures at national and international levels" (Mosadale, 2005: 245). In the mid-1980s, the word "empowerment" became popular in the field of development, especially in relation to women (Sahay, 1998). Nevertheless, in the 1990s the International Monetary Fund (IMF) used the term "women's empowerment" in association with a wide range of strategies – including strategies that focused on broadening the choices and productivity of individual women, for the most part, in isolation from a feminist agenda; against the backdrop that the state had reneged from its responsibility to ensure broad-based economic and social support (Mosadale, 2005). Analytical work by the IMF has shown that narrowing participation gaps between women and men is likely to deliver large economic gains (International Monetary Fund [IMF], 2019). The concept of women's empowerment seems to be the outcome of several important critiques and general debates advanced by women's movements throughout the world, particularly Third World feminists. Throughout the world, the concept of women's empowerment has its roots in the women's movement (Sahay, 1998). In "grassroots" programmes and policy debates, empowerment has virtually replaced terms like welfare, upliftment, community participation, and poverty alleviation to describe the goal of development and interventions (Sahay, 1998).

According to Sharma (2000), the role of women in economic development paved a way for the rise of a women's development perspective. The development strategy, however, has come under severe attack, not only for its failure to deliver as expected, but for working against the interests of women as well. The common factor is that women are all constrained by "the norms, beliefs, customs and values through which societies differentiate between women and men" (Kabeer, 2005:22). According to Mayoux (2001), for women's empowerment to be realised, a fundamental change in the macro-level development agenda is required. Women must also, in this regard, be given the explicit support to challenge gender subordination at micro level. In certain instances, this may manifest in women's lower incomes, relative to the incomes of men (Mosedale, 2005). However, the 1990s witnessed the rise in

women's empowerment initiatives, which gained traction during the Beijing Conference of 1995 (Sharma, 2000).

The Beijing Platform for Action was convened in September 1995 and committed all signatory states to act on the recommendations of the United Nations Convention on Ending All Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in concrete ways. This would ensure that issues of concern to women remain high on the international agenda (Assembly, 2012). In effect, CEDAW has enabling provisions in place, while the Beijing Platform for Action spelt out the intent of its provisions concerning the empowerment of all women in conformity with the UN Charter and the international law (SALGA, 2017). The Conference concluded with the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on 15 September 1995, which was approved by representations from the 189 countries (Assembly, 2012). The Beijing Declaration committed participants of the Conference to advancing the goals of equality, development, and peace for women worldwide. Assembly (2012) also noted that the Declaration further required participants at the Conference to dedicate efforts towards addressing the constraints and obstacles hindering the advancement and empowerment of women worldwide. The Conference also declared MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) and SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) global development frameworks (Kabeer, 2015). She argues that these MDGs are committed to achieving gender equality, and women's empowerment that would eliminate gender disparity at all levels of education. Progress made in this regard would be measured against the gender gap in education, increasing women's share in non-agricultural wage employment, as well as the increased percentage of women in parliaments. The Council of Europe (COE) (2022) argues in this regard that ensuring the equal participation of women and men in decision-making or different activities is a necessary first step and an objective on its own. However, women's participation in decision making does not mean that a gender mainstreaming exercise has been undertaken and does not automatically bring qualitative change in relation to gender equality in a specific policy, programme, or activity.

The level of women's empowerment will vary, sometimes enormously, depending on other criteria such as class or caste, ethnicity, relative wealth, age, and family position. Therefore, any analysis of women's power or the lack thereof, must appreciate these additional contributory factors (Mosedale, 2005). Sahay (1998) perceives women's empowerment as a range of several interrelated and mutually reinforcing components. She also argues that women's empowerment is a social process that neutralises women's oppression. The core of the women's empowerment framework is its argument that women's development can be understood in terms of five levels of equality, which have empowerment as an essential element at each level. These levels are welfare, access, conscientisation, participation and control. Using the empowerment framework, development planners

can determine whether a project or programme is at the welfare, access, conscientisation, participation or control stage, or a point where they can intervene to facilitate the promotion of women to ensure their equality and empowerment. An approach that seeks to empower women can also mean that the latter are involved in policymaking and planning processes (Sahay, 1998). The link between poverty and women's lack of control over resources and decision-making has drawn the attention of policymakers in government and mainstream development globally (Endeley, 2001). Thus, the findings of this study will facilitate women's equality and articulate it by pointing out ways in which economic transformation and social and political empowerment were adopted in the Kingsburgh West project. The next section discusses gender, which serves as a relevant conceptual framework as it focuses on gender inequalities and job creation, which was the subject of interest for the researcher.

### **2.2.2 Gender**

Feminist scholar's conceptualisation of gender, (Nidham & Aseel, 2014), argue that "gender" is a category created by society about how men and women are, what they should do, how they should behave, and what values are placed on them. It was necessary to explain how to distinguish between sexes in stalkers. They further argue that some feminists believe that women are only "sexual objects for men" and become women through this process of objectification. According to Mohammed (2020), the concept of gender must be clearly understood as a cross-cultural socio-cultural variable. It is a global variable in the sense that gender can also be applied to all other cross-sectional variables such as race, disability, class, age, ethnic group, and sexual orientation (Mohammed, 2020). Like UNICEF (2017), defines that gender incorporates the desires held around the characteristics, aptitudes and likely practices of both women and men.

More as of late, inside a few strands of Western women's liberation, a see around gender has risen that shifts the center from regenerative highlights and socially connected social parts to angles of personal psychology, subjective involvement, and self-knowledge (Earp, 2020). GENIA, (2015), (Gender in Education Network in Asia-Pacific), argues in this regard that some people do not want to be shaped for their gender expectations for their society as others are born into bodies they do not think is right for them. For example, a transgender person has a gender identity that is different from his or her sex at birth as transgender people can be either male or female (GENIA, 2015). Mohammed (2020), argues further that gender identity is based on assumption that someone's genitals match their gender even though it is about someone's anatomy and about who they are.

A focus on gender policy, according to Mayoux (2001), provides a framework that guides women's equal access to resources, their increased participation in self-help groups, and drives gender awareness and the formation of feminist organisations. In this regard, Sharma (2000) argues that the concern for gender equality has evolved to the level of a policy objective. More importantly, it has begun to dominate public discourses, overshadowing vital concerns for other kinds of inequalities, such as of castes and classes. Thus, the scholar opines that this provides evidence for the agility of gender concerns today. Some programmes, in this regard, have become effective in integrating gender awareness into programmes, and for organising women and men to challenge and fight gender discrimination. Some even has the support of legal entities, and are involved in gender advocacy (Mayoux, 2001). Even with all these developments, Global Gender Gap 2022 report, argues that even though gender gap has narrowed by 68.1%, at the current rate of progress, it will take 132 years to reach full parity (WEF, 2022). Thus, in this study I have used gender as an analytical lens to engender an understanding of gender inequalities within the construction industry. The next section unpacks patriarchy as part of the conceptual framework as it helps illuminates the oppression and exploitation of women.

### **2.2.3 Patriarchy**

The concept "patriarchy" articulates the "rule of men over women" and more broadly (economically, politically, socially and religious). Patriarchy is a social and political system where men dominate, oppress, and exploit women, which extends beyond the household to the broader society. Those who advocate for patriarchy are often soft Marxists, who argue that underlying the economic class dialectic of Marx is an even more fundamental sexual class dialectic – even though, for the most part, they emphasise cultural and institutional, rather than economic control (Mirkin, 2008). The proponents of patriarchy perceive males in the same way that Marxists view the ruling class. Males are seen as controlling access to institutional power. It is argued, in this regard, that males mould ideology, philosophy, as well as art and religion to suit them. Men within the patriarchal system define, "by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labour" the roles that women shall (or shall not) play. Women are thought of as a subgroup in a man's world: "patriarchy" is believed to be "equivalent to culture and culture is patriarchy". Patriarchy is a way of thought, Mirkin (2008) argues. As a "Religion of Rapism", patriarchy legitimises the violation of boundaries across the board. It blesses the invasion of privacy, rape, the law, the family, and religion

as major ways through which men have dominated women. To this end, women have internalised the values of the patriarchs (Mirkin, 2008).

According to Forum (2016), patriarchy is not affected by political, social, economic, legal cultural, religious factors, as well as military institutions, but is intertwined with, and informs the relationships of class, race, ethnicity, religion, and global-imperialism. The scholar (Forum, 2016) further argues that challenging patriarchy effectively requires that other systems of oppression and exploitation, which frequently and mutually support each other be challenged as well. Men's access to, and control of the resources and rewards within the private and public sphere derives its legitimacy from the patriarchal ideology of male dominance (Forum, 2016).

Kornegay (2000) argues that the socio-cultural dictates of all groups have contributed to the inferior status of women in relation to men and, have, as such, assigned to women the roles of minors in both public and private spheres of life. In the private sphere, women were less likely to lead in decision making. Thus, they were willing, cooperative and passive victims – since financial equality is almost impossible within the patriarchal system, which ties women to caring for children. As such, this traditional division of roles feeds male supremacy (Mirkin, 2008). In most interpersonal relationships men had more power. Thus, the historical legacy of patriarchy influenced the essential informal and formal human relationships, which have a marked impact on the workplace (Kornegay, 2000). The next section discusses the concept of sustainable human settlements as a conceptual framework that sheds light on the four pillars of sustainable human settlements.

#### **2.2.4 Sustainable Human Settlements**

Housing delivery has, over the past decades, shifted its emphasis on building houses to recognising the importance of providing access to resources and opportunities, which would facilitate the active participation of South African women in the social and economic activities. This shift is illustrated by the introduction of the Comprehensive Plan for Sustainable Human Settlements (commonly referred to as the BNG – Breaking New Ground) in 2004, and the renaming of the Department of Housing (DoH) to the Department of Human Settlements (DoHS) after the 2009 general elections (South African Cities Network [SACN], 2014). The introduction of the BNG policy represented the most significant shift in the mandate of the DoH to deliver “sustainable human settlements”, and reinforced the notions of spatial transformation and integration through housing delivery. BNG defines Sustainable Human Settlements as “well-managed entities in which economic growth and social development are in balance with the

carrying capacity of the natural systems on which they depend for their existence and result in sustainable development, wealth creation, poverty alleviation and equity" (SACN, 2014:6).

Attempts to align South African settlements with the precepts of sustainable settlement, as outlined in Chapter 7 of Agenda 21, were first made after the democratic elections of 1994, and the subsequent drafting of the settlement-related policy and legislation that seeks to address the segregated nature of the country's space economy (Hirano, 2004). According to Harvien (2007), the Integrated Sustainable Human Settlement Framework falls within the scope of the Urban Renewal Programme and must, therefore, be aligned to the strategic priorities identified. Given the necessary resources, environmental and socio-economic crises, which threaten human survival, the key components of sustainable human settlements would include the four pillars that support sustainable human settlements: environmental sustainability, institutional sustainability, social sustainability, and economic sustainability. This means that it must be ecologically bearable in the long term, economically viable, as well as ethically and socially equitable for the local communities. Economic sustainability includes job creation, entrepreneurship, empowerment and emerging contractor support, as well as the empowerment of women and previously disadvantaged groups (Harvien, 2007). The motivation of the Maintainable Tourism Summit Rhode Island 2006 (15 November 2006) clarifies supportability within the statement that sustainability is not only about the natural environment, but also about systemic concepts. system that includes many diverse elements and synergies of the human and non-human environment. UNCED, 1992 further demonstrates the parallel care of a wide range of economic, social, ecological, cultural and community knowledge as well as infrastructural capacities and assets through action. synergies to regenerate and restore both the site's communities and ecosystems.

The concept of sustainability is further articulated in policies and programmes on human settlements – for example the Breaking New Ground policy. Sustainable Human Settlements refer to the "well-managed entities in which economic growth and social developments are in balance with the carrying capacity of the natural systems on which they depend for their existence and result in sustainable development, wealth creation, poverty alleviation and equity" (Breaking New Ground, 2004). The question is, *how does the delivery of settlements contribute to poverty reduction and wealth creation for beneficiaries as articulated in the policy?* Thus, the need to alleviate poverty and respond to the triple challenge (of poverty, inequality, and unemployment) resonates with the objectives of the National Development Plan (NDP) for South Africa, which recognises inclusive spatial planning and development.

Chapter 8 of South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP), titled, *Transforming Human Settlement and the National Space Economy* emphasises the need to develop sustainable human settlements that would give citizens access to all other forms of basic services, and reverse the spatial patterns of apartheid planning as a vision for the country by 2030. The National Planning Commission (2011: 203) notes that building a sustainable human settlement must be guided to ensure that infrastructure investment is proactively directed towards the attainment of integrated human settlements and cities. The government has, since 1994, built 3.3 million houses (Khumalo & Wilkinson, 2019). However, this has not translated to the equivalent increase in the levels of beneficiary household income, nor has it contributed to alleviating socio-economic inequalities (Government Communication and Information Services, 2016: 3). The Fuller Centre for housing argues that, slums have sprung up around the cities because the state program has not kept pace with population growth...[since] 1994...population has increased from 13 million to 53 million...[ then] only 15% of South Africa's 14.45 million. According to government data, households earn enough to get a mortgage, while 60% is less than R3,500 a month and qualify buy public housing. The remaining 25%, including most teachers, nurses, police, and soldiers, have no access to both (Centre, 2014: 2).

This argument is supported by the 2018 General Household Survey (GHS) by Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) that about 81.1% of all households lived in formal housing in 2018. Although the percentage of households receiving some kind of government subsidy to access housing has increased from 5.6% 2002 to 13.6%, in 2018, 13.1% of households still live in informal housing. This may be because the rapid growth of households and population displacement makes it difficult to deal with the existing backlog in the face of new demands (Settlements, 2018).

Therefore, human settlements and the delivery of infrastructure at the scale in the South African context could be considered a potential sector that catalyses transformation to respond to the challenges of rapid urbanisation and alleviate inequalities. As such, the delivery of housing presents an opportunity to accelerate inclusive development and the attainment of the objectives of the New Urban Agenda. Inversely, the delivery of human settlements and the provision of housing for the urban population could be seen as a strategic policy programme for socio-economic transformation. The next section discusses women and low-income housing because this also provides the relevant conceptual framework and exposes patterns of inequality that affect women and the low-income housing environment that further affect civilisation.

## 2.2.5 Women and Low-income Housing

The benefits of shelter solutions on women have always been great, owing to the major typical play in managing the household. However, it is only recently that development agencies have focused on the potential differential impact of housing projects on women versus men and the particular housing and shelter needs that urban women may have attested (Lycette, 1984). SACN (2014) states that the new democratic government's critical priority is to deal with the lack of access to housing for black South Africans. Since the introduction of the 1994 White Paper on Housing, approximately 3.7 million housing opportunities have been created, ranging from subsidised freestanding houses to social and rental housing (The Presidency, 2014). However, 22 860 youth, women and military veterans, as well as government officials and consumers have benefitted from the training from the human settlements skills programmes (HDA, 2016). UN-Habitat (2011) states in this regard that the key stakeholders in any community housing process are always women, whether the project involves resettlement to a new land or on-site upgrading. Space must be created for women to play a full role in all stages of the planning, as well at the implementation thereof (UN-Habitat, 2011).

Service delivery protests in South Africa are attributed to a lack of access to housing, along with demands for economic access, inclusion and plans to address the growing inequality (SACN, 2014). Many scholars have attested to the fact that in the South African context, unsustainable and inefficient patterns of apartheid-era planning have persisted for more than 20 years into the post-apartheid settlements (SACN, 2014; Mirika, 2016). Furthermore, beneficiaries of the housing programme are in the periphery of the cities, which reinforces the spatial legacy of apartheid. SACN (2014) argues in this regard that over the past 20 years the housing programme in South Africa has undergone several articulations. To this end, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was the backbone of government policy as promulgated in 1994, and was replaced by the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy in 1996, which emphasised economic growth (SACN, 2014). However, Fitchett (2007) confirms that GEAR was an attempt to reconcile the altruism of the RDP with the realities of financial planning in a global, market-driven economy (neoliberal focus), which would stimulate growth.

Many formations, such as the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), Campaign Against Neo-liberalism in South Africa (CANSA) and so forth have extensively criticised GEAR. This criticism ranged from GEAR's move to abandon many of the "soft" issues enshrined in the RDP, such as the upliftment of the "poorest of [the] poor", to the same fiscal policies, promoted as underpinning the policy itself (Fitchett, 2007). Therefore, CANSA (cited in Bond, 2000:187) stated in October 1996 that the

IMF's macroeconomic strategy envisioned an intensification of government spending cuts that threatened social security benefits, with high interest rates and privatization. He then said, he envisioned that this would lead to monetary policy that prioritizes the interests of the economy at an expense of workers, the poor, women and youth and other downgraded social forces.

COSATU responded to the proposals from big business with a *Social Equity and Job Creation Policy*, that stresses job creation and social equity in favour of a more interventionist policy that gravitates towards the demand side. This included a job creation strategy (through measures such as public works, housing programmes, demand expansion, training and land reform, as well as a redistributive strategy) that would alleviate poverty and provide basic needs by increasing the taxation of corporations and high-income individuals, coupled with a reduction of value-added-tax on necessities consumed by the poor (Bond, 2000).

Reitzes (2009) also notes that this refocusing was considered a move from the more inclusive developmental ideals of the RDP, which some criticised as a departure from the redistribution agenda towards a neoliberal focus that disadvantaged the very poor. The changing political and economic discourse brought a shift, from seeing housing mainly within a right-based framework, to recognising its role in improving the broader socioeconomic participation of beneficiaries (Reitzes, 2009). Bond and Tait (1997) states in this regard that there are disappointing allegations of a "market-centred" approach to housing policy for public health, the environment, safety and security, the welfare of women and children, education, public hazards, urban planning, the labour market and related economic sectors. He argues in this regard that in many of the worst features of the existing approach, there is still no attention to limited consumer affordability – which remains the key problem preventing large-scale market delivery of township housing – and the housing subsidy for millions of South Africans who do not afford the products of proposed public-private "joint ventures" has still, not been increased. There is still no protection against the "downward raiding" of low-income subsidy beneficiaries by higher-income groups (Bond, 1997).

Griffin (2012) states that housing and housing policy are major areas of concern. To this end, women of colour in the low-income bracket bear the brunt of housing-related poverty, violence, discrimination, and displacement – which are mainly attributed to gender and racial inequality in society, gender-blind housing policies, and myths and stereotypes about low-income communities and people of colour. Access to housing is not only gendered, but varies among women, according to structural forms of inequality and factors such as race, ethnicity, marital status, sexual orientation, income, ability, education, and whether her household includes children (Griffin, 2012).

Le Roux (2011) states in this regard that state subsidies for housing are one of the 1994 Housing White Paper strategies. In introducing once-off capital grants, the state acknowledged the existing income disparities between male and female, as well as the negative impact these disparities have the ability of low-income households to access the housing they need (Le Roux, 2011). However, Bond and Tait (1997) confirm that one of the most generous incentives that the government granted to banks was to allow them to impose (in mid-1995) and 4-5 per cent interest rate on housing bonds for low-income borrowers. Given the banks' 1 per cent (and greater) discounts offered to many higher-income borrowers, this represents a substantial "reverse Robin Hood" mode of redistributing income from the poor to the rich. Griffin (2012) warns in this regard that the disproportionate utilisation of public and subsidised housing programmes that aims to provide housing to women of colour and poor women, the gender disparities in high-cost subprime mortgage-lending, particularly affecting black women; women and queer people's elevated risk of vulnerability to poverty – owing to housing costs and discrimination; as well as the pervasive nature of gender-based violence in the context of accessing, securing, and maintaining one's housing is referred to as gendered phenomena.

It is evident that the government failed to formulate policies or promulgate legislation to reform the financial sector (especially prohibitions on discrimination) called for in the RDP (Bond & Tait, 1997). Subsidies provide a lump sum of money to beneficiaries only once in their lifetime, as a financial leg-up into the market process. According to the Department of Human Settlements (2008), about 70 per cent of South African households do not have access to housing credit through the formal banking sector. UN-Habitat (2011) states in this regard that the cost of all housing goes up when there is more economic competition for urban land and housing markets, such that even the most minimal standard of formal-sector housing becomes unaffordable to the poor. Being forced out of the market leaves low-income households with only one option: to build, buy or rent dwellings of relatively small size, low quality of construction and minimal service provision in an informal settlement (UN-Habitat, 2011). Low-income households need to live close to income-earning opportunities in the commercial and industrial centres of cities and towns to minimise the cost and time spent on commuting to work. However, good land in these central places is generally, in high demand and, is, therefore, expensive. According to UN-Habitat (2011), the involvement of women in a process that brings improvements in the quality of everyone's lives can also build capacities and confidence, while it enhances their status and help them undermine entrenched patterns of inequality. Women often suffer hidden and open discrimination when trying to meet their own and their family's housing needs because often, they (and especially women-headed households) have lower income and, therefore, live in abject poverty. In turn, this makes it more difficult for them to access housing (UN-Habitat, 2011). The next section discusses women's

employment, which also provides a good conceptual framework, as it reveals gender inequalities and discrimination suffered by women in workplaces, including women in the construction industry.

### **2.2.6 Women Employment**

Internationally and historically, women have been subjected to various kinds of discriminatory behaviour, attitudes, and policies – whether intended or unintended, which have hindered their full integration into the labour market (Maja, 2005). Within the labour market women continue to be in a precarious position relative to men; with women being over-represented in low-income, less secure employment. The International Labour Organizations (ILO) states in this regard that women continue to face significant barriers to securing decent work throughout their working lives. Women represent around 11 per cent of the workforce in the construction sector, and as little as 1 per cent of the manual trades (ILO, 2016). The image that “construction” conjures is that of an unskilled labourer, going from site to site, and not of a skilled, well-paid worker engaged in a successful, long-term career in a modern industry (Munn, 2014).

