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WOMEN OF MARIKANA: SURVIVAL AND STRUGGLES

BRIDGET NDIBONGO

A full dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of Johannesburg, in fulfilment of the requirement of Master of Arts in Sociology.

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Johannesburg, May 2015
AFFIDAVIT: MASTER AND DOCTORAL STUDENTS
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OF 1963 and the applicable Regulations published in the GG GNR 1258 of 21 July 1972; GN 903 of 10 July 1998; GN 109 of 2
February 2001 as amended.
This Dissertation is dedicated to the women in Marikana and to the memory of Paulina Masuhlo, a leader, activist, mother, sister and a friend.
ABSTRACT

On 16 August 2012, 34 striking miners were killed at Marikana, a small mining town in Rustenburg, South Africa. The massacre received considerable media attention around the world. It has been scrutinised by a Presidential Commission of Inquiry, and it has provided a focus for academic writing that spanned across mining economics, iniquities of migrant labour, responsibility for the tragedy, policing, living and working conditions and union organisation. However, very little has been said about the women who lived side by side with the striking workers. These were women whose poverty helped propel the fight for a living wage and who suffered from police repression. They were often treated badly by their husbands and boyfriends; but, their leadership and solidarity made it possible for the miners to win a five-month strike in 2014.

This dissertation provides a feminist contribution in its analysis of this seminal moment in South African history. In the process, it offers a vantage point from which to learn more about the lives of women in South Africa’s mining communities and about their capacity to change those lives. It also shows that women in mining communities are not mere extensions of male miners, but have their own agency, interests, ideas and forms of mobilisation which need to be recognised and acknowledged.

In attempting to offer the perspectives of women in Marikana, various research methods were deployed and integrated. These included a survey, participant and non-participant observation, informal conversations and semi-structured and life-history interviews. Most data has been analysed and presented thematically. However, there are also three autobiographical life histories. These help to understand the women holistically and without imposing the author’s opinions. Four engagements, including report-back meetings, were held as a way of showing respect and gratitude to the women who participated in the project. These sessions, along with small acts of practical support, helped win trust among the women when tension and fear were widespread following the Marikana massacre. The dissertation reports on how the massacre and the related strikes impacted on the lives of women in Marikana. The findings reject a linear model of activism that sees women moving from domestic passivity to political activity as a consequence of involvement in the strike. This breaks
with the usual analysis of such activism since there is evidence of women exerting agency even before the massacre, and not all women were politicised through subsequent struggles. In addition, the dissertation also shows how women rejected the double burden of patriarchy and invisibility in this context. Their responses to the 2012 massacre pushed them beyond the normality of their hitherto daily lived experiences. In other words, the women moved beyond their activism in the homes to fighting for their community’s survival. This is important, because the participation of the women in the 2012 massacre challenged existing gender stereotypes and traditional roles played by women, and gave women a voice, thus highlighting their agency. It brought greater awareness to the visibility and struggles of not only the striking miners’, but also those of the women and entire community to the extent that they performed conventional duties, such as providing food and caring for wounded men. This was an unconventional practice previously never experienced; it saw the women of Marikana siding with workers against the police and employers. But, many of the women went beyond this. They formed their own grassroots organisation which challenged the norm that women are subordinate to men. Some led the community as a whole and were an integral part of the formation of a new political party. The massacre and its aftermath resulted in greater awareness, and for most women in Marikana nothing could ever be the same again.
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Ndibamba Ngazozibini (Thank you). This research would have not have been possible without the generosity of all the women in Marikana, who through their commitment and support to the mining struggles of their community continuously prove that Wathinta umfazi wathinta imbokodo (you strike a woman you strike a rock).

I would firstly like to convey my gratitude and appreciation to my exceptional supervisor Professor Peter Alexander who was as excited about this research as I was. I would like to thank him for his invaluable support and contribution to this research. His encouragement and belief in me are what made this research possible. Professor Alexander thank you very much for believing in me, going beyond your responsibilities as a supervisor by checking up on me and encouraging me to think critically and independently and for always pushing me to the edge. To Dr. Luke Sinwell, my co-supervisor, thank you for your kindness and for giving me critical feedback with a smile on your face. I relied immensely on your wealth of knowledge about issues in platinum mining communities. Thank you for your advice and the useful contacts you have generously shared with me and for proofreading my work. My gratitude also goes to everyone at the South African Research Chair in Social Change. Thank you for your advice for reading my very rough work and giving me valuable feedback and constructive criticism which pushed me to work even harder.

This research is dedicated to all the women in Marikana, who welcomed me with warm hands, to the memory of late Paulina Masuhlo aluta continua (the struggle continues). Your struggles have formed the core of this research. Without your co-operation, bravery, willingness to share your stories in the midst of tragedy with an ‘outsider’, generosity, and kindness, this dissertation would have not materialised. To my mother, Alicia Nogolide Ndibongo, thank you very much for your unconditional support and for always supporting my decisions even though you don't always agree with the choices I make, ndiyabulela (thank you). To all my friends for being a formidable support system and occasionally hosting me at your places and staying up all night with me to work on this research, thank you very much. I have been blessed to call you my friends.
I would also like to acknowledge the National Research Foundation (NRF) for giving me a bursary and the University of Johannesburg for a supervisor-linked bursary. However, conclusions and opinions expressed are those of the author and should not be attributed to either the NRF or the University of Johannesburg. I would also like to convey my gratitude to Dr. Sarah Sinwell and Hibist Kassa for editing my dissertation.
## GLOSSARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Work</td>
<td>Written work done in the class room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeding Scheme</td>
<td>National School Nutrition Program which provides food to children in schools from Grade R to Grade 7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hippo</td>
<td>The Hippo is a South African police armored personnel carrier specially designed to be mine resistant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iboma</td>
<td>An excluded place for boys undergoing circumcision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imbizo</td>
<td>Village/community gathering usually called by the Chief or leader of the area to discuss important issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kraal</td>
<td>Fenced enclosure for livestock located within a Homestead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobola</td>
<td>Refers to a bridal price paid to a bride by the groom before they get married.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mpondo</td>
<td>Xhosa ethnic group originating from the Eastern Cape province in South Africa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muthi</td>
<td>African traditional medicine makes use of various natural products, many derived from trees and other plants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension</td>
<td>Is a fixed sum to be paid regularly to a person, from the government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shebeen</td>
<td>Informal drinking establishments usually based in the Townships.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sjambok: Leather whip made from a cow skin/hide

Social Grants: Social security services provided by the state to support those who are vulnerable to poverty and in need of state support services.

Umqombothi: Traditional brewed African beer

Unprotected strike: In South Africa, an unprotected strike (sometimes mistakenly called, “illegal strike”) refers to a situation in which workers go on strike without the “protection” of a union. Hence, a protected strike refers to a situation in which workers have gone through formal or institutional processes before undertaking strike action.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Question

The Marikana miners’ strike began on 9 August 2012 which marked the national Women’s Day in South Africa, when about 3000 Rock Drill Operators (RDOs) from Lonmin mine downed tools demanding a wage increase. The strike lasted more than two weeks and grew scores of support from the community including that of the women in Marikana. It has been said that what happened in Marikana was a watershed moment in South African labour history (Bizoz in Tolsi 2012), remembered for its brutal nature which claimed the lives of 34 striking miners and saw 78 consequently injured. The strike can also be remembered as a ‘seismic event’ (Alexander et al. 2012) that resulted in a massacre. This did not only shake up striking miners themselves, but also communities within and beyond the Marikana landscape. The fallout from the massacre was not only felt by the miners themselves, the wounded, their families and widows, but was also in the hearts of ordinary women in the community who organised and mobilised on a scale that had not previously been seen. Some academics have commented that the women provided care work (Benya, 2013) to the miners helping to feed them during the struggle, but this is only part of a much richer story. The strike which was initially rooted in miners struggles, resulted in new forms of mobilisation that heightened the participation of women in community struggles and thus challenged the characterisation of ‘woman’ as a subordinate group. The impact of the participation of women in the struggle certainly resulted in a shift in gender relations in the community and this forms the basis of this research.

Firstly, the participation of women in the miners’ strike was an important part of understanding the everyday experiences and struggles of sections (women, children, workers, the unemployed, youth and men) in mining communities. Secondly, most dominant narratives on labour struggles shine the spotlight on men and their masculine identities, that is, men as providers and workers, arguably making little or no reference to the leadership and participation of women in the struggles of the miners. In her thesis titled Roots of Women’s Union Activism: South Africa 1973-2003, Tshoaedi (2008:2) has argued that ‘women often get but a cursory mention and their involvement in the labour movement as activists receives less acknowledgement’.
Scott (1988:55), for instance, earlier commented about the labour historians’ focus on male labour dominant issues and movements, neglecting the everyday kind of activism by women. She stated that ‘most however ignore gender entirely, insisting either that it is absent from their sources or that (unfortunately) women played only a minor role in the working class politics that mattered’ (Scott, 1988:5). The dominant view of mining and miner struggles has often been based on this industry which is considered male centred and less influenced by women and community struggles. Such a conception offers a bias and weak instruments for understanding whether the activism of women in labour issues is rooted within broader struggles of social movements and other transformations.

Emerging feminist scholars have attempted to close the gender gap by focusing on the experiences of women around mining communities, such as those of Mercier (2006), Gier (2006), Lahiri-Dutt (2011), and Ciaran O’Faircheallaigh (2011). Other scholars have made an attempt to acknowledge the participation of women in miner strikes, specifically the 1984/5 British miner strike, often labelling that participation as an isolated moment in history. The involvement of women in the 1984/5 British miner strike raised a number of important questions about the participation of women in miner struggles and secondly the nature of this participation. Strangleman (2001) argued that solidarity was more likely to be mobilised as simply welfare support. Shaw (1993) seemed to agree with this view analysing the participation of women as a desire to return to their normal domestic roles. This helps us understand why some of the women were more politicised than others. The desire of some of the women to return to their ‘normal domestic life’ limited them yet again to welfare activities, but this also shows that not all women had novel experiences. While some women immediately after the strike went back to their daily domestic activities, some of the women were equipped with new skills that allowed them to think beyond their own immediate struggles and the potential for a better future for them and their families (Davies, 2010:95).

For instance Benya (2009) has highlighted the experiences of women as underground workers focusing on how women survive and enter into struggles to fit in this male dominant sector. She also discusses the power and gender dynamics within the work place and how these impact on activism and decision making. Benya’s (2009)
research is useful in terms of demonstrating the agency and independence of women in mining. The research also draws our attention to the active but limited role of women in underground work. Benya (2009) also highlights the diverse forms of gender discrimination and biases within this sector. This dissertation however argues that one cannot understand the struggles of workers without understanding their daily lived experiences and struggles in the community as one informs the other.

This research therefore argues that the influence of women in community mobilisation has often been given an inadequate spotlight. The participation of women in the 2012 Marikana strike however indicated that the activism and leadership role played by women in miner struggles is important for understanding that the participation of women was embedded within the broader struggle for dignity, survival and social transformation similar to the struggles of the miners. The research therefore indicates that the social and political organisation of women formed a strong tool against male dominant narratives that marginalise women’s voices. The struggles of the miners and the activism of women in support of these struggles suggest that production (in this case at the mine) cannot be separated from reproduction (home and community) and that community struggles are rooted in gender struggles and access to public resources and spaces. Within these spaces, women adopt different strategies and identities that influence their decisions, challenges and activism.

Little was known about the women in Marikana until relatively recently. Nevertheless, a number of scholars and commentators sought to understand their living conditions as well as their involvement in the strike. They investigated how women in Marikana survived from the 16 August 2012 massacre to the second one year Marikana anniversary which was on the 16 August 2014. Some academic scholars, to a lesser extent however, even focused on women’s agency. For instance, Lauren Paremoer (2013) stated that:

The vivid images of the Marikana Massacre and its aftermath are strikingly different from those capturing previous strikes by South African mineworkers. What is noticeable is the presence of large numbers of women – not all of them mineworkers – acting in support of the miners’ demands (Paremoer, 2013:9).
Although this work is important in highlighting the struggles of women in Marikana, it was published soon after the massacre and as such did not reflect upon the changes in the historical context in which they occurred. This dissertation contributes to the literature on gender and mining. It provides a holistic overview of Marikana women’s participation in the 2012 to 2014 strike and their struggles to survive. It should be noted here that the 2014 strike was a protected strike which began on 23 January ending five months thereafter and culminating in the longest strike in South African mining history. It occurred under the upstart Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU) which united Angloplatinum, Impala and Lonmin under the wage demand of R12 500 that workers put forth on the mountain before being gunned down by the police.

For the purposes of this dissertation, women *in* mining will be understood as women employed in mine work generally (Benya, 2009), whereas women *around* mining will be understood as women living in mining communities not necessarily employed in the mines. The focus on women *around* mining is important because it not only shows that the struggles of the miners cannot be separated from that of their community, but it also demonstrates the important role played by women in producing a well-functioning workforce for the mines because the link between workers and women in the community is ever-present.

According to Chinguno (2013: 27), ‘in the past mineworkers were not part of communities adjoining mines and were treated as inferior by virtue of being mineworkers’. As a result, the need for dignity and recognition of the marginalised was central to these mineworkers’ demands. One central theme of the research is that the struggles to survive of both women and men are interrelated. One cannot separate the two as they are both products of the same environment in which they live. Moreover, women are the driving force behind hardworking miners. It is therefore important that they also be acknowledged for their tireless roles in the community to ensure the survival and wellbeing of miners. The research makes the participation and contribution of women in miners’ struggles recognisable. In so doing, it therefore aims to offer an understanding of the ways in which both men and women are affected by the same struggle as well as the ways in which the roles of women and social relations between men and women were transformed during conflict situations.
The dissertation makes a contribution at three levels. Firstly, it provides an analysis that takes into account the voices of women, which have been largely missing from the narratives on miners’ strikes and struggles. The research therefore provides an understanding of gender specific issues during workers’ strikes. It argues that wages are social issues that affect not only the workers but also the women who mobilised as a result of this. It is therefore critical to understand that the participation of women in these struggles go beyond workplace struggles because they also affect the security and dignity of not only themselves but of their children and the broader community.

Secondly, it contributes to the development of literature regarding a critical event in South African history, the Marikana massacre and its aftermath. Thirdly, the dissertation provides an understanding of the conditions faced by women living around mines in South Africa, specifically platinum mines. From observations and discussion, the communities considered here are not significantly different from those around the other two major mines in the platinum belt, Anglo-American and Impala, but, Marikana is relatively important because it saw women who were involved in their own struggles come out in large numbers to support striking miners in their struggles during the strikewave.

1.2 Research Undertaken

The purpose of this research is to provide a comprehensive analysis and understanding of the impact of the participation of women in the 2012 Marikana miner strike and how this has resulted in the changes in their daily experiences and activities in their homes and community. The central research question for this dissertation is: **How and why did women in Marikana participate in the strike and how has it affected their lives?**

The central research question was informed by the following sub-questions including:

- Who are the women of Marikana?
- What is it like living in Marikana and what are the daily challenges?
- What is the relationship between men and women in the community?
- What were their experiences of the strike?
- How and why did they participate in the strike?
• What impact did the sheer longevity of the strike have on the structure of life in Marikana?

Ariel Photographic Map of Marikana, Downloaded from: Google Maps

Marikana is a small mining town situated 120km North West of Johannesburg (Bench Marks, 2012). The area initially started as a farming area. Now it has become a site of both formal and informal settlements. On the one side, Wonderkop, the area is characterised by formal structures including tar roads, while on the other immediately adjacent to the mine shafts, which is Nkaneng, represents squalid squatter settlements and living conditions, including muddy roads, many of which cannot be navigated by a vehicle. Marikana has a total population of 39 041 (Statistics SA, 2013). Of this males make up 63% of the population and women constitute only 37% of the total population (Stats SA, 2013). The area falls under the Great Bojanala District Municipality boasting
a population of 477,381. Under its belt the municipality is host to Anglo Platinum, Impala Platinum, Lonmin, Xstrata, Aquarius and Royal Bafokeng Platinum (Bench Marks, 2012) with 40% of the province’s mining activities happening within the borders of Rustenburg’ (Benya, 2013:5). Despite this economic wealth in the region, the area boasts an unemployment rate which stands at 30.40% (Statistics South Africa, 2013).

Samantha Hargreaves (2013) in her article titled, More Misery in Marikana, states that ‘… thousands of residents in the Wonderkop shack settlement live in desperate dehumanising conditions’. Despite the generous profits made by the mine the workers live in conditions which can only be described as an eyesore and miserable. Wonderkop falls under ward 26 and is directly adjacent to mine shafts, yet the area experiences dire poverty, the mushrooming of shacks, lack of infrastructure and high rates of unemployment. This demonstrates that the struggles in Marikana stretched far beyond demands for a living wage, but is also about the ‘social reproduction crisis’ (Hargreaves, 2013:1). This crisis is reflected in the lives of women who are left behind during the day, in their tin and wood shacks dealing with the burden of poor service delivery.

1.3 Methodological Overview

The research questions were addressed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. This helped obtain nuanced information which was needed to understand the women in Marikana who participated in the 2012 miner strike. A survey and semi-structured in-depth interviews were used as research tools to provide a holistic picture of the daily lived experiences and struggles of the women, including the socioeconomic and political status of women as well as the relationship between men and women in the area. Observations were also important since they demonstrated the different challenges that women address in the various spaces they occupy. They allowed one to draw out more detailed understandings of the daily lived experiences and struggles of women. These observations enabled a greater engagement with the women in their own environment and opened up a channel for uninterrupted conversations, allowing the women to tell their stories with their own voices. The research acknowledges that change does not happen overnight, but rather is a complex social and continuous process that is influenced by the interactions of women with other individuals within different social spaces. It is through continuous
interactions with others that women to a significant extent became gender conscious and were politicised.

In an effort to understand and highlight the agency of women within a dominant masculine environment, interviews allowed me to explore the experiences of the women’s movement personally and collectively. The interviews allowed for rich collection of data that was not only limited to understanding the active role played by women during the strike, but they also allowed me to understand other issues that go beyond their participation in the 2012 miner strike and to look at the impact of this on their lives over a relatively extensive period of time (about 2 years). Information collected through the interviews therefore enabled me to understand that the participation of women in the miner strike was not a single moment in history but a continuous social movement. They also provided in-depth and detailed understanding of the experiences of women in the strike. The autobiographies, which are detailed in chapter five, track the lives of women over an extended period of time and provide the reader with the opportunity to understand why women participated in the 2012 Marikana strike. The research undertook more than 35 interviews, this included group and individual interviews from 2012 until 2014.

1.4 Chapter Outline

Chapter Two: Literature Review: In order to provide a detailed overview of the survival mechanisms employed by women in Marikana, this research has approached the empirical evidence in a theoretical manner. The chapter will provide an overview of the literature on gender and mining in South Africa. It will also look at the involvement of women in miner struggles, drawing on the literature of the 1984/5 British miner strike. The chapter will also detail the news coverage and general literature on the 2012 Marikana massacre. It also highlights the gap in the literature on women and mining, and women around mining communities and particularly focuses on the transformation of roles in society and the different roles men and women are expected to fulfil during a miner strike.

Chapter Three: Methodology: This research has used multi-faceted methodological approaches which helped in answering the proposed research question. This chapter
details the ways in which a survey, engagement meetings, interviews and observations were used to better understand the women of Marikana.

Chapter Four: Struggles to Survive Everyday Life: This section provides an overview of the struggles involved with the strike of women living in Marikana based upon the quantitative and qualitative work envisioned in this research. It examines the lives and relationships of women in their homes and in the community and how socio-economic positions influence their relationships with men. The chapter demonstrates that women are often subjected to subordinate and dependent positions. Nevertheless, most of the women interviewed for this research adopt various survival mechanisms in an effort to live independent lives and, to some extent, to challenge male supremacy.

Chapter Five: Autobiographies: Provides three detailed autobiographies of three individual and exceptional women living in Marikana. The narratives of the women are provided from the women’s own accounts and are presented in the first person. All three autobiographies provide rich detailed accounts of the lived experiences and struggles of women in Marikana. They include the histories of the women prior to coming to Marikana, as well as their experiences of living in the area and their responses to the massacre. These autobiographies provide a bridge between the description of everyday life contained in the proceeding chapter and the accounts of the changes that appear in the next chapter.

Chapter Six: Women Under the Marikana Strikes: 2012-2014: This chapter discusses the mobilisation and participation of women in the miner struggles from 2012 to 2014 when workers of Lonmin engaged in two powerful strikes, it also highlights the organising and mobilising of women in the community. It provides a detailed analysis of the awakening of the consciousness of the women as a result of their participation and experiences in the 2012 strike, and their attempt to build stronger relationships and solidarity in the community. The chapter also demonstrates women’s challenges and initiatives in participating in public spaces, which were equally important for the formation of Sikhala Sonke. Sikhala Sonke was a result of gender consciousness and the perceived need to break away from male dependence by becoming independent through a number of projects and initiatives. The chapter also demonstrates that the daily lived experiences of the women in the community significantly informed their
activism in the miner struggles. The chapter draws on the empirical data presented in both chapter four and five. It examines the period starting from the 9 August 2012 unprotected strike at Lonmin to the 2014 strike protected strike which was led by AMCU. This period will be referred to as a period of strife. Though mineworkers did not strike during this entire period, the 2014 strike is viewed in this dissertation as a continuation of the 2012 strike. Both strikes witnessed mineworkers demanding R12,500. It also looks at the effect of the initiatives set up by women after the strike such as Sikhala Sonke ('Cry Together') and whether this initiative has resulted in changes in social relations and identities.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion: The chapter provides a conclusion of the dissertation. It summarises the main argument and points raised throughout the dissertation. It focuses on the struggles and survival of women in Marikana and how these continue to shape their identity and role in society.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

While chapter one presented the background to the research and touched upon the gap in the literature on the participation of women in community and miners’ struggles, this chapter will expand on the preceding chapter by reviewing literature on South African women’s experiences in and around mining and the impact of labour politics on their participation in occupational work. Firstly, the research will explore the different roles and gendered division of labour that women have come to fulfil in mining communities. It will then discuss the shifts in these gender roles and how they have allowed women to make certain gains through their involvement in community struggles. This chapter maps out the broader experiences of women working in mines and living in mining communities. It draws from the experiences of women in their families and gender relations in society in order to provide an analysis that considers the struggles of women at both the home and in the community. The chapter therefore argues that it is important to focus not only on the experiences of women and mining, but also on women in mining communities in order to fully understand the nature of the solidarity formed at the community level.

2.2 Gender and Mining

For decades, mining has been a primarily male dominated occupation, which neither recognised nor acknowledged the important contribution of women in this space (Benya, 2009:2). As such, a significant body of scholarly written work has been dominated by men’s experiences and struggles to survive in the mining sector. Women featured less in these accounts because they were often undervalued and oppressed by the labour system (in both paid and unpaid work). The state instituted exclusionary sanctions against women working underground and the society assigned different social, economic, political and cultural roles along gender lines. Martha Macintyre and Lahiri-Dutt (2006) in their book, Women Miners’ in Developing Countries: Pit Women and Others, demonstrates how work was constructed and assigned in the mines along gender lines. Additionally, Mercier (2011:35) argues that ‘mining companies often encouraged marriage and constructed family housing in order to sustain a more docile workforce’. Women worked in the mines through their family units and usually their
salaries were combined with those of their husbands. This implied that the female labour force was not as important as that of their male counterparts.

Jones’s (2006:96) earlier work titled *Sociability, Solidarity and Social Exclusion: Women’s Activism in the South Wales Coalfields, ca. 1830 to 1939* also showed that wives worked together with their husbands to fend off losing their jobs in Europe and the United States of America. But, she also highlights that men and women have not always struggled together. In fact, women who worked in the mines experienced sexual harassment and exclusive treatment at the hands of their male counterparts and this undermined the possibility of moulding an inclusive family and tended to counteract any solidarity that was formed between women and men at the time. The focus on sexual violence often clouded the social relationships that were formed between men and women underground at the mines. Such reports implied that it was foreign to have a working relationship between women and men.

For instance, it was common to have men assist women to carry heavy machinery and perform other tasks underground (Benya, 2009), but this solidarity was often overshadowed by reports on women as victims of sexual violence and the discrepancies that existed between men and women. Mahy (2011:49), on the other hand, challenges the notion of viewing women in mines as either victims or heroines. While she clearly acknowledges that negative impacts exist within the mines and their broader communities, she argues that there is greater need to link gender, mining and communities. She further asserts, for example, that women demonstrate agency through sex work, because they pursue an independent source of income, which supports and maintains their livelihoods and negotiates for independence in a largely masculine environment (Mahy, 2011:49).