Women’s participation in the building trades should not be exaggerated, as it was gradually eroded when the statutory system weakened, culminating in the repeal of the statute in Great Britain in the early 19th century (Munn, 2014). Without the protection of regulation, and with a change in the division of building labour in the early 19th century, women were largely excluded than before (Munn, 2014). The scholar also argues that between 1841 and 1861 virtually all “male” trades became more male-dominated, including carpenters, bricklayers, plumbers, glaziers, painters, paviours and masons, while “female” occupations became more heavily female – including glovers, dressmakers, and ribbon makers. Thus, inequalities persist between women and men in the global labour markets, in respect of opportunities, treatment and outcomes (ILO, 2016). A key reason for this increased occupational gender segregation was that with the repeal of the Statute of Artificers in 1814, any regulation rested with the early trade unions and master’s associations, which tended to rely on custom and practice, including the control over entry into the trades through apprenticeship, from which women were excluded (Munn, 2014).

Sidney and Beatrice Webb (1894) describe the intensity of the resentment and abhorrence of the average working man who cannot fathom the idea of women entering his trade that is underpinned by the policy of all trade unions to exclude women. This has resulted in a low number of female membership in the trade unions in the late 19th century, as women’s work was associated with a

dilution of the wages (Webb, 1894). Yet again, the unequal pay scale between men and women, with the latter earning less was another important issue for women in the labour force in South Africa. Many women did the same work as men, but were paid much less (Mashinini, 1991). The minuscule wages of women hardly covered their living expenses. African and Coloured women were usually forced to live in townships, which required them to commute from their homes to downtown Johannesburg – and this was tiring. In addition, they were paid much less, and yet they spent a huge percentage of their pay to travel to their workplaces (Mashinini, 1991:15). The treatment of women in the workplace – from the daily discomfort to sexual abuse, to earning low wages was unacceptable. As more women joined the workforce and experienced these injustices, power in numbers allowed them to unionise and consequently, improve their working conditions from the 1930s onwards (LaNasa, 2016).

Since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, only marginal improvements were achieved leaving large gaps to be covered in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the United Nations in 2015 (ILO, 2016). As discussed in the World Survey 2019 (A/74/111), the most significant change in women's participation in the labour force has occurred in the Latin America and the Caribbean region, where the rate of participation has risen by 10 per cent (from 57% to 67%) between 1998 and 2018. The percentage of women participating in the labour force has remained high in sub-Saharan Africa and has risen slightly over the same period. In contrast, this percentage has declined by 2 percentage point from an already low base (36% to 34% between 1988 and 2018) in the Central and Southern Asia region. Exploring the patterns behind those aggregate figures indicates that being married or in a union has a dampening effect on women's likelihood of participating in the labour force, whereas this has the opposite effect on men. In addition to gender inequalities in the labour market, significant gaps in access to social protection also have an impact on income and time poverty among women (Assembly, 2019).

The then Public Works Minister, Thulas Nxesi, announced that the Preferential Procurement Regulations of 2017 allow for tenders to be awarded to women-owned companies, or those that have a 51 per cent representation of black and female employees. This is on the *proviso* that they are registered with the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB), and the Central Supplier Database (CSD) of the National Treasury, and that the company's taxes are up to date with the South African Revenue Service (StatsSA, 2018). The nature of the jobs on building sites, therefore, calls for a greater teamwork, as well as communication and literacy skills. To this end, women can and should participate in such jobs. The negative and discriminatory practices in the industry that hinder women's participation in construction cannot be overlooked.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) (2016) has noted that the significant achievements of women in education over the last two decades have not translated into a comparable improvement of working conditions. To this end, the global female labour force participation rate decreased from 52.4 per cent to 49.6 per cent between 1995 and 2015 (ILO, 2016). The corresponding figures for men in this regard, are 79.9 per cent and 76.1 per cent, respectively. Worldwide, the chances of women participating in the labour market remain almost 27 per cent lower than men's participation. The International Labour Organization (2016) reveals that the gender gap in employment and job quality suggests that women have limited access to employment-related social protection. Because of gender gaps at work, coverage (both legal and effective) by contributory compulsory social protection schemes is lower for women than it is for men. This leaves an overall gender social protection coverage gap. The implementation of a transformed and integrated framework, centred on the elimination of discrimination and the achievement of gender equality at home and at work, is at the heart of policy interventions (ILO, 2016).

Munn (2014) states that it is common for women to be featured as labourers on the billboards of construction sites (although not in great numbers), and as material suppliers such as brick-makers, and engaging in laborious work such as carrying sand and lime, as well as gravel and mortar. The onset of World War I (WW1) brought a shift in this dynamic, when the number of insured female workers in the building trades increased from 7 000 in 1914 to 31 4000 in 1918, and in the wood trades from 32 000 to 67 000 (Munn, 2014). This was attributed to an agreement between government and the trade unions that authorised the participation of women in skilled jobs reserved for males, on the condition that wages were kept low. The basic rate of wages for women engaged in craft processes was set at 20 per cent (less than the corresponding male rate). However, women continue to be paid on average, over 40 per cent less than what was paid to men, presumably because the work they engaged in was classed as semi-skilled (Munn, 2014). Despite some encouraging developments, wider gender gaps persist to this day. Increasing gender parity in educational attainment does not necessarily mean a decreased concentration of women in middle to less paid junior occupations that reflect traditional gender stereotypes and beliefs about women's and men's aspirations and capabilities. There is, therefore, a need to have in place ambitious policies that would ensure the transformation of gender norms and relationships in society and at work that would also address structural inequality (ILO, 2016). The next section unpacks the concept of feminism.

## 2.2.7 Feminism

The term “feminism” can be used to describe a political, cultural, or economic movement aimed at ensuring equal rights and the legal protection of women. Independent online argues in this regard that feminism is a movement that aims to establish the socioeconomic, political, and the institutional equality of the sexes and further highlights it as the advocacy for women's rights in a patriarchal, male-centred, and sexist world (IOL, 2022). Feminism can be divided into three waves. The first feminist wave was in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the second was in the 1960s and 1970s, and the third extends from the 1990s to the present. The first wave of feminism focused on the promotion of equal contract and property rights for women and opposed chattel marriages and the ownership of married women (and their children) by their husbands. However, by the end of the 20th century, activism focused primarily on gaining political power, particularly the right to women's suffrage. Second-wave feminism refers to the period of activity in the early 1960s, lasting through to the late 1980s. The second wave was largely concerned with other issues of equality, such as ending discrimination. Furthermore, second-wave feminists saw women's cultural and political inequalities as inextricably linked and encouraged women to be conversant with aspects of their personal lives as being deeply politicised and as reflecting sexist power structures. The third-wave feminism began in the early 1990s as a response to the perceived failures of the second wave, and the backlash against initiatives and movements formed during the second wave. Third-wave feminism seeks to challenge or avoid what it deems the second wave's essentialist definitions of femininity, which over-emphasised the experiences of upper-middle-class white women. A post-structuralist interpretation of gender and sexuality is most central in the third wave's ideology (Kirby, 2006). Third-wave feminists often focus on "micro-politics" and challenge the second-wave paradigm in relation to what is or is not good for females. Sarikakis et al. (2008) advocated the third wave women's movement as stated simply, the first wave called for a civic and legal entity for women as owners and voters, with suffrage movement, while the second wave works with and from civil rights. Movement focused on expanding the agenda from legal recognition to equality of women in employment, pay, benefits, control of one's body, and access to childcare and health and extend full human rights for women (Sarikakis et al., 2008:507).

Feminism in this regard, reconciles feminist theoretical and political views to illuminate the oppression of women (Kirby, 2006). It requires that the situation be analysed from a feminist perspective that does not align itself with but foregrounds the critical practices that link our understanding of postmodernity, global economic structures, the problematic nature of nationalism, issues of race and imperialism, critique of global feminism, and emergent patriarchies (Gunne, 2010). A conceptual and methodological

framework enables a critical understanding of women's multiple perspectives and works towards inclusion, participation, action, and social change. Feminism facilitates knowledge building to change the conditions of women's lives, both individually and collectively, while reconstructing conceptions of power to ensure that power is used in a responsible manner (Kirby, 2006).

All feminists call for changes in the social, economic, political, or cultural order to alleviate and eventually, eradicate the discrimination against women (Freedman, 2001). The women's rights movement started to emerge in the United States in the 1840s, with the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848, and the resulting Declaration of Sentiments, which claimed the principles of liberty and equality for women, as expounded in the American Declaration of Independence. After 72 years of organised struggle, all American women finally, enjoyed the same rights as men at the polling box when in 1920, women won the right to vote with the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (History.com Editors, 2017). Meanwhile, Freedman (2001) asserts that from the 1840s onwards, Britain saw the emergence of women's suffrage movements. She argued that before the emergence of organised suffrage movements, women had been writing about the inequalities and injustices in women's social conditions and campaigning to change them.

Most scholars have argued that organic feminism shifted to institutional politics, law reform, and the discourse on gender equality before the 1994 period. This has resulted in the bureaucratising of feminism (Hassim, 2006; Myeni, 2012). However, Shaw (2016) claims that the momentum of feminist activists has not died completely in South Africa. Women's organisations have regrouped around specific policy areas of community development and has held the government accountable for its broad commitments to gender equality and poverty alleviation. Due to the lack of strong women's voices, some of the challenges are not given policy priority at national level (Shaw, 2016). In this regard, Myeni (2012) argues that South African political structures are still dominated by men, despite constitutional guarantees to ensure gender equality and state commitment to the South African Development Community's Gender and Development Protocol of 2008. The next section discusses the theoretical framework.

### **2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

A theoretical framework is defined as an empirical or quasi-empirical theory on social and/or psychological processes that could be applied to illuminate phenomena at various levels (Tamene, 2016). The study explored job creation mechanisms for women in low-income housing construction.

Different waves of feminisms evolved in response to the persisting inequality between men and women. The difficulties that feminist scholars contended with currently constitutes an important reading like they were in 1989. These theories assisted the researcher to unpack the persisting inequalities and male dominance within the construction industry. The following theories guided the study: liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist feminism. This section further discusses the policy feedback framework as a framework that complements feminist theories that guided this study. The study also aimed to unpack the legislative and policy framework in South Africa that aims to address women's issues and concludes by elaborating on government intervention in policy failures. Therefore, this section discusses feminist theories and the framework that informed the study. The subsection below elaborates on these different schools of feminist thoughts.

### **2.3.1 Liberal Feminism**

The liberal feminist theory is informed by the liberal political philosophy, and argues that women can change the laws and politics, and achieve gender justice through political avenues such as gender mainstreaming (Sarikakis *et al.*, 2008). Liberal feminism in this study has been applied to shed light on equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men in the construction industry. According to liberal feminists, oppression involves the injustices fostered by gender roles, which favour men over women. Liberal feminists assert in this regard that equality between men and women must be achieved through political and legal reforms. This is an individualistic form of feminism, which focused on women's ability to show and sustain their equal status through their actions and choices. Issues that are important to liberal feminists include equal pay for equal work.

The liberal feminist theory claims further that oppression is attributed to gender role socialisation and sexism in society. This theory emphasises that women must enjoy the same civil rights and economic opportunities as men. Proponents of liberal feminism have promoted the idea of human dignity, equality, and self fulfilment, as well as autonomy, while reforming legal and political systems that limit individual freedom. To this end, Parpart (2000) argues that the liberal feminist conception of equality is based on the belief that men can be rational, and that any equality must be justified in rational terms. This theory espouses that liberty means that people should be governed with their consent within limits in terms of public and private spheres (Parpart, 2000). However, liberal feminists advocate for women to receive equal opportunities in education, and that job opportunities be equally open to women so that the latter can occupy positions of power in government and business. Women's participation in the construction industry is not excluded from these debates. One recognises, in this regard that liberal

feminism was concerned with visible sources of gender discrimination, such as gendered job markets and inequitable wage scales, and with getting women into positions of authority in the professions, government, and cultural institutions. Liberal feminist politics took important weapons of the civil rights movement – anti-discrimination legislation and affirmative action and used them to fight gender inequality, especially in the job market (Lorber, 1998).

The main contribution of liberal feminism is that it has shown how much modern society discriminates against women as this was the subject of investigation for this research. The next section discusses radical feminism. After all, it is an appropriate theoretical framework as it focuses on cultural changes in relation to patriarchy in this study.

### **2.3.2 Radical Feminism**

According to Haanstra (2005), this group of feminists perceives the oppression of women the most fundamental of all forms of oppression – one that cuts across boundaries of race, culture, and economic class. This is a movement intent on achieving social change, a change of rather, revolutionary proportions. Radical feminism questions why women must embrace certain roles, based on their biology, just as it questions why men embrace certain roles, based on gender. Radical feminism attempts to draw lines between biologically determined behaviour and culturally determined behaviour to free both men and women as much as possible from their previous narrow gender roles.

Radical feminists consider the male-controlled capitalist hierarchy sexist, with women's oppression as a defining feature. This group is of the view that women can free themselves only when they do away with what they consider an inherently oppressive and dominating patriarchal system. To this end, radical feminists feel that there is a male-based authority and power structure, which perpetrates their oppression and inequality. They are also of the view that as long as the system and its values are in place, society will not be transformed in any significant way.

Radical feminism's theoretical watchword is patriarchy or men's pervasive oppression and exploitation of women, which plays out whenever women and men are in contact with each other – in private as well as in public (Lorber, 1998). These feminists argue that making gender equality secondary to class equality has diminished the importance of and deferred action on women's concerns. They argue that patriarchy is primary and exists in many known societies, including those that are classless. Radical feminists are concerned with sexuality. They argue that procreation and sexuality, which have been seen as private issues are political issues as they are fundamentally organised by male power (Parpart,

2000). They claim further that patriarchy is difficult to eradicate because its root – the belief that women are different and inferior – is deeply embedded in most men's consciousness (Lorber, 1998). This concentration on universal gender oppression has led to accusations that radical feminism neglects ethnic and social class differences among men and women. In a nutshell, it downplays other sources of oppression. In addition, radical feminists value consciousness-raising as a means to bring about women's empowerment and consider group procession as being central to increasing awareness and transforming society (Enns, 2013). They describe women's oppression as being grounded in reproduction, mothering, gender, and sexuality (Sarikakis *et al.*, 2008). Radical feminism describes a general structure where men have power over women. It is because of this theoretical understanding that the theory brought insights on how men excerpt power over women in the construction industry, which also drives the neo-liberal agenda. The next section discusses Marxist feminism as a suitable theoretical framework as it helped illuminate gender inequality in this study.

### **2.3.3 Marxist Feminism**

Marxist feminism is premised on the doctrines of Karl Marx, whose theory is centred less on the material aspects of life than on the more broadly defined social ones. Weil (2004) describes Marxism as a theory that is quite incomplete insofar as its application is concerned, yet very relevant in describing the mechanisms of economic growth. Central to Marxism is the idea of the divisions of labour, which are familiarly evident in the capitalist system. Marxist feminists base their arguments of moral right and wrong on the corruption of wage labour that is an expression of class distinctions. Wage earning is a form of oppression that has inevitably, enslaved workers under a system of production, where they are deprived of knowledge and skills, are reduced to practically, nothing. Marxists are opposed to any social or political action that perpetuates the enslavement and oppression of members of the workforce. Prostitution is a form of labour – and has, therefore, been specifically noted as falling under the designation of corruption of wage labour. Prostitutes may feel that they are free but looking at the larger economic picture in a Marxist lens, they are in reality – oppressed workers reinforcing and perpetuating an exploitative capitalistic scheme.

Marxist ideals are about exploitation, oppression, and labour. Marx himself was of the view that eradicating class oppression would translate into the eradication of gender oppression. According to Marxist feminists, the capitalist economy is not best described through concepts such as market forces, exchange patterns, supply and demand as liberal/classic theory suggests, but rather, that a capitalist economy should be analysed by focusing on relations of inequality and power (Clegg, 1999). Thus,

Marxist feminists analyse the ongoing productive and reproductive gender dynamics of the patriarchal, capitalist organisational economy of society, and point out that gender inequality persists, and that this will not change unless major structural changes are implemented (Clegg, 1999). They argue in this regard that keeping women subordinate is functional to the capitalist system. For example, women constitute a reserve army of labour that provides cheap and available labour force that competes for existing jobs – thus, creating downward pressure on wages (Parpart, 2000). Capitalism may extend privileges to a few token women, but it cannot afford to have most women as economic and social equals of men (Parpart, 2000). Marxist and socialist feminists have severely criticised the family as a source of women's oppression and exploitation. Even when a woman is working for her family, she must still be supported – suggesting that she is economically dependent on the "man of the house" – just like her children. If she works outside the home, she is still expected to fulfil her domestic duties. Thus, she ends up working twice as hard as a man, and usually, for too little pay (Lorber, 1998). Therefore, it is crucial that we explore the coping strategies of women in the construction industry that requires these women to have the knowledge, skills and the time.

Structural conditions and macro-level processes that exploit one's labour are based on the gendered division of labour, coupled with gender oppression, and provide the basis for patriarchal capitalism (Sarikakis *et al.*, 2008). Marxist feminism as a conceptual framework for this study focuses on overhauling capitalism and patriarchy as systems that are inherently exploitative and bring the change towards a different society. Marxist feminism describes male domination as a source of gender inequality. The next section discusses the policy feedback framework.

#### **2.3.4 Policy Feedback Framework**

Mizrahi (2017) defines a policy feedback framework as the restructuring effect of adopted policies and subsequent political processes. Policy feedback owes its origin to the argument that "policies create politics" (Araral *et al.*, 2013: 402). Pierson (1993) argues in this regard that new policies create new politics. A feedback perspective prompts us to ask questions in respect of how policy implementation transforms the webs of political relations that constitute governance (Moynihan, 2014). New policies often result in the creation of bureaucratic organisations, whose very existence is tied to the success and expansion of certain programmes. This prompts policy professionals to strive to protect their programmes (Araral *et al.*, 2013). The scholars (Araral *et al.*, 2013) define policy feedback as a concept of path dependence, which is defined succinctly as "developmental trajectories that are inherently difficult to reverse" (Araral *et al.*, 2013: 402). Studies on policy feedback have continued to focus on

elements of policy such as programmes and policy regimes, which are rather, broad, leaving instrumentation issues in the shadow (Weaver, 2010; May & Jochim, 2013).

Pierson (1993) produced his categorisation on how policies might provide feedback on politics. He produced a six-celled matrix that sets out two main feedback mechanisms (resource/incentive effects and interpretive effects) acting on three sets of actors (government elites, social groups, and the mass public). The framework contains six "pathways of influence", where policies impact politics, with some pathways involving multiple sources of influence. Spoils, for example, could influence interest groups, organising niches, financing, access, policy learning, and visibility/traceability (Kellow, 2015).

A wide array of feedback effects has been detected that ranges from changes in actor preferences (Hacker, 2002), to broad patterns of civic participation, and even conceptions of citizenship. Pierson (1993) helpfully subdivided these effects into two main types: resource effects (those focusing on policies as packages of resources that affect interest groups, state capacities and mass publics) – and interpretive effects (those focusing on policies as new sources of information that affect patterns of cognition, understanding and meaning). In this regard, policies do not only flow from prior institutions and politics; but reshape institutions and politics as well – making some future developments more likely and hindering the possibilities for others as well (Skocpol, 1992). Thus, policy feedback in this study was applied to define mechanisms espoused by the BNG for job creation programmes, with a view to empowering women in South Africa. The next section presents the literature reviewed in relation to women and housing.

## **2.4 REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON WOMEN AND HOUSING**

The purpose of reviewing the literature is to provide a summary and critical analysis of the relevant available research and the grey literature on the topic being studied (Hart, 2001). The literature reviewed for this study presents an integrated overview of existing trends and views on the empowerment of women in the construction industry. It also sets out the theoretical framework for the study. The review demonstrates where the study fits into broader debates and justifies its significance against the backdrop of previous studies. This study, therefore, set to examine secondary literature on women and housing policy, women's empowerment and housing, as well as women in the construction industry in the post-apartheid South Africa.

### 2.4.1 Women and Housing Policy

Dolan *et al.* (2012) define housing policy as the actions of government (including legislation and programme delivery), which have a direct or indirect effect on housing supply and availability, housing standards, and urban planning. According to Harrison (1992), the element of housing during the apartheid era was that cities were not accessible to black people – owing to the influx control measures and homeland development policies that aimed at directing black urbanisation away from white cities. The scholar observed that the locations of black people did not offer adequate access to employment opportunities, and in the process, attracted high transport costs for people in the periphery. This move ensured that the apartheid government regulates the provision of housing, the type of housing, as well as arrangements – as black people were not allowed to own land or dwellings (Harrison, 1992). Pillay and Manjoo (2002) also claim that both colonial and apartheid laws and policies restricted black urbanisation, particularly African urbanisation. They assert that these laws on "influx control and homeland development policies" have disproportionately affected women's access to housing. To this end, explicit laws and policies to restrict the mobility of African women were enacted in the 1930s (Pillay & Manjoo, 2002).

Lee (2009:19) states that the Population Registration Act 1950, the Indigenous Peoples (Abolition of Passports and Adjustments to Documents) Act 1952, and the Indigenous Peoples (Urban Areas) Amendment Act 1952 – this "voluntary" flow control system is not limited in nature and scope but was to be radically changed. For women in Africa, the Indigenous Peoples (Urban Areas) Amendment Act of 1952 was of particular importance, placed in It was also important to outline "Section 10" privileges that are unlikely to change significantly over the next 20 years. "Section 10" has become an infamous buzzword for urban housing rights. These rights have been granted under three headings: Where a person has lived continuously in the relevant metropolitan area since birth (so-called Article 10(1)(a) rights). If he has lived in the metropolitan area continuously for 15 years or has been with the same employer for her 10 years (rights under Article 10(1)(b)). Finally, where a person has relied on a person who qualifies in her two previous categories (Section 10(1)(c) rights). "Unqualified" Africans had to obtain permits valid only for 72 hours to enter urban areas to look for work. By this law, the state distinguished between the permanent workforce that made up the urban population and the status of those who had to remain immigrants.

Women's legal vulnerability was symbolised in the notorious "Section 10" clause, which effectively made women's rights to urban tenure contingent on them maintaining their status as men's dependants (Lee, 2009). The role of the state in the oppression of African women was encapsulated in a significant

intervention – the enactment of the 1927 Native Administration Act, which recognised, nationally, the institutions of African customary law as the central mechanism for confining women to the reserves and thereby, ensuring the continuity of rural production (Manicom, 1992). The scholar (Manicom) further elaborates that this subordination of women was criticised, both for its functionalism and for the manner in which it located the oppression of women solely in the rural reserves, where the re/productive work of women contributed to capital accumulation (Manicom, 1992: 447). These laws reduced women to being dependants of their male partners or fathers who could either visit or remain in urban areas on this account. In addition, officials had vast discretionary powers to the explicit legislation and policies, which were often, exercised arbitrarily, with negative consequences for women (Pillay & Manjoo, 2002). It became clear that even though most households were women-headed, and that these women had to be allocated land, many were not allocated land only because they were women.

In the late 1950s local authorities in the Cape Peninsula actively moved to erase “black spots” (illegal squatter camps) and centralised African settlement through the demolition of the shack areas and the relocation of families from the declared Coloured areas to official African townships, under the Group Areas Act of 1950 (Lee, 2009). Around the same time, an array of policies were formulated that further attempted to close down any window of opportunity for African women to reside and work in Cape Town.

In 1961, a national freeze on African family accommodation in the Cape Peninsula was announced. The aggressive housing policy of the 1960s, which repealed the radical programme on forced removals, and the demolition of informal settlements forced Africans into distinct “locations”. As a result, influx control became more enforceable (Lee, 2009). This move saw many women being denied housing rights. In the event they had been able to access housing, these houses were largely relegated to the outskirts of economic centres, and were also of poor quality (Pillay & Manjoo, 2002).

Swanson (2006) states that the Urban Native Areas Act of 1923 became one of the foundational stones upon which the formal structure of apartheid was built, whose provisions were that towns were the white men's peculiar creation while natives, being naturally alien to that environment, might only enter the towns temporarily to serve the white man. The government was not conceived as a provider of social services or an instrument of social construction. Because of the urban poor, problems of public health, sanitation, overcrowding and slum clearance, as well as public order and security were usually perceived in terms of racial or ethnic differences (Swanson, 2006). In 1873, Theophilus Shepstone, then Secretary for Native Affairs observed that large numbers of natives flocking to the two main towns of Natal had embraced the idea of job work, and were demanding pay that is far higher than the

customary monthly servants' wages (Swanson, 2006). To this end, Shepstone's response to the problem defined was to frame regulations to regulate the behaviour of natives in the towns and monitor their freedom to come and go and demand wages as they pleased. These regulations contained the essence of influx control, based on the pass system. With the application of the influx control in Natal, there gradually emerged, in 1910, a comprehensive, paternalistic administrative system that tended to restrain the African commercial and industrial population to barracks or compound housing, and later to residential locations (Swanson, 2006).

Since the move towards the inception of a democratic government in South Africa (dating from the early 1990s), a policy has been formulated to redress the legacy of apartheid – specifically the inequality of the previously marginalised and disempowered groups (Fitchett, 2007; Charlton, 2004). These policies address issues such as access to land, services, habitat, education, job opportunities, and financial services (Fitchett, 2007). Much of the efforts of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), proposed in 1994 and implemented until 1999 were directed at providing housing assistance for the burgeoning population in the form of site development and housing subsidies. Furthermore, the new millennium brought with it fresh state and local pledges to provide free and universal access to water and electricity. However, these poverty-reduction measures did not bode well with neo-liberal efforts to increasingly privatise the same municipal services, and to move from the state provision of core housing structures (Lee, 2009).

The National Housing Forum (NHF), a multisector negotiating summit that ran parallel to the pre-1994 political discussions, had already laid the groundwork. Since the housing policy and programme were introduced in 1994, there have been a series of procedural and legislative milestones. These include the White Paper published in 1994, the Housing Accord of Botshabelo in 1995, the Housing Act of 1997, and the synthesis document, the Housing Code produced in 2000 (revised in 2009), and the Breaking New Ground in 2004 (Charlton, 2004). The NHF and the Botshabelo Housing Accord of 27 October 1994 served as a basis for the promulgation of the 1994 White Paper on Housing. According to these authors, the Botshabelo Housing Accord marked the end of intensive negotiations and culminated in the acceptance of a framework of principles and points of departure to guide the development of a single, uniform, fair and equitable national housing policy and strategy that would serve the needs of a country in transition (Centre, 2014; Phago, 2010). The Botshabelo Housing Accord binds every significant segment of the society concerned with housing delivery, both morally and politically, to a social pact that commits signatories to a concerted, unified action (Phago, 2010).

According to Venter and Marais (2006), literature on housing in the developing countries has no distinctive feminist perspective in relation to the housing debate. This scholar argues further that until the 1970s the urban and housing policy had largely ignored gender issues. To this effect, the transformation period is generally regarded as a gender-blind period. According to Pillay and Manjoo (2002), the social context within which women seek access to housing is informed by factors such as patriarchy, customary and religious laws and practices, domestic violence, and so forth. Since 1972, the World Bank (WB) rose to prominence, with its adaptations of Turner's self-help housing theories (Venter & Marais, 2006). The scholar mentions that the WB and its theories of affordability, cost recovery as well as reliability attempted to demonstrate that there were affordable low-income and user-acceptable solutions to the problem of housing. Venter and Marais (2006) also note that the World Bank's policies were directed at state-assisted self-help housing in the form of sites and service projects and related to *in situ* slum upgrading projects. The self-help housing phase correlates with the Basic Needs Approach to development within the Basic Needs Approach, the Women in Development (WID), and the Women and Development (WAD) frameworks (Venter & Marais, 2006). The Women in Development (WID) and WAD will be revisited to shed some light on their contribution to raising concerns on gender inequality in the job market and leadership positions.

UN-Habitat (2011) states that housing policies must not neglect the poorest and most vulnerable. At the bottom of the income scale, government support should focus deliberately on households to strengthen their ability to access adequate housing – especially the vulnerable groups (women, the elderly and the youth, as well as persons living with HIV). le Roux (2011) has also revealed that women suffer discrimination in many aspects, including in relation to access to housing by virtue of being women, or because of other factors such as poverty, age, class, sexual orientation, or ethnicity. She notes that in many parts of the world women's enjoyment of the right to adequate housing often depends on their access to and control over land and property (le Roux, 2011).

Since the advent of democracy in 1994, spatial development policies in post-apartheid South Africa have attempted to mitigate the severe and negative effects of the apartheid settlement patterns to create more compact, efficient and sustainable settlements. As the government attempts to redress the legacy of apartheid, low-income housing provision has become the main focus (Jeffery, 2015). The BNG policy, adopted in 2004, also seek to integrate subsidised houses with rental and bonded properties to provide a higher level of municipal engineering services, and create "ancillary facilities" such as schools, clinics, community halls, and informal trading facilities (Jeffery, 2015).

Ramashamole (2011) has identified four major obstacles to sustainable housing in urban South Africa. Among the obstacles identified are neo-liberal macro-economic conditions, enduring historical legacies of race and class, as well as the extent and rate of contemporary urbanisation. Neo-liberal macro-economic policies of the ANC government, especially those implemented from 1996, with the introduction of the Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) Programme, became one of the root failures in addressing the sustainable habitats agenda in urban areas (Mbeki, 2016; Ramashamole, 2011). It was envisaged that GEAR would contribute to job creation for women contractors in the construction of low-income housing.

Neo-liberal policies reduced the budget allocated for public and welfare-orientated programmes. This means that the construction of low-income housing programmes is underfunded. This results, not only in a delay in the delivery and provision of housing, but poor-quality houses built on cheap land on the urban peripheries (Ramashamole, 2011; Aguirre & Eick, 2006). The maximum R131 193 subsidy is not sufficient to build decent houses, due to the conditions under which these houses are built – for example steep gradients and the housing typology that can accommodate densification. This is in addition to increasing steel prices, which are controlled by the favour of the markets. Quality housing, particularly in terms of location, forms part of the requirement for sustainable human settlements. The neo-liberal policy would assist and empower women in the low-income bracket who struggle to secure employment, access adequate housing, as well as other basic services.

Ramashamole (2011) states that the biggest concern with the pattern of segregated communities is that historically, race and class inequalities, which persist in the urban environment, impact the quality of services and housing. For example, while policy documents acknowledge the importance of densification in urban planning for new housing to address radicalised geography and environmental concerns, the newest development of low-income housing continues to be on the periphery. The main contribution of the housing provision is that it reveals the link the house has to women and children's well-being. The next section discusses women's empowerment and housing and focuses on gender equality.

#### **2.4.2 Women's Empowerment and Housing**

According to Kabeer (2005), gender equality and women's empowerment are the third of eight Millennium Development Goals (MGDs). According to the scholar, empowerment is rooted in people and how they see themselves – that is their sense of self-worth. This, in turn, is critically bound with

how those around them, and the society as a whole perceive them. There is considerable evidence to support the claim that access to education can bring about changes in cognitive ability, which is essential for women's capacity to question, reflect on, and act on the conditions of their lives and gain access to knowledge, information, and new ideas (Kabeer, 2005). Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 is devoted to gender equality and aims to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" (Queisser, 2016: 88). Detailed targets of SDG 5 refer to a range of challenges, such as the discrimination of women, violence against women, reproductive health, ownership rights, and technology. Queisser (2016) argues that even women in the most advanced countries, who are well integrated into the labour markets still contend with a stubbornly wide gender wage gap and a conspicuous absence of women in senior management positions.

The challenges that women contend with in the construction industry, as well as the formulation of appropriate policies that cater for their interests are also compounded by the fact that gender-disaggregated data on construction employment is limited (Baruah, 2010). The South African and international legislative and policy frameworks were formulated in the late 1990s to support women empowerment (English, 2015). The post-apartheid era in South African history is recorded as the most positive legislative period for women ever, yet the construction industry appears to exclude women, both professionally and at skills and crafts level (English & Le Jeune, 2012). The next section discusses women and the construction industry and focuses on gender imbalances in the construction industry.

### **2.4.3 Women and the Construction Industry**

According to Kiaye (2013), there has been an unprecedented change globally in the composition and participation of the workforce in the world economy. This change has been propelled by the active involvement of more women in the economy than before (Kiaye, 2013). Meanwhile, Baruah (2010) asserts that the experiences of women in the construction industry differ widely from country to country. However, there are common themes that underly their different situations (Baruah, 2010). To this end, the construction labour market is segmented along gender lines in both developed and developing countries, with women concentrated in low-paid repetitive jobs and men undertaking the more highly-paid skilled work (Baruah, 2010). Furthermore, English and Hay (2015) suggest that a lack of knowledge of career opportunities and the challenges associated with working in a male-dominated, and sometimes discriminatory environment, are some of the main barriers to women's recruitment and retention in the sector.

Most scholars concur that on 20 April 1944 a conference on “Women in the Building Industry” was held in London, which resolved unanimously that considering the looming housing crisis, the government should provide training for women in the building trades, and that trade unions should change their rules and practices to enable the employment of women trainees (Munn, 2014; Clarke & Wall, 2006). This call was ignored by the Minister of Labour, Ernest Bevin, who later instructed men-owned construction company not to recruit women in the skilled building trades, thus, redirecting women to jobs deemed suitable for their gender (Clarke & Wall, 2006).

Moreover, Baruah (2010) argues that there is a desperate need to retrain programmes that provide real opportunities for economic independence. In this regard, a motion was passed during the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives Conference Annual Report of 1951-1969, which demanded equal pay for equal work for women, their right to participate in the building industry as skilled workers, and their organisation into the craft unions (Munn, 2014). However, if this was the case, why and how did the exclusion of women persist? Clarke and Wall (2006) argue in this regard that more attempts to restrain women as independent traders were more pronounced across the Channel in Brittany in the workshop-based craft guilds of the major towns, which offered privileged entry to journeymen who married masters’ widows, and which, by the 17th century, denied women access to apprenticeships or entry as independent workers. Baruah (2010) also elaborates that the global nature of women’s exclusion from certain occupations may have motivated the explicit focus on vocational training for women in the Platform for Action, developed at the United Nations’ Fourth World Conference for Women in Beijing in 1995. This document directs governments, in cooperation with trade unions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and educational institutions to take specific actions that enable women to access training and secure quality employment in traditional occupations (Baruah, 2010).

In South Africa, local feminists and the efforts of gender activists have since brought constitutional changes in the area of gender equality and socio-economic rights (Hassim, 2005). This subsequent gender imbalance suggests that the empowerment of women in the construction industry exists only in paper, as many young men are still of the view that women are physically and psychologically unsuited to engage in construction work, despite paying lip service to the notion that “women can do anything” (Thompson, cited in Madikizela, 2010: 2). The South African government committed to changing gender profiles and increasing the percentage of women employed at all levels in the formal sector. To this end, government support for women in construction has been advanced by the Western Cape Women in Construction Initiative, and the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) (English, 2015). The construction industry in South Africa has a particularly important role to play in the economy in terms of the production of the country’s infrastructure and fixed capital assets (English, 2015).

According to Abidemi and Ayobami (2015), the negative perception about women is reinforced by the historical notion that women's work is worth less pay than that of men. These scholars have noted that the recruitment process in the construction industry should be biased towards female workers. In general, women earn less than men. In other words, women's lifetime earnings are below those of equally skilled and educated men (Abidemi, 2015). English and Le Jeune (2012) have identified barriers that continue to affect women in the construction industry – for example, a lack of knowledge about the industry, which has resulted in the poor image; the effect of societal roles and cultural beliefs and traditional roles, the lack of role models; and from the industry's side poor remuneration, discrimination, hostile working conditions and a male-dominated culture. In addition, other disadvantages remain for those attempting entry into and wanting to build careers in construction - training, lack of participation and career development (English, 2015). The next section discusses legislative and policy frameworks in South Africa because as well as various Acts and policy implementation for women's participation in the construction industry.

#### **2.4.4 Legislative and Policy Framework in South Africa**

In the main, women in South Africa were discriminated against. Their discrimination was enabled through the formulation of policies, which favoured white men (Marthur-Helm, 2005). African women were could not access their inheritance and property, and general economic well-being. They were also reduced to a reservoir of cheap and unpaid labour, which anchored the apartheid economy. In addition, black women had to contend with multiple forms of oppression at the intersection of race, class, and gender as they were excluded from the social and economic opportunities (DOJ & CD, 1999). Housing policy and legislation that were enacted under apartheid were instruments that enforced the segregation ideology (Marthur-Helm, 2005). The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development is also aware that several blatantly discriminatory laws still exist in the statute books and in common law principles. These laws reinforce the notion that women are inferior to men, or impose undue burdens on one sex, and not on the other (DOJ & CD, 1999). To this end, the aim of the South Africa Gender Policy Framework (2008) was specifically to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. This framework legally bound both parliament and the executive of the Republic of South Africa to actively seek the abolition of gender discrimination (Haupt, 2012). Several scholars (Lingard & Lin, 2004; Dainty, Bagilhole & Neale, 2004) have, to this end, highlighted that women in construction are being discriminated against. However, Pillay *et al.* (2002) emphasise that discriminatory laws and practices have limited women's access to housing and other socio-economic rights – and have

disproportionately affected black women. Women's subordination generally cuts across race, class, and other social categories. To this end, they tend to be poorer than their male counterparts (DOJ & CD, 1999). The challenge for South Africa in this regard, is to ensure that women benefit equally from others in society (Kornegay, 2000).

Gouws (2004) highlights that policy outcomes are dependent on the interests articulated within the state – hence gender interests must be articulated in the political arena to influence policy. South Africa has embraced this concept, which is manifested in the National Gender Machinery, with a remarkable number of structures that stretch strategically throughout all arms of government to promote gender equality (Geisler, Widing-Alliso & Webe, 2009:14). Prominent within this machinery is the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE), an independent statutory body established to monitor government, the private sector and civil society, as well as the Office on the Status of Women (OSW), which seeks to facilitate gender mainstreaming in government departments (Geisler *et al.*, 2009:14).

The Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996) promotes the right of access to adequate housing. It also endorses the right to equality. The various sections of the Constitution make provision for the following:

- Section 9(1) of the Constitution recognises that everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit from the law.
- Section 9(2) explicitly endorses that equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms.
- Section 9(2) also states that special measures may be adopted to promote equality among previously disadvantaged groups.
- Section 9(3) prohibits unfair discrimination on a host of grounds, which include sex and gender.
- Section 9 and section 26, clearly confirm that the state must prohibit unfair discrimination in respect of housing rights, and that it can adopt special measures to promote the equality of women in the housing sector (RSA, 1996).

The recruitment of women into the construction industry trades and professions is no longer seen as "simply a nice thing to do" – it has become a necessity. English and Le Jeune (2012) describe, in this regard, instances where women have responded to opportunities they were offered. In self-help building schemes, women have been active in management, contributing ideas to the design and raising funds to build their own houses (English, 2012). The Department of Public Works and the

Construction Education Training Authority (CETA) are committed to increasing the number of women participating in the construction industry. The idea is that women must equally benefit from government's commitment to empower them through education. Thus, the greatest support for women has come with the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Act, part of the RDP, which promotes the rapid advancement of black women at all levels (Farmer, 2013).

The transformation policies, as implemented through the South African Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) provide frameworks for increasing black and female contractors, to ensure that the latter reflects the demographics of the country (CIDB, cited in Dlamini and Shakantu, 2015: 02). However, in their 2004 Status Report, the South African CIDB pointed out that one of the challenges faced by the construction industry is to ensure the "accelerated development of black and women participation in professional and technical built environment professions" (CIDB, cited in English and Le Jeune, 2012: 147). Even though apartheid collapsed, and the African National Congress (ANC) took over as the ruling party, its legacy lives on, and true to form, labour practices in this country are still influenced by the past (Dlamini, 2013). The next section discusses government's intervention in policy failures which addresses inequality by promoting economic justice.

#### **2.4.5 Government Intervention on Policy Failures**

Policy analysts argue that the failure of the market provides a necessary, but not enough justification for public policy intervention (Zerbe & McCurdy, 1999). The scholar argues in this regard that sufficiency is established when the gains, brought by government's intervention outweigh the risks of government intervention. To this end, Bond and Tait (1997) postulate that there are enormous implications for the failure of what can be accurately described as a "market-centred" approach to housing policy for public health, the environment, safety and security, the welfare of women and children, education, public hazards, urban planning, the labour market, and the related economic sectors. Thus, full-scale government intervention should be undertaken only when it can be proven that a less intrusive generic policy cannot be adopted, or that an effective contract for a private product cannot be designed to deal with market failure (Zerbe & McCurdy, 1999).

The resulting regulatory impact analyses refer to a wide range of market failure concepts. A controversial 1994 standard that set stricter wind resistance standards for trailer homes; for example, claimed that asymmetric information and externalities necessitate government intervention in the market for manufactured housing (De Alessi, 1996). The Department of Housing introduced the BNG

policy as an intervention measure in 2004, which intended to guide housing development. The BNG plan required that existing mechanisms be redirected and enhanced to move towards a more responsive and effective delivery system, and aspired to advance the achievement of a non-racial, integrated society, through the development of sustainable human settlements and quality housing (Department of Housing, 2004). Zerbe and McCurdy (2000) argue in this regard that in keeping with the diagnostic model, policy analysts were taught to apply the least intrusive intervention. The creation of an incentive would allow the market to resolve itself, and if market failure can be resolved by tax expenditure, such a measure must be adopted over more aggressive treatments, such as the creation of a government monopoly (Zerbe and McCurdy, 2000).

## **2.5 CONCLUSION**

This chapter discussed the conceptual frameworks, theoretical framework and the literature review that informed this research. The conceptual framework explored different concepts used in this study. The policy feedback framework, legislative and policy framework in South Africa and government intervention on policy failures provided the basis for the study to analyse policy action. This chapter also provided information on the different schools of thought on feminism such as Radical feminism, Liberal feminism, and Marxist feminism, adopted in this study. Liberal feminism fought gender inequality, especially in the job market, Radical feminism advocated for cultural change relating to male dominance, while Marxist feminism focused on the overhauling of capitalism and patriarchy as systems that are inherently exploitative, and a change towards a different society.

The chapter also reviewed the literature on women and housing – which revealed that women suffer discrimination in many aspects of housing, because they are women, or because of other factors such as poverty, age, class, sexual orientation, or ethnicity. The argument advanced in this section is that in many parts of the world, women's enjoyment of the right to adequate housing often depends on their access to and control over land and property. The chapter also noted that the construction labour market is segmented along gender lines in both developed and developing countries, with women concentrated in low-paid repetitive jobs, while men undertake the more highly-paid skilled work.

This chapter brought to light the negative view to the effect that historically women received lower pay than men. Previous studies have shown that the recruitment process in the construction industry should be biased towards female workers, as women earn less than men. It can be concluded, thus, that women's lifetime earnings are lower than those of equally skilled and educated men. Chapter Three discusses the research design and methodology for this study.

# CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research processes and the methodology used to collect the data. It also discusses the data collection techniques. The chapter also presents an overview of the research approach adopted for this study, which was a case study approach. The methodology used to collect the data was in-depth interviews. The chapter also presents an overview of the qualitative approach and constructivist paradigm applied in this study. Open-ended questions were used to gather the data, which were categorised into codes and themes. Last, the chapter provides a background of the study area in the eThekweni Municipality.

This chapter is divided into ten sections. The first section provides the study site background in the eThekweni Municipality. The second section discusses the research approach. Section 3 discusses the research paradigm, and section 4 describes a case study as the chosen research design. The fifth section describes the sampling techniques, methods, and the sample size. Section 6 describes the data collection methods, and the seventh section discusses the ethical considerations for the study. The eighth section presents the limitations of the research and the difficulties encountered during fieldwork. Section nine discusses the reliability and validity of the study. Last, section 10 presents the results of the data collected.