In such communities sex work is a taboo and women who work as prostitutes are often called names and ostracised from the community, but it was through sex work that some of the women were able to challenge gender stereotypes by earning an independent income from their male counterparts and taking care of their families. O’Faircheallaigh (2011:87), however, is of the opinion that women have no voice in mining spaces. For example, in North Australia, women have often played key roles in negotiations strengthening positive outcomes for the community, but the challenge
remains that women live in a male dominated environment where men are the sole breadwinners and heads of the households.

Lahiri-Dutt () indicates that even if women were allowed to pursue work in the mines this was to a certain extent minimal. They were still forbidden from participating in negotiations with the union company bosses. Tshoedi (2009:1) elaborates that ‘the history of trade union organisation in South Africa has emphasised the roles played by men in the mobilisation and building of the trade union movement. Analyses of trade union struggles during this period make little reference to the initiatives and leadership of women in workplace struggles for trade union mobilisation’. In *Mining Women*, Jaclyn Mercier and Laurie Gier (2006) merge the experiences of women who worked in mines with miners’ wives. Thus, mining was constructed and separated along gender lines which had an impact on the views about work, class and social livelihoods. This resulted in women being limited to domestic and care work, while men earned an income and assumed leadership roles both in the homes and in the community.

The above sentiment is supported by Miyachu and Yoshida (2006:136) who undertook a comparative study of coal mining communities in Hokkaido, Japan and Montana in the United States of America. They argued that the status of women was undermined by mining companies, who paid them less than their male counterparts. Regardless of this, the identity of women as mine workers was not tainted. Women still worked as miners regardless of the stereotypes. The role played by women was limited not only to where they worked but also to where they lived. The solidarity that was formed between women and men in the United States coal community in Virginia protesting against Pittston Coal Group contradicted the unwaged reproductive labour of women, which during the strike proved to be the glue that held the mining industry together.

The social roles played by women during the strike allowed women to express themselves through organising, socialising and gathering at Camp Solidarity (striking site). This would optimise the diversity of women and create a different picture about women in mining communities. The women were no longer limited to their invisible or private roles, but had a voice and they were willing to use it for the betterment of their conditions. While this body of literature is important in that it shows that there is no
linear understanding of the experiences of women, the literature presented here mostly deals with countries other than South Africa. This project enables the expansion of this body of literature on women and mining to include the participation of women in mining struggles in South Africa.

2.3 Women and Mining in South Africa

Since the discovery of gold at the Witwatersrand in 1886, there has been a need to drive black labour into the mines; driving labour also meant keeping it under control. Forms of control were limited not only to the miner's productive labour but also to their personal lives while at the mines (Moodie, 1994:12). The availability of job opportunities in the mines resulted in an influx of people from different parts of the country and beyond (Chinguno, 2013:7). This view is supported by Matsie (2009:5) who states that ‘cheap black labour was required to feed the segregation capitalist state through cheap black labour’. The mine management was able to control the black labour force by placing them under surveillance in mining compounds, separated from their families. While the system deemed male employment necessary, the lives of women were also centred upon domestic roles and their lives were dominated by the occupational work of the men.

Supported by restrictive legislations, mining soon became an occupation reserved only for the male labour force, thus discouraging and excluding women from mining work. As a result this pushed women into unvalued care work where they spent most of their time labouring in their homes and taking care of family members. With this in mind, mining and other male populated sectors centralised male labour as a necessity rather than as an option. Existing literature on mining shows that men were deliberately recruited into the mines because they were regarded as macho, hardworking, tough and willing to get the job done (Benya, 2009:5). The labour force was preferred because they were deemed ‘appropriate’ to carry heavy machinery and work under excruciating humid conditions underground. This created a gender divide which would see women excluded from underground mining work and limited to less demanding work such as cleaning and working as clerks.

The gender divide was clearly drawn. Men engaged in ‘dirty and dangerous work’ while women disappeared into the side-lines providing reproductive support. Murray
(1981:156) states that with reference to the past, in their capacity as married women left behind by their absent husbands, the men still maintained the position of sole breadwinners and heads of the household, while women traditionally continued assuming the roles of primary caregivers in the homes and looked after the households. The absence and paralysis of the men in the family disrupted traditional roles. For the 11 months that men were absent, women temporarily assumed the roles of heads of household.

Yoshida and Miyauchi (2006: 137) argued that the periodic rise of women as heads of household concretely challenged the power and authority of men in the home. However, when the men returned from the mines, they immediately assumed their dominant positions and the positions of women as heads were discarded. One of the issues that prevented women from maintaining these temporary positions was that even though work around the house was not formally classified as ‘work’ women were still tasked with daily arduous domestic work around the homes (Davies, 2010). Cronje (2009:31) earlier explained that ‘their husband’s profession usually made this much more difficult, first and foremost, the men themselves had to be kept clean’. Rojas (1994), on the other hand, explains that the position of women was centred on kinship and economic structures in society.

Traditionally, women assumed complementary roles to men by occupying virtuous roles as mothers and care workers. During this time, power in society was determined more by those in other positions of authority rather than strictly gender (Rojas, 1994). However, it could be argued that women’s involvement in domestic and care work around the homes allowed the men to attend community meetings and engage in important political debates and this is where power dynamics in society were centred. Therefore, in a sense, women were equally as responsible for contributing to political issues as the men who attended these meetings. It is the women who made sure that the men arrived in the meeting on time, they prepared food, and they picked and prepared the clothes the men were going to wear on the day. Through their engagement in domestic work, it would mean that the men had more time to engage in community meetings and other social activities (Davies, 291:2010).
In a society that did not spoil women with much choice, there was only so much those women could do. There were some opportunities available to them, but there were minimal options for jobs outside the home. These were largely in domestic and informal work, such as selling food on the streets and being a vendor. Formal administrative and professional work, such as becoming a clerks or nurses were relatively rare and domestic work and informal trading prevailed. Most women did not have money to further their studies; some did not complete school due to the heavy burden of domestic work and getting married at a very young age. Literature suggests that most women were concentrated in secondary sectors, trapped in unskilled jobs which were regarded as ‘suitable for women’. Some squeezed themselves into fringe activities such as beer brewing, vendors and prostitution which was also known at the time as ‘town women’ (Gaidzanwa, 1993: 278).

Dunbar Moodie elaborates that ‘town women were seen as temporary sexual partners only’. This statement is supported by Elizabeth Rabe (2006: 43) who asserts that ‘town women included concubines (prostitutes), casual partners (a partner that one randomly engages in sexual activities with, without necessarily being in a relationship with the person), prostitutes (a person who sells sex for a living), girlfriends (being in a relationship with a woman but not necessarily married to her) and even wives’ (being legal or customarily married to a woman) and shebeen queens (selling alcohol to survive). The exclusive nature of the mining industry contributed to a situation in which men made frequent visits to the city looking for prostitutes. Most women turned to prostitution as a last resort, but this also undermined the role and position of women even further in that it was viewed as dirty and shameful work. However this also demonstrated the double standards which were upheld by the patriarchal system, which made it acceptable for men to buy sex, but judged women for providing the service.

The minerals mining industry proved to be the most highly sex-segregated industry in South Africa. The Mine Health and Safety Act of 1996, accompanied by the Minerals and Petroleum Resources Development Act (MPRDA), made a sober and official call to expand equal opportunities for women through their inclusion into occupational mining work. The provisions were later adopted into the Mining Charter, which made a commitment to place at least a 10% quota for women working in the occupational
The mining sector to be achieved by 2014 (Benya, 2009). Although the quota guaranteed the recruitment of women working underground, it did not, however, immunise them from discrimination based on their gender. Often women were only superficially mentioned in their involvement in labour issues.

For instance Jeremy Baskin (1991) in his book titled: *Striking Back: A History of COSATU* provided a detailed history on the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and its focus on workplace struggles. In her analysis, Tshoaedi (2009:2) states that ‘the book highlights the roles of various male leaders and their contributions to the building of the labour movement, but only one chapter in the book discusses women, focusing on their status as victims of gender discrimination in the workplace and the unions’. The focus on the emergence of strikes in the period of the early 1970s and 1980s was mainly around the gender aspect of the strikes. The writing about the strike ignored the role and involvement of women in working class struggles. The conceptualisation of such events was dominated by male supremacy that undermined the participation of women as they were viewed, within this framework, as insignificant in working class politics. However the focus of women in mining in South Africa appears to be growing.

Researchers such as Ralushai (2003) and Benya (2009) focus on the experiences of women working in the mines. Recent years have seen the growth in the number of women miners in South Africa. According to Benya (2013:145), the numbers have risen from zero in 2003 to over 43,000 (12.8%) in 2012 (Statistics South Africa, 2012). While there has been a considerable increase in the inclusion of women in mining, most women miners still face the prevailing gender bias and discrimination. The presence of women in mining was a watershed moment in South African labour history. Challenging traditional masculine norms associated with the mining industry, women also renegotiated their own roles in this sector. The participation of women underground in the mines to some extent interrupted patriarchal and gender inequalities, placing women in a slightly better position. According to Lucas & Steimel (2009:320), this is because ‘women who work in the mines, build an identity that both links to gendered and generalised other, but also distances them from this generalised other’.
Mining work performed by women has often been rendered invisible. This is despite the fact that ‘Until the industry’s twilight in the 1980s, females compromised about half of the asbestos mineworkers in South Africa’ (McCulloch, 2003:414). Women were often recruited on contract or through labour brokers. This followed a particularly exploitative relationship that saw women being paid less than their male colleagues, which created an environment in which women were treated as expendable (Nandi & Aichi, 1996). The introduction of women in the mines then opened up the closed masculine gendered space that usually ignored the contribution of women.

The introduction of women in mines has been viewed as a vehicle through which the rights of women were acknowledged and given much needed visibility. It was applauded for being an instrumental effort in promoting the economic empowerment of women (Bezuidenhout & Buhlungu, 2009:10). However, little attention has been paid to understanding how the involvement of women in productive labour affects their positions and roles within the broader environment in which they live. On this basis, even less attention has been paid to understanding that the contributions of women in the mining sector extended well beyond occupational labour. The migrant system together with apartheid segregation laws systematically and structurally prevented most Black families from living together. This gave way to a new configuration of female headed households. This meant that men were not available to fulfil their traditional roles as decision-makers around their homes. Thus, women took on greater responsibility as both household managers and in terms of decision-making. This resulted in tensions due to the men’s loss of control in the family and their loss of dominant decision-making powers.

One of the most important factors influencing the living conditions of individuals and societies is the environment in which they live (De Waal, 2012). The presence of women in the mines unloaded the domestic burden off of the men. Women became central in maintaining households. While the men were at work, women purposefully roamed around the area in search of essential services such as water, often risking their lives by forging illegal electricity connections. The role played by women during the day while the men were away at work was important for the wellbeing of the workers who often came home after labouring underground to home-cooked meals and clean households.
The post-democratic state initiated a number of crucial changes, including the commitment by the South African Mining Charter to transform all single sex hostels into family housing units, and for mines to facilitate and encourage home ownership options for all mineworkers by 2014 (Mining Charter, 2004). The legal framework in South Africa no longer undermined family structures, but allowed families to live together in mining communities. This resulted in an influx of women to the mining communities. The presence of women in the mines and their struggles to survive in the community linked these daily experiences to those of the men. This contributed to a broader understanding of the social presence of women in the mining communities and their struggles to survive.

Up until 1986, apartheid laws required mines to house about 97% of their workforce in mine compounds (Bezuidenhout & Buhlungu, 2009:10). This resulted in poor housing and living conditions in the mines which was compounded by the lack of service delivery. Given the congested influx of people working in the mines, in the early 1990s the mine agreed to ease themselves of the burden of ensuring decent housing for their workers, by settling for a living out allowance (LOA) of R 1800 a month (Chinguno, 2012). The LOA placed the responsibility for housing in the hands of miners. The introduction of LOA catered to displaced miners’ who had been evicted from the hostels and it also created possibilities for women to live in mining communities with men who were employed in the mines. With this allowance, the responsibilities for the provision of decent housing, adequate services, infrastructure, and sanitations shifted to the miners and their families. The burden of responsibility for ensuring the provision of adequate services principally fell to women, who were left behind during the day negotiating survival strategies to ensure the provision of these services (Chinguno, 2013).

Chinguno (2013) explains that the LOA attracted miners to live in informal settlements. On the other hand, some miners’ opted to live outside the mine hostels/compounds for more privacy and to maintain family life. It meant that it would be easier for the miner to live with his family in the city. The LOA increased the miners’ income in that the miners opted to live in cheaper accommodation to use their income towards other pressing needs, such as paying for the children’s school fees and building houses in
the rural homesteads. This eased the pressure on the already low paid living wage of the miners, which was not enough to sustain the nuclear family back in the rural homesteads and the girlfriends in the mining community.

The urgent need for accommodation and privacy resulted in unintended consequences such as the mushrooming of shacks and spread of informal settlements (Buhlungu, 2009). Buhlungu (2009) further argued that the choice of accommodation for miners had its own contradictions. While the introduction of alternative housing was introduced to ensure miners were comfortable and would have privacy, mine management had hoped it would have a positive effect on the labour force. However, this resulted in the adoption of even more horrific living conditions, which undermined the dignity and integrity of miners and their families, which included lack of proper infrastructure, sanitation services and lack of service delivery such as water.

Living outside the borders of the mine resulted in the formation of a 'second mine family' (when a miner lives with another woman and children in the city, while he has a wife and children recognised and accepted by his family back home in the rural areas) and a new socio-economic disorder. While it gave the miners the freedom to live with girlfriends and wives in their place of choice, it also added on to the pressures on women who were responsible for domestic tasks in their homes and communities.

The LOA was introduced (Hargreaves, 2013) as part of a strategy to gradually eliminate hostels and phase out the migrant labour system by assisting the families of mineworkers to live with them. Hartford (2012) argues that the decision to build miners decent housing was aimed at addressing the single men’s hostel dilemma, through the introduction of family accommodation. Moodie (1994:78) stated that it was common to have sixteen miners sharing a room in single compounds and this obviously resulted in a lack of privacy. The initiative to address these horrific living conditions was introduced through LOA. Lonmin reported to have built 1, 149 houses and converted 60 hostel spaces into single accommodation and family housing units (Lonmin Report, 2010). These rusty zinc shack structures have become the defining factor of blooming platinum mining communities, resulting in congestion, unhygienic living conditions and unemployment.
The presence of women in mining communities and their role in maintaining the household and community structures is important because it opened up an opportunity for renegotiating existing social norms and relations in society. Against the background of patriarchal norms and gender biases in mining communities in South Africa, a closer study of the experiences and contributions of women in mining communities may contribute to a greater awareness of the role played by women in holding the community together. However, Bozzoli (1983:167) acknowledges that African women were more likely to be controlled by the state than their man. This was largely because during the apartheid era African people including men were regarded as inferior and did not have power or control over their own lives (where they lived or worked) let alone their own families or wives.

This had a significant impact on the power of the African men. It is however important not to lump together the experience of all African women under one umbrella or primary condition: ‘patriarchy’. It is therefore noteworthy to acknowledge that there are various ethnic groups in South Africa, with different cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and history and as such each ethnic group would be affected differently by patriarchal domination. Patriarchal tools offer some use of conceptual understanding but this is not enough to understand the experiences of all African women. With regard to this research, it is important to look at the different positions of African women in society, to better understand why patriarchy had an effect on the role of women in society and then to locate the reasons for changes in the lives of women overtime.

2.4 Women and Political Struggles in South Africa

‘Apartheid and its racist policies were central in the mobilisation of women into political activism and the political consciousness’ (Tshoaedi, 2009:89). The experiences of women during the apartheid years raised their awareness about political and gender inequalities which influenced the nature of their relationships with men. Patriarchal institutions including the capitalist nature of the mining industry institutionalised a set of rules and norms that promoted the domination of men over women making women dependent on men for support and remittances.
According to Tshoaedi (2009:5) ‘throughout the history of South Africa’s liberation struggles women have engaged in and led protests against various government laws that impacted directly on their rights as full citizens of South Africa’. Women initiated action to challenge long standing belief systems that limited them to subordinate positions. One of the most noted campaigns by women in South Africa was their fight against pass laws. Pass laws specified who was allowed to live in the city. Everyone working or looking for employment in the city had to carry a pass to show that they had permission to be there at the time (Luckhardt and Wall, 1980). Luckhardt and Wall (1980cited in Tshoaedi 2009:6) stated that the pass laws, for most of the apartheid era, had applied to African men with the objective of controlling and channelling labour supply to different sectors of the economy including mining. The government needed to control and monitor the labour. One of the ways of doing this was to extend the pass laws to African women. This was met with resistance by women who felt this move would not only control their movement but also affect various aspects of their lives and economic activities. This would also mean that women were forbidden to visit their spouses in the mines or be near their place of work.

This led women to take a more visible and drastic action against the government. Women embarked on a number of defiance campaigns, which included tearing up and burning their passes (Wells, 1983). This resistance set the ground for new ways of thinking amongst African women. It gave them confidence to stand up for themselves and fight for their rights. The new pass laws threatened the independence of women since ‘single women did not qualify for pass permits as they were required to produce the pass of a male guardian before they could obtain their own’ (Wells, 1983:68). The passes meant that women would be restricted in obtaining their pass permits without a husband and prevent them from taking part in economic activities in the city.

‘The introduction of pass laws was a threat to women’s means of earning and income, since their economic activities required movement outside their designated areas’ (Tshoaedi, 2009:9). Walker (1982) and Wells (1986) conclude that resistance to pass laws by women was not an attempt to be with their husbands in the urban areas, but rather was the women’s attempt in setting the ground for other women to fight against
Some of the women’s struggles in the 1950s challenged the sexism in the government’s policies. In 1959 when the government introduced the betterment schemes (in the rural areas of Natal), many women suddenly lost access to land. In the reallocation of land only heads of households were eligible. The government’s definition of household obviously excluded women and this is what women challenged in 1959 when they protested against the schemes (Cited in Tshoaedi, 2009:11).

Gasa (2007:214) elaborated that ‘their struggles against the pass laws, which were a tangible way of infringing their rights, was in fact a struggle to be in the public domain at the same time as it was a struggle for free movement’. More than this, the resistance of the women revealed the gender consciousness and agency of women in challenging the political system, sexism and male dominance:

African women’s mobilisation on the basis of motherhood reflects the significance of this identity for this group of women. However, their struggles against the apartheid state do not suggest a lack of gender consciousness or being unaware of the unequal gender relations with men or within the family (Tshoaedi, 2009:10).

These struggles formed a significant part of women’s activism and struggles in South Africa; they helped in tracing the initial steps of the development of political and gender consciousness amongst South African women. Ndingema nasemthini nokuba kusesibondeni (I would climb a tree even if it had no branches), is a Xhosa proverb used to explain that in order to achieve something difficult you have to do the extraordinary. As the proverb suggests, earlier struggles have laid down the foundation and opened up a space for women to participate in miner strikes.

This also encouraged women to organise in the communities to deal with issues related to safety and security and challenging unjust systems in society. Most of these organisations adopted the liberation movement policies with their political affiliations. Tshoaedi (2009:17) elaborates that ‘in 1983 with the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF), which was aligned to the exiled African National Congress (ANC) most women’s organisations formed alliances with the UDF’. This affiliation was met with broad criticism which questioned the legitimacy of the women’s
organisations. Hassim (1991:69) argues that ‘black women who have been politically active have tended to get involved in broader campaigns against apartheid or in the trade unions, rather than take up women’s issues per se’. Charman, de Swardt and Simons (1991:45) offered a similar assessment when they stated that ‘the participation of women in political organisations is not instrumental to the development of gender conscious struggles that tackle power relations specifically between husbands and wife’. This largely Western analysis lacks an African feminist framework which was not necessary applicable in the South African context. If anything it offers a narrow component of the daily experiences of women in these organisations. In her focus on *Women's Organisation and Democracy in South Africa* Hassim (2006:36) acknowledges that:

…narrow definitions of feminism that do not conceptualise the specific historical and cultural contexts in which women’s actions take place, are not useful in explaining forms of gender consciousness that emerged within the anti-apartheid movements. She points out that, national liberation facilitated and legitimated women’s politicisation, albeit for reasons of mass mobilisation rather than concerns for gender equality per se and provided a context in and against which to elaborate these formulations (cited in Tshoaedi, 2009:20).

The above arguments show that there is a clear need to adequately conceptualise and clearly define the daily realities of women so that they can accurately capture the experiences of women and whether these fall within a ‘labour’ or ‘political’ framework or neither. One thing that this demonstrates is that there is a cleavage between women’s political organisation and the broader community struggles (and workers happen to be part of this community). This research focuses on women within mining communities and their participation in miner struggles. The emphasis is on women as individuals and their daily experiences and how these influenced their decision to participate in the 2012 and 2014 miners’ strike. The focus is on the awakening of their gender and political consciousness which draws our attention to the solidarity that was formed in Marikana. It highlights the fact that the articulation of women’s demands within male dominated occupation spaces is conducted deliberately, because it is identified as a site of male supremacy and female subordination both in the women’s individual and collective lives. The concept of gender consciousness, daily lived struggles and activism is discussed according to the narratives provided by women who participated in this research.
2.5 Women and mining struggles: The British Case

The literature on women’s support for miners’ strikes is limited. The major exception is scholarship on the British miners’ strike of 1985/6. This strike lasted a whole year and had major impact on British politics. A small body of literature on the British miner strike exists and this includes popular readings which seem to suggest that the involvement of women in the strike was a ‘singular moment of working class female activism’ (Spence and Stephenson, 2007:1). There were controversial messages being communicated about the value the women played in the one year long strike. At ‘one level the message being conveyed speaks of the value of the traditional roles of support and sustenance associated with women and mining. At another the focus is on the importance of a politicised and self-directing female organisation and activism’ (Spence and Stephenson, 2007:2). However, some have argued that miners’ struggles to survive were twofold. On one hand, they reaffirmed traditional roles of women, while on the other, they resulted in the wake of political consciousness for women. This statement was reiterated by Beynon (1985); Rowbotham (1986); McCrindle (1986) and Samuel et al (1986) who all stated that women assumed both roles and that it was this combination that would lead to a very powerful female-led force.

Contrary to the above discussion, Waddington et al (1991:148) argued that the impact of the participation of women in the strike was exaggerated, both in terms of socialist and feminist understandings. This meant that the participation of women did not result in any perceived changes in their social standings in society and their individual lives in the homes. Shaw (1993: 126) seemed to agree with this view since he analysed the actions of the women as nothing more than part of a desperation and desire to go back to their traditional domestic roles in what Shaw described as a ‘desire to return to normal’. Meanwhile, Strangleman’s works (2001) showed that the political solidarity that was formed during the strike had quickly disappeared and the solidarity was more likely to be mobilised as welfare support and not as political action.

Allen (2000:np) and Waddington (2003:np) however ‘indicate that over the long-term the development of political understanding and the patterns of activism associated with the strike and with mining life are not simple’. There is no clear way of determining
if women simply moved from traditional roles to grassroots organisation in the community because women who participated in the strike are not a homogeneous group and each experienced the strike differently. It therefore becomes apparent that much of the analysis of the participation of women in the 1984/5 British miner strike was based on stereotypical views rooted in gender stereotypes and norms. As such, the pivotal role played by women during the strike was either viewed as emotional work or immeasurable to the struggles of men who were out of work for a year.

Spence and Stephenson (2007:4) argue that ‘the linear model of activism depends upon a set of assumptions which presumed firstly that all those involved were ‘miners’ wives’ and secondly that such women were characterised by domestic passivity and an absence of political consciousness prior to the dispute’. The implication is that all the women who participated in the strike had no prior public engagement before the strike, and that they were all limited to domestic activities. They state that ‘it is necessary to move beyond the unitary view of ‘mining women’ in order to understand the nature of subsequent community and political engagement amongst some of the women concerned’ (Spence and Stephenson, 2007:4).

While it might be the case that the women who formed solidarity support in the community were all women living around the mining community, this does not in any way suggest that all women who participated in the strike were miners’ wives, or even that they were directly related to striking miners. Nor does it tell us why women allied themselves with the men’s struggles, but instead assumes that those women who participated in the strike all performed domestic roles in their homes. For instance, some of the women could have been activists before the outbreak of the strike and therefore their participation in the miner struggles could simply be an extension of their earlier political activities. This would imply that some women were active long before the miner strike and it is their role in the miner strike that would result in greater visibility in the role of the women.

The British miner strike was important because it highlighted the significant role played by women in community struggles to survive. It also offers an understanding of the gender specific experiences of women living in mining communities. The 1984/5 miner strike provides an important reference that helps us understand the differences
amongst women who participated in the 2012 Lonmin strike and related industrial action. These comparisons also are useful for creating an understanding of the women’s daily lived experiences. Similarly to the British miner strike, the involvement of women in the 2012 and 2014 strikes at Lonmin was motivated by immediate struggles to survive and personal concerns. The threat of losing one’s wages, security, and stability resulted in an urgent need to provide solidarity and support to the striking miners. The involvement of women in the British miner strike was regarded by some as a heroic and politicised moment that resulted in the visibility of the activism of the women. The participation of women in the 2012 Lonmin unprotected strike should then be treated as an emblematic moment which stretched to the 2014 five month long protected miner strike under the upstart union, the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU). The significance of the British strike is underlined by the solidarity for the women involved in the strike with the families and widows of Marikana (see Appendix 1).