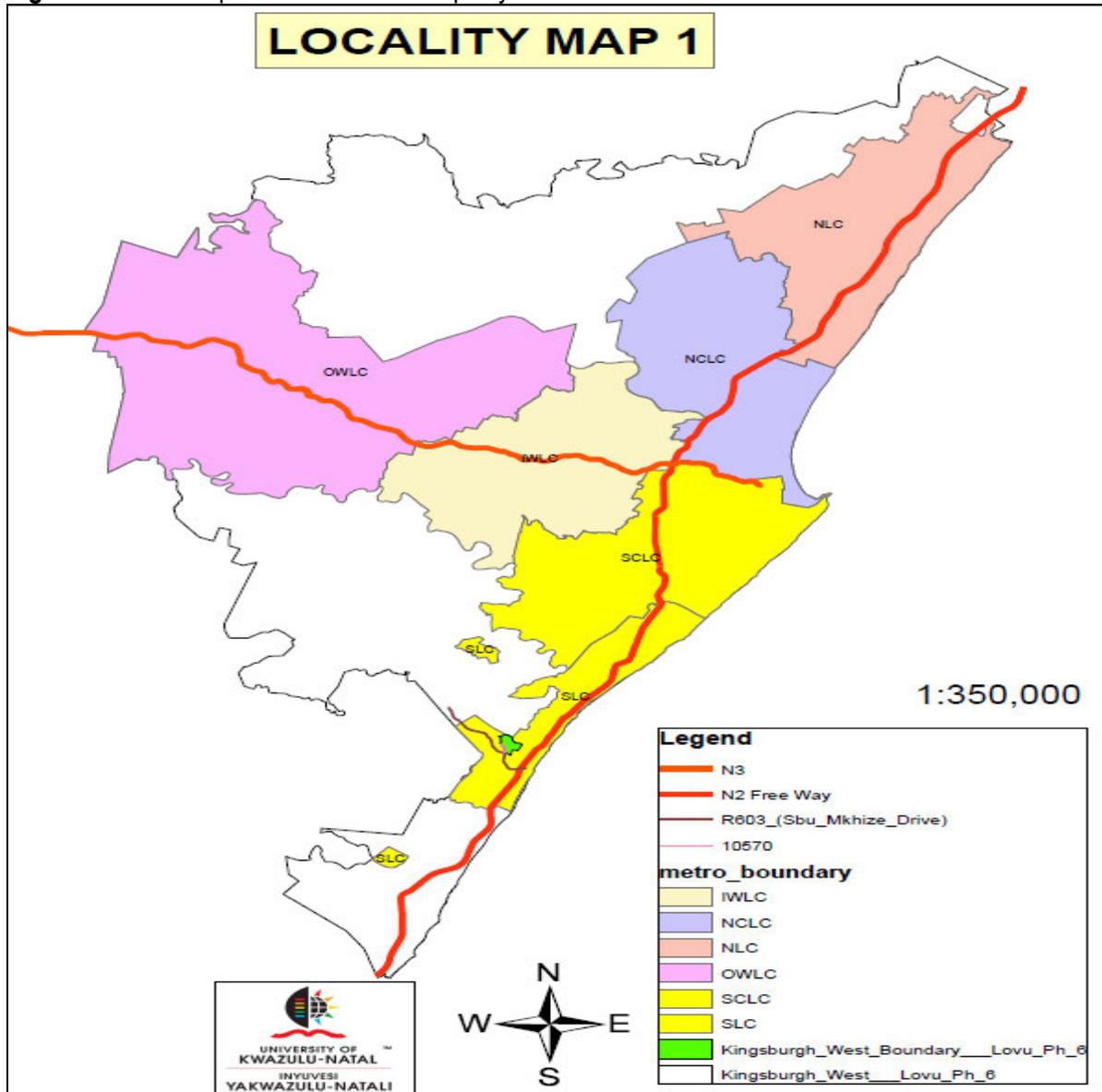
## 3.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY AREA

This section provides a comprehensive overview of the Kingsburgh West Housing Project. It also provides the history and location of the area, as well as an overview of the township establishment. The section also presents maps to illustrate the study area. These include Figure 3.1 (Provincial location map of the eThekweni Municipality), Figure 3.2 (Illovo Township location map and layout), and Figure 3.3 (Layout plan of the housing development in Kingsburgh West).

The eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality is geographically located in the east of Durban, and is the only metropolitan in the KwaZulu-Natal province. It includes the city of Durban and the surrounding towns. It was formed from seven formerly independent local councils and tribal land. It covers a geographical area of 2 297 km<sup>2</sup>, and has a population of 3 555 868. The municipality extends to both the rural and urban areas in terms of its spatial analysis. The prevalent economic sectors are manufacturing and

finance. Most of the people speak isiZulu. The map below demonstrates the locality of the eThekweni Municipality.

**Figure 3.1:** The map of eThekweni Municipality

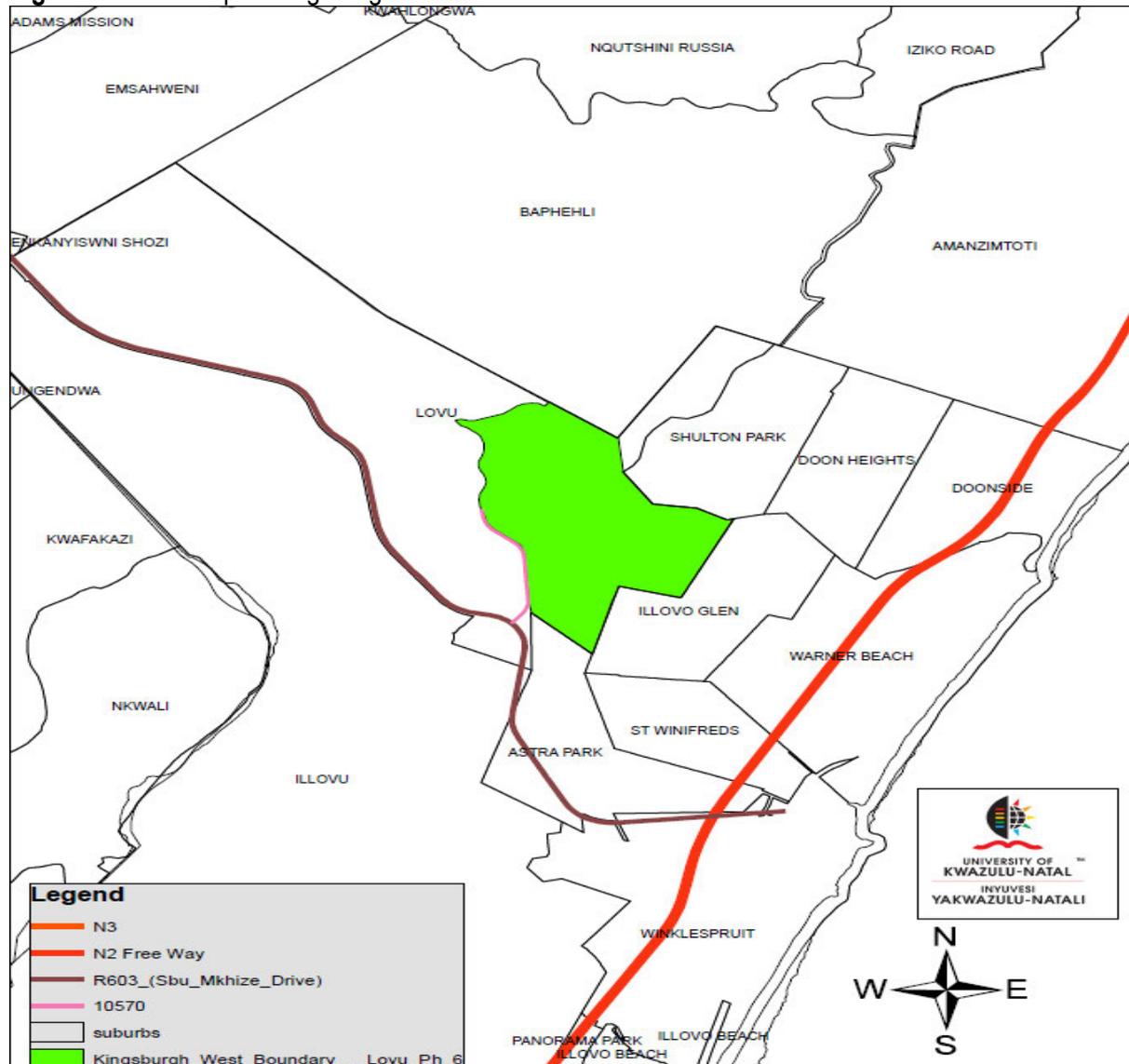


(Source: Researcher's Own Fieldwork Data)

Kingsburgh West is located within Ward 97 and Ward 98, and within the existing phases of Illovo Township, and the suburb of Kingsburgh, South of Durban. This housing project was well integrated and close to the already existing residential developments of Amanzimtoti, Umkomaas, Winklespruit, and Scottsburgh's existing educational, health, and recreational facilities. In addition, the existing development had access to community facilities – notably the then development of two major shopping centres, the Harbor Crossing and the Galleria. The housing project's proximity to these major shopping

centres increased the potential for employment opportunities for the resident community. The map below illustrates the housing layout of the project.

**Figure 3.1:** The map of Kingsburgh West area



(Source: Researcher's Own Fieldwork Data)

The housing development and construction began in 2010, and by 2011, some houses were occupied by the qualifying beneficiaries. The Kingsburgh West Housing Project is a low-income housing project, which was rolled out under the BNG strategies. The subsidy instrument used was the Integrated Residential Development Programme (IRDP), which provides for the planning and development of integrated housing projects that can be planned in phases to cater for a holistic development orientation. The first phase entailed planning, land acquisition, township establishment, and the provision of serviced residential and other land use stands to ensure a sustainable integrated

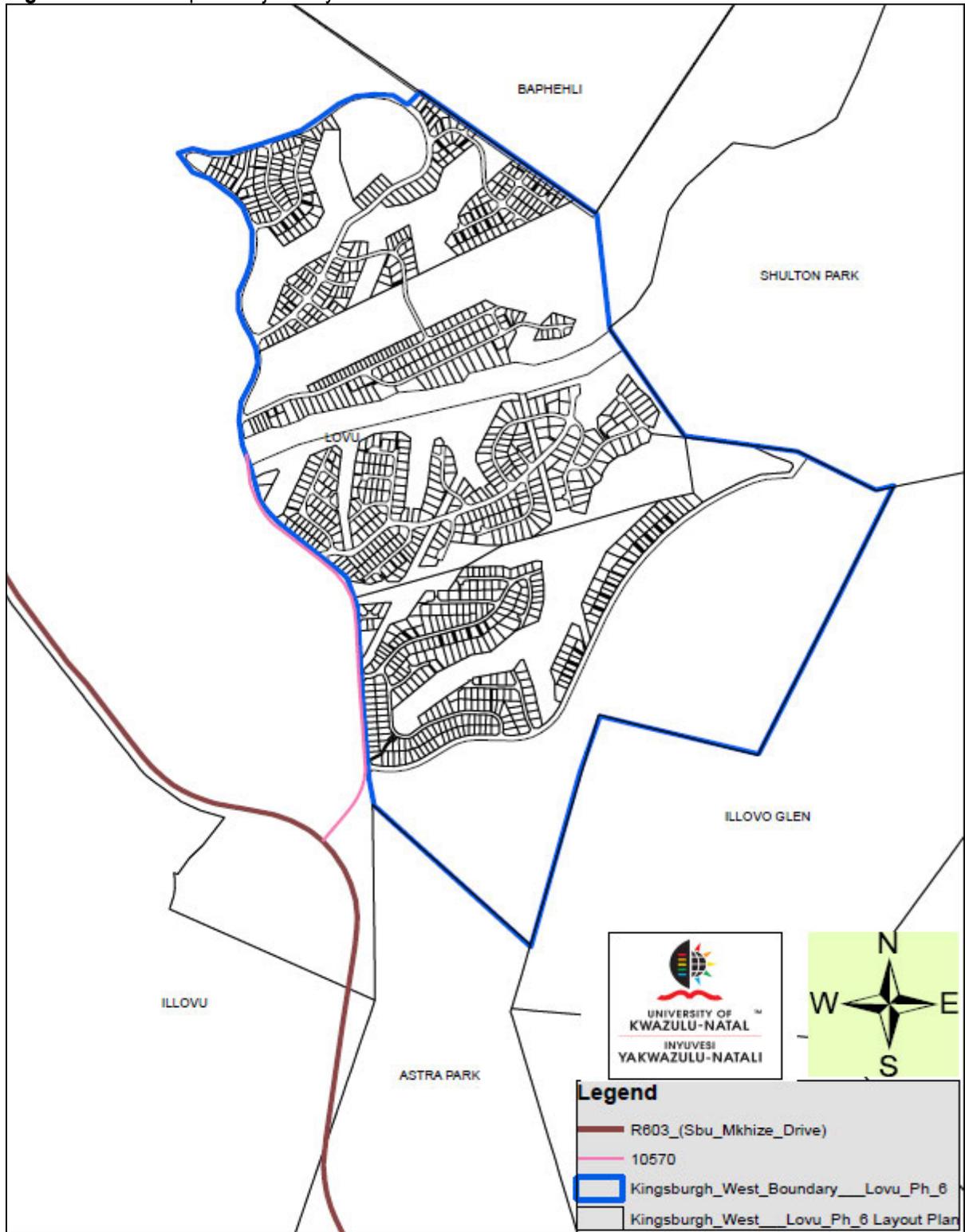
community. The second phase comprised the house construction for qualifying beneficiaries of the housing subsidy, and the sale of stands to non-qualifying beneficiaries and commercial interests.

The stakeholders were

- the Department of Human Settlements, as the project financier,
- the eThekweni Municipality as project developer,
- the Project Steering Committee (PSC), who represented the community (their role was to provide support and oversee the progress);
- The Community Liaising Officer (CLO), who assisted in all aspects related to the recruitment of local labourers and provided information to the community and the councillor on anything related to the project;
- main contractor, whose roles were to plan the project, and assume the legal, regulatory, health and safety responsibilities, manage the project, and monitor deliverables; and
- the professional team that comprised different engineers – from a structural engineer, architect, quantity surveyor, land surveyor, environmental and civil engineers, as well as safety officer.

The researcher established that 30% of the Project Steering Committee members were women. This committee was also responsible for hiring local subcontractors within the project. The community was the main stakeholder as the houses were being built for beneficiaries within the community of Kingsburgh West. The National Home Builders Registration Council's (NHBRC) role in this regard, was to enrol the project and inspect all enrolled homes at key stages of construction, to completion.

Figure 3.2: The map of Project Layout Plan



(Source: Researcher's Own Fieldwork Data)

### 3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH: QUALITATIVE

The qualitative research approach is an approach that enables the researcher to conduct an inductive data analysis to explore participants' views on an issue by identifying themes (Lewis, 2015). This research employed a qualitative approach, which facilitated her understanding of the lived experiences of participants within a specific context. The research methodology chosen intended to show how participants answered the research questions, and how the researcher achieved the objectives of the research. The data were collected from primary and secondary sources. Furthermore, the technique used to collect such data from the case study area was outlined. Thus, qualitative research entails the use of inductive, holistic, emic, subjective, and process-oriented methods to illuminate, interpret, describe, and develop a theory on phenomena or a setting (Burns & Grove, 2005). Qualitative researchers present the data in the form of words, quotes from documents, and transcripts. The qualitative researcher "begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2009:37). Further, qualitative researchers "study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, cited in Randall, Dignon & Mills 2011). Qualitative research considers that viewpoints and practices in the field are different because of the different subjective perspectives and social backgrounds related to them.

According to Patton (2002), qualitative research relates to illuminating some aspects of the social life of the stakeholders' perceptions and experiences. In this regard, Mason (2002) maintains that through qualitative research, researchers explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world, including the texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginings of research participants, the ways that social processes, institutions, discourses or relationships work, and the significance of the meanings that they generate. In the same vein, Gall, Borg and Gall (1996: 44) assert that qualitative research is an "inquiry that is grounded in the assumption that individuals construct social reality in the form of meanings and interpretations, and that these constructions tend to be transitory and situational. The dominant methodology is to discover these meanings and interpretations by studying cases intensively in natural settings and subjecting the resulting data to analytical induction". Meanwhile, Hughes (2006) posits that qualitative researchers use various tools and techniques to facilitate deeper understandings of how people perceive their social realities, and in consequence, how they act within the social world. They (qualitative researchers) also try to make

connections between events, perceptions, and actions to ensure that their analyses are holistic and contextual. In summary, the qualitative approach afforded this researcher an opportunity to step beyond the known and enter the world of participants. Thus, qualitative research affords the researcher an opportunity to explore and understand the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2009).

### **3.4 RESEARCH PARADIGM - CONSTRUCTIVISM**

The constructivist paradigm was used to foreground the study. Constructivist epistemology is a social science research methodology that examines the theory of knowledge and focuses on how individuals acquire the knowledge. Scholars such as Gadamer (cited in Myers, 1997) regard it as a circular relationship – which attempts to understand human beings in a social context. Walsham (1993) argues in this regard that in the interpretive tradition there are no “correct” or “incorrect” theories. Instead, theories are judged according to how “interesting” they are to the researcher, as well as those involved in the same research areas. Reeves and Hedberg (cited in Antwi, 2015) note that the “constructivist” paradigm emphasise the need to conduct an analysis in context.

The constructivist paradigm is concerned with understanding the world as it is from the subjective experiences of individuals. Antwi (2015) maintains that meaning (versus measurement) oriented methodologies such as interviewing or participant observation rely on a subjective relationship between the researcher and the researched. This constructive paradigm aims to explain the subjective reasons and meanings that lie behind social action. In the interpretive paradigm, the researcher does not stand above or outside, but is a participant observer (Carr & Kemmis, 1986: 88), who engages in the activities and discerns the meanings of actions as they are expressed within specific social contexts.

### **3.5 THE CHOICE OF A CASE STUDY DESIGN**

This researcher adopted a case study design to explore the BNG policy on job creation mechanisms in low-income housing construction. The case study design is particularly useful in cases where there is a need to obtain an in-depth appreciation of an issue (Crowe et al., 2011). Collecting the data for a case study is extensive and draws from multiple sources, such as direct or participant observations, interviews, document records, and physical artefacts. To this end, the researcher spent time on-site, interacting with participants, and collecting the data, using different collection methods, which are appropriate to a qualitative approach.

### **3.6 SAMPLING THEORY, TECHNIQUES AND METHODS**

Goel, (2022), Defines sampling as a process of using a small number of items or parts of large population to make a conclusions about the whole population. While scholar (Taherdoost, 2016) argues that sampling can be used to make inference about a population or to make generalization to existing theory. This researcher applied the non-probability theory in the form of purposive sampling to select participants. Non-probability sampling was used because it enables the identification and selection of information-rich for the most effective use of limited resources. This involved identifying and selecting individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or had experienced a phenomenon of interest (Cresswell & Clark, 2011).

Nayeem & Huma (2017), argues that purposive sampling allows a researcher to choose participants as his or her own judgment in process keeping the purpose of the study. Srivastav (2022), futher advises that purposive sampling is used primarily when there is a limited number of people that have expertise in the area being researched. In addition to knowledge and experience, Bernard (2002) and Spradley (1979) note that it is important that participants are available and willing to participate, and that they can communicate their experiences and opinions in an articulated, expressive, and reflective manner.

#### **3.6.1 Sampling Size**

Sample size reflect the number of obtained responses and not necessary the number of questionnaires distributed (Taherdoost, 2016). The population for this study consisted of contractors, construction industry workers and government officials, as well as members of the South African Women in Construction (SAWIC). Table 3.6.1 shows that the researcher recruited government officials, while Table 3.6.2 shows that this researcher recruited Grade 1 to Grade 9 contractors that were women-owned, with most shareholders being women. Table 3.6.3 shows that the researcher recruited participants from SAWIC. This helped shed some light on the challenges these contractors encountered at different levels. Stakeholders interviewed included female and male contractors, employees, officials/individuals from the Provincial Department of Human Settlements, the eThekweni Municipality, the National Home Builders Registration Council (NHBRC), and members of SAWIC who were involved in the construction of houses for the Kingsburgh West low-income housing project. The research was conducted to answer the research questions that this study sought to answer. The data were collected mostly through in-depth interviews. Men-owned contractors from Durban were also

recruited for this study. It is important to note that recruitment was only restricted to contractors who participated in the Kingsburgh West Housing Project from 2010 to 2015. These participants were recruited to participate in this study according to the following criteria:

- they were women and men;
- they were employers and employees working for construction companies;
- they operated these businesses as sole owners or in partnership with other owners;
- they were government officials who were housing practitioners in the eThekweni Municipality;
- they operated within the jurisdiction of the eThekweni Municipality, and had worked for the Kingsburgh West Housing Project; and
- the business itself would be physically located and identified by the researcher.

In short, participants were selected from among female and male-owned contractors who worked for, or managed construction companies on their own, or in partnership with other women and men. The criteria for selection were based on:

- whether they had participated in the construction of houses for the low-income housing project in Kingsburgh West, and for other agencies or structures involved in the construction industry, such as the NHBRC.

There was further, a need for both contractors and government affiliation agencies, as well as officials to provide evidence of their operations, as well as the kind of interventions they implemented to ensure job creation for people in low-income construction. Hence, it was necessary for government officials to be among participants, as evidence from the preliminary literature review suggests that they run different programmes that contribute to the job creation of women. Thus, a purposive sample targeted 16 participants. Two interviewees were members of SAWIC, four were government officials, while ten were from the private sector. Government officials in question were from the Department of Human Settlements (DOHS) in KwaZulu-Natal, eThekweni Municipality, NHBRC, and the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB). Last, the SAWIC KZN province body was also among those interviewed. All government officials were recruited, based on their participation in the Kingsburgh West Housing Project.

The researcher selected participants from contractors who participated in low-income housing construction in the Kingsburgh West project. Her reason for selecting both female and male contractors

and government officials were because the study aimed to explore interventions that government implemented to create jobs and to ensure women's participation in low-income housing construction.

**Table 3.6. 1:** In-depth Interviews with government officials

Individuals interviewed	Total No. of interviewees	Gender		Government affiliation			
		Female	Male	DOHS	Municipality	NHBRC	CIDB
Managers	4	3	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

(Source: Researcher's own fieldwork data)

The Construction Industry Development Board states that contractor grading designation is determined by the company's financial and works capabilities, and that the company relies on the turnover and the amount of work capital they have (CIDB, 2021). To be considered a grade 2, the company must have completed a contract to the value of not less than R130 000. A grade 3 company must have completed a contract to the value of R450 000, have a turnover of not less than R1 000 000, or capital of not less than R100 000. A grade 4 company must have completed a contract to the value of R900 000 and have a turnover of not less than R2000 000, or capital not less than R200 000. Meanwhile, a grade 5 company and higher must have completed a contract to the value of R10 000 000 and have a turnover of not less than R3 250 000, or capital of not less than R650 000 (CIDB, 2021). Table 3.6 presents contractors and their grades that participated in the study.

**Table 3.6.2:** In-depth interviews with contractors

Individuals interviewed	Total No. of interviewees	Gender		Contractors		
		Female	Male	Grade 1& 2	Grade 3	Grade 7-9
Directors	5	3	2	3	1	1
Employees	5	2	3	3	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>

(Source: Researcher's own fieldwork data)

**Table 3.6.3:** In-depth interviews with SAWIC members

Individuals interviewed	Total No. of interviewees	Gender		SAWIC KZN
		Female	Male	Member
Members	2	2	-	2

<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>
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(Source: Researcher's own fieldwork data)

Grade 1 to Grade 9 women-owned and men-owned contractors were selected from the database of the main contractors, using project work milestone. Browsing company profiles assisted the researcher to determine women and men-owned companies as well as their management. This population was made of contractors that participated in the Kingsburgh West housing project. Government officials also constituted the relevant participants as they were key government personnel, whose responsibility was to align policies with projects, and manage the implementation thereof.

### **3.7 DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

The researcher employed the qualitative research method, which entails conducting in-depth interviews to collect detailed data with thick descriptions from four different sources (government affiliation, contractors, employees, and representative bodies) to shed light on the job creation mechanisms implemented to create jobs for women in low-income housing construction. The researcher conducted interviews with government officials to determine whether the BNG policy on "job creation" has achieved its objectives of ensuring women's participation in the construction industry. The rationale for choosing the qualitative research method was that creating jobs for women in the construction industry is a mammoth task. Therefore, the in-depth interviews conducted to collect the data for this study facilitated the researcher's understanding of individual experiences, and her evaluation of the mechanisms, and how these mechanisms have benefited the study participants, and the meanings they attach to it. To this end, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with 16 participants.

#### **3.7.1 Interviews**

The researcher collected the qualitative data for this study using in-depth interviews. Fewer in-depth interviews were accepted because of their complex nature, and the fact that they are time-consuming. The purpose of conducting in-depth interviews is not to get answers to questions to test hypotheses, or evaluate it (Lewis, 2015). At the root of in-depth interviewing lies an interest to make sense of the lived experiences of other people, as well as the meanings they make of their experiences. Interviews afford the researcher an opportunity to access the context of people's behaviour to facilitate their understanding of the people's behaviour (Seidman, 2006).

This study supported in-depth interviews conducted in 2018 with 16 participants with a profound understanding of the social, political and housing processes of the Kingsburgh West Housing Project, who were selected purposively. The interviews were conducted with officials from the provincial Department of Human Settlements, the eThekweni Municipality, NHBRC officials, CIDB officials, directors of construction companies, employees of construction companies, as well as members of the South African Women in Construction (SAWIC). These interviews assisted the researcher to unpack how job creation mechanisms (for the benefit of women) have provided direct and indirect jobs to women in the construction sector.

### **3.7.2 Types of Interviews**

There are different types of interviews. In this regard, the researcher conducted unstructured, face-to-face interviews, using the interview guide that combined open-ended and closed-ended questions. Open-ended questions are ideal for gathering information, which can be grouped into codes, themes, categories, or larger dimensions (Lewis, 2015). For open-ended questions, participants were able to elaborate of their responses. An open-ended questionnaire enabled the researcher to uncover themes that closed-ended questions did not reveal, because the purpose of this study was to explore the impact of government interventions on job creation, and of the empowerment programmes on individual contractors that had worked in the Kingsburgh West housing project.

The types of interviews conducted were determined, based largely on the fact that participants interviewed could shed light on the subject of the investigation (Myeni, 2012). Most of the interviews were recorded and conducted in the language that the interviewees were comfortable with – mainly IsiZulu or a mixture of IsiZulu and English. Some scholars have studied the same or similar themes before – for example the challenges encountered by women, gender roles, attitudes in the construction industry, and so forth. However, the aim of this research was to explore mechanisms of the BNG to create jobs for women in the construction industry, specifically in low-income housing construction.

### **3.7.2 Life History Approach**

According to Ojermark (2007), the life history method suggests a growing reluctance of many researchers in the social sciences to make many inferences from survey-based studies. He further argues that for some, life history reflects a move from objectivity and a privileging of the subjectivity

positionality and for some, it provides a rich source of data that enables the researcher to explore the life course, and to examine the relationships between causes and the effect, as well as the agency and structure thereof (Ojermark, 2007). The term “life history research” is used in this context to refer to the collection and interpretation of personal histories or oral testimonies, collected during an interview to facilitate the researcher’s understanding of “the changing experiences and outlooks of individuals in their daily lives, what they see as important, and how to provide interpretations of the accounts they give of their past, present and future” (Roberts, cited in Ojermark, 2007).

Documenting life histories can be an empowering for the social science researcher because it privileges voices that are often excluded in other forms of research, as it reflects the personal and social life that this method presents, which is not mediated, but is communicated to a given audience by the researcher who collected the material (Riessman, cited in Ojermark, 2007). The life histories methodology is distinct from its parent methodology (the oral history) in the sense that rather than focusing on an event or place, it involves the recording of an individual’s memories and experiences from right across their lifetime (White, Uzzell & Rathzel, 2010)

### **3.7.3 Documentary Analysis**

Document analysis is a form of qualitative research where the researcher interprets documents to give voice and meaning to an assessment topic. Analysing documents incorporates coding content into themes similar, like how interview transcripts are analysed. Documentary analysis was of great benefit to this study as it enabled the researcher to unpack **Objective 1** of the study, which was to “*trace the historical narrative of the role played by women in transforming the construction industry in South Africa*”. Abbott (2012) defines document analysis as a form of qualitative research, where the researcher interprets the documents to give voice and meaning to an assessment topic (Bowen, 2009). This study analysed government policies, company annual reports, as well as their strategic plans as well as promotion strategies.

## **3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS: ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

This study offered multiple ways to determine and categorise qualitative findings, including the two types that are specifically applicable to this research: substantive and ethical validation. Ethical validation requires that the research provides practical answers to research questions that have transformative value to trigger action and have impact – such as implementing effective interventions

that would ensure women's participation in the construction industry, in the context of this research (Lewis, 2015). To this end, the researcher treated participants with respect and guaranteed them of their privacy. Participants were issued informed consent before they were interviewed and were given an assurance that the information, they provided would be used for research purposes only.

### **3.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH AND FIELDWORK DIFFICULTIES**

The most substantial limitation of this research was time and financial constraints. The other challenge that the researcher contended with was securing interview dates with key informants as they had tight schedules. Travelling to and from informants' places of abode was also a challenge as the project had been completed, and the researcher had to visit informants in awkward places, or their homes. The main limitation, however, was that the researcher did not get an opportunity to interview all participants, which probably could have provided her with a more comprehensive view of the study findings.

The study did not investigate the monetary gains that contractors derived from their involvement in the project. Monetary gain serves as intrinsic motivation for contractors in the construction industry and secure their long-term commitments. The researcher was also, unable to establish monetary gains made by white-owned companies. However, the study benefited from the findings of other researchers. While the researcher experienced all the challenges highlighted during the study, Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) hit the world and became a significant barrier as students were not allowed access into the University of KwaZulu-Natal, owing to COVID-19 protocols that were necessary to ensure that they avoid the risk of transmission. Little benefit was derived from desktop research, as the cost of data and the unstable network, owing to load shedding, compounded the challenges.

Despite all the challenges the researcher successfully concluded the study. The researcher is confident that the findings of this study would provide accurate information that would illuminate mechanisms used by the BNG to address the challenges encountered by women in the workplace, as well as job creation mechanisms to ensure women's participation in low-income housing construction, and their impact on women's empowerment. Despite all these limitations, the aims and objectives of the study were met. The findings of the study revealed that women contractors are faced with many difficulties.

### 3.10 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Validity and reliability were key aspects of this research. Meticulous attention to these two aspects distinguishes good research from poor research, and provide an assurance to fellow scientists that the findings of the study are credible and trustworthy (Brink, 1993). The reliability of qualitative research is established through accurate data recording, transcription, and/or intercoder agreements (Lewis, 2015). According to Mays and Pope (1995), the basic strategy in qualitative research that ensures rigour in qualitative research is systematic and self-conscious research design, data collection, interpretation, and communication. Golafshani, (2003) argues in this regard that many researchers have developed their concepts of validity, and had often, generated or adopted what they considered more appropriate terms – such as quality, rigour and trustworthiness. Substantive validation in this regard, involves self-reflection to assess one’s understanding of the topic as a researcher, and how that can influence data interpretation (Lewis, 2015). If the issues of reliability, validity, trustworthiness, quality and rigour were meant to differentiate “good” from “bad” research, then testing and increasing the reliability, validity, trustworthiness, quality and rigour would be important to the research in any paradigm (Golafshani, 2003).

Some of the ways in which qualitative researchers retest the reliability of their analyses entail meticulously maintaining records of interviews and observations and documenting the analysis process in detail (Mays & Pope, 1995). In this regard, a coding frame was developed to characterise each utterance (for example, about age, sex, and the role of the speaker, the topic and so on), for transcripts to be coded by more than one researcher.

The interview questions were translated into isiZulu to accommodate participants who were not conversant in English to ensure more credible answers. The data collected from participants were captured using a voice recorder. The researcher also took notes during the interviews. The data were stored in such a way that it could be examined for authenticity. Participants were given consent forms explaining that their participation was voluntary, and that the researcher will not, in any way, influence the interviews, or influence participants to change their minds. This was done to ensure truthfulness, applicability, and neutrality of the responses. Participants’ views have been reported in this dissertation as articulated by them. All interviewees were accorded the same treatment. Participants were also given an assurance that the data collected would be used strictly for academic purposes. The researcher engaged the services of additional skilled qualitative researchers to assess the transcripts and make a comparison of the analysis. This enhanced the reliability of the analysis.

### **3.11 DATA ANALYSIS**

The researcher described the steps she followed in collecting the data, which are defined as a series of interrelated activities designed to gather information to answer emerging research questions. According to Lopez and Whitehead (2013), data analysis is process of collecting, modeling, and analysing the data to gain insights to support decision-making. The process is iterative, and moves in analytic circles, rather than a fixed linear approach. Using “prefigured” codes, based on a theoretical model or the literature to analyse data are preferred in the health sciences. Codes are categorised into themes and sub-themes, the data are interpreted, and results presented in text, tabular, or figure form (Lewis, 2015). This researcher used content analysis and contextual design. These are detailed in the section below.

#### **3.11.1 Content Analysis**

Williams (2007) defines content analysis as a method that reviews forms of human communication – including books, newspapers, and films, as well as other forms that identify patterns, themes, or biases. Meanwhile, Cole (1988) defines content analysis as a method of analysing written, verbal or visual communication messages. This method is designed to identify specific characteristics from the content in human communications, where the researcher explores verbal, visual, and behavioural patterns, themes, or biases (Williams, 2007). The process is designed to achieve the highest objective analysis possible to identify the body of material studied and define characteristics or qualities examined (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). Therefore, the researcher conducted content analysis of the transcribed data.

#### **3.11.2 Contextual Research Design**

In a contextual research strategy, the researcher studies the phenomenon for its intrinsic and immediate contextual significance (Burns, 2003). Burns and Grove (2005) state in this regard that contextual studies focus on specific events in "naturalistic settings". Naturalistic settings are uncontrolled real-life situations, sometimes referred to as field settings. Thus, the researcher conducted an in-depth, unstructured, open, qualitative interview with participants in a free and non-manipulative setting. This means that this study was conducted on the construction site – the Kingsburgh West housing project. This study was contextual in the sense that the researcher considered participants'

ethnic background, physical and cultural values, as well as the occurrence of the event in a place where nature took its course without interruption.

### **3.12 CONCLUSION**

This chapter outlined the research methodology and the research design adopted in this study, the research paradigm, sampling method and size, data collection technique, ethical consideration, as well as the reliability and validity of the study. The chapter also highlighted the limitations of the research, and the challenges that the researcher encountered while conducting the study. Chapter Four presents and discusses the results of the data collected from participants, who were involved in the Kingsburgh West Housing Project.

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE FINDINGS

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Three outlined the research design and the methodology adopted in this study. This chapter, therefore, analyses the results of the data collected and discusses the findings of the fieldwork. It further foregrounds the findings within the research objectives and research questions outlined in Chapter One. The chapter presents the results from the analysis of the data collected concerning policy implementation and challenges in the construction industry. Stakeholders interviewed included female and male contractors, employees, officials/individuals from the Provincial Department of Human Settlements, the eThekweni Municipality, the National Homebuilding Regulation Council (NHBRC), and members of the South African Women in Construction who were involved in the construction of low-income housing in Kingsburgh West. The research was conducted to answer the research questions presented in Chapter One. The data were collected mostly from the selected individuals through in-depth interviews. This chapter uses "prefigured" codes to categorise the data into themes. Questions in the interview guide were informed by theoretical frameworks.

This chapter is divided into six sections, according to the broad themes in this research. The first section presents the profiles of participants in the construction industry and provides a summary of the capabilities of the women in the construction industry. The second section inspires women to venture into the construction industry and explores ways of making them realise their potential in this male-dominated space and find ways to claim the space as theirs as well. The third section explores the challenges that women in the construction industry contend with. The fourth section assesses the provision of training in the construction industry, specifically the training provided, and how it was delivered. The fifth section traces the origins of women contractors and establishes how it is like to have women in the construction industry. The sixth section establishes if there is a link between women and independent organisations and expand on how some of them engage with these independent organisations. The findings presented are also in line with Section 7 of the BNG policy objective, which provides that housing delivery also contributes to alleviating income poverty by providing jobs directly or indirectly to individuals in the construction sector. These findings are also in line with the theoretical framework for this study.

## 4.2 PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE KINGSBURGH WEST HOUSING PROJECT

This section discusses the demographic information of personnel working within the project area, who were interviewed to monitor women's participation in the Kingsburgh West Housing Project. The interviewee profiles reflected the demographic difference in ethnicity, marital status, race, age, and education. Thus, this section discusses the age, marital status, and educational background of participants, and how they joined the construction industry. Wider female participation has been identified as a necessary factor that would promote equality and increase the number of women in the construction industry. The eThekweni Municipality regulations require that a percentage of women benefit when the main contractor is awarded work within the community. Despite these initiatives, the industry is divided on whether women's input should be considered. Instead of being included and afforded better opportunities to ensure their growth in the construction industry, many women contend with gender-biased attitudes. To this end, the eThekweni Municipality has regulations in place that cater for women's participation in construction projects, which are included in all their tender documentation. This will ensure that disadvantaged groups (women, youth, MK veterans, and disabled people) are afforded opportunities to participate in the construction industry.

### 4.2.1 Age Distribution

The study sample was made of the younger and older participants as illustrated in Table 4.2.1. To this end, 5 per cent of participants were between the ages of 20 and 29, 50 per cent between 30 and 45 years, while 45% was from 45 and older ages. The data in Table 4.2 shows that women from the ages of 20 and 29 joined the construction industry because they were trained in school and in tertiary institutions to work in the construction industry. Women between the ages of 30 and 45 had matric only and were unable to continue with their studies. However, some of these women now live independently, while other still live with their parents. It emerged from data that women 45 and older were married.

**Table 4.2. 1:** Age distribution of participants

Age	Men	Women	Total
20-29 years	0	1	1
30-45 years	1	3	4
+45 years	1	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>

(Source: Researcher's Interview Questionnaire)

#### 4.2.2 Marital Status

Most of the participants interviewed were single black females with children and dependants. The findings of this study revealed that most women who work in the construction industry are heads of households, and that domestic chores were the most demanding family responsibilities of women. On the other hand, men prefer wives who assume the bulk of domestic tasks and who will, therefore, not invest too much in their career. In this regard, privatisation has threatened advances toward women's equality in the labour market and in their homes. This is because women's experiences are different from men, as one-woman contractor explained: "It is not easy because as a woman, I have to leave the house clean. There is someone disabled at home so, I have to leave when that person has been fed and bathed" (Interview, 20 April 2018). These women struggle with tremendous guilt for not being able to spend time with their families, or not being able to provide for them. Privatisation deepens inequality, which, further, widens the gaps in wages, working conditions among members of one group of workers, and workplace rights. These women's feelings spilt over into their home lives.

The study noted that while both men and women need to balance the demands of work and home life, women in many households still assume the primary responsibility of doing domestic cores. This presents a major challenge as these women lead their lives as unmarried women with children to look after, and grandmothers and fathers, or disabled family members that they must care for. Married women on the project, however, perceived the challenges differently, as opposed to the single women. To this end, the construction industry perceives women as liabilities as they are considered emotionally exhausted, because they are committed to taking care of their husbands/partners and their children – hence having them on board affects production negatively. It is asserted that both married and unmarried women enjoy poor quality relationships because of the number of children they have, which impact on their responsibilities, thus causing relationship conflict between them and their spouses and children.

**Table 4.2. 2:** Marital status of participants

<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Total</b>
Single	0	4	4
Married	2	2	4
Divorced	0	0	0
Widowed	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>

(Source: Researcher's Interview Questionnaire)

#### **4.2.2.1 Views of married women in the construction industry**

Some of the participants who were married women revealed that they did not enjoy their jobs, and that this affects their loyalty and commitment to their employers. These were women starting their families, as they would take four (4) months' maternity leave to attend to their newborns. In such cases the employer must find a replacement for the duration of their leave. Some of the contractor participants mentioned that their employers could not cater for their leave/maternity pay because they were not able to register their employees with the labour department to receive unemployment funds (UIF), because they are still in grade 1. Some of the married women mentioned that they enjoyed the support of their husbands. They mentioned further the effect of construction workload on family expectations, where they must at times, work overtime. This impacts the time spent with their families and puts a strain on their marriages. One married woman testified:

“You know, there's no physical part of affection but sometimes it's emotional because as women we are faced with a lot. You have to do your house chores sometimes, you have to look after your husband, you have to cook if you can't afford to buy out, some males do not want to eat food cooked by maids at home so, even if you go to a project, you still need to do your house duties, you have to cook for your husbands and your kids. I don't have energy” (Interview, 25 July 2018).

#### **4.2.2.2 Views of unmarried women in the construction industry**

Unlike married women, unmarried struggled to cope with the demanding family responsibilities at home as they did not have husbands who support them but depended on relatives and friends. These women could not work overtime, as they had to fetch their kids from school and do house chores when they got home. Thus, for these women, it was imperative that gender equality be achieved. They deliberated on the wage gap between them and their male counterparts, which they deem unfair. Some participants also mentioned that there were times they felt like quitting – because they had work related stress leading them to lose focus and impacting their productivity.

#### **4.2.3 Ethnic information of personnel of the Kingsburgh West Housing Project**

Regarding race, the one-woman contractor argued: "It is not easy in construction as there will be black women and white women, but things are even much worse for the black women" (Interview, 8 August 2018). She argued further that even though there are not many women in the construction industry it is rare to find a white woman doing labour work at the construction site – they are, instead, given office positions. This view was also supported by an official from the Department of Human Settlements when

he mentioned that he had never seen a female foreman in all the projects that he was involved with, let alone the black female foremen. Most of the subcontractors in the Kingsburgh West Project mentioned that they had white male managers leading the project under the main contractor, and male supervisors /foremen. This is evidence that the construction industry is still male dominated.

**Table 4.2. 3:** Race group of participants

Race group	Men	Women	Total
Black	1	6	7
White	1	0	1
Coloured	0	0	0
Indians	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>

(Source: Researcher's Interview Questionnaire)

#### 4.2.4 Educational background of participants in the Kingsburgh West Housing Project

Despite women's educational achievements, their progress has not equally translated into their development in all areas of work. The construction industry is a work site that is fully dominated by one gender. The percentage of women in construction is extremely low – this is even though there are new gender regulations and policies in place to ensure that more South African women participate in the construction industry. Research was conducted on an intellectual discourse of gender inequalities that has contributed to gender gaps in the construction industry. This female employee expressed that she has difficulty getting her male counterparts to respect her:

"Regardless of whether I, complete my degree in Quantity Surveying, I also believe that within I am being undermined and that being aggressive, women are not given equal opportunity. We women are never given tasks equally but we will be measured the same as our male co-workers and the decision of whether you were capable or incapable will be made. Men just simply say women are incapable of doing the task and another reason would be sometimes women come across as emotional people and do not look at a business concept or management concept these women are presenting but men will look at women's emotions" (Interview, 14 August 2018).

It emerged that four of the women contractors interviewed had no background in the construction industry – however, some had degrees outside of construction, which laid the foundation for them to start their construction businesses. The data collected have shown that other female contractors had partnered with established and experienced male contractors to start their construction companies. Others succeeded by using subcontractors and their management skills. In addition, other female contractors benefited from attending some mentorship programmes offered by different stakeholders within the construction industry. As one SAWIC contractor argued:

"I have a legal background that is where I started working for the Legal Aid Board and from the Legal Aid Board, I joined the Department of Minerals and Energy as a Deputy Director for KZN regulations and from there I joined Lafarge as their mineral manager for the Eastern region which consists of KZN and Eastern Cape, so from there I open my own consultancy company where I started consulting and mining and with my interactions with quarries and my experience in aggregates, I found myself ending up in construction as well. I started construction and at the moment my company is grade 3GB and I also do some civil works" (Interview, 7 August 2018).