The solidarity formed during the 2012 strike went beyond class struggles and politicisation because it showed there is an urgent need to move away from constraining the experiences and roles played by women to traditional gender roles and work in the home. The active participation of women in public spaces challenged this notion. It also provided an opportunity to interrogate the nature of the participation of women in miner struggles.

2.6 Literature on Marikana

Wasserman (2013:1) has indicated that ‘the most shocking event to occur in South Africa since the advent of democracy in the country has been the massacre of striking miners’ at the Lonmin mine near Marikana in North West Province, on 16 August 2012’. The deadly clash between police and mines saw 44 people dead and 78 consequently injured. The massacre was followed by intense coverage and debate including a public inquiry named the Marikana Commission of Inquiry headed by retired judge Farlam that sought to establish the responsibility for the events that occurred in 2012 (Marikana Commission of Inquiry, 2014:3).

The events of the massacre led to a critical reflection and public scrutiny of the violent response of the state towards striking miners. The research by Lisa Chamberlain and
Lerato Thekiso, titled *Marikana: The true cost of mining and the common thread in mining industry*, pays specific attention to the breakdown of social relations between the mines and the communities within which they operate. The first footage of the events of the massacre was captured and discussed in the eNCA (2012), and it showed journalists behind firing police officers capturing the events. Wasserman (2013:2) elaborated that ‘this alignment of journalists with positions of authority when covering conflict is not unusual, but it has implications that suggested that there was only one killing site. However, Peter Alexander and his team were the first people to discover that there was more than one killing site, when they were conducting research about the events leading to the miners’. They later released a book titled *Marikana: A view from the mountain and a case to answer*. The book offers an alternative account to dominant depictions and constituencies in what Jane Duncan (2012) called ‘embedded journalism’. This follows Steven Friedman’s (2011:109) observation of press coverage, when he argued that the press often provide a ‘view from the suburbs’ and that mainstream media in South Africa is often aligned with narrow views of reality.

Gans (1999:247 in Wasserman (2013:3)) explains that many studies have found that journalists tend to consult a limited number of the same types of sources and that these tend to be powerful sources which are eager to appear in the news, who then ‘in turn can satisfy the journalists source considerations for authoritativeness and productivity’. Instead, Alexander et al (2012) focused on the position of the striking miners themselves that covered the events leading to the massacre from the surviving striking miners’ points of view. In her analysis of the media coverage on Marikana, Jane Duncan (2012) reported the following: 27% was with businesses, 14% with mine management, 10% was covered from various political parties, 5% was made up of interviews conducted with the police, 9% was with government officials and only 3% of the interviews were conducted with striking miners.

Other academic work on Marikana included Crispen Chinguno’s (2013) detailed study on the socio-economic living conditions of miners titled *Marikana and the post-apartheid workplace order*. This study mapped a more detailed picture of the daily struggles of the miners and their families. It linked the struggles of the miners with those of the broader community. In addition, it also showed that the demand for R 12 500 was not simply a convenient request, but rather a ticket to better living.
conditions. This was strengthened by Asanda Benya’s (2013) report titled *Absent from the frontline but not absent from the struggle* on the care work and solidarity support provided by women in the community during the strike. It sought to recognise the invisible and forgotten faces of women in mining communities. It also showed that the reproductive role played by women during the strike was important for strengthening the solidarity that was formed during the strike. The women were at the forefront of the struggle, sitting side by side striking miners and taking in some of the injured and wounded miners on the day of the massacre. This resulted in social and political visibility of women in Marikana and closer relationships between the women and men in Marikana.

Some of the media accounts covering the massacre and its aftermath include the Mail & Guardian report, *Return to Marikana*, which centred on the effects of the strike on the lives of deceased family members. Samantha Hargreaves’ article titled ‘*What of the women of Marikana*’ was a detailed account that shed light on the living conditions of women in Marikana. Asha Speckman of the Business Report, ‘*Police face community wrath,*’ reported on the tragic death of African National Congress (ANC) councillor Paulina Masuhlo, who was a victim of police brutality in Marikana and detailed the way in which the community united by marching to Marikana police station seeking justice for Paulina’s death. This provided a fresh perspective, showing how women were also affected by the injustice that was observed in the community. It showed that women were also capable of organising independently from men and had a voice in society.

### 2.7 Women in Marikana

Niren Tolsi’s (2012:107) article which focused on the aftermath of the massacre on the lives of people pointed out that what had happened in Marikana was felt by families that had lost their loved ones. He specifically highlights Paulina Masuhlo’s family who ‘lost a daughter and mother when Paulina, an African National Congress councillor in the Madibeng municipality and a campaigner for better social conditions in the squalid informal settlements around Lonmin’s shafts died from injuries sustained during a clampdown of Nkaneng informal settlement on August 25’. In ‘*Woman’s death in Marikana prompts march*’, the South African Broadcasting Corporation also reported that a number of women from Nkaneng and Wonderkop marched to the police station,
demanding an investigation of the death of Paulina Masuhlo. Lauren Paremore’s article in Amandla, titled ‘The women of Marikana are marching because they want to see justice questions the limited coverage on the agency of women in the days leading to the strike. The coverage was soon followed by an inquiry into the killings through the creation of the Marikana Commission of Inquiry formed on the 23rd of August 2012. The coverage of the events leading to the massacre raised a number of questions about what really happened on the day of the killings.

Some scholars called for a more balanced and fair coverage of events in order to provide different perspectives thereby keeping with the democratic principles of equal representation. This coverage was embedded in what was sensational at the time and little attempt was made to provide accurate coverage by including the participation and important contribution of women in the events surrounding the massacre. There was no attempt to write about the experiences of women and the impact of the strike on their lives. Samantha Hargreaves’ article titled ‘And what of the women of Marikana?’ was the first piece of the puzzle in painting a picture of the lived experiences of women in Marikana. In her article, Hargreaves (2012) explained that days after the Marikana tragedy, the women of Nkaneng and Wonderkop in Marikana were not supported or visited and they had all but disappeared from the spotlight. She also drew our attention to the little privilege that was awarded to women who mobilised fearlessly during the massacre and most importantly she exposed the invisibility of the women in Marikana.

Lauren Paremoer’s (2013) follow-up article centred the focus on the injustice that women endured at the hands of the police. This painted a partial picture of the pivotal role played by women who stood side by side striking miners during the routine violence which striking miners suffered. Lauren Paremoer’s focus on women was important in that it exposed the deep underlying injustice in Marikana. She discussed the struggles of women in a way that opened public conversation about the women in Marikana and their lived struggles to survive. But this still did not provide an analysis of the role played by women during the 2012 unprotected strike and the events which surrounded the massacre.
Asanda Benya (2013) attempted to bridge this gap by writing an article focusing on the role played by women during the workers’ time on the mountain in the lead up to the massacre. In her account, she demonstrates that women played traditional supportive roles by cooking, holding vigils and offering emotional and spiritual support to the striking miners. Benya adds that this also included providing food and water to the miners in the mountain, which was an extension of their domestic roles in households. It is therefore important to note that the analysis of ‘care work’ such as providing food and water and taking care of wounded miners highlights the solidarity and relationship that was built between women and men in the community. The women provided both resources to the miners and emotional support. In this light, Asanda’s focus on the ‘care support’ strips women of their voices and cuts them off from the very public community they were actively defending. Her analysis serves to undermine the pivotal, grassroots organisation that was formed by the women which was important for sustaining strike action. One reading of this account suggests that women were cheerleaders for male ‘soldiers’ during conflicts. This conventional representation of the women’s role during the 2012 Lonmin strike completely disguises and excludes the experiences of women during community struggles.

To mark the one year anniversary of the massacre, Niren Tolsi in the Mail and Guardian published a 24 page spread which investigated the unseen cost of the Marikana massacre on the affected families and communities of the deceased miners. This coverage was important ‘because we, South Africans need to understand what happens after Marikana to the families and through their eyes’ (Tolsi, 2013). This was substantiated by eight moving narratives of the Marikana widows and family members of some of the miners who were killed during the massacre. Many of these moving narratives were told through visual art drawings and were the first glance that brought greater awareness of the impact of the massacre on the women, children and communities who were left behind to make ends meet. It was through these stories and the pain of the women that we began to understand that the struggles of the miners cannot be understood separately from that of the women and the communities in which these miners lived (Khulumani Support Group, 2013). There is therefore a greater need for detailed interrogation of such stories; otherwise, the narratives and agency of these women will risk being buried in a stereotypical analysis.
The agency of women was expressed through their participation during the miners’ time at the mountain and during the strike. As will be demonstrated later, the women negotiated for the safety and survival of their loved ones and the entire community. Historically, women have seldom been active in the struggles to survive alongside their male counterparts. There has been limited or no literature at all in South Africa that covers the involvement of women in miner strikes. Yet, women in Marikana found ways to contribute logistically, emotionally and politically in the miner struggles and to become stronger after the massacre. As noted above, their contribution has been confined to the categories of ‘emotional and care work’, which became a convenient description which shadowed the significant role played by women in favour of the men.

In the recent report by Hargreaves (2013) she explains that the informality of the settlements in Wonderkop in Marikana added to the workload of women, who stay at home battling these poor conditions. Life is generally difficult for the residents of Wonderkop in Marikana, especially for women. It is the women who are left behind during the day when the husband/boyfriend goes to work, facing unbearable and horrific conditions characterised by poor service delivery. They are forced to walk in the muddy road after periods of rain to fetch water, relieving themselves in open fields and battling the daily realities of community struggles to survive (Hargreaves, 2013).

Camalita Naicker’s (2013) work focuses on the politicisation and agency of women’s organisations. She asserts that ‘the women of Marikana made their existence and struggles to survive public during and after the Marikana massacre, and shattered the quiet assumption that the mines remain a space that is inhabited by men only, or that their contribution remains purely sexual’. (Naicker, 2013:1). The focus on women does help us understand the struggles to survive in the broader community and sheds some light as to why women participated in the miner strike. This, however, paints an incomplete picture and seems to suggest that all women were involved in a linear passage of passivism to activism. It is important to highlight the differences between the women and the fact that some of them might have been active members of society even before the massacre. In the case of Marikana in particular, there is a need for a more balanced view that moves away from painting a romantic picture about the sudden awakening in female activism in mining communities.
The research therefore focuses on the activism of women. It moves away from stereotypical notions of encapsulating the role of women in relation to emotional work. Instead, it investigates the commitment of women in Marikana to community struggles to survive and the mobilisation of women in the platinum community. As such, their pivotal contribution was overlooked and thus not regarded as a formal contribution to the struggles of the miners. This research focuses on the participation of women in the Marikana massacre, the nature of their contribution and how this has impacted on their lives.

According to Benya (2013), during the strike, there was a compliance with cultural norms on what is deemed an appropriate women’s role and respect for the symbolic gendered character of the mountain space. She further asserts that Marikana women originate from the Eastern Cape province. As such, for these women, the mountain had the same resemblance as a *Kraal* (where family and communal affairs are discussed, women are prohibited from participating in these discussions). Also, she suggested that the mountain symbolised *Iboma* (where women are not allowed because of the ‘danger’ it can cause to the young initiates) (Benya, 2013). In order to fully understand the narratives of women, there is a need to strip off the gender and linear layers presented in this narrative of the involvement of women in miner struggles to survive. This will provide insight into the daily reality and lived experiences of women. In presenting the stories of the women in this manner, this research hopes to show the different ways in which the needs of women and their responses to such struggles to survive shape their everyday lives.

Benya’s assumption is supported by Chinguno (2013:24) who states that in Xhosa culture there is a symbolism attached to the mountain. He explains that ‘in Xhosa culture when there are problems in the family that need to be resolved, the men converge at the kraal and the women are excluded as this is a gendered space’. Both accounts preclude women from participating in the struggles of the miners’ on the mountain. There were a number unfounded reasons provided as to why women were not allowed to participate alongside striking miners. They included safety reasons since the miners explained that the mountain was reserved for men only because they feared women would get hurt. Another explanation assumed that the involvement of women in the struggles to survive could jeopardise the safety of the striking miners.
Based on these accounts, there is no concrete response that explains the basis on which women were excluded from the first striking site, and whether this practise was continued to the second striking site which miners’ assumed after the 16 August 2012.

Literature supporting these two claims suggests that men cannot express themselves or be understood around women, instead they are to find a homogenous community that is specifically masculine, where they can without restraint talk to each other (Hebert, 2001). Others attributed the exclusion of women in the mountain to the use of *muthi*. Bond (2012) attributed the use of traditional medicine (*muthi*) with dysfunctional spiritual suspicions. The argument was that the presence of women in the mountain will cause the *muthi* to wear off and the men will not have protection against bullets (live ammunition). The analysis of the use of *muthi* missed the significance of the use of traditional medicine, but it also had the effect of hiding the role of women. In one of the interviews with the striking miners in Alexander et al (2012) a miner explained that the mountaintop was chosen simply because it was away from the community, mine property and National Union of Mineworkers (NUMs) offices. It meant that miners could gather without being disrupted or chased out, as was previously the case when they occupied the Wonderkop stadium which legally belongs to the mine. The practical response of women to the strike was immediately restricted to the extension of traditional roles and responsibilities of women. It was therefore not surprising that the restriction of women in the mountain was wrapped around ‘cultural norms’ and traditional practises such as use of *muthi*.

To some extent, women challenged the traditional gender division of public participation, because the activism of women was demonstrated in the public space in support of community and workplace struggles. It also challenged the depiction of the contribution of women as being confined to emotional and care work. The support of women resulted in the creation of stronger relationships between the women and their male counterparts. This was crucial in sustaining the solidarity and support that was formed in the mountain after the massacre. In times of conflict and dispute, identities

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1 The second striking site, was a site which the miners’ inhabited after the massacre on 16 August 2012, this is the site where the presence of women intensified as they fought along the striking miners’.
are transformed along with structures in society. In this time of chaos and confusion, women were able to negotiate their roles in society.

The embedded masculine coverage of the involvement of women in the miner struggles was important precisely because of the large involvement of women. The miner struggles occurred in the context of a masculine mining environment. The particular involvement of women in the struggles raises a number of questions about the position of women in society, the nature and perspective of women in community struggles, and the social relationships between women, men and the society in which they live. It certainly raised curiosity about the link between the position of women in society and their involvement in the miner struggle. What significance if any did the involvement of women in community struggle have on their agency? These are the questions that this research aims to answer in detail.

In the historical writings about social movements and political participation in South Africa, women expressed their anger through protests and demonstration, using boycotts and opposing legislations to shame those in authority and coerce them into responding to their needs. The relationship between women and agency is often the key that unlocks understanding into this complex relationship. The Marikana massacre presents a particular moment in history in which gender and class struggles and civil status disappeared in the face of fear and uncertainty and allowed for the opening of a new space in society in which women became more visible in a process that optimised their politicisation.

2.8 Conclusion

The chapter has highlighted the gendered transformations in the mines. It is after the introduction of LOA that the relationship between women, miners and the broader community are strengthened and linked together more strongly. The nature of this change in relationships in the mines has opened up new spaces in which women assume roles previously reserved for their male counterparts in order to ensure the safety of their loved ones and communities and in so doing addressed gender imbalances and the invisibility of women in the community. It is therefore important to acknowledge that understanding what really happened in Marikana cannot be done completely without understanding the participation of women in the 2012 unprotected
Lonmin strike and the 2014 AMCU protected strike which lasted a staggering five months. The Marikana strike opened up a space in which women for the first time used their voices and presence to echo the daily horrific living conditions they are subjected to, and to show their resentment of an emerging exclusionary policy. As a result, women were able to transform traditional identities and re-negotiate for greater participation and visibility in the community.

The literature reviewed in this chapter not only serves as an important source of information about the experiences of women in mining, but, it also provides a sense of the level of participation and contribution of women in both family and public life. The apartheid era and various legislations restricted the participation of women in various aspects of public life, but the post-democratic state resulted in dramatic changes which have brought with them new challenges for women. Such changes include the recruitment of women into mining work. However, regardless of this, the literature presented in this chapter has shown that women still face numerous challenges including marginalisation and subordination in both mining work and community life. But, recent events have shown women coming out stronger, re-instating their position and visibility in society. Yet, this activism is still delegitimised by gender stereotypes. Having discussed the position of women in mining communities in South Africa from the apartheid era to the present, it is clear that women still have a long way to go in order to achieve the level of recognition they deserve. Various factors have been highlighted which prevent the visibility of women in public life. The next chapter will use these factors in detail to identify and discuss the survival strategies employed by women in Marikana and how these contribute to their current positions in society. These serve as a foundation for understanding the broader experiences of women in mining communities and how they negotiate for better living conditions.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Since the participation of women in miner’s strikes in South Africa is a relatively new field of social inquiry in South African literature, this study permitted approaches that could describe and analyse this social action in detail. In order to enrich my understanding of the survival mechanisms of the women in Marikana, the research uncovers the perspective of the interviewees using two research methods. These are quantitative and qualitative research methods. This section highlights the research methodologies employed in the study in order to get in-depth information and detail about women in Marikana as they try to make sense of everyday struggles to survive. The study combined quantitative research methods such as a survey, semi-structured interviews, observations and autobiographies. It also included briefing and engagement meetings with the interviewees.

In order to understand why and how women participated in the 2012 and 2014 miner strikes, one needs to first understand the complex set of social relations which composes the experiences and behaviour of the women being studied. One of the benefits of using multi-methods was that it allowed for rich, in-depth collection of information. In as much as one research method is capable of providing rich data, it is also subjected to a degree of reactivity, where respondents tell the researcher what they think he or she wants to hear, and in some cases some adjust their behaviours when they are being observed and in other instances some people refuse to participate in the research. Using multiple methods was a way to counteract some of the above mentioned pitfalls. Therefore, the use of multiple research methods was important both because each method offered new insight into the lives of the women in Marikana and because the use of multiple methods provided more than one way of verifying the findings which helped ensure the validity of the data.
3.2 Research Site

The research was undertaken from late 2012 to mid-2014 in Marikana, Rustenburg. This time was spent collecting information through preliminary interviews, a survey, semi-structured interviews, autobiographies, conversations and observations. Much of this time was also spent visiting the women interviewed for this research in their homes and attending community gatherings and organisational meetings. I came to know quite well most of the women who participated in the in-depth interviews. I was an active participant observer\(^2\) because I visited their homes whenever I was in Marikana. I also ate at their houses and interacted with their families. This made me feel part of the community and over time as I became more than a frequent visitor, people started calling me by my name. This did not necessarily bias the writing of this research in a negative way, although I was sympathetic to the struggles of the women interviewed and grew closer to the women each time I visited them. These interactions encouraged me to tell the stories of these women accurately. This provided insight into the socio-economic conditions of the women in both Nkaneng and Wonderkop. Initially, I undertook non-participant observation\(^3\) in order to familiarise myself with the participants and the environment I was conducting the research in. It was also to ensure a balance of data collection and to avoid misrepresentation of information.

The research was undertaken at both Nkaneng (Informal Settlement) and Wonderkop (Village) in Marikana because both sites are close to mine shafts. Nkaneng is an informal settlement in Marikana, home to hundreds of people including miners, women and children. The sites were chosen because of their close proximity to striking sites. Wonderkop is close to the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) office where two miners were shot by NUM guards on the 11 of August. Wonderkop stadium was used as the initial gathering site on the 9 August 2012 when the strike started, whilst Nkaneng is closer to the mountain and is also known as killing koppie where the majority of the miners were gunned down on the 16 August 2012 (Alexander et al, 2012).

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\(^2\) Participant Observation is a method of gathering data, in which the observer participates in the daily lives of the people under study, either openly in the role of researcher or observing, listening to what is said and questioning people over a period of time.

\(^3\) Non-participant observation is a research strategy of gathering data about the subjects under study without directly interacting with the participants in the research.
Both Nkaneng and Wonderkop are adjoining settlements and as mentioned before in chapter 1 closer to striking sites. As a result, on the day of the massacre most miners ran to Nkaneng and Wonderkop. On the day of the massacre, when the police started shooting and had killed some of the workers, the surviving workers told how they started running as they fled the scene to reach Nkaneng and Wonderkop where they had their shacks and where many of their girlfriends and wives reside (Alexander et al, 2012). Wonderkop is a developed formal area. The majority of the built houses are occupied by the local people (most of whom are Tswana speaking). Both areas were chosen because the majority of the women who participated in the strike live in either Nkaneng or Wonderkop, near the Wonderkop stadium (initially a striking site) and Koppie (where many miners were killed). In the interviews I conducted with women, they explained that they were able to hear the guns go off because they lived in close proximity to the killing koppie and as a result they were able to quickly run to the mountain to inquire what had happened. The participation of women in the miner strikes is a new phenomenon in South African literature, and it warrants in-depth investigation and understanding as indicated earlier. The research is purposefully limited to women who lived in the Wonderkop/ Nkaneng area during the 2012 Lonmin strike, specifically women who participated in the strike. Both these areas served as sites of refuge and death for some of the miners. Random sampling was used because it allows for generalisation of the population under study from the obtained data (Lawrence, 2003:210).

### 3.3 Access

The interest for the research was in a sense initiated in 2012 when I transcribed interviews for the book *Marikana: A view from the mountain and A case to answer* (Alexander et al 2012) co-written by both my supervisor (Peter Alexander) and co-supervisor (Luke Sinwell). Access to the participants was facilitated in part through both my supervisor and co-supervisor who gave me contacts with some of the miners who participated in the focus group meeting held in October 2012 prior to the publication of the book. The contacts were instrumental in securing my access to key women who initiated the participation of women in the 2012 miner strike. Prior to this, on the day of the focus group meeting held with the miners, I had informal conversations with the women who accompanied the miners to the meeting. It was
upon the conversation with the women (sisters, wives, girlfriends, community leaders and members) that the interest for this study was born. The women suggested that they were being ignored even though they were part of the solidarity support that was formed in the mountain after the massacre. It was this very conversation with the women that made me wonder about the day to day struggles endured by these women.

The initial conversation with the women did not have a deliberate goal. I simply listened to the women when they explained that their role in the massacre had been ignored by the media. This conversations gave me an opportunity to develop this topic and undertake this research. The research approach therefore did not begin with an abstract formula, but rather developed through informal conversations with women. The conversations with the women opened a window of opportunity to develop a specific topic and to understand the situation of the women in Marikana.

3.4 Conversations, Observation and Participation

As mentioned above, initial conversations with the women who participated in the 2012 miner strike were instrumental to the initiation of this research. The conversations with the women brought greater awareness of the complexities of the relationships between the individual and the society they live in. The conversations were also very important in shaping the understanding of the local structures and social relationships. They also prepared me for what to expect in advance and possible strategies to employ when approaching people, especially because the research was undertaken in a post-traumatic environment, which had just witnessed the brutal killings of 34 striking miners. It was therefore important to start the research by engaging in conversations with the participants, because they contributed to the acquisition of knowledge about the role and social position of women and helped me observe the women in their daily interactions. As a researcher, I spent most of this time observing the women in their daily interactions and recording some of the community meetings.

Although this technique was time consuming, it enabled me to get to know the women better. Being in direct contact with the women enabled me to be a direct observer and to get an opportunity to observe their interactions and daily activities. The visits were unstructured and this enabled non-staged interactions amongst the women. Webster
et al. (1999:19) argue that ‘participant observation affords researchers the opportunity to confront the circumstances and approach the hopes and fears of the respondents as if they were theirs’. This allowed me to document the daily lived realities of the women as they happened. Participant observation included attending community meetings, attending local church gatherings, and spending time with the women in their homes in the course of their daily activities.

The observations were undertaken by myself who took the form of both an insider and outsider. This was through engaging in frequent conversations with the women, but within this there were instances where I was viewed as an outsider because of my position as a researcher and a non-participant observer. As a result, this put me in a position of power which sometimes influenced behaviours of the participants. The women would often change their tone and there were often queries about leadership positions in society especially when I attended meetings with the women. This influenced the behaviour of the participants and the manner in which they responded to some of the questions I posed. To overcome this, I become a frequent visitor and this made the women open up and they started becoming comfortable and open with me. I therefore, became an active observer, by assisting the women in the registering of their organisation (Sikhala Sonke) as a Non-Profit Organisation. This allowed me to get closer to the women. I became more of a participant and less of an outside observer, which proved beneficial in building a trustful relationship between me and the interviewees, given the sensitive nature of the topic. I visited Marikana as much as I could and kept in touch with some of the interviewees through frequent phone calls, to check up on the participants and possible new developments in their lives. As Wolcott (1999: 57) pointed out, ‘Fieldworkers have sometimes reported a strengthening of relationships between themselves and the community by the very act of going away and then returning as promised’. This builds trust between the participant and the fieldworker.