Another woman contractor claimed: "I did my certificate in carpentry then I saw that women are not many that do carpentry (deals with roofing) then I started a company that will deal with carpentry and be a woman that deals with carpentry" (Interview, 20 April 2018). More women, including one woman from SAWIC supported this view when she argued:

"Initially, I started working as an educator in 1993, however, I then started a general supply business in 2003. While doing trading, I ended up doing my first construction project in 2005 and now I am a grade 8 GB" (Interview, 25 July 2018).

Considering that no one starts off as a grade 8 company, all contractors were at first, grade 1 companies and upgraded through the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) by bringing a portfolio of evidence, including the monies invested. To this end, grade 1 companies could only be upgraded to the next grade, provided they met the CIDB requirements. Being a grade 8 is advantageous as it affords companies greater opportunities than the grade 1s to grade 3s who were still new in the industry; and considered Small Medium Micro Enterprises (SMMEs). The Department of Human Settlements, together with the municipalities, awarded most of the low-income housing development tenders to companies with higher grades – provided that these companies have a track record and employ SMMEs and Small Medium-sized Enterprise (SME). Some of these women reported that they embraced an opportunity to grow or start their own business as the Kingsburgh project was presented by the eThekweni Local Municipality in their area. This woman contractor confirmed that:

"Even though I had worked for a construction company as a labourer before starting my own business. It was not easy when I started because in any company it was the first time my company started working on a project and it was a big project" (Interview, 20 April 2018).

The level of education appears not to be a problem in relation to male counterparts, as they will not be undermined or ignored, compared to their female counterparts – instead, they are awarded senior positions. One construction employee argued: "Even though I obtained my National Diploma in the building which was Quantity Surveying and Construction Management and then furthered my studies with a B-Tech qualification which was B-Tech in Quantity surveying and worked for some time in construction, I am still considered inexperienced and paid less than my male counterparts with the same education and experience as mine" (Interview, 14 August 2018).

Many of the women contractors in the Kingsburgh project that were interviewed had at least a Grade 12 (matriculation) qualification, while a significant proportion had degrees, mainly in non-construction related fields. However, in terms of experience, women are still climbing the ladder. Most of the female contractors do not have experience in the construction trades. As one woman argued:

"Firstly, I noted that the construction industry is open to everyone but when it comes to scales, we are suffering a lot both technically and administratively. Remember that at one point we had colleges where people before becoming bricklayers or whatever skill they wanted, but currently we do not have those anymore. When it comes to technical skills and administrative skills in terms of everyone who wants to be the main contractor, lacks project management and financial background. This is the reason we see the failure of women contractors every single day. Both technical skills, administrative skills and financiers we know we have got so many things that are funding, but I am not sure why they are not getting the funds as well; start-up and support" (Interview, 8 August 2018).

**Table 4.2. 4:** Education background of participants

Education	Men	Women	Total
Degrees/Diploma (Other)	0	2	2
Degree/Diploma construction related	2	2	4
Grade 12	0	1	1
Some Secondary	0	1	1
No schooling	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>

(Source: Researcher's Interview Questionnaire)

### 4.3 BACKGROUND OF WOMEN CONTRACTORS IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

It has been shown that the construction industry is dominated by males. To this end, women had been under-represented as contractors, developers, and so on. According to the state of the industry (2020), only 13 per cent of the construction firms are owned by women. To this end, women contractors contend with multiple challenges in the construction industry; however, they have the drive to close the gender gap. Some of these contractors have benefited by educating themselves in construction-related courses. Others had worked in the construction industry for years as labourers or holding junior positions in other construction companies before they started their own companies. There has always been a need to empower women or empower them for the construction industry space. For participants who are members of the South African Women in Construction (SAWIC), being a woman contractor is about forming networks to ensure their emancipation in the construction industry, or the entire built environment. After all, it is about women contractors, women's' construction professionals, and students in the construction related fields (Interview, 25 July 2018).

#### 4.4 MOTIVATION FOR WOMEN ENTERING THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Since its inception in 1994 the democratic government's efforts have been directed towards creating an environment conducive for the transformation of the economy by affording opportunities to historically disadvantaged groups, including women. This has been achieved through the formulation and implementation of various strategic programmes and policies, such as the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act (B-BBEE), Cooperatives Act, Small Business Empowerment Acts, as well as national industrial policies. Many participants that were interviewed argued that there were no structures in 1994 that promoted women's participation in the construction industry. The structures were more about changing on a grand scale, the spatial social economic injustices of the past. Therefore, Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) was the buzzword in the late 1990s and the early 2000s, which was, however, not about women and young people. Through the BEE guide, the study noted that one of the objectives was to "increase the extent to which black women own and manage existing and new enterprises, and facilitate their access to economic activities, infrastructure and skills training". The BBEE spoke of codes that all companies must follow and obey; however, this study's highlight was that companies will be committing an offence if they engaged in a "fronting practice". The Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act further states that Exempt Micro Enterprises (EMEs) and Qualifying Small Enterprises (QSEs) that are 51 per cent Black-owned, and 30 per cent women-owned are given a Level 2 BBEE status – thus having a significant advantage over other EMEs and QSEs. This statement warns all companies that enter partnership with women as a guise, while men make all the decisions. It must be noted that some women go along with these partnerships in the hope that they will learn construction practices and be able to stand on their own and avoid being used for the sake of BEE compliance. Despite these efforts, the researcher argues that there is a strong presence and persistence of inequality, which is widely linked to the distribution of resources and the limited participation of women in the construction industry. This was supported by one official from the Department of Human Settlements official:

"We got to a point where we are deliberate, we are trying to get women to participate and if I may share with you, we are reporting against the 30% set aside and if you look at our report, you will realise that over 80% of the work is allocated to the designated group which is to women-owned companies. So, you would see that obviously in terms of ensuring that we give work to women, that is now starting to happen but, if you look at the bigger scale of things, you would see that not much has been done because if you look at the allocations, we get about 3.2 billion of the Human Settlement Development Grant (HSDG) and if you had to check against that, how much goes to women-owned companies? It will be something that, obviously we wouldn't be proud of, but in terms of the dollar regulation as per the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act (PPPFA) regulation in terms of last year, you will see that there is something we are doing there" (Interview, 29 August 2018).

Because of the injustices women face on construction sites, the department had established a lack on women's participation in construction sites, he further argued for the need to introduce a new Act that will enforce the youth and women empowerment in the construction industry:

"The regulations in terms of the designated groups, only came into effect last year in 2017. We are working on a policy in term 1, It's called Youth and Women Empowerment Development Policy. It is a draft and it talks to issues of employment, skills development, incubation programs for youth and women I think, the issue becomes capacity for women in most cases" (Interview, 29 August 2018).

Therefore, more policies on gender representation and gender equity are now being formulated. The participant further indicated that the Department of Human Settlements has identified a gap in the construction sector – hence the proposal to draft a new policy – the "Youth and Women Empowerment Policy" that would promote youth and women participation in the construction industry. This policy was drafted during term 1 of 2018, and aimed to address issues of employment, skills development, and emerging programmes for the youth and women. The policy advocated for the inclusion of women into the construction sector and extended the responsibility to achieve gender equality to actors involved in public policy formulation in the institutions of society. This is seen as a challenge – considering that women in the construction industry were previously disadvantaged. There was minimal participation of women in this sector in terms of employment and business opportunities. According to the views of the contractors interviewed, the then Minister of Public Works, Stella Sigcau, played a key role in her attempt to ensure that women were included in the construction industry in South Africa. When the new democratic government was incepted, the construction industry was male dominated, and Minister Sigcau felt that more women should participate in the sector through the Public Works Programme, as well as the Construction Industry Development Board, whose task is to bring transformation in the construction industry. They argued that Public Works had organisations like Independent Development Trust (IDT) that spearheaded the support, training, and mentorship of women, like the contractor's development programme.

One official indicated that the Provincial Department of Human Settlement has a dedicated team dealing with youth and women issues, which is tied to the targeted programme within the Supply Chain Management (SCM). He supported his statement thus:

"We need to ensure that in all our procurement contracts 30% is given to designated group so, so while we are still following the generic process now, we have the particular regulations which says, we need to ensure that these designated groups are catered for. We now have the regulation in terms of the PPPFA (Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act) that says 30% of the HSDG should go to the designated groups and designated groups include women and youth, military veterans and people with disabilities and within that then the 10% of that 30% need to go to women-owned companies" (Interview, 29 August 2018).

This study established Preferential Procurement Regulations, which do not only cater for women, black people, and people with disabilities, but also puts great emphasis on small and medium enterprises. The regulations also state that if a contract is worth R30 million, the procuring entity must apply to subcontract to ensure the participation of the designated groups (EMEs/ QSEs). The tender document must be specific that the successful tenderer must subcontract a minimum of 30 per cent of the value of the contract to SMEs and other entities covered by the Act. Another official from the NHBRC argued that they also advertise tenders through the SCM processes, and that they select contractors from their database, in line with government's policies at the time. She claimed that:

"We have to do rectification of the fund. We use your normal triple BBBEE (Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment) and your prefectural policy framework which is government, so we use all their policies" (Interview, 8 August 2018).

More views from participants suggested that the government has policies in place that cater for the needs of emerging contractors within the construction sector, guided by the Act. This male official stated:

"We are looking at companies between grade 2GB- 5GB. Because within those you get the emerging contractors. From those, we then look for companies that are complying in terms of the law. You have the tax clearance, are you fine with SARS, are you registered with the NHBRC know that, once you pass all those checks and balances you will then have a database of those and we want them to be based at the district level so the issue of geographic location becomes important because in terms of local procurement that is what we are also working on" (Interview, 29 August 2018).

Officials from the Department of Human Settlements stated that they have also partnered with organisations such as the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) that would provide soft skills to emerging contractors and the NHBRC, which assists businesses technical aspects. They also claimed that these institutions also help by formulating policies and frameworks to ensure that the department adheres to the standards and the specifications to ensure that individuals venturing into construction are aware of what is expected of them.

Unfortunately, competition in the construction industry is rife in South Africa. One reason why there is a high rate of unemployment in South Africa is that many people perceive that construction is a profitable business – and that it a simple exercise, where one wakes up in the morning and start a construction company. Most of the participants expressed that it is crucial to be conversant with the construction value chain as the construction industry is competitiveness. These women contractors argued that engaging in material supply, plant hire, and construction logistics might be key to reducing the unemployment rate and minimising the power of those who monopolise the markets within the construction industry. One female contractor argued:

"It starts from the person who controls the material, so if you don't control the material and one, you don't control the prices. If there could be a way that there is some sort of levelling field but also if the women in construction can also look at supply and find ways even if it goes as deep as manufacturing, we would be able to kinder manage the value chain rather than coming in where someone who has already detected the prices" (Interview, 7 August 2018).

The government must intervene by enforcing policies that would regulate monopolistic markets that affect, not only the construction sector, but all sectors. The dominant companies manipulate prices, quality, and the quantity of the product. One would remember that during the construction of World Cup stadiums in South Africa in 2010, six (6) companies committed fraud by engaging in tender-fixing – a process companies decide in advance the winner of the tender, and the specific stadium that they will be constructing. According to the Mail & Guardian (2015), the Competition Commission had asked the Competition Tribunal to impose an administrative penalty equal to 10 per cent of the turnover of each firm, which is the maximum penalty in terms of the Competition Act. Tender-fixing undermines the bidding process and can attract a calculated price that is higher than what might have been in free market competitive tenders. The Mail & Guardian (2015) concurred in this regard and stated that tender collusion in this regard was estimated to have added R14 billion to the construction costs, which were borne by the municipalities. This is also a common practice when hiring a competing subcontractor to undermine the tender process. These tendering procedures attract a lot of competition as everyone is keen on securing work. One male official supported this view and argued:

"This is what we are doing as the new directorate to say let us understand the value chain so that when we want to do work it is not only subcontracting in construction. When we award you a project, you won't need to go to the masters builders' warehouse to get materials but you can procure locally where ever you will be working. Even the materials suppliers will be compliant with the law and follow all the necessary regulations. So, as the Department of Human Settlements, we are opening up opportunities. And in opening up these opportunities, I believe that you will be targeting procurement. We are changing the landscape" (Interview, 29 August 2018).

Participants were also of the view that to support contractors, the government connects companies to provide micro credits to contractors. This official articulated that:

"We do not give money like debt runners as government, but what we do is, bread the fertile ground into prosper. We even have agreements with Ithala and ABSA banks. If you have a contract to do work, we are willing to write a letter to support you to say this project is our project, this person has got no money from the implementing agent, please support them. So, we are linking up with all these financial institutions, so that happens" (Interview, 29 August 2018).

It should be noted that the construction industry has four different types of actors: namely clients, main contractors, consultants, and subcontractors/suppliers. The Kingsburgh West Housing Project referred to the Department of Human Settlements, the municipality, and the professional team, which embraces architects, engineers, the community, and so forth as clients. The main contractor is the contractor who has been awarded the tender, who oversees the construction work on site. Subcontractors/suppliers are those who sought work from the main contractor. In this regard, Myers (2008) argues that

subcontractors often organise materials and maintain the equipment. Labour-only subcontracting is the cheap and efficient option for the main contractor, as the self-employed worker is not entitled to holiday pay, redundancy money, sick leave, pension rights, or any other benefits that accrue to permanent members of staff (Myers, 2008).

#### **4.4.1 Background of the Subcontractors**

Subcontracting is a business strategy that the main contractor uses to transfer skills, while dealing with fears of the construction market (in terms of rising labour and material costs). This strategy minimises direct costs and overheads for the main contractor, in the process, allowing them to use competitive local companies with lower overheads and better knowledge of the local market, leaving new subcontractors at risk of not securing work. Having specialist subcontractors who are skilled in the trade ensures the production of quality work. Thus, subcontracting enables the reduction of operating costs and promotes competition (Christiansen, 2020).

Also, the subcontracting packages of the main contractor are relatively cheaper than the cost of planning and monitoring workers' performance on a construction site. Subcontractor participants in this study pointed out that they were often without work, as competition is high. Alternatively, they would accept work at minimum rates offered by the main contractors, which opens the door for exploitation and makes being subcontracted unprofitable.

Subcontracting is a trend in the construction sector to a point that it is taken for granted. It comes in many forms – either as suppliers, supply, and installation (domestic subcontracting) or labour-only subcontracting. This does not only end here, as even the sub-contractors divide their work into smaller tasks and sub-subcontract some of their work. In all this, the main contractor always bears the risk of non-performance to poor quality. It must be noted that subcontracting constitutes networking as the main contractor will accept the cost of materials, and the subcontractor will accept the cost of labour for a labour-only subcontracting agreement. Women-owned subcontracting companies usually have a challenge of being overlooked for certain tasks, as main contractors prefer men than women. This assertion was supported by an official from NHBRC:

"I think perception issues here and attitudes from the guys on site they will always be there, even with other women contractors. If I have got a male contractor and a female contractor, I will think that even though they can work perfectly the same way equally with everyone, I will always think the male contractor is much stronger for site-related issues so I should rather be having a male subcontractor" (Interview, 8 August 2018).

Another woman contractor argued that after "women have gotten a job they are mistreated to a point that they receive material last even though they were first in the queue" (Interview, 20 April 2018). This researcher also noted in this regard that these women contractors were mistreated, even though they had male employees working for them. It can, then, be concluded that the construction industry is highly sexist.

#### **4.5 CHALLENGES IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**

Privatisation is not gender neutral. In the labour market, privatisation usually means lower wages for female workers, fewer workplace rights, reduced health and welfare benefits, no pension coverage, less predictable work hours, more precarious employment, a heavier workload, and, generally, more exploitative working conditions. Subcontracting is common at all levels of government, and is one of the common forms of privatisation, where a private company is awarded a contract to perform work. One woman reported that:

"In business, I have worked but it did not go well. I encountered problems, but I think the problem was because we had a majority of men. Women were two or three in number. There were problems, we were suppressed, and we had to stop work so in that way it did not go well" (Interview, 20 April 2018).

Workers in the construction industry endure long working hours, overnight work, and project-based work that requires teams to travel to construction sites regularly. This affected many ungraded subcontractors more than those who were in grade 1. To this end, it is difficult for the grade 1 companies to transition to upper grades as they are required first, to have more resources and be financially stable. They must also secure more jobs to prove to the CIDB board that they have met the criteria for grade upgrading. The construction industry continues to be a lonely business for women, even though they might have the relevant training.

The contractors revealed that at times they contend with challenges related to intimidation, isolation, and harassment by coworkers, supervisors, and even their managers. This assertion was supported in a report given by one woman employee:

"I did have a challenge where I was confronted by a municipal official coworker who claimed that I was a part of a syndicate of people who were selling the houses. We had a verbal argument where I disagreed with him and he showed to be physical. He was then held back by some of the people who were witnesses to the debate if you would call it. I then decided to call my female superior because my male contract's manager who was also present at the time the bullying happened and who happened to be a white man, did not do anything to rectify the situation, he just looked and walked away" (Interview, 14 August 2018).

More women argued "[Sigh]: Men take advantage of women on site. If a male is in some position on site (supervisor), we encounter challenges where they must ask me out first for my things to work

smoothly" (Interview, 20 April 2018). Working in such conditions leaves these women depressed, upset, frustrated, and angry. Despite this, they just block the experience as they are scared of losing their jobs.

Only a minority among participants interviewed reported that it was rare to find another woman on the job, except for a small percentage. They also indicated that in most of the sites they would be working at they would be given clerical and store lady positions – or are offered positions as cleaners. For them this does not come as a shock, as it was the dominant trend in the industry. One Human Settlements official articulated:

"I was on-site the day before yesterday, and the guy was saying, he tried to get women to do plaster for him and it wasn't working, so I think there are still those things, those perceptions in terms of what women can do and what they cannot do" (Interview, 29 August 2018).

It is clear that because of the various forms of intimidation that women in construction suffer, they struggle to forge unity among themselves, and do not quite support each other all the time – hence, they feel that they are running a race where they need to keep up the pace.

Another major challenge for male and female contractors was transport. Often, they had to travel to and from work, sometimes transporting their employees, tools, and materials to complete their trades. One woman argued that:

"The challenges I faced in the project was sometimes, I had no transport because the company was still small and in grade 1 and had no van to transport items and in that case, work would delay because of the transport. Sometimes when I needed something from the site, I would not get them in time and that made work delayed" (Interview, 20 April 2018).

These delays had a major impact on their production, and this, in turn, affected their cash flow. Judging by these participants' views on the working environment, working in construction presents both opportunities and challenges. Like their experiences with earnings and the contracting processes, these women reported a wide range of their experiences relating to their treatment on the job. A female contractor made this statement: "When I started on site as a woman, I had challenges because when you start on site you need to get workers and observe how work is done on-site and how the material is carried or handled". She also noted that: "Being a woman on site, the workers I hired used to undermine me" (Interview, 20 April 2018). This shows that women are even undermined by their employees.

South Africa has many labour laws that apply to the construction industry as well – yet gender discrimination is persisting, widespread and considered normal by many in the construction industry. To this end, patriarchy is still prevalent in the construction industry. Several initiatives were made over the

years to implement gender equality, but these initiatives have not spread to the construction industry. The prevalence of gender hierarchy, with the notion that male are strong and robust are typical of the masculine culture, which breeds fertile ground for patriarchy to thrive in the construction industry. In the construction industry gender has a way of stripping women of their self-esteem and portray them as inferior – as men hold perceptions of what women should and should not do. Women sustain daily life and are responsible for the continuation of humanity; and yet, have no authority (right to give orders or make decisions) over men. Women participants in this study felt that their knowledge or opinions do not carry the same weight as their coworkers and were critical of the endless struggle to have their voices heard. One female contractor argued: "You may have whatever your male counterpart has but because you are a female, you still need to prove yourself more in construction because construction is male-dominated" (Interview, 20 April 2018).

Radical feminists will agree that patriarchy is still dominant in the construction industry. To this end, women are still far from achieving parity with men in senior positions – owing to gendered organisational practices within the construction industry. Women noted, in this regard that in many cases men consider their ideas ridiculous and meaningless and portray them as brainless. Another female participant reported that: "Men still have a thing that construction is a job meant for men and it hasn't got to them that women can also do it" (Interview, 08 August 2018). Another female contractor argued:

"When I had something to voice out on site, men just looked at me as a girl and those that were older than I am will talk back at me and say, as a woman I cannot tell them anything. Other men will think they have a right to collect work materials before me, even if I was first in the line" (Interview, 20 April 2018).

Men are of the view that women will never match their male subordinates in terms of skills, let alone get senior positions, as men had been in the construction industry for decades and that women are newcomers.

As Marxist feminists point out, gender oppression in the construction industry is no different – as many contractors have confirmed cases of gender inequality. Lack of equality in the construction industry limits individual women, but also hinders the transformation of the workplace in generally. This woman contractor argued: "When we had site meetings and when I tried to voice out something as a woman, men saw it as not powerful enough when it is said by a woman even if it was helpful, they did not take my opinion seriously" (Interview, 20 April 2018). She noted that many a times her suggestions were ignored until her male counterpart came to the same conclusion. Women's subordination shows itself in this statement, which suggests that women are powerless in the hands of men. Women do not have access to resources and have no decision-making powers – and are employed in lower positions than their male counterparts. The subordination of women in their daily lives manifests in various forms –

discrimination, insults, exploitation, control, oppression and violence within their homes, place of work, and in society at large. Another woman contractor added that: "Men make sure they oppress women even if a woman wants to take a stand, they make sure they sideline you and at the end, they are discouraging women about the construction industry" (Interview, 20 April 2018). Based on the views of many that were interviewed, gender inequality had a bad stigma to many women who want to join the construction industry as they have reservations. Some of these women are primary caregivers and are experimenting with work overload and time management – while juggling work and family life. Some of the contractors raised theft as a major problem in the construction industry and noted that this challenge constitutes a setback for many construction companies as discussed below.

#### **4.5.1 Theft in the Construction Industry**

Many contractors pointed out that as smaller companies that are still finding their feet, theft forces most of them out of business. They also pointed out that it is not only women who are contending with this challenge – but everyone in the industry. One male contractor reported:

"It is a challenge as it comes to people stealing from me because they believe that they are taking what is rightfully theirs in their minds and then you also get like those regular facts with all of these things happening where even people who are securities within the project neglect to protect the project and they will steal and they will also let people steal because of the whole belief as the main contractor I am not taking care of them" (Interview, 14 August 2018).

The participant mentioned further that "it never got better when vandalism started and got worse when the Mkhonto Wesizwe Military Veterans (MKVA) took over half of the project, demanding and taking over the houses by force" (Interview, 14 August 2018).

These contractors also highlighted community and political challenges in the construction industry – and that political influence affects production timeframes. Politicians never consider the impact of their decisions – not only on contractors – but on the fewer community members who secured employment, as well as those who are waiting to receive their houses. The ongoing community strikes also impact negatively on the delivery of houses. Contractors also indicated that the people (ward councilors) who are supposed to intervene to restore the peace are sometimes the ones instigating the protests. This male contractor mentioned in this regard that:

"The next challenge probably came with the community and the politics and all that kind of thing whether who was going to work there and who was not going to work there. The councillor will cause a problem with the purchasing of materials within the area, but we got through it all" (Interview, 14 August 2018).

He also added that: "One major challenge will be when we got on the ground, I was dealing with a subcontractor who was a little sceptical. Because they were fly by night so we had to control very close, it was a big challenge" (Interview, 14 August 2018).

Some contractors highlighted the challenges they encountered with the different municipalities and provincial departments. Among these challenges were difficulties with securing tenders, where they had difficulties accessing opportunities. One contractor articulated:

"When there are opportunities advertised and projects don't get awarded on time or not awarded at all. There's always an extension of the validity period and it ends there and no one explains what happens after that. This is because when the government does not have the budget, or we don't know what happens to the budget like currently there are no new projects this financial year. Projects that have been tendered before last year are still not awarded" (Interview, 25 July 2018).

The participant also highlighted that theft always set back companies, as some of the items stolen are not recovered, nor covered by insurance, and this becomes a huge risk.

#### **4.5.2 Finance for Low-Income Housing**

Women in construction still do not get housing-related finance assistance from the government, 20 years after the inception of democracy in South Africa (in 1994). This has taken women back to the neo-liberal macroeconomic policies the current government had introduced in 1996 – considering that emerging contractors require funding assistance – from when they secure government tender documents to the completion of the project. This assertion was backed by different study participants – who argued in this regard that funding is crucial in executing the project, and that government's turnaround times for approving funding are longer. Participants alluded to their frustrations when they approach the banks for funding. Another contractor reported that:

"In the construction conferences we get banks who promise that if you have a project come to us, but once you get a project you go to them, they ask so many things. It becomes a barrier and ends up not even getting that finance that has been promised by the banks. It is like they just want to be seen by other entities as they are doing something and yet they are doing nothing, and the projects are failing if they do not get funding" (Interview, 25 July 2018).

Most contractors highlighted issues with late payments from different departments, attributed to slow approvals from these departments. One female contractor participant argued as follows:

"Even if you have got the skills to do the project. For those who have funds to do the project, their main challenge is that clients don't pay them on time as well. Even if you have your startup capital but when it comes to payments, we battle to get our monies. Most South African construction contractors do government jobs and there are very few who do private jobs, if there are any, most of them just do government work and the same government is letting them down because they don't pay on time" (Interview, 25 July 2018).

This view suggests that somehow government has failed many contractors – with the slow processing of payments, which affects the pay date of contractors and subcontractors. Construction companies

require huge sums of money upfront. Also, the long delays in the payment of invoices constitutes an everyday struggle for the construction businesses. This assertion was supported by another woman contractor who argued that:

"The issue of non payment for instance has affected many badly because some become stressed and they lose their houses and their cars because if you do not pay the bank, they repossess your assets and we have seen people dying because of non-payment. Many contractors loan these amounts of money to startup projects. Others go to loan sharks or stokvel accounts to borrow these funds and the interest rates are very high. With the hope that they will pay only to find out that they are not paid to service their loans and that is how bad it is when it comes to non-payment" (Interview, 7 August 2018).

As noted, one of radical feminism's watchwords is men's pervasive oppression, or the exploitation of women. One contractor representative argued in this regard that competing with male contractors is a challenge for female contractors. She also highlighted that they must hire a man as foreman for the projects, because sometimes men refuse to take instructions from female bosses because of their egos. These contractors highlighted more challenges in respect of their knowledge of the construction industry. Another women contractor supported this assertion:

"Most women have to rely upon other men as well, sometimes men take things for granted and you know some men are bullies even if you know your stuff, they want to make you feel as if you do not know and you will end up accommodating to their ego sometimes or you just keeping quiet for the sake of avoiding arguments and that is another challenge" (Interview, 25 July 2018).

The lack of engagement among women-owned businesses in the construction industry could be attributed to the fact that local women-owned construction businesses are typically small and cannot take on bigger projects. Most of these women-owned construction companies in this regard, struggle to meet procurement requirements for major projects because of the limited access to finance, as well as the know-how to operate in the construction industry. Some of the participants from SAWIC argued that:

"Female construction entrepreneurs often experience a hard time accessing financing than men let alone securing work in the construction industry. Construction women businesses face challenges in getting loans and this set them to use informal funding sources such as family resources. Even so, the banks set interest rates to sky high when one manages to secure the bank loans or the Stokvel" (Interview, 7 August 2018).

### **4.5.3 Technology in the Construction Industry**

Most construction work is secured through the tendering process. Therefore, contractors in the Kingsburg West Housing Project required tools to assist them to secure work. It became clear that software was a challenge for many in the construction industry, where contractors acknowledged that acquiring the necessary software does not come cheap. This software is required to manage the construction projects – first, to submit tender documents and do the costing to establish the profitability of the project and its viability thereof. This contractor confirmed:

"Software for construction is very expensive. Many contractors do not afford the software that they can use to manage their construction projects or price them. So those are the things that they need to have to be able to succeed, hence the tender might be a failure" (Interview, 25 July 2018).

Thus, these days every sector requires software, including the construction sector.

#### **4.5.4 Employment of Labour in the Construction Industry**

The study established that for the work to be done labourers must be employed – and this was the case for both the main contractor and subcontractors. This system, thus, endorses the "labour-intensive approach". When asked about the employment of labourers, participants revealed that 80-90 per cent of labourers employed in the Kingsburgh West Project were from the local community. They highlighted that labourers were employed by the Community Liaising Officer (CLO), whose task was to recruit of local labourers.

Kenton (2020) states that the less developed economies tend to be more labour-intensive. He argues further that this phenomenon is rather, common, because low income means that the economy or business cannot afford to invest in expensive capital. However, with low income and low wages, a business can remain competitive by employing many workers. The International Labour Organization [ILO] (2001) maintains that the use of labour-based methods in infrastructure development has proven to be highly useful means of creating such jobs and has contributed to the development of low-income economies – characterised by the existence of widespread unemployment and underemployment. Kenton (2020) argues further that because the cost of labour can be adjusted during market downturns – through layoffs or reducing benefits, labour-intensive industries have some flexibility to control their expenses (Kenton, 2020). This assertion was supported by one of the female employee participants:

"I have a limited duration contract which I signed. I don't have benefits but just basic wage/ salary and when I was working on-site, I did not even have paid leave days, meaning it was no work, no pay" (Interview, 14 August 2018).

Some subcontractor participants from the Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) mentioned that it was more difficult for them to enter written contracts with their labourers, as they could not even register them with the Department of Labour for the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF). The study established that these employees even suffered further as they had to buy their safety gear, which their companies did not supply. In cases where a company would provide the safety gear, the money would still be deducted from the employees' wages/salary.

#### **4.6 TRAINING IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**

Even though construction work is considered largely muscular and specialised, the construction industry offers employment without a college degree. Thus, training becomes crucial to transfer skills to those who did not get the opportunity to get a college education. To keep abreast with the changing technology in the construction industry, workers may attend institutional programmes – sadly this is their individual responsibility – as they must fund their training. There are apprenticeship and outreach programmes to empower construction workers in different trades. Most of the contractors interviewed were concerned about the lack of funding for training within the industry, considering the cost of taking part in such programmes. One woman argued:

"I must say due to financial constraints, it is difficult to get assistance, especially when it comes to training and training are very expensive. We are still looking for sponsors to sponsor programmes and courses that are key to the construction industry, not generics because in the past you would find that even clients who had programmes when they wanted to spend money, you will find that they offered generic courses and nothing related to construction. The service providers that are registered with the Construction Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA), in terms of contractor development courses are accredited on the basic courses, not on the key ones which will deal with the construction contract law. In terms of your contracts, they need to understand construction contracts and it is better if they understand the specific contract that they used in construction like your Joint Building Construction Contract (JBCC), General Construction Contract (GCC), New Engineering Contract (NEC), you name them but, indeed that is difficult" (Interview, 25 July 2018).

Even so, one would tell from participants' responses that the lack of access to training was a barrier, and that this affected many contractors, leading to the failure of many emerging contractors, from both male and female-owned businesses. One male official supported this assertion and argued as follows:

"The issue of financial management and project management is a serious challenge for emerging contractors, black businesses in general and women businesses. I know women businesses who have since discontinued because they were not managed well" (Interview, 29 August 2018).

This SAWIC member also argued:

"The actual knowledge of the industry is a challenge, how it works, how to price for instance, how to manage the project as a women contractor is a major challenge" (Interview, 25 July 2018).

Participants argued that sometimes the training providers that the government contracted to assist Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) send facilitators who have no clue about the construction industry. One of the SAWIC participants supported this assertion, thus confirming that:

"Sometimes you will find that training providers will allocate facilitators who know nothing about construction-related even when it comes to examples that they use even in programming they just do vague things like people end up not understanding what is a construction programme for instance because even the facilitator would just talk about hospital-related health issues in terms of programming because if that person has knowledge working in the hospital and end up being a facilitator so all her examples will be the hospital, health-related examples and not the core construction" (Interview, 25 July 2018).

According to these participants, some of the training programmes that were provided by the government were cancelled owing to financial challenges. A female contractor reported:

"There was a programme, under Public Works called Eyesizwe Contractor Development Programme. This programme was led and facilitated by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Public Work and was to assist emerging businesses for youth, women and people with disabilities and military veterans, however, projects were set aside for women contractors and are accessed on the Eyesizwe database. Even so, contractors needed to register within the Eyesizwe database and they will receive work through tender competitiveness. These emerging contractors the department of Public Works considers are grade 1-grade 3 but according to the Eyesizwe database admit grade 1 - grade 6 contractors that are registered with Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) database. Eyesizwe would hold summits for women contractors through SAWIC" (Interview, 25 July 2018).

The participant argued further that:

"There was also a programme by CIDB but that one also is on hold. The Department of Transport (DoT) also had a programme, Vukuzakhe. It is like they are trying to set aside in the name of programmes but there is no training involved, hence there is no growth" (Interview, 25 July 2018).

The participant also mentioned that some organisations are in partnership with the Department of Human Settlements, like NHBRC, which provides technical skills, and the SETA and NYDA, which provide soft skills. Some participants mentioned challenges with their family members – who need to be educated about their profession. This female employee argued:

"For me, construction is quite demanding since my family does not understand. Currently, I feel like I must constantly update them that currently this why I am handling it this way, this is what is happening so, it is a matter of educating yourself within the industry and then going back and educating my family to understand my industry" (Interview, 14 August 2018).

Other participants mentioned that they have acquired training or skill through higher learning institutions and have obtained diplomas and degrees in the construction sector. This statement is supported by one female employee, who argued: "Skills I have obtained are management skills like to believe. I have got administration skills and I have also got my construction skills which are like my quantity surveying which is measurements, taking off things like that" (Interview, 14 August 2018). It is also clear that workers on the construction site learn every day from other coworkers and share skills for different trades offered. This employee supported the argument:

"I believe I can learn from other people as I can never get to know everything or to be exposed to everything so whoever is within the industry for me is somebody whom I can learn from so when I interact with other people within the industry, I always have that mindset that I can learn something from that person no matter where they are in the industry" (Interview, 14 August 2018).

#### **4.7 WHERE DO WOMEN CONTRACTORS COME FROM?**

First, a company is an association of individuals with ownership that is conditioned to membership, and aims to make profit, with the capital divided into shares and bound by law. This study established that these women contractors had either started their companies, with the assistance and funding from their families or banks – others had entered partnerships with male acquaintances – on condition that they (women) own 51 per cent and more of the company. From this researcher's experience in the

construction industry, men approach construction differently than women. They tend to focus on the result, meaning completing the project on time and within budget. On the other hand, this is another story for women – who like to do due diligence for everything beforehand. This woman contractor argued:

“You know in construction you learn every day, every little piece of paper that has construction-related material, women contractors must read and if they do not understand they need to ask, and they need to subscribe to newspapers that have got construction related information” (Interview, 25 July 2018).

In South Africa, the 50/50 share of gender has been a target of many policies since the 1994 democratic dispensation. The low percentage of women in construction workmanship prompted women to consider joining the construction industry. Irrespective of the industry, women can bring better quality to a project than men. Thus, this woman articulated:

“Most women contractors have performed better than men contractors. They take their work seriously when they are given an opportunity. They are willing to learn although it's not like the majority, I mean, not all of them, but the majority of them are always willing and when given a chance they can excel” (Interview, 25 July 2018).

Employment in the construction industry has enabled women to support their families – while others are still struggling to make ends meet. This move has led to inequality in this segment for work allocation and wage distribution for women. Most of the female participants highlighted in this regard that as female business contractors in the male-dominated space, they are not invited to the table as often as their male counterparts, to a point where they are being excluded in certain types of work – as some believe that they cannot manage or handle the projects. They also mentioned that it is a huge challenge for many, as their companies are still classed as grade 1 and grade 2. Another woman contractor expressed thus:

“I don't think the increased number of women contractors has made difference concerning equality. We still don't have many women in the construction industry, but the women that we are, still struggle to get opportunities, so the increasing number is not helping even if we increased but we still have a lot of men without opportunities and the majority of the women contractors are in the lower grades and that is the grade that is very difficult to access work” (Interview, 25 July 2018).

However, these obstacles did not stop these women from entering building partnerships with established construction companies. With the help and support of different organisations – ranging from helping them secure funding; providing them with technical expertise and helping them formulate policy and seizing opportunities to be trained in construction-related stuff – one woman contractor shared that she owns a company classed as Grade 8GB, 8CE, 6SQ. She also mentioned that she can now assist other women contractors by mentoring them, and offering others work in her construction company. Other contractors confirmed that many organisations assist women to be better contractors. With a small fee, these organisations like the SAWIC and the NHBRC assist women to set up companies (from

obtaining the correct documentation on their behalf to registering a company in different departments or organisations) in the hope that they would secure employment.

#### **4.8 WOMEN AND INDEPENDENT ORGANISATIONS IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**

Many of these independent organisations that assist women venturing into the construction industry are non-profit organisations that promote gender equality and provide support to women wishing to join the construction industry. When I spoke to South African Women in Construction (SAWIC) representatives, I gathered that there was no difference – as they aim to help women contractors in the construction industry. The South African Women in Construction was established in 1999 by then minister of Public Works, Stella Sigcau, to empower women and give them access to business opportunities, training, networking, and finance to run their construction businesses. Many women were motivated to join SAWIC because they were in the construction industry already, while others were invited by their friends who were already members, and the rest were invited to SAWIC presentations to lure them to join the industry. One representative argued:

"After joining, they had a constitution which was about networking for women's emancipation in terms of the construction industry or the total built environment because it was about women contractors, women professionals they invited students who are in construction-related courses. Then I thought, maybe I was going to learn more in construction through SAWIC" (interview, 25 July 2018).

Organisations that fall under SAWIC include women entrepreneurs, some business owners, and some who are employed in the construction industry – skilled and unskilled. The initiative of SAWIC is to empower all women in the construction space to support the BBBEE. The South African Women in Industry and Construction partners with government and private entities like CIDB, IDT, Master's Builders, Department of Transport, Public Works, SEDA and NHBRC, and get them to train their members.

These women's organisations play a major role of finding opportunities for others, ensuring compliance, organising contractor development programmes (by running workshops for women in various departments) through networking. It was understood that one of the BBBEE construction codes requires that the main contractor mentor small contractors – and if the contractor being mentored is a women, their scorecard improves.

## **4.9 CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented the research findings by analysing the findings in terms of participants' demographic and women construction background, and motivation – thus highlighting challenges that women contend with in the construction industry. These findings also highlighted the pieces of training provided, the genetics of women in the construction industry. Last, the chapter discussed women and independent organisations. Chapter Five draws conclusions, based on the findings of the research and make recommendations for policy, and future research propositions.

# **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This final chapter presents the findings of the research conducted on the Kingsburgh West Housing Project and makes suggestions for further research. The chapter also presents an evaluation of the literature; a combination of the issues covered in previous chapters on policy implementation, and challenges within the construction industry. It also presents recommendations for government and construction industry and suggests a way forward by identifying strategies that can be implemented to address gender inequality. The researcher's main aim was to explore the impact of the BNG policy as a job creation mechanism for women contractors in low-income housing construction, and to identify possible interventions to redress gender inequality in the construction industry.

## **5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS ON WOMEN AND HOUSING IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**

Giving work to female-owned businesses in the construction industry is still in its infancy in South Africa and the rest of the world. Chapter Two presented the results of the literature reviewed and made a case for women's participation in the construction industry, and reviewed policy implementation to redress inequality, which is linked to gender, race, and class in the construction industry. The literature was reviewed in the context of South Africa. The findings of the study are based on the data gathered from interviews with participants and the literature reviewed in relation to the construction industry. These are the findings in relation to the BNG policy, training, women's organisations, and the challenges that these women contend with in accessing employment in the construction of low-income housing. The findings have brought to light issues that will empower women as individuals and contribute to the sustainability of their businesses in the construction space in South Africa and abroad.

The study established that many macroeconomic frameworks exist within the construction industry, which seems to suggest a monopolistic competition. To this end, there will be increasing competition, in one way or another, but the construction sector must find strategies to counter monopolistic competition. The analysis of the literature has shown that monopolistic competition often precipitates collusion between oligopolistic firms, which set the prices they will charge, and the quantities they will manufacture. The study has ascertained that most women contractors venture into construction by starting their own construction companies. It was also established that many are emerging construction

companies, which had difficulties progressing, and thus, withdraw from participating, owing to a lack of finance and their inability to make profits.

This led to the main question of the study, on whether the BNG is, indeed, a mechanism for creating jobs for women in the construction industry. The findings of the study revealed, in this regard, that a labour-intensive employment method was adopted – where up to 90 per cent of local labourers were employed by the project but even so, the percentage of women employees was still not close to the percentage of their male counterparts. The analysis revealed that women contractors are still struggling to secure work to a point that others had even abandoned their construction businesses to seek work as labourers or have ventured into other sectors. It should also be noted that the construction labour-intensive work is on a contract basis, and not on a permanent basis. As such, it does not give guarantees to labourers who face the risk of retrenchment once those trades they were employed to do were completed. The study concludes, thus, that the BNG has a long way to go before fulfilling its mandate of being a job creation mechanism for women in the construction industry and requires high level intervention from the government.

### **5.2.1 Gendered Nature of the Construction Industry**

The findings of this study revealed that it is not only emerging women contractors who are faced with funding challenges in South Africa. Government takes forever to approve or release funding for all black contractors – both male and female – and bank representatives in South Africa seem to make empty promises of assisting these contractors. In this regard, the researcher is of the view that the government has failed to intervene in this matter – and has, thus, failed construction companies owned by those who were previously disadvantaged – by allowing banks – that do not share the vision of the democratic government, to exclude emerging black contractors. This neoliberalist tendency has spilled to the domain of construction suppliers and the main contractors, who control the market by influencing the prices of materials and implementing tender competitiveness – hence emerging contractors bid at a lower price to secure work – which, they are not able to execute because the prices are too low. The study recommends, in this regard that the South African labour unions as entities whose mandate is to protect the people, should enforce measures to protect contractors from the neo-liberal macroeconomic mandate that both the private sector and the government are protecting.

This researcher argues that even though policies and regulations are in place, implementation remains a problem. Failure to implement policy lies with government officials, who do not enforce the monitoring procedures stipulated. Knowing that policies are in place does not help, if the implementation of those

policies does not benefit the women of South Africa. The study, then, recommends that independent bodies be appointed that will monitor and report on the progress quarterly – and provide feedback on whether the implemented policies have abated the gap in the construction industry.

Community issues within the construction industry affect emerging and main contractors – both female-owned and male-owned companies. The findings of this study revealed that these community challenges are attributed to political influences – where leaders use construction projects to further their political aspirations. It is recommended, in this regard that government must intervene and conscientise councilors about the usefulness of these projects to the community, and not use them as tools to advance their selfish political agenda.

### **5.2.2 Participation of Women in Housing Delivery**

The findings of this study revealed that patriarchy still poses a major challenge for women in the construction industry. It is, to this end, still difficult for men to accept that times have changed – hence change is imperative in the construction industry. This researcher argues in this regard that even after decades of injustices and the unfair discrimination of women due to lethal forces of gender inequality, to this day, the construction industry does not have regard for women contractors. This has been exacerbated by the fact that women still suffer at the hands of their employers who pay them less than their male counterparts – or do not even consider them for promotion – simply because they are women. This researcher is of the view that it does not even matter whether the women are more qualified than their male counterparts – they continue to be discriminated against for being females. This attitude had also bred employer biasness towards women employees, where some managers do not appraise female employees in a fair manner – but instead, increase their workloads to set them up for failure.