3.5 Survey

The use of a survey had an inherent value to the research. It provided a quantitative description of who the women of Marikana are and their struggles to survive. It was particularly significant in providing a detailed understanding of the daily lived struggles of the women and the survival mechanisms employed to address these challenges.
The survey was also used because it allowed for the selection of women for the second part of the research, semi-structured interviews. It also permitted the collection of samples from two different communities. One of these areas was an informal settlement in Marikana called Nkaneng. The area is characterised by an environment fraught with shacks and poor service delivery. The survey was also conducted in Wonderkop, an area divided into both formal and informal settlements.

The village is referred to by the people of Marikana as *emzini* (Xhosa name for a respected home or real home’) because of the magnitude of the built houses and better services delivery compared to Nkaneng. As mentioned before, both areas are in close proximity to mine shafts and the majority of miners live in both areas with their loved ones. One difference between the two areas is that Nkaneng (or Enkanini - which can be translated into ‘force’ in Xhosa) was forcibly inhabited by people who needed an area to live without the consent of tribal family the Bapo Ba Mogale who own the land, whereas in Wonderkop the land was not forcibly taken. The land is less developed because the tribal family claim the people who inhabited the land did so without their consent and as a result they refused to acknowledge their existence or provide services for them. ‘The geography of Wonderkop closely resembled apartheid homelands with most Batswana living separately from the amaXhosa migrants. This separation translated into differentiated services provided by local government in the former and tribal authorities in the latter’ (Marikana Commission of Inquiry, 2014).

Lawrence (2003;140) argues that quantitative research is more concerned with issues of design, measurement and sampling because their deductive approach emphasises detailed planning prior to data collection and analysis. A quantitative research methodology was used because it poses questions and not all of the questions proposed can be answered qualitatively or quantitatively. These included questions such as: how much is your monthly income, what is the total amount of your monthly expenses, and have you ever borrowed money from a loan shark?

The study used a survey to analyse, describe and identify the similarities and differences within and between categories of data. Most importantly, the use of quantitative research will result in a complete description of the variables of the population being studied (Johnson& Christensen, 2008). Perhaps even more
importantly, qualitative research was used to identify intangible factors such as social norms, gender relations, socioeconomic status and political participation. The use of quantitative research included analysing data using statistics from the Rustenburg local municipality, Bench Marks Foundation and Statistics South Africa and provided broader information about household expenditures, demographics and other important issues.

A survey produces information that is inherently statistical in nature. It asks many people (respondents) questions about their behaviours, attitudes/beliefs/opinions, characteristics, expectations, self-classification and knowledge (Lawrence, 2003:264). The survey provided a description of the women in Marikana and their daily lived struggles to survive. The use of the survey was important in that it provided descriptions of the socio-political and economic aspects of the women’s lives. It also assisted with selection of participants for the qualitative interviews.

The survey was conducted over three days on the 6th, 7th and 8th of September 2013, in both Nkaneng and Wonderkop settlements in Marikana. The survey was facilitated by the assistance of two honours students, who are part of the South African Research Chair in Social Change. Also, two women in Marikana were trained to conduct the survey and hired to assist. The two women who assisted with the survey formed part of the group of women who accompanied miners for the focus group meeting. Both women assisted with the sampling; each person was responsible for 30 houses. Access to the map was facilitated by the Madibeng Local Municipality in Marikana. The municipality willingly loaned me the map to use for the sampling. The map was divided into 10 equal proportions in each of the two settlements. A purposive sample of 150 houses was chosen for the survey. The sample consisted of 150 women aged 18 years and older from both areas.

Cluster sampling was used as a sampling method. According to Kelly (2006), cluster sampling is a method of survey which selects clusters such as groups defined by area of residence, organisational membership or other group defining characteristics. The area photographic map was divided into 10 clusters, in both Nkaneng and Wonderkop; from there, a random sample from these clusters was chosen to collect basic information from each of the selected households. Each second household from the
left was chosen. In instances where there was no one available in the selected household, the next house was then chosen. The main motivation for using a cluster sampling technique is to assume some form of a representative sample size which will provide more detailed results and budget on time as the selected population were all within reach. It is however important to note that there was some bias in the sample.

Firstly, the sample was very small and as such, it failed to reach a larger population and there was therefore a larger margin for error. The sample was also biased towards working women who were under-represented because they were most likely not home at the time the survey was conducted. The survey was undertaken during weekdays and it is highly possible that some women were at work at the time or were away. The survey was also conducted after the massacre so it is possible that some of the women went back to their rural homesteads to escape the trauma of the massacre. The survey represented the situation in Marikana at the time. Although it might have not been representative of the larger population of both Nkaneng and Wonderkop, it helps explain who the women are, their living conditions and even why women participated in the 2012 miner struggles to survive and how this impacted on their lives.

### 3.6 Semi-structured interviews

A purposive (intentionally chosen) sample of 20 women was selected from the survey and they then participated in semi-structured in-depth interviews. The sample was purposive in that it deliberately chose 20 women who answered yes in the survey when asked if they participated in the 2012 miner strike. I wanted to know how the strike impacted on the lives of women. But, to get a more accurate and detailed understanding of why women participated in the strike, it made sense to also conduct seven brief interviews with women who did not participate in the strike to provide a more accurate analysis of the impact of the participation of women in the strike. Out of the 150 surveys conducted, 50 women were interested in participating in semi-structured interviews, but out of the 50 only 25 answered yes to having participated in the miner strike and out of this 25 only 20 participants were interested and availed themselves when contacted for the semi-structured interviews. The 20 people then made up the sample for the semi-structured interviews.
The survey consisted of 15 questions and the last question asked whether the participants would be available for an in-depth interview. From the survey, 50 women answered ‘yes’ to participating in semi-structured interviews. This was then narrowed to 20 women who expressed their interest, when asked if they would be interested in participating in semi-structured in-depth interviews. Initially 25 women were chosen, but days before the interview process some of the women went to their respective rural homesteads, some were sick and some were visiting while others changed their mind about participating in the research. A qualitative research approach was used because it allows for interpretive and critical approaches (Lawrence, 2003:140) and provides a rich body of information about the phenomenon being studied in a specific setting.

The duration of the interviews approximated from one to one and a half hours. All the interviews were recorded and later directly translated into English by me and no attempt was made to interrupt the voices of the women by adding my own opinions and voice except in the analysis and writing phase, when I needed to choose which aspects of the interviews to include and not include. Nevertheless, the interviews remained raw and reflect the point of view of the participants. This was done to avoid distorting the meaning of the transcripts. Since all the interviews had been recorded, it made it easier to listen to the recordings repeatedly to ensure all the translated information was reliable and accurate. I also took notes during the interview to supplement information recorded from the interviews. A field research journal was also used to note down ideas, questions and thoughts that might arise from the field. This allowed me to draft important points observed in the field. I also took a camera with me to the field to capture visual moments of the women living in the Marikana community. This was accounted as non-verbal information used to strengthen the argument. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were used as key information collection techniques. This form of data collection allowed for rich detailed information, and ‘free interaction between the researcher and interviewee’ (Hargreaves, 1994:6). It also resulted in the bridging of hierarchical power relations between the researcher and the respondents. The use of open-ended questions, ‘facilitated exploration and discovery by the researcher of people’s views about their reality’ (Hargreaves, 1994:7).
The proposed research question for these interviews was: how and why did women in Marikana participate in the strike and how has it affected their lives? The project explains the situational, societal, political and personal aspects of the lives of women in Marikana. These questions will be best answered when explored qualitatively because, according to Lawrence (2003), qualitative research strategy is a good tool to answer the ‘how, who, what’ questions. These questions helped me in building the profiles of the participants and to tell detailed and thorough stories about the women in Marikana. Such questions helped in explaining who the women in Marikana are. They included specific questions such as: how did you come to Marikana and how do you cope and survive. Also, the use of qualitative research offers a detailed explanation of why women participated in the massacre (Yin, 2003). This shows the relevance of choosing this research strategy. A relevant case study facilitates learning and is an effective way of bringing real life experiences into the world (Johnson & Christensen, 1998:4).

The interviews were all set up a week in advance to give the women a chance to work around their schedules. This was also done to check the availability of the women for interviews I therefore ended up completing all twenty interviews in five days, in locations chosen by the interviewees. The interviews all took more than one hour each. All the interviews were semi-structured but, they were also flexible and more probing questions were added, especially in a few instances where respondents provided new crucial information which had not been previously disclosed. Interviews were divided into specific themes and these were guided by the survey and preliminary group interviews conducted on the 10 February 2013 with some of the women before the actual fieldwork began. When conducting semi-structured interviews, open ended questions were asked and a tape recorder was used to capture more details. Lawrence (2003:277) argues that open ended questions can qualify and clarify unanticipated findings and permit the richness of details. I also took notes during the interview to ask follow-up questions which arose during the interview.

Often some of the women still call me to check up on me and find out when I am coming for a visit. This made me feel like I am part of the community since the women have welcomed me with open arms and some even regarded me as a daughter because I often checked up on them as well. Building trust with the women was an
important part of this research given the sensitive nature of the research topic and the on-going killings taking place in Marikana particularly in 2013 when the first phase of research was undertaken.

### 3.7 Autobiographies

Three of the twenty participants were chosen to construct autobiographies. Amongst these women included a woman miner, a community leader and a woman who recycles cans for a living. The rest of the interviews were used throughout the research to supplement the presented literature and theoretical framework. These three autobiographies were chosen because they represent the broader picture of women living in Marikana, each facing similar struggles to survive irrespective of financial standings and backgrounds in society. The individuals help us understand the deeper social relations and the agency and contribution of women in the mining community of Marikana. Autobiographies provided an opportunity to hear the voices of women, whose lives have been embedded in the daily struggles to survive in the mining environment in which they live (Nite & Stuart, 2012:1).

Autobiographies were undertaken so that they can enrich the reader’s understanding of the women living in mining communities in South Africa. Autobiographies provide rich, uninterrupted voices of the women in Marikana. All three autobiographies were captured over a period of time. A total of four interviews were carried out with all three interviewees. The interviews were conducted on the 12 January 2013, 16 March 2013, 7 August 2013 and 9 April 2014. The use of autobiographies provides women with a sense of agency because their stories are told with their own voices. The research therefore undertook autobiographies in part to move away from the general convention of treating people as purely research objects, by allowing the reader to view the women as individuals. This strategy attempts to give the women a sense of dignity, importance and humanity by providing rich, detailed and uninterrupted autobiographies. Phil Bonner (2013: 159) states that autobiographies focuses on transformations that have taken place at the local level, and where possible, generalises from these, rather than following the normal route which examine them from the top down.
This research takes Bonner’s lead and uses the autobiographies of the women in order to understand the individual lives of women in Marikana. This was invaluable in explaining the lives of women as a group in Marikana and the social relationships and solidarity within the broader mining community. Autobiographies were therefore useful in explaining the contribution and role of women during the two strikes (2012 and 2014) and what characteristics they brought with them to that space.

This data capturing approach provides a broader understanding of the histories of the women, their experiences, perceptions and views. It is for this very reason that three autobiographies were conducted. They sufficiently tracked the social changes that women have gone through and provided a detailed understanding of their stories. They also document the lives of these women. In this case the use of autobiographies offers a detailed narrative or a ‘history from below’ (tracking the past experiences and present realities of the women). Autobiographies were therefore undertaken because they provide detailed accounts of the participant’s lives in their own words (Plumer, 1983). The information gathered from autobiographies, provides detailed insight into the lives and socio-economic relationships of the participants, thus offering generous descriptions of their precarious existence (Murray, 2002:495). The narratives of the women enhance their integrity of the analyses tentatively based on a set of such narratives (Nite & Stuart, 2012:7). According to Murray (2002:495) ‘autobiographies form part of the tools meant to trace the history of accumulation, vulnerability, poverty alleviation mechanisms because it uses a looking back approach, by looking at past events’. It is thus important to map past events in order to understand the current circumstances of the women.
3.8 Collective Briefings and engagement meetings

Photograph 3.6.1 Shows an engagement meeting held with 20 women in Marikana who participated in the semi-structured interviews.
Photograph 3.6.2 Shows an engagement meeting held with 20 women in Marikana who participated in the in-depth interviews.

A total of three meetings were held for the purpose of the research. The first of these was held on 28 August 2013. I held this meeting with the women and informed them of my plans to conduct the survey. It was a small meeting which was held at one of the women’s yards. The purpose of this meeting was so that the women who attended could spread the word in the community about the research. An engagement meeting was held on the 16th of October 2013 to report the findings of the survey and choose participants for semi-structured interviews. The third meeting was held on the 5th of November for the selection of 20 participants for the semi-structured interviews. Prior to the submission of the research, a reference group meeting was held with all 20 participants who participated in semi-structured interviews.

The participants will be the first people to get access to the information in the research before it is submitted. The meetings were all important in that they were a way for me to give back as a researcher to the participants. They were also a platform to provide an opportunity for new arising information to be recorded. The briefing and engagement meetings were also a way to show the participants how central they were in the research process. Without the generosity of their time to tell their stories openly, this research would have not been possible. Critically, the meetings allow for an opportunity for the participants to get together to reflect and share their experiences in a safe and non-judgmental environment.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

3.9.1 Dealing with Trauma

Given that the majority of the participants might have suffered some psychological trauma/discomfort during the Marikana massacre, it was understood that some psychological trauma might result from the nature of some of the questions that will be asked. The researcher might also experience psychological discomfort known as secondary trauma. The researcher therefore sought psychological advice both for the participant and the researcher. As a researcher, I did not experience any trauma, partly because I had been well informed in advance about how to deal with trauma by a qualified counsellor who informed me of correct procedures to follow in instances
where psychological discomfort might be experienced. A social worker from the Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) situated in Marikana was contacted and she got me in touch with counsellors based in Marikana. There were no instances during the interview where women broke down in the middle of the interviews. As a result, none of the participants made use of the services of a counsellor. Given the sensitive nature of the research topic, before interviews were conducted, a focus group was called with twenty participants in the presence of a counsellor. During this session, I explained the nature of the research and informed the participants that should they feel the need to speak to someone as a result of psychological discomfort; a person will be available to immediately speak to the interviewee. Participants were guaranteed that the information shared with the counsellor would be confidential, and this was a voluntary decision by the interviewee.

3.9.2 General Considerations
Permission to conduct the study was sought from the participants during the first focus group, where findings of the survey were reported to the women. Consent forms were used to receive permission from the participant, before the interview started. For those who were unable to read, write or understand English, I explained the nature of the research and contents of the consent form in the presence of someone the participant had chosen to sign the form on their behalf. It was also explained to the participant that should she feel uncomfortable or unable to participate in the research for whatever reason, a counsellor will be contacted and the participant will be free to discontinue with the research.

I also explained to the participants that they had a choice as to whether or not they want to disclose some information and that they may refrain from answering questions that they may feel uncomfortable with. It is my responsibility as a researcher to ensure that my research does not in any way cause direct harm to anyone or cause disruptions in a community’s normal way of life. Confidentiality will be maintained and no real names will be linked to the views expressed in the research paper, except for Primrose Sonti whose real name is mentioned in chapter six and seven. Permission was sought from Primrose Sonti to use her real name. This was done because she is a famous figure who is a Provincial Parliamentary Member of the Economic Freedom Fighters. In order to ensure confidentiality of the interviewees in the research I used
pseudonyms. This practise was done to respect and protect the respondent’s identity. This was particularly a good strategy considering that the Commission of Inquiry is currently in progress (at the time of writing). The women feared being victimised for withholding information that was viewed as ‘important’ to the proceedings of the commission which might influence the decision in the commission.

3.9.3 Engagement Meetings and Solidarity

The briefing and engagement meetings were important in that they helped to create closer relations between me and the women. It showed the women that I was not just there for the purpose of extracting information and submitting my report, but that I also cared about them and their opinions. I shared a rapport with these women and the women were able to share more sensitive information about themselves, such as dating men for money, having unprotected sex, leaving children in the rural homesteads with grandparents and other difficulties of being a woman in Marikana. The meetings were also important for the women in that they allowed them to come together and created the possibility for the women to see each other in relation to other women who participated in the research.

As a result, close relationships and strong communication were built between the participants themselves and myself over the two years of this research. This was one of the reasons that I mobilised food for the community in Marikana, following the 2014 miner strike. It was the hospitality and generosity of these women which was quite notable. They had far less material benefits to offer, but always called me to touch base and often invited me over to their homes for a warm meal and conversation. The women were willing to share the little they had with me, and this made me feel welcome. Two months into the 2014 strike, I visited Marikana to find out how the women were surviving. I remember when I asked one of the women, how she was doing and her response was ‘kunzima Bridget, silambile, abantu balambilie’, meaning ‘it is tough Bridget, we are hungry, the people are hungry’. It is upon hearing these sad words that I decided to come back to the university, with the permission of my supervisor and co-supervisor in order to mobilise food and clothes for the women and miners in Marikana.
3.10 Critical Review of Methodology

3.10.1 Challenges

Conducting research in a post-conflict environment was no easy task. When I first visited Marikana, I was an outsider who was there to extract information. I did not have any idea about the women and their daily lived struggles to survive. First was the fear and challenge of approaching the participants. I asked myself, what do I say? How do I approach them? When I first conducted preliminary interviews, the majority of the people around Wonderkop were not interested. They were scared and they often associated researchers with the media who they clearly did not trust. Some of the people approached initially for the preliminary interviews explained that there were a number of incidents where they were approached by people who claimed they were media personnel and after giving the people an interview they would be approached by the police at night who raided their houses arresting their men.

Travelling in a university car drew a lot of attention to myself. I was often stopped by mine security when entering Wonderkop for a ‘routine check’ as I was told. This was supposedly done to ensure that I was not carrying any illegal weapons. On the 1st of September 2013, I was tailed by a police van, the police stopped me and explained
that they were guarding the area and checking for ‘suspicious cars and people’. Conducting the actual research was a major challenge, because the university car (with a UJ logo on the side of the car) was often mistaken for a state car, spying\(^4\) on people and the community in what they termed as ‘finishing them off’, because they feared for their lives. They explained that if a person were to go missing that same night they would kill them for being sell outs and might come and take revenge on them. People were vulnerable and as a result there was a lot of mistrust amongst the community. People did not know who to trust anymore.

One of the major limitations in the process of acquiring interviewees was the different social standings. I (the interviewer) come from a different background than the respondents. Rabe (2006:95) argues that in certain research situations specific disparities between interviewers and respondents may constitute a substantial hindrance, however, similarities in language, race and background allowed the interviewees to speak more freely, since I was able to communicate in the respondents’ home language.

To overcome some of the mentioned challenges, I spent as much time as I could going around the community, attending community meetings and socialising with some of the miners who participated in the book *Marikana: A View from the Mountain and A Case to Answer*. This introduced me to women who played a crucial role during the strike. This was an advantage since being seen with the miners increased my chances of getting interviews. Also, some women were familiar with University of Johannesburg, because they were acquainted with the researchers who worked in the book, while a few recalled seeing me in the community a couple of times. This was a big break through, because I often tagged along with some of these women and this is how I got access to more participants. I also had two report back meetings. Firstly, I reported on the survey results. Secondly, I had a follow-up meeting, where I chose the twenty participants for semi-structured interviews. This helped me to get even closer to the women, who slowly opened up their homes and invited me into their lives.

\(^4\) The women explained the word spy as a person who came to Marikana under the pretence of conducting research in order to gather information about the miners’ who participated in the strike so that they could be arrested or even killed.
Being fluent in IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, SeSotho, and SeTswana helped dismantle the outsiders’ walls, and this allowed me to engage in formal conversations with the women, without the presence of a third person to interpret the interviews which might have intimidated the women. It was difficult at first to create a relaxed atmosphere that would allow the respondent to express themselves more freely. This was due to the fact that the participants were scared of being seen entering a car or walking with someone who was not from Marikana, because they viewed everyone carrying a pen and a paper as a journalist or a state informant, wanting to get a story and publish false information. Another challenge with conducting in-depth interviews is that the interviewees were sceptical about providing me with personal information at first. Understandably, given the on-going murders of people in Wonderkop particularly in 2013, the women were scared and they did not trust easily. More than that, the women feared for their safety. They often explained that they were victimised by the community, who claimed that they got paid for interviews.

Five of the twenty women asked to be interviewed in the university car. They also asked that the car be parked away from the interviewees’ home. Conducting interviews in the car was a major challenge. It became difficult to conduct the interview in a quiet environment. The car windows had to be closed to avoid the noise of passing vehicles, which made it difficult to concentrate given the high temperatures in Rustenburg. Small breaks had to be taken in between the interviews, to open the windows and get cool air into the car.

3.10.2 Self Reflections
Age created certain challenges for me during the research process since I was younger than all the women who were interviewed. I had to work hard to prove my loyalty, maturity and commitment to the women. My ability to speak to these women in a language of their preference had an added benefit, and I understood and could relate to most of the things they shared about their backgrounds. I was able to address them directly in a respectful manner and I treated them as equals. Instead of it being a routine interview, the communication was more of a conversation between two people learning from each other. The direct conversation built trust between me and the women, and helped them open up more. Some of these interviews were conducted in the participants’ own homes and were carried out over a nice hot meal, and I would
often use my hands to eat pap with them, because most of the women ate pap with their hands. This helped me get even closer to the women and made me part of the community.

Frequent visits and interactions with the participants proved beneficial. I became more than a researcher and my interactions with the women developed into a relationship that stretched far beyond just extracting information. I related with the women on a more social and personal level. Whenever I left Marikana, I thought of the women and wondered if some of them had something to eat that night, since they were unemployed and did not have a stable source of income. The empathy I felt towards the interviewees enriched my understanding of the struggles to survive faced by the women and enhanced the findings of this research. This enabled me to get closer to the interviewees. Without this trustful relationship with the women, I do not think that this research would have been completed and enhanced in the manner that it has. The women would have not agreed to be interviewed by a young woman coming from a different world who did not experience the same struggles, and they would have not been able to open up and be honest with me in the manner that they did. Being a woman also helped me get closer to the women interviewed and I could to some extent relate to some of their experiences and this helped in providing a more honest and rich answer to the central question posed in the research.

3.10.3 Lessons Learned
It is important for researchers to familiarise themselves with the particular environment they are conducting research in or the social relations in that specific community. This way one is well prepared, and knows what to expect and can seek advice on how to deal with the chosen social environment. Alternatively, one should always build relations with crucial or active people in the specific community, interact with them and shadow them around. This will make one familiar with some of the community members, culture and social dynamics which will inform the researcher as to how to approach people within a given society. Collective briefings and engagement meetings are also very important, because often as a researcher we go into an area, extract information and write research treating people as nothing more than objectives for our research. It is thus important to show the participants that you are a researcher, but you are also sympathetic to their struggles. Although one must be clear at the outset
that we cannot transform the lives of the interviewees. It is through giving back to the people a trustful relationship is built. This helps build stronger relationships between the participants themselves, and through sharing their struggles the women are able to adopt alternative strategies that they might have not previously thought of.

The use of a male driver was beneficial for safety reasons, in that I was not alone as a women in a vulnerable environment that had just experienced trauma. Also, the police who often stopped me in road blocks were able to let me pass because I was not alone. There was little room for them to intimidate me. But, driving the car myself might have also been beneficial, because I would have been a woman driving alone and the women of Marikana wouldn’t have hesitated as much to speak to me. It would have been easier to influence the participants to speak to me without the presence of a man.

3.11 Conclusion

As highlighted above, the research has used various research methods of quantitative, semi-structured interviews, conversations, observations and participation and autobiographies to critically evaluate the literature related to the topic of women in mining. All methods had a unique capability to describe, provide understanding and capture meaning within the social context being studied. The use of all these research methods allowed for the literature to be adequately addressed and data to be thoroughly analysed and then allowed for more broader and thorough understanding of the experiences, contributions, participation, survival strategies and struggles of women of Marikana. Chapter four draws on both the qualitative and quantitative data to describe the women in a general sense (including demographically) and to analyse the daily struggles and survival strategies employed by the women of Marikana.
CHAPTER 4: STRUGGLES TO SURVIVE IN EVERYDAY LIVES

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides both a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the living conditions and demographic backgrounds of women in Marikana. In many instances the involvement of women in strikes can be exaggerated. For instance, there has been many controversial interpretations of their involvement in the 2012 Marikana miner strike. Thus, this chapter provides an accurate and holistic account of the lived conditions of the women of Marikana which assists in unpacking the solidarity and unity that was formed in the mountain (prior to and following the Marikana massacre) between the miners and the women in the community. It therefore provided a detailed description of living conditions of women in Marikana and a sense of the daily lived experiences of the women and how these influenced their role and contribution in the miner strikes.