Women have intrinsic values and should be recognised for their strong qualities. This researcher argues that women are excluded from certain jobs, even though they have strong qualities. The findings of this study support the notion that it is rare to come across sites with female supervisors. This suggests that there are few sites with female supervisors. The construction industry, therefore, needs to address issues of segregation and the inflexibility of appointing only men to senior positions. The findings of this study also revealed that women-owned construction companies are also not invited to table talks for reasons not known to them – which could be that they are not considered to have enough experience or skill to take on certain work.

The construction industry needs to address their attitudes towards women (**see figure 5.2.2.1**). In this regard, this researcher opines that women are still seen as the weaker sex and not fit enough to cope with the pressure that is inherent in construction work – the same way, men consider themselves skilled, muscular, and having the technical expertise, whereas they consider women more suitable for administration related work. Thus, the findings of this study revealed that men in the construction industry do not take women's positions seriously on construction sites – for example a female Health and Safety Officer is not accorded the same respect as a male officer. This calls for strategies that would be implemented in construction sites to educate males in the construction industry to treat women in the industry with the respect that they deserve.

**Figure 5.2.2.1:** Photo A: showing only man were given a task to lay concrete & Photo B: shows only women were given planting grass task.

**PHOTO A**



**PHOTO B**



(Source: Researcher's Own Fieldwork Data)

### **5.2.3 Motivation for Participation in the Construction Industry and Housing**

This researcher argues for a need for female contractors to engage with those who are already in the construction industry to familiarise themselves with the construction value chain. To this end, women must start positioning themselves in relation to construction material supply, plant hire, and logistics to find ways of getting their companies into these sectors. This will allow these women contractors to supply local projects rather than sourcing material outside project geographic locations. To this end, women must ensure that their businesses follow government's regulations on procurement processes.

The study participants mentioned that women must ensure that their businesses are sustainable businesses and that they fit the criterion of construction specialists. This researcher argues in this regard that women must choose certain building material codes, as there are many codes in the construction industry – for example concrete supply and other, rather than taking on every code as this requires huge capital. Participants in the Kingsburgh West Project argued in this regard that more black women should be part of the makers of the construction material industry, as this does not require bodily man-made muscle – like the construction industry suggests, which is their way of perpetuating discrimination against women. The findings of this study suggest that there is still room for innovation within the construction industry, and that it is time women occupy that space. Getting women to participate in the construction industry empowers them to harness their potential in the process, thus reducing their vulnerability. I argue, in this regard, that gender-biased norms and attitudes still need to be addressed or made evident, as this might be the key to attracting more women into the construction space.

#### **5.2.4 Access to Subcontracting in Housing Delivery**

The study found that access to construction work is not easy – for both main contractors and subcontractors. Most of the participants highlighted that to secure work, they had to follow tendering processes. The findings of this study also revealed that some of these tender processes require contractors to procure documents before tendering, and for some contractors, this was a barrier as they did not even have the money to access these documents.

Participants argued further that different departments or organisations select contractors and subcontractors from departmental contractor databases. The data collected suggest that companies cannot automatically register on these databases, but that they must comply in terms of the law, by ensuring that they have tax clearance certificates, are registered with the NHBRC, the CIDB, and the Department of Labour for the Federated Employers Mutual (FEM) and have a certificate in this regard. Companies must also produce BEE certificates. The findings of this study, thus, suggest that contractors cannot secure government work without these certificates.

Emerging contractors in the Kingsburgh West Housing Project have highlighted that while government is expected to assist poor people to secure work, the same government put people out of jobs by insisting that contractors who had little or nothing to sustain themselves and their families be compliant. These contractors claimed that even though they can do the work, some were not even given an opportunity (by testing their skills) because of this mandatory compliance. The findings of this study

revealed that in addition to being complaint, contractors or subcontractors needed to prove that they had the capacity, and provide references from previous jobs, which most of the emerging contractors did not have. The findings have also shown that some men working in the construction industry take advantage of women subcontractors in the construction sites and promise to assist them in return for sexual favours. These women contractors indicated that they were disgusted by these incidents, to a point that some left the construction industry to seek in other sectors.

The findings of the study also revealed that at times work is secured through community councilors, as they are leaders within different structures. This, also has disadvantages, considering that to be allocated work, one had to be part of the community structures and be popular.

### **5.2.5 Transparency of Processes and Procedures for Women to Participate**

The findings of this study revealed that although there are policies in place that promote women's participation in the construction industry, a huge gap still exists that needs to be closed. To this end, the study participants argued that the Contract Participation Goal (CPG) was not talking to women only. These women had raised concerns about contractors' participation goals and forums that are overlapping and undermining policies put in place for promoting women's participation in the construction industry. A combination of these concerns includes women's participation, which was a subject of national interest during the 60th anniversary of the Women's Charter anniversary (to the effect that that women owned contractors must be allocated 30 per cent of the work. According to the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act (PPPFA), 30 per cent participation goal includes males and females youth, women, people with disabilities, and military veterans. When former Department of Public Works Minister, Nathi Nhleko, responded to the parliamentary question on the KwaZulu-Natal's Delangokubona Business forum, he introduced a policy that compels companies awarded tenders worth more than R30 million to subcontract 30% of the contract value to local beneficiation and participation (since then, business forums started demanding 30 percent participation on construction projects). The findings of this study also revealed that these three components present challenges in the event that the allocated projects amount to R3 million and above. In terms of the client's responsibility, and the condition under which the tender is awarded, which requires that contractors who get allocated projects of above R30 million allocate 30 per cent of their work to local subcontractors, or women and the youth. According to the findings of this study the 30 per cent that must be subcontracted has not been clearly articulated. What is not clear is which component will benefit from the 30 per cent mentioned in the document.

The findings of this study revealed that during the May 2016 Budget Vote 38, then deputy minister of Human Settlements, Zou Kota-Fredericks announced the promotion and empowerment of women to participate in the human settlements value chain. To this end, the deputy minister allocated 30 per cent of the Departmental Capital budget to women-owned projects. This finding was corroborated by the SAWIC participants, who confirmed that the 30 per cent was to be used to facilitate the Women Build Programme to commemorate the South African Women's march of 1956, but that to this day, the allocation has not come through.

This researcher argues, to this end, that the attitudes and perceptions of men in the construction industry about women hinder the latter's participation in the industry. In this regard, women who are already in the construction space are also limited by these perceptions and attitudes. This assertion was supported by several participants from different organisations, who concurred that there is construction language that prefers male contractors over female contractors – even if the female contractor puts in the same effort as her male counterpart – because of the popular belief that there are certain tasks that only men can undertake, and that male contractors are physically equipped to work on site, and not female contractors.

### **5.3 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

South Africa has formulated and implemented many policies, such as the Breaking New Ground (BNG) policy to improve conditions of women and the youth, and to ensure their inclusion in society and the economy. However, policies that seek to redress inequalities in the construction industry have not been formulated. This researcher argues in this regard that only blanket regulations and policies are currently in place, which do not specifically confront issues that women are faced with in the construction space. Policies and frameworks on the youth and women have been formulated since 1994, and legislation enacted – however, women in construction continue to suffer at the hands of men. To this end, women are tired of the endless fight to achieve equality in the construction industry. This begs the question, *What does the law says about equity and fairness in relation to women – and do gender policies protect women in the construction industry?* When the BNG was promulgated in 2004, and was adopted by the national Cabinet as a policy that replaced, or was a revision of the White Paper on the achievement of equity, women had hoped that the new policy would eliminate the barriers that they encounter daily in the construction industry.

Even though South Africa has measures in place to ensure the implementation of these policies – for instance, the Gender Equity Index (GEI), this researcher argues that this is not enough to bring parity of

males and females in the construction industry. The national government, in this regard, must provide guidance on how wealth is to be shared. This would translate to issues of skills and opportunities, as only men are afforded most of these opportunities, to the exclusion of women – regardless of the fact that there are umbrella policies and legislation in place. The construction industry often, perpetuates gender discrimination, which is manifested in the pay scales, salary earnings, and promotion. Thus, to address gender discrimination in the construction industry, a tool must be designed that would be dedicated to supporting and advancing the interests of women and in the process, outline benefits that can accrue with the implementation of the practical gender construction inequality agenda, justifying the implementation of the instrument/tool – namely the "*Practical Gender Construction Inequality Act*" (PGCIA) that will produce constructive results. This tool can be linked with SARS to monitor compliance and evaluate the progress of all companies conducting business in the construction sector. The three layers of government (national, provincial, and local municipalities) must enforce legislation and regulations and impose harsh penalties for non-compliance. These regulations must be enforced, especially on construction companies that take on private work – as owners of these companies think that policies do not apply to private work – but to government work only. This means allowing the subpoena-duces-tecum powers and the right to apply to the court to institute a breach of the Act. Government must act by developing programmes that would support the implementation of the new Act. This includes organising training, setting up workshops, and identifying accountabilities and incentives.

Since it is taken for granted that gender discrimination in construction is not a concern, the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) must design and enforce an instrument that will focus *only* and take cognisance of, and monitor gender equality in the construction industry. To redress gender inequality in the construction industry, South Africa needs to bring radical changes, and those changes can only be seen when women actively pursue careers in construction and subcontracting without fear of being discriminated against. Additional tools and resources must be identified to enable these changes. These include the training budget, additional staff, or consultants to support the development of the new policy. To this end, government must hold departments accountable to ensure that targets are met, and that the policy is enforced.

## **5.4 CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

The attitude of those who are in construction need to change – it is, to this end, imperative for the quality and quantity of the work to be measured, and the hours that one spends on the construction site

not to be counted. Most women did not choose construction to imitate/become men – but as a career. They do not expect to be treated like men – but want to be appreciated, just like men. It is recommended, in this regard, that government enforces strategies that would foster construction sites/workplaces where women would be free and not fear losing their jobs because of male domination.

In conclusion, the findings of this study have confirmed that patriarchy, gender inequality, and discrimination are prevalent in the construction industry. and that women are debating whether there is fairness within the construction industry. The role of women in the construction industry must be revisited. To this end, companies must not put women as faces of companies in the name of women's empowerment – while they are still the sole decision makers. Women and men must stand as a collective and fight the gender stigma that has plagued the construction industry for decades. It is time for South Africa and the global community to start enforcing new policies, and for women to understand that the foundation had been laid towards redressing gender inequality. What is still needed is, however, to shift the focus to the construction industry. Women in the construction industry demand to be treated fairly and the world must act. Construction companies need to implement women's equity policies formulated by the government – only then will a fair working environment be fostered in a true sense for women in the construction industry. In this regard, women must be acknowledged, rewarded, and treated with the utmost respect – like their male counterparts – to facilitate the participation of more women in the construction industry.

This study has investigated the extent to which the Breaking New Ground policy serves as a job creation mechanism for women in low-income housing construction. In acknowledgement of the challenges and the contested discourses concerning women in construction, the analysis has focused on finance and gender inequality in the construction industry. Analysing inequality trends in the construction industry has revealed formal and covert gender discrimination, and partiality construction practices, as well as the culture where the main challenge for women is how wealth should be shared. Patriarchy has continued to manifest in workplaces where males are dominating. This talks to promoting women's participation in the construction and manufacturing industry by affording them opportunities to participate in construction material supply by supporting and financing their ideas. The analysis drew from the study Objective Four: "Explain the linkage between programmes run by government for women and their performance in low-income housing construction", and that these programmes do not empower women/women-owned businesses as the conditions women find themselves in are unbearable.

The challenges these women are faced with have affected their sustainable careers in construction as the study established that some of these women have joined other sectors – while others are still contending with discrimination at the hands of their employers who, in the process, are shattering their levels of confidence.

Considering the challenges identified, and the findings of this study, I make recommendations for future research topics:

- Understanding the value chain - the success of women-owned businesses in the construction industry.
- A gendered state towards women in the construction industry – construction gendered inequality policy formulation.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX 1 LETTER FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY UNDER KINGSBURGH WEST PROJECT**



UNIVERSITY OF  
KWAZULU-NATAL  
INYUVESI  
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

22 May 2017

Policy and Research  
eThekweni Municipality | Human Settlements & Infrastructure  
3rd Floor; Shell House | 221 Anton Lembede/Smith Street  
Durban  
4001

Attention: Ms Bulelwa Magudu

### REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH TOWARDS MASTERS IN HOUSING

My name is Anathi Xuma, (Student Number 216072550), currently studying towards a Masters in Housing at the University of KwaZulu Natal. My supervisor is Dr Sithembiso Myeni, who is contactable on 0768171990 and on email at [Myenis1@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Myenis1@ukzn.ac.za), also at the University of KwaZulu-Natal at 031 260 1270.

The title of my dissertation is: "Exploring Breaking New Ground as a job creation mechanism for women in low-income housing construction: A case study of Kingsburgh West Housing Project in eThekweni Municipality"

The objectives of this study are:

1. To trace the historical narrative of the role played by women in transforming the construction industry in South Africa.
2. To analyse government policies that contribute to the shaping of women job creation in low-income housing construction in the eThekweni Municipality.
3. To examine how challenges faced by women in low-income housing construction affect their sustainable career in the construction industry.
4. To explain the relationship between government programmes for women and their performance in low-income housing construction in Kingsburgh West.
5. To recommend strategies for job creation of women involved in low-income housing construction.

Part of my dissertation requires a field research to explain my theory. I intend conducting this field research at Kingsburgh West from July 2017 interviewing 10 contractors who were involved in the construction of low-income housing in the Kingsburgh West housing project. The Breaking New Ground policy vision is to promote the achievement of a non-racial, integrated society through the development of sustainable human settlements and quality housing. Job creation is one of the objectives of the BNG policy. The research will explore women job creation systems used in low-income housing construction in the Kingsburgh West housing project. With your guidance, I intend interviewing at least 10 women and men owned contractors.

Kingsburgh West project has been selected because it is the low-income housing project build at the time of the Breaking New Ground policy, therefore the project is seen as suitable for the research study.

Thanking you in advance for your positive feedback.

Yours sincerely,

A. Xuma

Cell: +2784 511 2602; E-mail: [anathi@motheogroup.co.za](mailto:anathi@motheogroup.co.za)

APPENDIX 2 LIST OF QUESTIONS - SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS FOR EMPLOYEES,  
CONTRACTORS, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, AND SAWIC

**QUESTIONS FOR EMPLOYEES**

1. Historical Profile

- 1.1. When did you start working in this company?
- 1.2. What opportunities did you see that gave you your idea to seek employment in the construction industry?
- 1.3. Tell me about your last position and what you did before starting in the construction industry?
- 1.4. What is your position in this company?

2. General Profile

- 2.1. What skill do you have?
- 2.2. What work did you do when working at the Kingsburgh West housing project?
- 2.3. What made you qualify for the work you did?

3. Administration/Contract

- 3.1. Do you have an employment contract in this company?
- 3.2. Do you receive employment benefits in this company?
- 3.3. What are those benefits?

4. Participation in the Kingsburgh West Project

- 4.1. Give a brief detail about the projects that you have worked in.
- 4.2. What position did you serve at the Kingsburgh West low-income housing project?
- 4.3. How did you get employed at the Kingsburgh West?
- 4.4. What challenges did you face in the project?
- 4.5. How did you deal with those challenges?

5. Relationship with other structures and support system

- 5.1. How do you balance your work in the construction industry and that of the family?

5.2. How do you relate with other employees in the construction industry?

5.3. How do you cope with demand of a construction site?

5.4. Who serves as your support in the construction industry?

6. Challenges in the Construction Industry

6.1. What challenges do you face as a woman/man in the construction industry? Name few.

6.2. Do you receive protection gear in the construction site?

6.3. Why there are few women in management positions in the construction industry?

6.4. What are common risks in the construction industry?

6.5. How do you overcome risks in the construction industry?

7. Policies, Practice and Way Forward

7.1. What do continuously improve your skills or efficiency?

7.2. Do you think the increased number of women has made a difference in relation to equality in the construction industry?

7.3. What would you suggest to encourage women in the construction industry?

8. General Comment

8.1. Do you have anything else you would like to add?

**QUESTIONS FOR CONTRACTORS**

1. Historical Profile

1.1. Describe how and when your business started?

1.2. What opportunity did you see that gave you your idea to start your business?

1.3. How did you plan your business?

1.4. Can you describe how your business was performing in the last three years?

1.5. Where do you want to see the business in the next three years?

2. General Profile

2.1. What skill of labour your company have?

2.2. What work your company did when working at the Kingsburgh West housing project?

2.3. What made you qualify for the work you did in Kingsburgh West housing project?

3. Administration/Leadership
  - 3.1. How many directors, members, of the business?
  - 3.2. Who are executive directors of the business?
  - 3.3. Who takes decision in the company?
  - 3.4. How do people qualify to become a director?
  - 3.5. What are the director's level of education?
  - 3.6. What are director's responsibility?
  - 3.7. How is your board of directors constituted in terms of gender?
  
4. Participation in the Kingsburgh West Project
  - 4.1. How did you source the labour?
  - 4.2. What challenges did you face in the project?
  - 4.3. How did you deal with those challenges?
  - 4.4. At what time were you starting at the construction site? Also, what time of the day did you finish?
  - 4.5. How many job opportunities you created through your participation at the Kingsburgh West low-income housing?
  
5. Company Sustainability
  - 5.1. How much was work you did in the Kingsburgh West project?
  - 5.2. What did you do with the money the company made from the project?
  - 5.3. What measures you have in place for company growth?
  
6. Relationship with other structures and support system
  - 6.1. How do you balance your work in the construction industry and that of the family?
  - 6.2. How do you relate with other structures as a woman?
  - 6.3. Who serves as your support in the construction industry?
  
7. Challenges in the Construction Industry
  - 7.1. What challenges do you face as a woman in the construction industry? Name few.
  - 7.2. Why there are few women in the construction industry management positions?

8. Policies, Practise and Way Forward

- 8.1. Do you think there is a need for women to participate in the construction industry?
- 8.2. How do the structures established after 1994 relate with women in the construction industry?
- 8.3. Do you think the increased number of women has made a difference in relation to equality in the construction industry?
- 8.4. What would you suggest to encourage women in the construction industry?

9. General Comment

- 9.1. Do you have anything else you would like to add?

**QUESTIONS FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS**

1. Women Participation in the Construction Industry

- 1.1. Can you comment about the status of women in the construction industry?
- 1.2. What is criteria for job creation of women in the construction industry?
- 1.3. What programmes are in place in order to facilitate empowering women in low-income housing construction?

2. Demand and Supply of Women Contractors in the Construction Industry

- 2.1. What is the recruitment strategy of contractors in government?
- 2.2. Who draws the list of contractors for housing projects?
- 2.3. How do contractors qualify to get a job in the EThekweni Municipality?
- 2.4. What tools do the government have in place for job creation of women in low-income housing construction?

3. Policies, Practise and Way forward

- 3.1. Do you think there is a need for women to participate in the construction industry?
- 3.2. How do the structures established after 1994 relate with women in construction industry?
- 3.3. Is there a policy in place that monitors implementation of mechanisms that support women job creation and participation in the construction?

- 3.4. Do you think having more women owned construction companies has made a difference in job creation of women?
- 3.5. What would you suggest to encourage women contractors in government?
4. Challenges in the Construction Industry
  - 4.1. What challenges do contractors face in the construction industry?
  - 4.2. How do you relate these challenges with other structures?
  - 4.3. How does government assist in minimising challenges contractors face in low-income housing construction?
  - 4.4. Are there differences contractors face in the construction industry between women owned contractors and men owned contractors?
5. Feedback Strategy, Conditions and Support
  - 5.1. What strategies are in place for job creation of women in the construction industry in government?
  - 5.2. Are there any innovating ways of improving women contractors economically, challenging social inequality, and improving women's voice in the public sphere in government?
  - 5.3. Are there any forms of providing micro credits to the women contractors as part of support from the government?
6. General Comment
  - 6.1. How would you comment about the participation of women in the construction industry?
  - 6.2. Do you think that women contractors are respected and other structures respect them?
  - 6.3. Do you have anything else you would like to add?

#### **QUESTIONS FOR SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION MEMBERS (SAWIC)**

1. Entry in SAWIC: Motivation and Expectations and Participation
  - 1.1. Can you tell me more about yourself before joining SAWIC?
  - 1.2. What motivated you to join SAWIC?
  - 1.3. What made you decide to join SAWIC?
  - 1.4. Describe how and when SAWIC was formed?
  - 1.5. Does SAWIC has a constitution in place?

2. General Profile
  - 2.1. How much do SAWIC members pay for membership?
  - 2.2. How long have you've been a member of SAWIC?
  - 2.3. How do contractors become SAWIC members?
  - 2.4. How does the SAWIC membership benefit in the construction industry?
  - 2.5. What did you benefit as a SAWIC member?
  
3. Administration/Leadership and Training
  - 3.1. How many executive members at SAWIC?
  - 3.2. Who are executive members at SAWIC?
  - 3.3. How do people qualify to become EXCO members at SAWIC?
  - 3.4. What are the EXCO members level of education at SAWIC?
  - 3.5. What are EXCO members responsibilities at SAWIC?
  - 3.6. How is SAWIC constituted?
  - 3.7. What is the relationship between SAWIC and government?
  - 3.8. What role SAWIC is mentoring and training contractors?
  - 3.9. What training programmes are existing for SAWIC members?
  
4. Challenges in the Construction Industry
  - 4.1. What challenges did you face as SAWIC members?
  - 4.2. How did the challenges affect SAWIC members?
  - 4.3. How did SAWIC deal with those challenges of their members?
  
5. Feedback Strategy, Conditions and Support
  - 5.1. What strategies are in place within SAWIC so as to better chances of securing jobs for its members?
  - 5.2. What support SAWIC provides to its members?
  - 5.3. Does SAWIC receive support from government?
  - 5.4. If yes, what kind of support?
  
6. Policies, Practise and Way Forward
  - 6.1. What influence SAWIC has in policy in the construction industry?

6.2. Do you think the increased number of women contractors has made a difference in relation to equality in the construction industry?

6.3. What would you suggest to encourage women in the construction industry?

7. General Comment

7.1. How would you comment about the participation of women in the construction industry?

7.2. Do you think that women contractors are respected and other structures respect them?

7.3. Do you have anything else you would like to add?