4.2 Life in Marikana

Like most mining communities, Marikana is highly dependent on mineral resources, in this case platinum, which is integral to the survival of the larger community. The livelihoods of the individuals are shaped by the opportunities and constraints presented by the environment they live in. This also relates to culture, as well as the social and political landscape of the area. Lack of employment opportunities, especially amongst women, makes living in such communities a daily struggle. While the history of Marikana itself has resulted in the marginalisation and exclusion of women in public life, broader social dynamics have also resulted in the further exclusion of women.

According to the Marikana Commission of Inquiry (2014:33), ‘In 2012 the majority of Lonmin workers resided in Wonderkop, a residential area within Marikana’. Wonderkop consists of both formal and informal settlements. One area of Wonderkop boasts formal built houses and running water. Nkaneng means to ‘take by force’. The area legally belongs to the Bapo Ba Mogale traditional authority and it was initially reserved as a farming area. As a result of the mushrooming of people into the area,
people started illegally occupying the land. The area is characterised by poor service delivery and a lack of proper infrastructure and basic services such as water. The separation between the two areas also resembles the social dynamics within the area, with most Batswana living in Wonderkop and AmaXhosa settling in informal settlements such as Nkaneng. The separation also translates into differentiated treatment in the community and provision of government services.

The majority of people living in Wonderkop are migrants originating from Eastern Cape, North West, Free-State, Gauteng and Limpopo, with a small fraction of immigrants coming from Lesotho, Mozambique and Swaziland. Migrants from other North West towns tend to speak Setswana and live in the Batswana areas, because of the commonalities in the language. Migrants have settled in informal areas such as Nkaneng despite the fact that they have poor services. The presence of migrants in the area has resulted in tensions between the locals and migrants. The locals often accuse ‘outsiders’ of stealing the money of their loved ones. They accuse migrant women of going to Marikana to seek a man to support them and this has led migrants to retaliate by accusing the locals of taking their men who work in Marikana. Migrants live in such conditions in part because they have no claim over the area, and because they prioritise building houses back home in the rural homesteads.

Figure 4.2.1  Place of Birth of Miners’ in Marikana

Figure 4.2.1  Statistics taken from: Marikana Commission of Inquiry: Preliminary Report, 15 August 2014. Graph By: Author.
Figure 4.2.2 Place of Birth of Women in Marikana

Figure 4.2.2 shows place of birth of women in Marikana. Graph By: Author.

Figure 4.2.1 shows the provincial and national percentage of women living in Wonderkop and Nkaneng in Marikana. Figure 4.2.1 and Figure 4.2.2 both show the consistent high percentage of men and women coming from the Eastern Cape province. Much of this can be attributed to women coming to visit their husbands, boyfriends or relatives. Figure 4.2.1 has a higher percentage of women compared to figure 1 because of the existence of mixed cultural relationships. It is not uncommon to have a Xhosa speaking man date a Tswana or Sotho speaking woman. Further, graph 1 shows the provincial composition of mining work force in 2012. Figure 4.2.1 represents the population of women in Wonderkop and Nkaneng in September 2013. The population could have changed by now due to migration, births or deaths.

4.3 Women and Relationships

Marriage has always been viewed as a key institution in most societies. In most black cultures, marriage is seen as a central defining factor in the transition from immaturity to adulthood. However, Clare Chambers (n.d:1) argues that ‘it has been a
fundamental site of women’s oppression, with married women having few independent rights in law. Currently, it is associated with the gendered division of labour, with women taking on the lion’s share of domestic and caring work and being paid less than men for work outside the home’. The popular Xhosa phrase *indawo yentombi isemzini* literally is translated as ‘women’s place is in the marriage’. There is a certain sense of pride and significance attached to marriage. Lobola is a means of the groom showing appreciation to the bride's parents for raising her:

I remember, I was twelve years old when I was abducted and married off to my husband who was in his early 30s at the time. My husband's family was rich, he paid twelve cows for me for *lobola*, my family was very happy [and] so was I (Mavis, 52).

The idea of marriage and paying *lobola* had multiple meanings and interpretations attached to it, however, the common concepts often revolves around showing appreciation and taking care of the bride. Even more importantly, it is about the financial position of the groom and his prescribed role of being the sole provider which is reflected through the process of *lobola*. Here, the dominant position of men as breadwinner is re-emphasised. Conversely, the women are expected to be the homemakers and caregivers in the home. This reiterated Parkin’s view that the division of gender roles is strengthened through *lobola* payments (Parkin, 1980). The reasoning therefore seems to be that the division of gender roles is justifiable under the *lobola* institution.

Important to note, however, is the underlying meaning of *lobola* being based on the traditional division of gender roles, specifically the fact that men had capital and women tended to family needs (Nkosi, 2011:66). More than 40% of women who participated in the survey were single. Thus, there were blurred lines between the sole provider role and the role of women’s independence. Further, as it appears that while women assumed the homemaker role, this was done in the women’s own private homes as most of the women who participated in the survey lived alone, with only 17,3% cohabiting. On the one hand, the socio-economic information obtained from the survey seemed to show that majority of the relationships in Marikana were based on financial gains but, it also meant that amongst those women who were not cohabiting there was greater independence and freedom. In the in-depth interviews the women
explained that they were able to make independent decisions without the influence of their male counterparts. Most of the participants noted that they preferred living alone because they were involved in relationships with married men. Living separately resulted in greater freedom and less complications in instances when the wife came to visit. This is captured well in the following quote:

I used to live with my boyfriend who was married, when the wife came to visit he asked me to live with his friend temporarily but his wife ended up staying for 3 months, his friend starting demanding I sleep with him otherwise he will kick me out of his house (Ntombi 32)

This illustrates the complexities associated with dating a married man. Most of the women interviewed lived by themselves. They explained that their boyfriends gave them monthly stipends depending on the occupation of the man and his responsibilities back home in the rural homesteads. The stipend starts at R 500. Some of the women entered into these relationships for financial gains in what I call ‘transactional relationships’, whereby the women provided domestic and sexual benefits to the boyfriend in exchange for financial support. Often such relationships are dominated by the men because they are the sole breadwinners. Participants explained that they found themselves in positions where they could not refuse the demands made by their boyfriends, such as having unprotected sex, which resulted in a substantial number of informants admitting to have contracted HIV:

I am weak, I always have headaches, sores, as a result after the strike I started going to the clinic and found out that I was HIV positive, so now I have to take the treatment (Nontombi, 36).

Figure 4.3 Marital Statuses of Women in Marikana (Percentage of Total)
48% of the 150 women who participated in the research were previously married themselves, and one of the common reasons provided for the failure of the marriage was that there was another woman in the picture. This is a contradictory situation in which the women find themselves doing the very same thing that ended most of their marriages so they can survive. In some of the informal conversations I have had with the women, they explained that, ‘desperation and hardship have no room for dignity’. Others have stated that, ‘shame will not put clothes on my back and food on the table’. This forced most of them into a position in which they found themselves doing things they wouldn’t do under decent circumstances. The women explained that when the man refused to have sex with a condom, if the women demanded a condom, he would say ‘are you sleeping with someone else? Because if you were only sleeping with me, you would not ask me to use a condom’. In its mid-year release of HIV/AIDS prevalence in South Africa, the SANHPIBS (2012) reported that the North West province had the fourth largest HIV/AIDS prevalence standing at 13,3%. The report also showed that women from ages 15 to 49 years old have the highest HIV infection rate (SANHPIBS, 2012:4).

Women find themselves giving into pressure because they fear losing their only financial stability. But, as indicated earlier, this results in a number of women contracting HIV and AIDS related illnesses, which leaves them in an even worse off position. Frail and sick, the women’s ability to perform domestic and sometimes sexual
duties were limited, forcing the men to look for replacements. Usually, the men gave the women money and it is the women who prioritised what the money should be spent on. Most of the relationships are based on a convenient arrangement. One woman explained that:

> love will not feed me every day, we agreed that we will help each other, he gives me money every month, in return I cook for him and sleep over when he asks me too. I cannot exactly say no, otherwise he might take his money and find someone else. It is just an arrangement we have, he told me he has a wife and I respect that, all I want is money, it is not like I expect him to leave his wife and marry me (Nozuko,36).

Even though there is no definite way of proving how much of the relationships are about love, and how much of them are simply transactional, a great deal of relationships are clearly based on finance (offered by men) and sex (offered by women). Much of this complication is centred on the fact that it is not strange in most black cultures to have the man financially support his woman. This is considered to be the responsibility of a man. Nor is it foreign to have a woman married to a man she has never met before, given that most of the women are from rural backgrounds where these practises are common. The involvement of women in transactional relationships is simply a survival strategy, a temporary one at that. Some of the relationships predominantly involve married men with families back in the rural homes. Relationships with local partners in the city usually serve as surrogate families in the absence of a wife who lives back home in the rural homestead. Given the long excruciating hours put at work, many workers struggle to balance between paid work and housework. The local girlfriends serve to ease the burden off men since women manage the home and provide care work to the miners. Such work includes activities such as cleaning the house, cooking, washing clothes and taking care of the miners when they are sick.

The nature of the relationships are further complicated by the retirement and retrenchment of miners due to old age, given the reduced or non-existent remittances. According to Matsie (2009:1) ‘the economic strategies of these women have changed since their husbands have been retrenched. They now have to struggle for alternative means of sustaining their livelihoods’. This also affects women who with age find it even more difficult to find a man to support them financially. Usually men approaching
pension start saving up and preparing to retire to their rural homesteads and as a result they spend money on necessary basic items. This leaves the surrogate wives vulnerable and with limited opportunity to sustain themselves financially. With age, most men lose interest in sexual relationships and those that are still in relationships tend to spend less money on their partners. Mazulu (55) claimed that her partner of 10 years used to give her around R 1000 a month, but over the recent years the money started gradually decreasing to about R 500 a month. She elaborated that her partner is preparing to go on pension in less than a year so he is saving up as much as he can.

The nature of most relationships is highly dependent upon the life span of the labour force. When the men retire women are forced to return home in rural homesteads empty handed. Some ought to remain in Marikana and look for someone else to provide financial assistance, but this is a gamble because men spend less money when they get older since they are starting to prepare for retirement back home with their families. It is, however, important to note that the relationship between women and men go far beyond just monetary benefits. Without the presence of these women, the men would simply not work as hard in their paid jobs as they do. The work the women provide in the households eases the pressure of men, and ensures that the men do their best in the work place. Thus, the dependence of the women on the male miners motivates the men to work even harder at negotiating better living wages. However, it is the women who have to battle to find ways to exist with the little they get from the miner’s meagre monthly wages. The wages of men directly impacts on the lives of women who are left behind struggling for proper services. The remittances from the miners is a way of life and means of surviving for these women who ensure that the mineworkers are in good condition when they go to work.

Figure 4.4 Employment Status of Women Living in Marikana (Percentage of Total)
The lack of job opportunities forces the women to remain behind in the community, while the men go to work. It is common to see a group of women, intently gathered outside their shacks chatting and breaking into laughter, while children roam around.
the yard carefree and half naked. Most households in Marikana have one breadwinner. The majority of breadwinners are male and working in the mine, while the rest of the family members are ‘either unemployed or in part-time jobs with no stable income’ (Benya, 2013:7). Most stable and permanent jobs are those found in the mine. The rest are left to work in supermarkets in Marikana, as domestic workers, in petrol stations, doing contract work, and as assistants in local shops and local farms. However, there has been a significant drop in the number of job opportunities in the community since the 2012 strike. The women explained that since the strike the local shop owners no longer have employment opportunities. The shop owners, on the other hand, explained that after the 2012 strike, miners started spending less money and as a result their businesses were taking a knock and they were unable to hire people to help out.

The lack of employment opportunities has led to a situation in which most people take advantage and see this as an opportunity to make money. The women reported to paying anything between R 2000 to R 10 000 for jobs in the mine. Whether the money is paid to the mine authority, union officials or tribal authorities, one thing is certain. There are no guarantees of getting the job even after you have paid the price. Some of these women have reported paying the sum, but are still awaiting their jobs. Some explain that the person often disappears with your money and when you go to the mine to report this case they tell you they do not know the person. The vulnerability of these women and their desperate need to escape poverty has opened them up to a number of schemes. Sindiswa (51) explains that ‘in 2012 there was a car with GP number plates, one of the women here in the community told me that car was offering jobs, and that I needed to pay R 200 to register my name’. The desperate need for immediate employment has made the unemployed people in Marikana victims of money schemes:

I woke up the following morning went to the mine and the white men was parked near the mine, I gave him R 200 he took my details and told us to come back on Thursday to find out where we will be placed. I woke up Thursday morning went to mine site, but the white man was not there, there were a number of us waiting for him but we waited and waited and he never pitched. We decided to go and report the incident to the mine management, but we were simply told that they do not know the men; we were confused if they did not know the person why did they allow him to park near the mine and take our money (Sindiswa, 51)
Local politics within the community and the inability to speak the local language also leaves women in a disadvantaged position. Migrants are often left on the outside to fend for themselves. The women interviewed explained that jobs are also allocated to locals first. Setswana speaking people get first preference while migrants are left to fend for themselves. Caroline is a 28 year old Mozambican woman living in Wonderkop, renting a shack with her husband and two children. Her eldest son is 6 years old but does not go to school because she cannot afford to buy uniforms for him and he only speaks Portuguese:

I work here with my husband who fixes people’s shoes he cannot get work in the mine because he is old and does not have legal papers... as you can see business is not going well because people prefer going to local shops, as a result I am suffering, I can barely pay rent let alone buy food, and I am unable to register my child for social grant because I am here illegally, without any papers, life is hard for me I am even thinking of taking my children back home and leave all this life behind (Carolina, 28).

Caroline’s story is similar to that of most women living in Marikana. However, her story is different in the sense that she faces a triple burden of exclusion. Firstly, she is a woman; secondly, she is an immigrant; and, thirdly, she experiences exclusion and is often ostracised by the rest of the community because she can only speak Portuguese. Her struggles to survive in Marikana have left her and her family struggling to scrape by every single day.

4.4 Living Conditions

The lived experiences of the community are a major factor in the workers’ lives. In order to have a holistic picture of the daily lived struggles of the women in Marikana and their experiences in the strike, it is important to know the social living conditions of the men which are linked to those of the workers. ‘In the case of Lonmin underground workers in 2012 they returned to a hostel, to a house or backyard shack in one of the villages surrounding Lonmin’s mines, or in large numbers to informal settlements surrounding its shafts’ (Marikana Commission of Inquiry Report, 2014:29). These places are kept warm and clean by the women who stay behind during the day to ensure the men are well rested and prepared for work.
In 2012 over 38 informal settlements existed around the Rustenburg platinum belt (Chinguno, 2013). At least 45% of the dwellings were informal compared to a national average of 15% (Rustenburg, 2012). Lonmin estimated that 50% of the population who lived within a 15 kilometre radius of its mining operations lived in informal dwellings and lacked access to basic services (Lonmin, 2010). This highlighted a crisis in workers’ living conditions of which the employer was aware. It especially highlighted the living conditions of women and their struggles to survive in the community. Marikana falls under two local municipalities, Rustenburg in the west and Madibeng in the east, both within the greater Bojanala district municipality. The women complained of often being tossed between the two municipalities, leaving them unsure who they should direct their complaints to or who is responsible for providing them with adequate services. People often are refused service because they fall under a different municipality for issues such as medical emergencies, whereby hospitals refuse to transport patients because they belong to a different municipality. At least one such incident resulted in the fatal death of a child who fell into a hole while playing and the community could not hold the municipalities accountable for this, since they do not even know which municipality they belong to. The police are also accused of refusing to assist migrants, saying that they do not belong in Marikana and that they should go back home.

The administration of the area by two different municipalities results in disputes which arise from the lack of service delivery. There is also the issue of land ownership. Some of the land in Marikana is owed by Lonmin, while places like Nkaneng belong to the traditional authority of the Bapo Ba Mogale. This results in confusion about who is responsible for providing services to which community and this effects basic service delivery and living conditions. The land ownership issue has resulted in growing frustration, because Lonmin refuses to have its land developed or ‘buy land to lay sewerage and water pipes’ (Marikana Commission of Inquiry, 2014:34) because of future mining prospects. This has left the community in poor living conditions struggling to get basic services such as water.

The lack of proper services has left women trapped between a ‘hard place and a rock.’ They spend most of their time going around the community looking and queuing for water. When they find the water, they spend considerable amount of time transporting
the water between the tap and their homes, filling big water drums (which serve as a water reserve/storage). The women complain that looking for water is time consuming. They have to carry 20 litre drums and walk long distances to get water, often accompanied by young boys pushing wheelbarrows filled with drums and buckets (Benya, 2013:16). When they get home, they are still tasked with domestic chores. In order to secure a sufficient supply of water, women have to wake around 4am to fill their drums or wait until 10pm, even though water pipes stand dry in most yards in Wonderkop. The time usually varies according to each house stand.

This reflects the controversial relations within the community. On one side, they have formal housing with running water that is properly serviced. On the other side, the area is characterised by shack buildings, with dry water taps decorating the yard, which means people struggle to get drinking water and are forced to buy bottled water. It is also important to note that not everyone can afford to purchase bottled water, forcing such people to wait until taps are running again or to go to neighbours to ask for water. The women interviewed for this research explained how they often miss work opportunities because they are sentenced to time consuming housework. The women are tasked with the daily work of giving their time and life to the mining community and their demanding family life.

Lack of decent living conditions demonstrate the injustice that is done to the women and miners of Marikana. Often, this is identified in the form of lack of proper amenities, such as decent roads, water, sanitation and housing. The roads in Nkaneng are not tarred. They are in horrific conditions and when it rains, the roads are muddy and it becomes impossible for vehicles to pass. People have often expressed their dissatisfaction with the lack of proper services, explaining how unsafe and unhygienic it is for the children who are seen playing near the potholes. Women often expressed their fear that the young children might fall into these potholes. The lack of drainage systems causes water to carry faeces from the veld where people relieve themselves and children can be seen playing in this filthy water. The majority of shacks have ‘holes and water seeping in once it rains’ (Benya, 2013:15). There is mud inside the shack and mud outside, particularly those whose shacks do not have cement floors (Marikana Commission of Inquiry, 2014:34).
Table 4.4.2 Living Conditions-Type of Dwellings (taken from the research survey sample of the 150 women)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Dwelling</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informal Dwelling in Back Yard</td>
<td>40,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shack on own Stand</td>
<td>16,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal Dwelling in Backyard</td>
<td>16,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House Yard</td>
<td>10,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal House/Room Backyard</td>
<td>10,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Room Shared on Property</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4.2 Shows place of birth of women in Marikana.

4.5 Survival Strategies

I go around the veld and look for spinach to eat and ask for mealie-meal from friends so I can have something to eat with, I live in this shame this is not a way a person should live. If you would see where I live you would also be shocked, I use a three foot pot to cook, I go to the Wonderkop scrap yard and look for wood so I can cook, I have to wake up at 5 am in the morning and start cooking because I have to cook outside while people are using paraffin but I cannot afford to buy paraffin, so I wake up cook spinach and when it is cooked, I transfer it to a pot in the house, wash the three foot and cook pap, when it is done I do the same thing, wash the pot then boil water to bath and then eat. Whenever I can afford paraffin I have to save it for lighting the lamp (Nonesi 43).
Nonesi’s story reflects the hidden reality of most women in Marikana, who are not fortunate enough to have a stable boyfriend to support them financially. She constantly makes alternative plans to get by everyday and to carry out her daily chores. She is unemployed and does not always have paraffin to cook with or to heat water to bathe in. She survives by collecting firewood and cooking outside on the fire even in the winter cold. Lack of money has forced Nonensi and some women in Wonderkop to adopt alternative survival strategies such as fetching wood from a field, using candles to light (for those with no electricity) and primus stoves to cook and boil water.

Photograph: 4.5.1 Shows women carrying fire wood on their heads.

Photograph 4.5.1 Shows two women in Marikana carrying fire wood from the Veld. Photograph taken in 21 February 2014

Financial constraints have left women to adopt alternative survival mechanisms such as collecting wood in the veld, which is used for cooking, boiling water and starting a fire to keep warm during cold days:

I do not have money to buy paraffin, so my friend and I Zozo we wake up in the morning and go around the mine to collect firewood, I run out of paraffin and I do not want to go and ask my partner for money again so this save me an extra R 50 for electricity which I will use to supplement my monthly remittance. My partner only gives me around R 200-500 a month, R 100 is for rent because I have my own shack, and the rest I use to buy food, he is old now and
Some of the women explained that in the face of unemployment, they wake up early in the morning and take the mine bus and go to the mine scrap yard to look for scrap metal which they sell in exchange for money. But, this also comes with dangers. The scrap yard is in a field with no security and the women explained that they always look over their shoulders because they are scared of being raped. In one instance, women explained that they were arrested by mine security because they did not have permits. The women explained that getting their permits renewed is a process which takes time, and during this process they have no choice but to go and pick scrap illegally, simply because they cannot afford not to have a source of income to feed their families.

4.5.1 Social Grants

Social grants have become an increasingly important source of income for many South Africans (Dubbled, 2010). The Child Support Grant is perhaps one of the most utilised grants. The Grant was initially aimed at supporting women and children who do not have a male breadwinner in the house, but for millions of families in South Africa it has become the main poverty alleviation tool, a source of comfort for those women who do not know bazopatanisani or bazobambani bayekeni (I do not know what to take and what to combine it with). The words describe a person going through enormous hardships trying to find means to an end. In Xhosa or Zulu culture the phrases describe a person who is carrying a burden not only for themselves but for the rest of the family as well (Dubbled, 2010).

This does not suggest that social grants have become a sustainable alternative to poverty alleviation, but merely recognises the instrumental role played by these grants in the lives of impoverished communities across South Africa. In a social condition where communities are afflicted by poverty and unemployment, social grants are the only reliable and frequent source of income. For most women, it means more decision-making power, which gives women the power to decide how, when and what to spend the money on. For most of the unemployed families, social grants are the only source of stable monthly income.
While this might be the popular sentiment amongst privileged women who benefit from social grants, some women in Marikana do not receive social grants for their children. For instance, there is the issue of where the original place of birth of the child is since most children were born in the women’s rural homesteads. The women complain that when they go to home affairs to register their children they are told to go and register the children in their place of birth. This is not only a setback, but also a financial frustration. For most, this means paying about R 400 for a trip to the Eastern Cape, an amount the women cannot afford. Many immigrants living in Marikana do not have identity documents or passports and this further hinders the women’s chances of registering their children for social grants. Again there is also the issue of money since most of the women are unemployed and they cannot afford the taxi fares to travel to home affairs.

4.5.2 Lending, Debt and Stokvels

The remittances provided by the men do not cover all the essential needs of women. Much of this is attributed to the fact that miners have to send money back home to their wives and extended families. The women explained that they are unable to borrow money from loan institutions and loan sharks because they do not have a pay slip. Given the already low pay miners receive, money is hardly saved because it is often stretched between three families. In unpredictable situations such as death, the women explained that the boyfriend will go to a loan shark to borrow money so that he can give her money to go home and bury her relative.

This puts even more strain on the financial situation of men and is also reflected on the women. In situations where the men do not have money or cannot afford to provide remittances to the women, the women have to find alternative ways of surviving. Although women do not have debt, the financial situation of the men is often felt by the women. Most of the time miners use micro lenders based in Marikana for smaller loans, while some approach banking institutions such as Capitec Bank, U-Bank and African Bank for loans starting from R 4000 (Marikana Commission of Inquiry 2015:55). This is also accompanied by debt in clothing and furnisher shops such as Jet, Edgars, Ellerines and other stores. Usually the clothing shops are used to buy clothes for the children and girlfriends, but this puts the men in more debt and with
more financial constraints. The women are also at the receiving end of this financial constraint because the amount of remittances they receive is an indication of the financial situation of the men.

Stokvels have therefore served as an important way of promoting relatively debt-free situations and crucial saving plans. Lukhele (2009) defines stokvels as a type of credit union in which a group of people enter into an agreement to contribute a fixed amount of money to a common pool which is contributed to weekly or monthly. Stokvels are very important in this small mining community. They stretch far beyond being just a community-based group and have become support systems (Lukhele, 2009). During the 2012 miner strike in Marikana, it is the women and children who were left behind in the homes, stranded and destitute with no sense of hope and no money and food. These women relied on each other to survive; they shared the little they had with one another. It is after the three week long strike that the women of both Nkaneng and Wonderkop decided to group them and form these formal savings clubs, to generate economic independence. Stokvels assume the role of community-based support structures. Aimed at providing social and economic support, they represent a sense of collective financial support for the women.

Stokvels are mainly formed with the sole goal of saving money, but for communities such as Marikana, they supplement the formation of friendship bonds, support systems and a sense of belonging and security. The majority of the existing stokvels schemes around Marikana are based on a pure savings scheme. A pure saving scheme is when each member contributes a certain amount every month, interest may not be necessarily generated and the money is then distributed in December (Lukhele, 2009). For example, each person contributes R 100 a month, with the option of adding one’s loved ones. If, for instance, a member decides to add her two children, the total monthly instalment will come up to R300, which is multiplied by twelve months, adding up to R3 600 annually.

This is a considerable amount of money that the women use to supplement their monthly expenditures. Stokvels also provide an option to borrow money during the year up to a maximum of R2000 without any accumulation of interest, and the member can repay it back before December. Stokvels thus serve as a process which
challenges existing financial structures in society which have been put in place as barriers to the empowerment of women. Through financial mobilising, stokvels serve as a positive change, increasing the possibility of women to live better lives. The empowerment of women through stokvels also includes political and economic transformations in society. This means increasing the participation and access of women to economic and political life.

4.6 Local Politics

Local politics in Wonderkop are reflected in the informal and formal settlements with proper housing and essential services. This is also reflected in the party politics, with the African National Congress (ANC) structure more sympathetic to the needs of locals and marginalising migrants and immigrants. The ethnic divides are also reflected in party politics, with the South African National Civics Organisation (SANCO) extending a helping hand to migrants looking for a stand in Nkaneng. This relationship has seen SANCO ousted by the ANC. This has had a negative impact on the ability of migrants to access basic services in the community, such as employment and health facilities:

*I am friends with Xhosa speaking women who live at Nkaneng, now if something is happening here in Wonderkop they exclude me because they say I am friends with Xhosa people. There is a new project now; people are employed to clean the streets. I am the one who has the list of names of people who want jobs and I was number seven on that list but I did not get the job because they say I am friends with Xhosa people and Julius Malema (Economic Freedom Fighters MP) so I must ask Juju (Malema's nickname) to get me a job... Tswana people are saying that Xhosa women are invading their place and that Inkaneng and Wonderkop rightfully belongs to Tswana people (Dora, 42).*

These ethnic tensions have been taking place for more than 20 years and there appears to be no effort from the government or local tribal authority to intervene in such conflicts. Even the local community clinic in Wonderkop has been caught at the centre of these ethnic conflicts. As a result, migrants who do not speak the local Setswana language are often refused assistance. This often results in many people being unable to take their medications because they refuse to go back to the clinic to be ill-treated by local nurses. This means that women have to pay a transportation cost (which majority can not afford) to travel to Rustenburg or Rankuwa hospital where they receive better treatment and service.
The existing ethnic conflicts in Marikana are rooted in the competition for resources and the need for better socioeconomic conditions. Limited resources, brought about by lack of employment opportunities result in social conflicts between locals and those considered to be outsiders. The latter are more susceptible to dire poverty as a result of their migrant status. The rapid growth in the population has resulted in further constraints in the need for these resources. This results in the lack of availability of resources for both the locals and outsiders.

Language plays a very important role in Wonderkop. It is those people that are not indigenously Tswana speaking that find themselves at the beginning of the line. Whether queuing in the clinic for medical attention or waiting in line for water, non-Tswana speaking people are always shifted towards the end of this line, because they simply cannot speak Tswana. This is a discriminatory treatment more familiar amongst the older generations who have lived through apartheid, to the new democratic transition but have witnessed limited change. There is also a new younger group of migrant women in their early 30s living in Marikana and seeking job opportunities that also support this claim. When Lonmin started mining in the area officially, it promised the traditional authority Bapo Ba Mohale, that it will give preference to job creation and service delivery to the local speaking people.

It is thus not surprising that locals are given more priority over migrants. What is shocking, however, is the exclusive and discriminatory treatment that migrants are subjected to. They often complain of being pushed at the end of lines whether in the clinic or in the police stations because they do not speak Tswana. Some even tell of rude taxi drivers who refused to stop for them at their desired destination, simply because they do not speak Tswana. Police often refuse to open cases or even take statements from migrants, telling them ‘they are wasting their time’ (echoed by one of the participants). Migrants are viewed as having no rights. No right to work in the mines; no rights to have access to services and houses; and no rights to live in the area. The Nkaneng Informal settlement developed because the majority of migrants refused to be accommodated. As a result, most of them inhabited the former farming area and built their shacks. But, the traditional authority refused to accommodate the inhabitants with services, housing, road infrastructure, or employment opportunities.
The tribal authority claimed that the area was inhabited illegally and as such they have no obligations to develop the area, leaving the majority of migrants to fend for themselves and in dire poverty.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a glimpse into the daily lived experiences and struggles to survive of women in Marikana. This chapter has also shown that the struggles to survive of women cannot be understood separately from that of the men and the broader community as they are linked together by the mining environment. Women face a double burden of gender bias and exclusion because of their migration status. Chapter 5 builds on this chapter and provides autobiographies of three women in Marikana. The narratives of all three women offer an opportunity to understand the struggles to survive and the daily lived experiences of the women through their own voices.
CHAPTER 5: AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides detailed and thorough descriptions and engagement with the recordings of the voices of women in Marikana, and assists in mapping a richer understanding of the relationship between women and the society in which they live. Represented in this chapter are autobiographies of three individual women, reflecting upon their past experiences and present daily struggles to survive. The women introduced here are from different backgrounds, social standing and strata, but they are all influenced by the history of the masculine mining environment in which they live. The three autobiographies were collected as an attempt to make available more rich and detailed information about the experiences, attitudes and behaviours of the women in Marikana.

The accounts provided here may not necessarily reflect the lives of the women of Marikana as a whole, but they do offer invaluable and original in-depth and nuanced accounts. Each of the narratives below are divided chronologically into sections and they trace the women’s early childhood memories, their transition into adulthood, the circumstances under which they moved to Marikana, the events leading up to the Marikana massacre, the massacre itself, and the ways in which this event transformed their lives. The first woman is unemployed and she represents the experience of a vast array of women in Marikana. The second woman is a mineworker who is confronted with the male-dominated mining environment both at home and in the workplace. The third and final woman is distinct because she is a local community leader and highly involved in politics.

5.2 ‘Revealing layers of poverty’: Angelina Kelly Nqolweni

One of my neighbours had told me that, they were hiring people in Marikana, I took both my children and headed for Marikana, not knowing where I was going when I got off taxi. I walked around and that is when I met Nokulunga who saw my suffering and took me in to live with her

Upbringing
My name is Kelly Nqolweni but my friends call me Angelina my grandmother (from my mother's side) gave me this name. May her soul rest in peace, not a day goes by that I do not think about her, I miss her so much. Okay, so let me catch my breath so that I can tell you more about myself. I have two children, my son is 25 and my daughter is 21 years old, they are both currently not working I am the breadwinner at my house. So you can imagine how difficult life is for me, especially because I do not have permanent employment, I collect and recycle cans for a living. I have a grandson, but he is a handful that one, you know how boys are like, always getting into mischief (laughs). I was born in 1968 at Soshanguve, in Pretoria. I was raised by my grandmother. I never met my mother, my grandmother told me that my mother gave birth to me out of wedlock, and left me when I was a couple of months old, she got married to another man. Back then, when a woman gave birth out of wedlock and married someone else other than the father of the child, she was forced to leave the child back home. This is what happened, and between you and me, I still do not understand this rule, because we as women we have to accept the man’s children, even if they were out of wedlock. So my mother left me behind at home and I was raise by my grandmother. I tell you now, things were not easy growing up.

My grandmother was not working, she received pension, growing up my grandmother tried to provide for me, but it was not always easy, because my grandmother did not have enough money. We lived in a two room mud house that my grandmother built herself, with the help of some local people she hired. I remember when she used to wake up early in the morning to make the mud breaks I am telling you, that woman was strong she worked very hard, and managed to look after me at the sometimes. I grew up in a very small community, everyone knew and cared about each other, and I had a good childhood. I loved playing, immediately after school, I will go home, change my uniform then go outside to play. My friends and I usually played in the streets, you know how it was back then, we did not have fancy play grounds and parks, so we were always dirty because we played in the mud but I enjoyed it.

My grandmother will tell me that, I will not sleep in her bed, looking like that, so every night I had to warm water in the prama (paraffin stove) and make sure I bathe properly then go to bed. You know growing up, I always thought my grandmother was my mother, because she did everything for me, paid my school fees, and bought me
clothes, though she was a bit older than my friends parents, but I was not that bothered about it, she will always be my mother. I only discovered the truth about my biological mother when she came for a visit, I cannot remember exactly which year it was, she introduced herself and asked me if I knew her, off course I did not know her, how was I supposed to know a person who abandoned me while I was still in nappies. When I finally learned the truth, I was a bit angry and jealous, she had come with her other child, who was dressed in fancy clothes, and did not even think to bring me something, not even a sweet.

It was a really strange situation, on the one hand here I was the child deprived of her mother’s love, and on the other her golden child from the marriage dressed in fancy clothes, how does one react to such a situation? You know during all that, time all I wanted to ask her, was why? How can you let a man tear us apart, what kind of a woman chooses a man over her own child? Ok so after sometime, I decided to go outside and play with my friends and leave them in the house, so I left. We did not have fancy toys then, I had one doll, which my grandmother took from the white people she worked for, but the doll was old now, with no hair, so we started playing with empty bottles of dish washing liquid soap, or old shoes and we will pretend they were our babies, because buying toys was a luxury we could not afford.

I was very happy, and my friends and I usually exchanged toys. My grandmother was a good woman, we could not afford buy many things, but she always knitted me a new blanket, jersey and hats came winter, especially because we did not have electricity. My grandmother loved church but she never forgot her traditions she often used to appeal to the ancestors, she would slaughter a chicken to appease to the ancestors and ask them for blessings and to light our way. I remember during Good Friday holidays, my grandmother made umqombothi, and we both went to the grave yard, to clean the grave of our deceased family members. She told me to speak to the deceased in the graves and ask for blessings, I was told whatever I asked for will come to pass. I was a child then and all I ever asked for was to pass and advance to the next grade and I did, I never failed a single grade in my life, and this I believed was because of the blessings of the ancestors.

Transition into Adulthood
I remember when I first started my periods, I was very scared, I had no idea as to what was going on, I was around 10 years at the time. At first I thought it was because I ate tomato sauce, and since it was so red, I just assumed that it made me bleed. I woke up that morning and went to pee, and I notice the red stain, I was scared and I did not know how to tell my grandmother, because telling her would mean putting myself on the line, she told me not to waste the tomato sauce, because we might receive a visitor, and then they will have nothing fancy to eat. So you can imagine how scared, I was (laughs). I remember that day I did not want to take a bath while my grandmother was watching, because she would know, I really did not know what to do, but there was no way of hiding this forever, so I finally gathered the courage and showed her my panties, she just looked at them and laughed. She sat me down and told me, I was no longer a young girl now, I had graduated, I was a woman. That meant, from now on, I had to conduct myself differently, I had to be clean at all times, I was about 10 years old, so I had no idea what she was saying, I just could not imagine myself not playing, but I promised myself from that day forward I will never eat tomato sauce again. A ceremony was done for me to mark this crucial period in my life, but because of financial situation at home, my grandmother was unable to slaughter a sheep during the ceremony, I had a little ceremony where she brewed umqombothi and cooked food, she did this so that I wouldn’t stand out from other children in the community.

During the ceremony I was told that, I had to take care of myself, I was no longer a girl I was a woman now, that meant I had to bath regularly, stay away from boys and be home before dark. I learned how to cook, clean and wash my clothes. I have always wanted to perform the ceremony for my daughter but because of financial reasons. I was unable to do so, and now I believe she cannot find a job, because we did not appease to the ancestors, our ancestors have abandoned her and I lay at night thinking about this. I do not even know where this ceremony will be performed, because my house in Soshanguve collapsed, and since I did not formally introduce this shack to the ancestors, I cannot perform the ceremony here, because the ancestors will not recognise this place.

Moving to Marikana
My life took a dramatic turn, with the sudden passing of my grandmother, she had been sick for a while but I just assumed she will be okay, but she got worse, and one day when I came back from school, I saw a group of people in my house, I was not sure what was going on. When I got into the house, my aunt told me that my grandmother had passed away and I had to be strong. We buried her, and my aunt told me she will come back to fetch me to live with her, because my mother’s husband refused to let me live with them. But my aunt never came back for me. For months, I was left with the neighbours, I slept at my friend’s house, but would go home in the morning to change and prepare for school. I was actually raised by my community, neighbours often checked up on me and some gave me food. And that is when it actually hit me that my grandmother was gone, and that I had no one, I was left alone, with no money or any form of a support system.

After six months I was forced to drop out of school, while doing my standard five (grade seven), there was no one available to pay my school fees, I was only 12 year old with no money and who was going to hire a child. One of my friends, Sarah told me that we should come to Marikana because life was better here, there were hiring people in the mines. Sarah managed to organize money for us to come to Marikana, having nothing else to lose, I packed the little I had and left for Marikana this was in 1980. We arrived at her relative’s place in Mooinooi and we both lived there for a couple of months. Things were not easy; we all depended on her relatives for food and other basic essentials. I knew that I had to find a job or man to support me, I was told that is how most women sustained themselves in the community. I found work in the farms, picking oranges, I did not earn much, but I was able to sustain myself.

Few years later, I think I was about 14 years, I met a man who promised to take care of me and support me, being very young and in experience in relationships. unfortunately I fell pregnant, you know how man can be like, especially when they date a younger woman, he promised me the world and told me that, sleeping with one person without protection will not get me pregnant. I was naive and young and little did I know. Within a few months into the relationship I gave birth to my first born child in 1985 the man who got me pregnant never married me. I stayed with him but things were not good between us he was very abusive and did not give me money, he used to beat me up, he was a very jealous and controlling person and I decided to leave him.
in 1987. Few months later, I met someone else and moved in together with him, I gave birth to my second child later in 1988, for the first time things were looking up for me, I was happy and with a man who accepted my child, we had plans to get married but unfortunately the father of my child passed away in December the same year. He went to visit his family and when he came back he was not feeling well and one day he passed away I was left alone again.

I sold the shack we were living in, and decided to move out, his family were treating me badly, because they wanted all his belongings and accused me of being a gold digger. One of my neighbour had told me that, they were hiring people in Marikana, I took both my children and headed for Marikana, not knowing where I was going when I got off the taxi, I walked around and that is when I met mama Nokulunga who saw my pain and took me in to live with her. While living with her I got my job back to work in Orange farm in Mooinooi, the pay was not good, I made around R 300 to R 800 a month, but making R 800 was not easy, I would have to work during the night so that I can fill my sack. You can imagine how difficult this was, especially because I had to carrying my youngest child in my back while working, I would feed her and put her under the tree, and go back to work and if she cried I would come, breast feed her and leave her again to sleep under the tree.

This made it even more difficult to work faster, because I was often interrupted by the baby, but I could not leave the baby with other people, because she was being breast fed and I could not afford to buy her milk. Even though Nokulunga was a generous and kind person who never complained not even once, but I started feeling like a burden, especially with two young children, because she was also taking care of her daughter. Even though she never asked me to buy food or pay rent, I gave her the little I had and she often refused to take the money, telling me that I must use it to take care of my children. I realised that I had to go and find my own place, where I could live with my children. I started saving money and buying one pieces of corricated iron at a time, until I was able to build my own shack.

I had to pay R 150 rent every month, to put my shack on someone else’s stand, and this was a lot of money especially because I was not earning a lot of money. I decided to the council offices and applied for my own stand, few months later, I got a stand and
I have been living here in Wonderkop with my children since 1998, if I am not mistaken. But this made it even more difficult for me to leave my children and look for a job at the same time, there were times when I could not go and work because I did not have transport money, as a result my employer found someone else to replace me. A few months later, my aunt asked me to come and live with her, because she saw how much I was struggling with my kids, her marriage had ended, I packed my bags, took my children and moved back to Pretoria to live with my aunt, life was better until she passed away, I was then forced to come back to my shack in Marikana.

My children were growing up, and I struggled to support them, I took them out of school, for one year, while I tried finding a job to take care of them. This pained me, because I had a mother who had forgotten about me and I did not understand why. Nonetheless, Mantombi my mother’s cousin saw my pain and she took my children to live with her, while I worked in the farms. I would visit her at the end of the month and give her whatever I had and she appreciated whatever I gave her. My daughter fell pregnant, and this weighed heavy on Mantombi, she told me that she will not be able to take care of all three children, I took my grandchild and put him in a local crèche here in Wonderkop.

Struggling for work, I sold fat cakes at a nearby school, but I stopped when I fell sick. After I regained my strength, I attempted to go back to the school to get my stand back, but unfortunately, I found that I had been replaced by someone else. I was told that, I can get another stand, provided I pay R50 a month, this would be a big loss for me, because I hardly made R 30 a week, a lot of students do not have money to spend, they depend on the feeding schemes, so I took the decision to leave and find a job that will pay better. I got a job at Caltex garage in Rustenburg but they robbed us, we were not paid enough, I worked as a cook, the owner of the garage had a caravan, which they used to cook and sell food, I was hired as a cook and I earned R 1600 a month. But, I did not last in this job, the problem is we used gas to prepare the food, so it affected me badly I developed sores, started coughing and if you missed a day of work going to the clinic your pay will be cut from R 400 to 200 rand a week. The clinic told me that I had TB, I was forced to leave the job.
After months of sitting at home without a job, I decided to collect and recycle cans. So every day, I go around the mine and community picking up cans and recycle them, this is my life now. I have been collecting cans for the past 3 years now. If I do not go and pick up cans, then I do not make money and my grandchild will go to bed hungry. I tried looking for a job in the mine, but I was told that I have to pay a bribe, I cannot afford to pay R 7000 or R 10 000, I do not even make that much money in one month, let alone two months and I have responsibilities. I cannot afford to gamble with that much money, because even if you pay the bribe, there are no guarantees that you will get a job. Collecting cans is not what I want to do with my life but living in the mining community, leaves you with limited options.

I remember growing up I wanted to become a teacher, I was very intelligent, I passed all my classes. But when my grandmother passed away, all my dreams were shattered, but, I cannot just sit and feel sorry for myself. I have people who depend on me. At least with collecting cans I work on my own pace, the more cans I collect the more money I make. Before my wheel borrow was stolen, I used to make around R 1000- R 2000 a month, I will go collect the cans in the morning and in the afternoon, when it is not very hot, but now someone stole my wheel barrow and this means, I am unable to pack a lot of cans in one sack because I will not be able to carry a heavy load on my own. If I pack the bag very well, I make around R 30 per bag and I usually go with two full bags to the scrap yard, but now things are even better, the scrap yard sends a car that comes once a week to collect the cans, all the bags are weighed, depending on the load, you can get anything from R13 if the bag is not properly packed, up to R 30 if you packed the bag well.

Life In Marikana

Life in Marikana It is not that bad because I have options of selling cans and getting money, whilst back home you are not presented with so many options. If I had decided to stay at Soshanguve I would probably be begging people for food and I have children which makes things even worse. Here I can also borrow money from friends and pay them back when I can, they do not pressurize me. Paying back people, all their money, builds good relations because then, they can borrow me the money again when I am in a tight situation. I can always pay back the money when I go and collect cans. I do
not usually borrow much because, I do not have a lot of expenses, I buy basic necessities, as long as I have mealie meal and few vegetables I am okay for the month. Finding a man in Marikana is not easy, you will a meet a man who will promise to take care of you and your family, but as soon as you give him the cheese cake (sex) he disappears or starts lying and you will never see him or his money ever again.

I was seeing someone for one year, he works here at Lonmin but I got fed up of his lies and excuses, he used to give me around R 200 a month, what am I supposed to do with R 200? which is nothing, he would tell me stories about his goats being arrested back home, but I never made excuses when he wanted the cheese cake, so I got tired of him and his stories. I then took a decision to break up with him, we are friends now. I know that he has a wife and that he had to send money back home in Kwa-Zulu Natal to his family, but when we met, I had no problem with him having a wife, it is not like I expected him to be single or marry me, and as a woman you know that you will always share your man, with some other woman, you might just chose not to believe this, or ignore it but this does not mean that it is not happening. When we first met, he promised me that he will take care of me, and provide for me and my children, but he turned out to be nothing but a liar. It is not easy being poor, not having a job and money, when things were really bad I wished that I could dig a big hole, hide my children and look for a job, make a lot of money when I have saved enough go back to the hole and dig them out, but this is one of those things, in life you cannot change. It is up to you to accept the situation and do nothing about it, or else, acknowledge the situation and do something, that puts you in a different position.

The 2012 Strike

Although I try not to dwell too much on my situation because it gives me stress, it is however difficult to ignore your reality. Men live better lives than us women here in Marikana, because they work so they have money, well they did but things changed ever since the strike in 2012. I remember when I first learned about the strike it was a holiday on the 9th of August, the miners’ gathered around the mountain, and they were discussing the fact that they were not going to work [and] the following day they were going on a strike. On the same day, I just came from collecting cans when I saw a
group of men gathered around the koppie, I asked one of the miners what was going on, he told me that they were going on strike.

The next morning on my way to collecting cans, I saw miners gathered on the mountain top, they were singing and saying that they work very hard and they deserve to be paid more money. On Saturday morning I woke up and prepared to go and pick up cans, on my way I saw the police and people gathered around the mountain, so I decided to go back home and stay with my grandchild. I was not sure what was going on, and I was also reluctant to leave my grandchild alone especially after a child went missing at Nkaneng a few months back. No one knows what happened to the child. All I know is that the child was found dead in a damn far from Nkaneng, I am telling you this world.

Life after the Strike

Things were very bad, the police were abusing us, they threw tear gas in our yards, majority of the children here at Nkaneng, were affected by the teargas. My grandson could not stop coughing, I took him to the clinic but we were not assisted. I also fell very sick as a result of the tear gas, I was coughing a lot, I went to the local clinic and they gave me a transfer to a hospital in Rankuwa. I am still going there for regular treatment and check-ups, the police badly hurt us, as you can see my ears ever since they threw the teargas. I cannot hear properly and see clearly and this started when the police started throwing teargases, my eyes are always red now. I do not know what was in those teargases but I and some of the people in the community were bearing the consequences on the police and the governments’ evil actions. They treated us like insects that needed to be killed. On the day of the massacre, I saw a police hippo passing by and the next thing I saw was white smoke next to my house, soon after that, It was as if my chest had been stabbed, I started coughing and soon my children also started coughing.

Late last year in 2013 around November, I fell sick and my aunt asked me to come and live with her, I was later diagnosed with ulcer and all of this is because of the strike, before the strike I was healthy, but ever since I inhaled that tear gas my health has deteriorated.
The 16th of August 2012, I can never forget that day, I was in my shack cooking. I heard a whistle and women crying saying that men are being killed in the mountain, I took my grandchild and left him with my neighbour and followed the group of women to the mountain. I asked what was going on they told me that the men were being slaughtered by the police in the mountain, amongst the women that were running to the mountain, there were pregnant women, while others carried their infants, some were crying it was chaotic. When we got to the mountain one woman threw herself in front of the police and asked them to kill her with her child since they had killed her husband. There were bodies lying on the ground, there was green water which had been poured on the ground and ambulances were loading dead bodies. We saw bodies lying on the ground, but the police prevented us from identifying the bodies.

Things were bad, we were all crying, I have never seen so many dead bodies before, so I was in shock when I saw bodies lying on the ground. We refuse to just sit around while our brothers, husband and sons were being slaughtered like dogs. The police were just jumping over the bodies, as if they had just slaughtered dogs, none of them showed remorse. Even when we approached them as women, they threatened to shoot us, and we told them to go right ahead and kill us. We stayed in the mountain, and then decided to go back to our homes. On my way home I saw a man sitting under a tree near the shacks, I thought he was a thug but he told me that he escaped from the mountain, he was bruised and he did not believe that he was still alive. I asked him if he was ok, he said he was ok all he needed was water, so I invited him in and gave him water.

I stayed outside with him for hours talking, he was telling me what had happened, he was scared to come inside the shack, because he said the police were going around the community looking for more miners'. That was the darkest day in Wonderkop, nothing made sense, people were busy going around looking for their loved ones, other women were crying, you would have also cried if you were here, I couldn’t help myself but cry. My neighbour, who usually watched my grandchild for me, was crying saying that someone told her that her husband was amongst the deceased. We decided that we would both wake up in the morning, go to the mortuary to identify his body, but when we got there his name was not on the list of deceased people, we then went to hospital and found him in hospital. He had been shot and badly wounded by the police.
and ever since that day he has been using crutched to walk, because he was shot in the abdomen and they damaged some of his bones. What the government does not realise, is how much they have ruined our lives, even though the strike was about the miners’ plea, it also affected a number of innocent people.

I mean now, my neighbours husband will never work again, because his condition does not allow him to be underground the mine. It pains me to know that, the very government I voted for, is the very government that robbed innocent people of their lives and happiness, now a lot of families are left unhappy and poor, because of the government who clearly does not care about its people. You know on the day of the massacre I could even eat, because of what had happened, some were missing their loved ones they could not find them. People where not even allowed to go to hospitals and look for their relatives. People were only allowed to look for their loved ones after Zuma visited the hospital, some miners’ were in prison and we thought they were dead because we could not find them, we heard what had really happened from them when they told us that they had been held at number one.

My son was also part of the people who were on strike; he was working in the mine at the time as a contract worker. I found him after 2 weeks he said he ran to Pretoria, he stayed there for two weeks he left his phone home so there was no way to get hold of him, he explained that he got lifts to Pretoria. I was scared that my son could also be amongst the deceased. Things were really bad; here I was taking care of my neighbour while at the same time I was thinking of my own son whom I did not even know if he was still alive. The uncertainty made things worse, I was looking for him everywhere, the hospital, jails, mortuary and no one had seen him since the shooting started. I felt like I was losing my mind. I really did not expect this from the government, all I ever wanted was for the government to build us houses, we are still badly hurt after what they did to our loved ones and to us. I wish they can support the families of the deceased; the government together with Lonmin should support the families of the miners’ who were killed. One of the women has six children and she says that the government stopped supporting her in December, so I want Lonmin and the government to take responsibilities for these families and do the right thing. This government hurt us very badly they decided to kill our loved ones and we will never forget that, they don’t even call us into a meeting to encourage us or even tell us
something positive even if they are lying to us, the government does not care about us at all.

**The 2014 Strike and Its Impact on Community**

Now there is the second strike, which is much worse than the first strike, yes people died in the first strike, but now it has been more than three months, people have not been paid, children stopped going to crèche, there is no money, the social grant is used to buy basics, mealie meal and vegetables. I have been trying to collect cans for the past two weeks, without any success as you can see, I can hardly fill up one sack with these cans, things are not easy in Marikana, all my chickens are gone someone stole all my chickens, but who can blame them, people are starving. The crime rate has also gone up, people’s houses are being broken into. Some of the miners’ went back home to their rural homesteads, those that are still here, get send social grant money by their families back home. Some of the shops closed down, while others are selling food at lower price, but even though this is the case, we can hardly afford to buy bread any more, it is worse now bread only costs R 4, but even this seems too steep of price to pay.

As soon as the sun sets, you are scared because of the possibility that someone might break into your house at night, things changed for the worse around here. I wish this strike could end ready, because we live in fear, it is okay during the day, but as soon as the sun sets you are afraid. Women in the community decided to march to Lonmin manager to plead with management to end this strike and give the miners’ what they want, things are difficult around here, people live on social grants, they are unable to pay their debts and monthly instalments. We organized as women of Wonderkop to hand over a memorandum to the manager, but we were stopped by the police before we reached the manager’s office, they told us that we embarked on an illegal strike. Things are on a stand still around here, everyone is frustrated and the crime rate has gone up. Initially men lived better lives compared to us women, but now they are in a more disadvantage position, they have pride so they cannot easily go to the neighbour and ask for food, even though they are hungry, while us women we never go hungry because we share the little we have with each other. Today Nomzekeloa asked me to
go and have breakfast at her house, but she cannot easily invite a man over to her house to have breakfast.

5.3 ‘Being amongst them, but I can never be one of them’: Nompendulo Fakwe

People often tell me how unfortunate I am to have a job in the mine, and they automatically think that I am immune from all the problems that they experience, little do they know that, I have to always prove myself underground that I deserve my position, and I did not just get this position because I slept with someone. It is difficult being a woman, but being a female miner is even worse.

Upbringing

My name is Nompendulo Fakwe, I was born at Ncoloshe village, in a town called Libode. My grandmother helped deliver me, there was no time or money to hire a car to take my mother to the hospital, so she was forced to give birth at home, and here I am. I was born in 1975 and I have 10 siblings, I am a fourth born but there is nine of us left now, two of my siblings passed away. I have a very big family, I tell you....as you can imagine, my mother did not have time for all of us, but because there were twelve of us, I do not blame her, sometimes she even mixed up our names (laughs) but we did not take any offence, we got used to it after some time. Ever since I can remember I was mostly raised by my older sisters, because you know back then...people had a lot of children, they waited a year or two and there was another child in the family, so you never received all your mothers attention, my sisters took care of me, they bathed me and fed me, they practically raised me, while my mother looked after the youngest children. Now that I think about it, I really have no idea, how she managed to raise twelve children.

Growing up in the rural homesteads, was very fun, we always got into mischief, I liked playing with the boys, so I would go to the bush with them on weekends, we hunted and swam in the river. My grandparents always warned me against swimming in the river, people believed that there was a huge snake in the water, and if a person arrived in the river unannounced the snake will swallow you. But we were kids, we never listened, after swimming the boys would go and pick up wild berries, I love berries but
they often gave me constipation. The trips home from the river, were spent, shooting birds, when we got home we would start a fire and braai the meat. My brothers were good hunters, they often took dogs to hunt for rabbits, I remember this one time, they came home with two big rabbits, and we had a feast that day, and we did not eat meat that often, so this was a very special time for the family, hey Xhosa people love meat. Life was tough; it was even more difficult for all of my siblings to go to school, because my parents did not have enough money to send all of us to school at the same time. So we often had to give each other a chance, the older siblings had to drop out of school, so the younger siblings could also get a chance to go to school.

My cultural clan is Mpondo, and we are very traditional, first thing they do is they cut your face, that is our culture, but some people cut their faces, when they have eye problems, but mpondo do it because it is a long standing tradition. When a woman starts menstruating they slaughter a goat, this is done to show that you are never allowed again in the kraal, this is believed that it will destroy the livestock, it is believed the cows will fall sick and die, you are allowed to go inside the kraal if you are not having your periods. As a girl I was expected to do everything, clean, cook, fetch water, this was believed to be a girl’s job while boys were excluded from such activities. If for instance my brothers were playing soccer and they were unable to go and collect livestock later, as girls we were expected to perform this duty as well, as a girl we had a lot of responsibilities, while boys had it more easy.

*Transition into Adulthood*

My family were church going people, they went to Methodist church, but they never abandoned their cultural practises, and growing up in such a rural community, culture was at the centre of the people’s lives. I was not very privileged growing up, but I am not complaining. I had wonderful parents, they taught us very well, my father was the bread winner he worked at Bascorp mine. Growing up with eleven siblings was not easy, there were many of us and we all depended on one person, and this made things even more difficult for the whole family. I was forced to drop out of school in standard four, because of financial constraints. After living school, I sat at home, did all the house chores, fetched fire wood from the veld, and cultivated the land, this became my job. Some of my older siblings left for the city to look for jobs, because I was still young, I
was left at home, helping my mother run the household. It was not easy watching other children go to school, while I was left at home. After a while, I started having a relationship, with one of the men in our village, he was not that old, we were almost the same age and later we got married. Dating was not easy, we had to sneak around, so that we would not get caught. We loved each other, but it was difficult for us to spend time together, because I could only make time to see him at night, when my parents went to bed. I often slept over, but I had to wake up early in the morning before 5 am, rush home before my father wakes up, it was not that difficult because all the girls had their own house, while the boys also shared a house. But I had to make sure that I do not get caught, getting caught meant getting lashed with a sjambok. After months of dating my husband, proposed and I said yes. I was very young when I got married, but it was easier because my husband and I came from the same village and he working in a mine at Germiston and he came home during holidays or whenever he could get time off. He was a machine boy, he started working here at Lonmin in 2007 after he left his job in Germiston. My husband and I, have four children together one boy and three girls, they are all still in school and they stay back home with my mother in the Eastern Cape.

**Moving to Marikana**

While visiting home for the holidays in 2008, my husband was shot and sadly he passed away. Things were tough, I had four children to look after and I was not working, but because my husband was killed while he was still working in the mine, and at that time the mine had a policy that required a family member to come and replace a worker who passed away, so because my children were still very young the family decided that I should come and work for my children and that is how I started working at Lonmin. Working in the mine is not easy, especially when you are a woman, you often have to take rules from men, and they treat us like we are children who need to be guided all the time. When I started in the mine, I spent weeks not doing anything, because often while I was trying to do my job, one of the male miners’ would come and offer to assist, he will tell me to sit down and rest. But that also came with a price, the men were not helping us women for free, we had to repay them, either through sex or dating. To avoid sleeping with everyone who helped me, I decided to date one of my colleagues, that way no one would ask me to sleep with them again.
Miners’ respect each other, they have a code, and they do not hit on each other’s women, the only time they cross the line, is when the woman is dating someone from the outside.

When I was first hired, I was told that I would replace my husband, and that meant I would also operate the machine. I went for training, but when I started working, none of the miners’ would allow me to operate the machine, they always told me to go and sit down and that machines were not for women. So eventually I was assigned to painting and clean underground, I paint chairs, tables and the rocks underground. This is what women do underground and there a lot of women doing this job. You will never find a women underground, performing the same tasks that men, perform women clean and paint underground some have to count stock, these are regarded as a women’s job ‘easy job’ the men call it. I do not mind performing such jobs, the important thing is that, I get paid at the end of the month, so that I can send money back home to my children. I start to work from 10 am till 6pm every day, and I receive R 5 000 a month.

I first arrived here in Marikana and started working at Lonmin in 2009; I live with my younger brother. He came here looking for a job, but he has been unsuccessful. He has been living with me since 2010, he wakes up every morning goes to number one to market but nothing has come up yet, he is getting discouraged now, because it has been more than three years now and still he does not work. I am the breadwinner responsible for, rent and food. I pay 800 a month for rent, it is 250 for my brother’s shack, R 450 for my shack and R 100 for electricity, then I spend R 800 on food and send R 1200 home to my children, with the R 2 200 that I have left I buy things for my house in the Eastern Cape, I have a four room house home, that I have just built, so I need to buy doors and furnish the house. Still the R 5000 is not enough but I am scared to go to the loan sharks, so I follow a strict budget every month. It helps that, I am part of a stokvel, every month each person contributes R 500 a month, we save the money and in December we share the money amongst the 10 of us. The money usually amounts to about R 10 000 includes the interest the bank gives us, this is the money I used to build my house back home.

Things are a bit tough for me now that, my boyfriend left the mine, because he helped me out financially and I used that money to patch some things, he went on pension this
year (2013), he has been here for a very long time not sure when he started working at Lonmin but I know it has been very long. The mine gave him what we call waya waya. What happens is that, if a person has been working in the mine for a very long time, the mine replaces the person with a younger person and the same thing happened to my boyfriend he was old, so the mine had to let him go. I miss him, life can get a little bit lonely here in Wonderkop, my only friends are the women I work with, and there are only four of us, who live in this yard and work in the same mine, so we spend our free time together, just catching up.

*Life in Marikana*

Life here in Marikana is better, but I think it is easier for me to say because I work, so unlike most women here, I do not depend on a man to give me money at the end of the month. I am able to financially support myself and my family. I get along with everyone and all the other women regardless of whether they speak Sotho, Tswana at work we are all the same, we face the same struggles. There are not much differences between men and women, except when it comes to treatment, as a women I also need to know my place so I cannot compare myself with men, for example if I have to do something at work that requires a lot of strength, for instances transporting rocks on a willbarrow this is regarded as hard work and If I am unable to do the job, a fellow male worker will come to my aid, he will tell me to sit down while he takes over. Take the 2012 strike for example, growing up, I was taught battles are for men and since the strike was started by men, women miners decided not to join the strike. For me the strike was similar to *Imbizo* (men gathering to discuss community issues) women do not go in such gatherings because *imbizo* are considered to be for men only, so that is why I never go to places where men gather. Women can go to the gatherings, but only if there is no male figure in the house, such as a son, that is the only time women are allowed to go to *imbizo*, because they are considered to be men's playground were important issues affecting the community are discussed and important decisions are then taken.

*Experiences Underground*

The thing is even underground; we have separate gatherings and proceedings in the mine. Women have their own meetings and the miner's also have their own separate meetings. So what happens is that the men gather and they discuss important issues
and after that, they make an announcement, as women we then hold our own meeting and discuss the issue and the decision that has been taken by the men. Growing up and depending where you grew up you know that there are certain places where women are not allowed to go into, for instance I cannot just take a chair and go and join men sitting outside my shack that is considered to be disrespectful. For instance at work, some women are trained on how to administer first aid, so if for instance one of the man miners was injured and needed emergency first aid as a woman I would not just touch the man, I would have to ask for permission first, I have to respect him. Because this is how I grew up, as a woman I was taught that I should know my place and that was not near the men.

The 2012 Strike

During the strike things were not easy, things were really bad, we were not working and we did not have money to buy food or pay rent so life was difficult for many us. Fortunately for me, my mother shared some of her social grant money with me so I was able to buy food, she sent me R 500 every month for two months, but I was unable to pay rent for the two months. As a result even when the strike ended, me and other women who work in the mine, we found out through watching the news that the strike had ended, so we did not know much about the proceedings of the strike. I did not even go when the other women from the community went to support the miners, I saw the women in the television. I am scared of guns, and whenever there is conflict I tend to exclude myself from such situations. Things were so bad to the point that, I did not even have hope that we will go back to work. It is not like we did not want to go but we were scared. People died on the mountain and we do not even know if we will receive the money that they died for in the first place, because no one has received the money yet. The miners are angry and there are talks that we will go on a legal strike again in 2014 to demand a wage increase, and this time we will not go to work until we get what we asked for.

All I want is for people to have jobs, especially women because they are struggling here in Marikana, majority of the women here survive on child social grants. I wish for the young men in the community to get jobs so that they would stop hanging around taverns and drinking, I want them to start taking responsibility. My hope is for everyone to live a decent and comfortable life here in Marikana. The 2014, strike is no better, but
we knew the strike was going to happen anyway so we saved up some money, but we did not anticipate that it will take this long. It has been two months and my savings are almost running out now, and if they run out before we go to work who knows when that will be, I do not know what I am going to do. I will probably depend on my mother again, to send me money to buy food at least. My brother is back home now, so I am spending less on food right now. I hope the strike comes to an end very soon, because although we will not stop fighting but we are suffering now, and the strike is not only affecting us, but our families and the entire community as well. The community is left lifeless, people can hardly afford to buy bread, we only buy basic necessities, such as mealie meal, vegetables and cooking oil. The frustration is waiting and not knowing what is going on, AMCU called us for a meeting and to tell us that we must keep on fighting and that they will come and give us a response after the Good Friday holidays.

5.4 ‘Leading a nation of men’: Nokwakhe Precious Caweni

I was shocked and excited at the same time, who would have thought that me Nokwakhe coming from an impoverished background, living a small mining community like Marikana I will go to parliament and sit with the big people.

**Upbringing**

My name is Precious Nokwakhe Caweni, I was born in 1961 in the Eastern Cape in a small town called Tsolo, in the village...I come from a big family, I have six siblings, I am the first born, unfortunately one of my siblings passed away and there is only five of us left now. I grew up like any other child, I woke up at 5 am every day, weekends were no exceptions, my daily routine was the same unless I was very sick, then my grandmother will let me rest. I woke up, performed house chores, fetched clean water in the river, after fetching the water; I started a fire outside, put the water in a very large iron three foot pot, so that the water could accommodate everyone. While the water was heating, I would take an iron put in the fire. Back then we did not have these fancy irons that you just plug in, and we did not have any electricity. I would put two irons in the fire, so that while I was using one iron, the other was being warmed. When I was done with ironing the school shirts, I poured water into the washing dishes [plastic washing out bowl about 48-60 cm], then woke up two siblings at the time to take a bath. We only had two washing dishes. If we were late sometimes they were forced to share. Two people will wash in one dish. While the young ones are taking a bath, I had to
make sure that their uniforms are ready and when everyone is done, only then can I start getting ready for school. I often got to school late because of all these chores. It got worse during harvest period, we went to farms early in the morning around 4 am. That meant I had to wake up around 3 am, prepare tea, put it in a flask and pack some bread if we had any. I would pack my uniform and put it in a plastic bag, take a scoop of Vaseline and put it in a small piece of plastic, I took a bath at night and just washed my feet in the nearby river.

My younger siblings were left home, so I had to leave water in the fire, so that when they wake up, they can easily pour water into the washing dishes and take a bath. I worked in the farms with my grandparents until around 7am. I would quickly run to the nearest stream, wash my feet, then smear the Vaseline, get dressed and prepare to go to school. I often got to school late during this cultivation period and I was heavily punished by the teacher. On his bad day we received around 10 lashes each person. It would be so bad that sometimes you would find your hands blue/purple swollen from all the beating and I wouldn’t even be able to hold a pen to write. You would get more lashes from the teacher if you didn’t write the classwork. We did not have any money to buy food during break time at school or pack lunch box because the food was reserved for eating in the home. Although we had feeding scheme at school, it was only for the lower grades. From standard three onwards we did not receive food. So I heavily relied on friends who sometimes packed lunch, or when one of my friend’s father came for a visit from the mines he gave her money, which she used to buy us fat cakes.

I loved school, and I can confidently say I was intelligent because I never failed a grade. When I was at school I felt like I was a child, playing around and laughing, but this only lasted while I was at school. It was as if I lived two lives, on the one side I was just a child enjoying her childhood. On the other I assumed the role of a mother. With my mother’s absence things were even worse. After school I had to rush home so that I can wash all my siblings’ shirts and socks in time before the sun set. We did not have many shirts, each person had only two set. That is all my mother could afford, but sometimes we borrowed from each other. Sometimes, when we run out of washing bar or powder, I would wear my shirt inside out so the collar looked clean, and would do the same with socks. I was lucky because we did not wear white socks (Laughs). When I was done with the washing, I had to take a 20 litre bucket and go fetch water. I would
put it on top of my head; this made it easier to carry. I had to make at least two or three trips to the river a day, so water will be enough for cooking and bathing the next morning. The trips were fun because we always went in groups. Then I had to start preparing supper.

After eating supper I had to wash the dishes, but sometimes I would ask my younger sister to wash the dishes so that I can start my homework and that is if there was any candle left do my homework otherwise I will have to wake up early in the morning and do my homework. Unfinished homework will earn me five lashes and I was already receiving punishment for being late. One day the teacher who was punishing us, said that I should receive a certificate at the end of the year for being a late comer of the year (laughs). My grand-parents were good people, they taught me well. Life was tough then I tell you, there were times when I resented being the first born, because I worked the hardest. Sometimes I felt like I was a slave, and complaining was no option either. My grandmother will whip you hard and you regretted ever complaining afterwards.

I never knew my father, he has always been absent from our lives. From ever since I can remember. Like any other child I longed for a father figure in my life. I remember thinking that, maybe if I had a father figure in my life things would have been better. Maybe I wouldn’t have struggled as much as I did. Do not get me wrong I loved my grandfather, but he was old and did not have enough time to entertain us. I knew that he loved us. Even though he never expressed his feelings but we were always told that, a man is a provider not a crier. My grandparents raised me and my siblings well. They did all they could for us, but things were not easy then. They both relied on social grant, and that was not enough to sustain a family of eight people, so life was not easy at all.

*Transition into Adulthood*

It was not easy though, not having my mother around. Especially being a girl, my grandmother was always there, but she was older and not that approachable. When I started my period, I hoped my mother was there to guide me. All the information about periods I received from my friends and their older sisters. My grandmother warned me that ‘if you sleep with a boy, you will fall pregnant’. My mother worked as a teacher, she did not stay at home with us. I did not see her as much as I would have loved to, and she only visited during school days. Even when she came home, she did not bring
much. You know as kids growing up *emaxhoseni* [rural area] when a person comes for a visit you expect something new or sweets but that never happened, but at least we ate meat. Eating meat was a luxury we only ate meat during *kam-kam* (social grant pay day) or when my mother came for a visit. So if you ate meat twice in one month, then you were very happy.

My grandparents were farmers, so I grew up in a warm family, surrounded by a lot of people. That meant everything had to be shared amongst eight people and it was not easy. I will not say that, we were poor but I was not that privileged either. It was very tough growing up, I can remember it like it was yesterday. There were times when we would eat pap and tea for breakfast. You know what they say, ‘the stomach never questions what you feel it up with’. What was important is that we did not go to school with an empty stomach. It is not like we were marked that this one ate pap and tea or this one had bread and eggs for breakfast. The important thing was to get educated.

My grandparents were Christians, but culture was at the centre of their lives. Much of the reason for that was because we grew up in a very traditional society. My cultural clan is *Bhaca*. We did not have strong cultural beliefs and practices. Especially amongst us girls, boys went to the mountain. When a child is born in the *bhaca* tradition a ceremony to introduce the child to the ancestors has to be performed and it is called *imbeleko*. The ceremony involves slaughtering a goat and making traditional beer. Growing up I used to hear people talk about that, girls were not allowed in the kraal especially if they were on their periods. But my grandparents were not very strict people so they told me, I didn’t have to follow such rules.

I completed my primary school at Qhaqane primary school. My dream career was to become a police woman. So that I can protect people but police do not protect these days all they do is to kill. I always loved the idea of serving the community. I then advanced to a Junior Secondary School in Tsolo at Mtwaku Junior Secondary School. My mother was based at Nqamakwe and this is where I attended my Senior Secondary School at Jongabantu, in a village called Mbiza. In the same year, I fell in love with a boy, and during those times dating was not easy. So we sneaked around so that the elders will not catch us. Unfortunately I fell pregnant, and gave birth to my daughter in 1981. After giving birth to my child out of wedlock, my family was very disappointed in me, their dream was to see me graduate in high school and finding a
job so that I would be able to assist my family. My mother told me that I would have to stay at home and raise my daughter. I had to drop out of school. I stayed home for four years, and when my daughter was four I decided to go back to school. I decided to leave school in 1985 after passing standard nine. My mother could not afford to support all of us and take us to school at the same time. As the eldest child, I was forced to drop out of school and go look for work to assist my mother and support my daughter.

Moving to Marikana

My aunt lived in another village, also in Tsolo, her husband had money and they owned a shop. She asked me to live with her so that I can look after the shop and she paid me for this. The pay was not that good, but at least I could afford to support my child. I sometimes went to visit home, when both my aunt and her husband were home. I would buy few things so that I did not arrive home empty handed. My aunt was very strict, there wasn’t much time for boys and dating, after my daughter I promised myself I will never repeat the same mistake again, by falling pregnant out of wedlock. In 1986, I fell in love with a man. He worked as a miner in Joburg, and often came during holidays to visit his family. One day he came to buy in the shop, and I happened to be the one serving him. We talked but he did not say much. It was only when he came to visit in December that I decided to accept his proposal, and we formally started dating. But this time, I had promised myself that I would do things differently. I told him that I had a child out of wedlock and he promised that he will raise my daughter as his own. We got married in 1987, my husband was working in Johannesburg. I was left home taking care of my daughter and his family.

In 1988 I came to visit my husband here in the mines in Marikana. Things were okay at the beginning. But I later found out, just what kind of a man my husband was. I struggled; he was cheating seeing other women. It got worse when he stopped bringing money back home. He was always drunk, never gave me money to buy food or to send back home to his parents. I took the decision to leave him in 1989. I was tired of living like an orphan. I went back home to the Eastern Cape, but the situation back home was not looking good. My mother was struggling, I was forced to come back to Moooinooi and look for a job. It was not easy finding a job. After years of struggling I ended up selling clothes, beers and cold drinks just so that I could support myself.
In 1995 I was hired by a company called M Stores as a sale’s lady. The company sold clothes in the mines for credit. I worked for the company for 18 years. Initially I was based in a mine called Samancor. I was later moved to Eastern Bob mine under Lonmin. I was unhappy in this job. I earned a salary of R 3000 a month and I was not satisfied with this pay. I had to supporting my two grandchildren, my late sister’s children and my mother who is on pension and this money was not enough to sustain myself and my entire family. I also have debts, I borrowed money from the bank to build this two room house that you see, but I was unable to repay the bank. Now I owe around R 30 something thousand rand. Things become even more difficult, in 2012 during the strike. I was asked to stay home and not come to work during the duration of the strike. That meant, staying home without a salary, I can tell you know it was not easy. During that time, I took a decision that I will leave my job and focus on more important issues, supporting the community struggles.

In 1994 It was my first time voting and I fell in love with politics and the African National Congress (ANC). I moved from Mooirooi where I lived and came to live here in Wonderkop that is when I started working for the ANC. The community loved me because I was not corrupt and I also loved working for the community and I was good at solving people’s problems. The problem started arising when the 2011 elections [local government elections] were approaching, it turned out that the community wanted me to stand for the elections as a councillor. My branch had also elected me to stand as a councillor only to find out that the chairperson was not pleased with this decision. He did not say anything and we were very close. He failed to talk to me and tell me that he wanted to stand for the same position. We went to the elections and I won, but the people from the Regional branch in Rustenburg manipulated the votes and so he won. But people were complaining because they said they did not vote for him. We went to the screening votes and again he won there and people were not happy about that. After that we never had a good relationship again. I became his enemy till this day and he is a councillor, so there are a lot of issues that paints my name in a wrong way and now the community is divided they do not know which side to take. After that we formed an organisation with the community members called SANCO, South African Civil Organisation.
The councillor refused to recognise the organisation because I was the secretary until its two year license expired. I left politics and decided to just sit at home. My heart was heartbroken and after that things went from bad to worse. I was prevented from voting in 2011, regardless of the fact that my ID document was filled with voting stamps. I was told I will not vote because I am not a South African citizen, when I asked how so, they said because I am from the Transkei. That did not make any sense, because the Transkei they are talking is in South African. The only difference is that it has been renamed. I think all of this was done to spite me. This was the chairperson’s doing because I wanted to become a councillor. Ever since then, I lost faith in the ANC.

**The 2012 Strike**

My life was just a routine, before the 2012 strike. I woke up went to work came back home. I was unhappy, and it is not until the 2012 miner strike that my life changed. It took a different direction, one I did not anticipate. I first heard that there was going to be a strike from the miners in the mine, so when the strike started. It was just a normal strike that I thought will end soon. But as time passed, the strike started intensifying and we started seeing heavy police near the striking sight. People were shaken by this, because we did not understand what the police were doing in the striking site. Especially since the strike was peaceful. The striking miners’ were just sitting in the mountain singing. It is not like they were going around the community harassing people. The miners’ were also angry and they were getting restless. They had been sitting in the mountain for days waiting for the manager to come and speak to them but that did not happen, they felt disrespected.

A few weeks passed and nothing was happening, the miners’ were hungry. I then decided with the other women of Wonderkop that we would not sit around while our brothers were starving. We then went around the local shops asking for food donations. On the morning of 16th of August we saw police gathered around. Some were riding horses, while others came in police vans and hippos. The police started fencing the area. This scared me and I decided to mobilise women in the community. I blew a whistle going around the community calling all women to unite behind the miners’ struggle. I told them about the striking miner’s pain and we took the decision as women that we should stand up and go support the miners’.
We marched to number one to speak to management about the miners’ asking him to respond to their request. We were tired of waiting so we decided that as women we might be heard we decided to go to management and approach the employer we thought that if we went as women the miners’ might receive a response. We wanted to ask him what was the razor fence for, and that if he was not going to give the miners’ what they were asking for, then he must let them go back to their rural homesteads. But unfortunately we never reached the office. We had just passed Wonderkop stadium we started hearing gun shots. There was smoke everywhere, then we all started coughing we were choking from the teargas. I was not sure what was going on, all I saw was smoke and people running around. Despite this we rushed to the mountain crying and screaming. But on our way there, we were stopped by some miners’ who had survived the shooting. They told us to go back, because people were being killed like flies in the mountain. But we decided to go and see for ourselves despite this warning. We refused to sit around while innocent people were being slaughtered like chickens. If it was our turn to die then be it, we were prepared to die with our loved ones. By the time we approached the mountain, there was a border line made of something that looked blue or green so we were not sure what that was. The police also prevented us from going near the mountain they told us that they would shoot if we came any closer.

We went back to our homes but decided that, we will wake up tomorrow and go back to the mountain the following day. That night, we could not sleep, people were scared. Peoples husbands did not come back home, none of my tenants [all miners] came back home. I started calling all the miners’ I knew to find out if they were okay, but none of them were answering their phones. I was scared that they had all been killed by the police. It felt like there was a cloud of darkness that day hanging over our heads.

I was in shock and didn’t want to admit to myself that people might be dead. The first time we learned the real truth, about what happened to the miners’, it was from watching the news on television.

Everyone was scared and worried, and the uncertainty was killing us. The following morning we woke up early and headed for the killing site. When we got there we approached the police. We asked them why they were killing innocent people. They did not give us a response. They were angry and threatened to shoot us if we did not disperse. But we did not care, we refused to be intimidated. They had no shame they
had already killed our brothers and husbands they might as well kill us also. They said we must wait for someone to come and give us a response. We then decided to go to the offices in number one. That was after we heard that some miners’ were held at number and were being beaten up by the police. On our way there we bumped into the police who prevented us from seeing the miners’. They warned us and told us that we had 10 minutes to disperse otherwise they threatened us that they will start shooting us. After that we went to the hospital to see miners’ but even when we got there we were prevented from seeing the miners’. So we went back to our respective homes, but days after we went to prisons and mortuaries searching for miners’.

As women we needed to be the pillars of strength for the miners’ and grieving families. It is a women’s job to comfort and help people to heal. There was no time to be scared or even think about what we were doing. I just jumped when he heard the guns. I can confidently say that the role played by women during the strike was very important. It would have been a bad thing if the miners’ did not see us in the courts supporting them. We did not want to abandon the men especially when they needed us the most. No one deserved to be killed for fighting for their rights. We left our houses and mixed with them we were prepared to die with them. We also went and buried the deceased in their respective homes. The strike affected me very negatively everything changed after the strike nothing is good in Marikana. The massacre affected us very negatively we are still traumatised some people are cripples as a result of the strike. They could have sent them home instead of killing them like that. Most children are orphans they do not have fathers they have no hope for the future.

*Life After the Strike*

After the strike, I saw that something needed to be done. I decided to form an organisation for women called Sikhala Sonke. I wanted women to be united because before the strike. Everyone was doing their own individual money generating activities which did not result in much change in their lives. I wanted all the women to be involved in community projects that will help them and their families financially. The organisation was formed with sole purpose to empower women so that if miners’ were to go on strike again. So that women and children will not go hungry ever again. They will have their own money or vegetables which they can go and pick in the garden. Upon which they will go home and cook for their families. Women starved and struggled during the
2012 strike and I do not want to see that happening again. I want women to be secure and know that if something like this happens again. At least they will not go to bed hungry and their husbands will also have something to eat. Most important is that majority of women are overlooked for jobs here in Marikana. I am getting old now and no one will give me a job in the mine at this age. I want a sustainable livelihood for women, I want to give women a reason to wake up every morning.

My life changed for the worst we supported the miners’ in courts so the police saw us, so in December last year one of the miners’ was arrested his sister is close to me. She used to stay here with him, the miner was arrested for the second time. He was arrested first after the strike but released on bail. I got a call from his sister on the 16th of December telling me that Andile had been arrested. Apparently he got into a fight with a women in Marikana. She went and opened a case of attempted murder against him. Andile’s relatives came and asked me to go and speak to the women to forgive Andile and withdraw the case. I went to her place and we were told by the boyfriend that she had left for home ever since she opened the case against Andile, so he gave me her numbers. I called her and told her about the situation she said she was willing to forgive him. But she had told me that she received number of sms threats and wanted to know who the person was. We went back home and came back in January. When we came back I went to Andile’s court case and sms her telling her that I am in court and we should meet. On the 16 January 2013 I saw her with the police and they took a picture of me, on the 4 February we went back to court again. I was then arrested on a charge of intimidation and stayed in prison for 2 days. I was released on a 1000 rand bail they took my phones and went and threw it and saw the pictures of the mountain on my phone. They asked me what I was doing with the pictures and why I supported the men even though I was a woman. They started calling me names they said I supported a fool like Julius Malema who knew nothing. So the interrogation now became about the strike not about the intimidation charge. So that is why I say the strike impacted negatively on my life because I am still attending the court case and going back again on the 10 February next year[2014] the case will be heard in the High Court.

People died because of the reality of living in poverty, the miners’ wanted a better life, better standard of living they were tired of living in this poverty. But they were killed while asking for a better life. Secondly, the widows went to bed as wives and woke up
as widows. We want the government and Lonmin to pick up where their loved ones left, support them and their children. Thirdly, we wake up every single day and go to the commission to support the miners’ because what happened was not good. We want the commission to do justice by the deceased miners’ and the widows left behind to pick up the pieces. We want justice to be served in the commission as women living in Wonderkop/ Marikana we want peace and justice.

It pained me a lot, all we were expecting the miners’ to be fired we did not expect people to be killed like that. It really crippled me when I found out that innocent people had been killed. I am still haunted by what happened till this day. Now we are faced with this strike in 2014. The strike has left people hungry. I am not saying people being killed was better. But now with this current strike which has been going on for over 3 months now. Children are hungry, people are suffering, the entire community is hungry even the shop owners are struggling. I send my grandchildren to school because I know they will receive feeding scheme. That is one less problem to worry about. But people are unable to send their children to creche because they cannot pay the monthly fees. I decided to call all the women in Wonderkop to march to Lonmin offices to submit a memorandum of demands. But before we reached the offices we were stopped by the police. I did this because I saw that the miners’ are suffering. All my tenants in the yard are miners’ and now they survive by being send money from back home. This is their parent’s old pension grant money, and their children’s social grant. I cannot ask for rent from them because I know the situation.

I also rely on my sister who lives in Cape Town she sends me R 300 a month, this is not much but it is something. With this money I have to buy food and send my grandchildren’s social grant money to my daughter who is currently in the Eastern Cape with her husband. My son in-law works at Lonmin. So we are all affected by the strike. I have to share what I have with my tenants and other people because they do not have any other alternative. At the same time I support the strike, because if the miners’ get the R 12 500 then things will change for the better. The strike was not only for them, but for the community as a whole, because without the miners’ hard work, this community would not exist. It is because of their hard work and sacrifices that give us a reason to wake up every morning, so we have to keep on fighting.
Getting Into Parliamentary Politics

On the more positive side though, my active role in the strike gained me recognition as a leader in the community. As a result I was shocked when I received a call from one of the Economic Freedom Fighters comrade informing me that I will be going to parliament. I was shocked and excited at the same time. Who would have thought that me Nokwakhe coming from an impoverished background. Living a small mining community like Marikana will go to parliament and sit with the big people. I am not sure how or why I was chosen to be a parliamentary member of the EFF. But I am grateful for the opportunity and this will give me an opportunity to promote my community and ensure that change is brought to Marikana. A lot needs to be done here, need for proper services, better schools and job creation for women. I mean there is a reason why God placed me in this position and I need to use my position wisely to ensure that it benefits the needy. I am looking forward to confronting Zuma and his ANC and asking him if he enjoyed killing innocent people. I want to face him and see if he has any regrets about what he did. He ruined people’s lives and he does not care, his life is going on he is busy building Nkandla while families of miners’ are starving back home.

5.5 Conclusion

The stories provided in this chapter present extraordinary characters who help us understand how all three women survived under extreme life challenges and conditions. All three stories directly contribute to some degree to platinum production. Their experiences of discrimination and struggles on the basis of gender influences, their conceptualisation of identity and rights. It also has implications on the perception of the role of women in working class politics and community struggles. Nompendulo Fakwe’s struggle centres on dangerous and hostile conditions of work in the mines. Her insights and experiences are broader in the sense that she merges the two spaces together. As a community leader, Nokwakhe also finds herself focused on living conditions in as much as she seeks to build stronger relations with women organising in other areas or even within the country and beyond. She is more connected with the women’s movement locally and nationally. Her interest and penetration into politics raises the awareness and agency of women, thus challenging persistent patriarchal relations in the community. Through recycling cans for a living, Kelly also has her own
established networks which have shaped her experience of struggle within the community as she scrapes by for a living. Her love for her two children and grandchild is what motivates her to survive. The differences between all three women are not with their financial standing, but in the relations that revolve around them and how that shapes the struggles they experience. This helps us to create a broader and more detailed understanding of the lived experiences and struggles to survive of each individual and how they survive in these highly discriminatory spaces. Through the three women’s lived experiences we are reminded of the daily realities of gender and class which continue to shape and complicate the patriarchal structures in this mining community, but despite these constraints women continue to triumph and exercise agency, by sustaining the community and ensuring its survival in conflict situations such as the 2012 miner strike. The autobiographies therefore awarded an opportunity to understand the transformation of identities and realities of these women and how these resulted in the newly found agency and politicisation of the women in Marikana.

Chapter six will then draw on the three autobiographies provided in this chapter in order to map an understanding of the lived experiences of women before, during, and after strike.
CHAPTER 6: WOMEN OF MARIKANA AND THE POLITICS OF TRANSITION

6.1 Introduction

The 2012 Marikana massacre left a momentous and ever lasting effect on the lives of many people. The effects were not homogeneous and differed from one person to the next. Some of the women interviewed for this research were relieved and eager to have things return to the state of normalcy as it was before the massacre. However, there were those women who believed that things would never go back to how they were before. They explained that their lives had transformed for the better following the massacre and they did not want things to return to their previous state. Nevertheless, it was apparent that the experiences and actions of women during the massacre would change the attitudes and the way women were viewed in this mining community drastically. While there were different reasons why women participated in the miner struggles, it was clear that the presence of women in the strike changed the nature of conflict, and the struggle to become one against intransigence of the mining bosses. This chapter therefore will investigate the impact of the strike on the lives of women who participated in the miner strike. It specifically looks at the contribution of the women in the labour movement in terms of influencing gender consciousness in mining communities. The research specifically focuses on the extent to which the participation of women challenged male domination and patriarchy.

6.2 Time-Line of Events

The participation of women in the strike has spread to more formal and independent organising of women that fight for survival of their families and the greater good of the community. A number of notable events shaped the current position and situation of women in Marikana, and these events are highlighted below.
### Table 6.2.1 Time-Line Events

#### 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 August</td>
<td>Women’s Day, RDOs took a decision to go on a strike demanding a living wage of R 12 500.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 August</td>
<td>Two employees are shot and taken to hospital for treatment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 August</td>
<td>Strike begins to spread to all other categories of workers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 August</td>
<td>Day of the massacre. 34 miners were killed, women go to the killing site after they hear gun shots.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 August</td>
<td>Women march to Lonmin number one offices in Wonderkop demanding a list of names of arrested miners, those in hospital and the deceased who were taken to a morgue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 August</td>
<td>Women go to Rankuwa hospital, morgue and police station in search of injured miners and some arrested or deceased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 August</td>
<td>Women support miners and mobilise food to take to the striking miners. They regularly go to the mountain to support the striking miners and they attend the funerals in their rural homesteads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 August</td>
<td>Sikhala Sonke is officially formed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 August</td>
<td>The Marikana Commission of Inquiry is appointed by President Jacob Zuma to investigate events leading up to the massacre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 August</td>
<td>Women gather outside Ga-Rankuwa magistrate court demanding release of 270 arrested miners after 270 arrested miners are charged with the murder of 34 miners who were killed on 16 August.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 September</td>
<td>The charge of common purpose against the 270 arrested miners was dropped, but the miners are still charged with intimidation and other offences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 September</td>
<td>Paulina Masuhlo and Ntombencinci shot by a passing police hippo near a local shop in Nkaneng, while waiting for visitors from Johannesburg. They are both taken to hospital.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 September</td>
<td>Paulina dies in hospital and it is reported it was a result of injury related complications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 September</td>
<td>Miners’ agree to a 11 to 22% wage increase and return to work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 September</td>
<td>Women’s Forum in Nkaneng in Wonderkop issues a statement planning peaceful march on 22 September.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 September</td>
<td>Women embark on a peaceful march to the Marikana police station demanding justice for the death of Paulina Masuhlo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 September</td>
<td>Women in Marikana march to demand better service delivery. They also asked for the police to be prosecuted for their role in the killing of the miners and to stop harassing the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 October</td>
<td>The Marikana Commission of Inquiry begins.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17 June</td>
<td>A cleansing ceremony is held in Marikana by families of the deceased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 August</td>
<td>Lonmin signs an agreement recognising AMCU as the majority union at the mine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 August</td>
<td>First year anniversary. Women involved in the organising and cooking in the commemoration.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23 January</td>
<td>Marikana strike begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 March</td>
<td>Wonderkop Community Women’s Association protests in effort to bring an end to the violence which accompanied the continuing mining strike in the Marikana area. The Local municipality gives permission to women to march.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 May</td>
<td>Food parcels distributed to Marikana.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The changes in the socio-political context from the first unprotected strike in 2012 to the recent protected strike in 2014 have been instrumental in influencing the gender shifts within the community. In between the two strikes women have had a big window of opportunity to transform their lives for the better.

**Table 6.3.1 Changing roles of women in Marikana before and after the 2012 strike**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Life of women before the massacre</th>
<th>During the 2012 strike</th>
<th>Current position of women after the 2014 strike</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role of women</td>
<td>Mainly engaged in domestic and reproductive work</td>
<td>Women involved in solidarity work, mobilising for food to take to striking miners. They also organise independently</td>
<td>Women are more actively involved in community struggles. During the 2014 five month strike, they were going to universities and non-governmental organisations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**6.3 Marikana Women Before and After the Miner strike**

The changes in the socio-political context from the first unprotected strike in 2012 to the recent protected strike in 2014 have been instrumental in influencing the gender shifts within the community. In between the two strikes women have had a big window of opportunity to transform their lives for the better.

24 June
- Five month platinum strike ends.

12 August
- Women in Marikana hold press conference demanding answers from government officials for their unchanged situation.

16 August
- Second year anniversary of the Marikana killings.
mobilising food for striking miners and the community of Marikana

Sikhala Sonke receives a lot of media attention and prominence. It held a media conference on the 12 August 2014 to raise their grievances about their suffering and the forgotten widows who are scraping by in horrific living conditions.

| Economic Position | Women highly dependent on men for remittances and some engaged in transitional relationships. | A group of women organise independently and form Sikhala Sonke. Some women are involved in money saving schemes such as stokvels to supplement their money. | Primrose Sonti (community activist and leader, responsible for mobilising women in the community to go the striking site on 16 August 2012) is elected into parliament.

Women hired in the local clinics and by CSVR to provide counselling to traumatised victims in the community after the strike. |
| Mobilisation | No mobilisation. | Women start to mobilise and organize independently. | Mobilisation becomes more prominent and crucial during the five month strike in 2014. Women in the community were in the forefront of mobilising food for their community during the strike. |
| Relationship with men | Women and men do not have strong relationship. Men are often seen together. Community still highly patriarchal and gender exclusive. | Women and men start attending the commission together and leaders are often seen attending meetings with the miners. Strike exposes gender biases, gender discrimination and discontent. | Relationships between women and men becomes stronger. They all attend meetings together, often seen socialising. Some women in the community regularly start attending the commission on behalf of the striking miners and give them regular updates. Expression of reflective consciousness that allowed women to be more involved and active in the struggles of the miners. |
| Participation in community struggles | Some of the women participated in the 2012 service delivery struggle but dominated by Tswana speaking | Women participate in the 2012 miner strike. Their role becomes instrumental in saving the lives of surviving | The role of women in the community becomes more prominent and ensures the survival of |
women since they are considered legitimate residents in Marikana.

miners who run to the homes of some of the women during the day of the massacre seeking refuge. Women also go around hospitals and court in support of striking miners and demand the release of arrested miners.

**Role in the homes**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mostly involved in care work and domestic duties.</td>
<td>Women not as involved in domestic and care work, because they attend the commission and the men look after the children.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Involvement in politics**

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
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<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limited, only few actively involved in politics.</td>
<td>Most women start supporting AMCU and are often seen in miners’ meetings and gatherings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While there are few records about the activism of women before the strike, this does not mean that the participation of women in the miner strike was necessarily a novel experience. Women have always supported their male counterparts in more ways than one. This was not always public like the 2012 miner strike, but it could have been in the form of reproductive work. While men attended community meetings, it is the women who made sure the man looked clean and arrived on time in the meetings. Through their involvement in domestic activities in the homes, women made sure that men engaged in public life. Moreover, as the table indicates, the women, following the massacre, indeed engaged in public activities directly.

### 6.4 Entabeni (Mountain)

The descriptions and analyses associated with the masculine identity of the 2012 strike dominated the accounts of the labour conflict. This was the case, whether the account were presented by academic scholars or the media. Most of the provided discussions and analyses were precisely written to explain the circumstances under which women were allowed to be in the mountain and the roles they were allowed to play while in the mountain. Men were presented as the only agents, implicitly denying and undermining important roles played by women.

Historically the mountains have been featured both as a site of resistance and rebellion and as a space where men gathered undisturbed to discuss political issues. According to Drew (2012:71) *intaba* became an alternative site of political imagining that began to elaborate a structure of authority-polity even that stood in opposition to the chief and, ultimately, to the apartheid state itself’. During the *Mpondo* revolt, for example, *Mpondo* men advanced to the mountain to discuss their dissatisfaction with decisions concerning the concentration of power in the hands of one chief (Drew, 2012:76). *Intaba* then became both a strategic and symbolical space. Strategically, the mountain represented a neutral area, away from the community. Symbolically, the hill held numerous spiritual and cultural meanings. ‘The *Mpondo* believed that their ancestors who inhabited the hill would provide protection to them while they fought against what was understood as a worthy cause’ (Muller, 2012:220).
Many of the women interviewed for this research came from rural backgrounds and were familiar with a number of cultural practices, including patriarchal institutions. These conversations provided a meaningful discussion over the influence and connection of rural backgrounds on the miners and the women (Bruchhausen, 2014:8). There have been a number of emerging arguments on the meaning of the mountaintop. The emerging literature on this topic tended to support the patriarchal position of men by associating the mountaintop with a kraal. According to Benya (2013), during the strike, there was a compliance with cultural norms on what is deemed an appropriate women’s role and respect for the symbolic gendered character of the mountain space. She further asserts that Marikana women originate from the Eastern Cape Province. As such, for these women, the mountain had the same resemblance as a Kraal (where family and communal affairs are discussed, women are prohibited from participating in these discussions). Also, she suggested that the mountain symbolised l'boma (an excluded place for boys undergoing circumcision where women are not allowed because of the ‘danger’ it can cause to the young initiates) (Benya, 2013). This notion is supported by Chinguno (2013:24) who explains that in Xhosa culture there is a symbolism attached to the mountain: ‘in Xhosa culture when there are problems in the family that need to be resolved, the men converge at the kraal and the women are excluded as this is a gendered space’. Both Benya and Chinguno provide an analysis of the way in which gender is reinforced and redefined by cultural and physical structures within many African cultures.

The picture that was painted during the strike otherwise argued the contrary. As mentioned in chapter two and in the autobiography of Precious Sontweni, it was the women on the day of the massacre who went to the mountain confronting the police about killing their loved ones. It was the women who were shielding the man against further police brutality. This act had defied the very basis of the masculinity of the mountain as a striking site and had penetrated the confined prescribed roles that women were expected to act within. It certainly resulted in higher confidence and more independent organising amongst the women of Marikana.

According to Precious, feelings of grief, injustice and exploitation amongst women in the community is what prompted women to organise. The miners’ decision to occupy the mountain as a striking site opened up a window of opportunity for people in the community, to fight side by side striking miners and to represent their concerns and
needs. It was during this time that women became aware of the shortcomings of patriarchal institutions and the greater need to develop a gender identity to mobilise for the interests of ordinary women in the community.

This thus raises a number of questions concerning the legitimacy of the mountain and the roles that were assimilated in the mountain. Even more importantly, there is a tendency to deny women a space to express their views. The impression made is that women do not have working class consciousness; as such, they are not interested in workers’ struggles. This triggered a symbolic shift from standing behind the men to standing beside them. It moved women from the backgrounds to the front lines of workers and community struggles. We have seen the women of Marikana come out in full force fighting for better living conditions and safety of their community. Family life, gender relations and the identity of women have all been effectively transformed. These were women who had previously been highly ignored and invisible from the public light. Through their actions to occupy the mountain and fight alongside the miners, they had found a new voice, which they used to stand up and speak out against brutality and injustice.

According to Nomfanelo (Interview, 2013), women began talking about their experiences in the homes and the community, their high dependency on men for money and their subordinate positions. ‘These were discussions amongst us women while we were at the mountain supporting the striking miners’ (Nomfanelo Interview, 2013). Women fought alongside men because the jobs and the prospect of future employment of their loved ones and children were in jeopardy. The large absence of women miners in the mountain further highlighted the discrimination of women both in the workplace and in the community thereby awakening women’s gender consciousness.

For most of the women, their experiences in the mountain, of sitting in the hot scorching sun for hours opposite the miners made listening to them talk about their experiences and hardships in the workplace for a low wage. This has made them better understand the exploitation of their male counterparts, and realised the reality of their socio-economic hardship and positions, which resulted in shared struggles between the women and the miners’. The voluntary participation of women in the strike represented a site of unity. It opened up a space that provided a socio-political platform
for women, whereby women could express their thoughts and feelings freely. Their involvement in the strike certainly challenged the claim that labour struggles in the mines are only for men.

The very presence of women in the mountain was a form of resistance, which made it possible for women to advance their interests in both political and community struggles. The frequent presence of women in the mountain openly defied the political and patriarchal system in the community. It is important to note that the women had no obligation to participate in the miners’ struggle. But the resistance arose from a fear of insecurity and losing their loved ones. Through their participation in the miners’ struggle, women faced the danger of being labelled as defiant and rebellious, especially in a highly patriarchal and male dominant society. The advances that were made in the mountain were undeniable and can therefore not be ignored, even though they have been compromised by a narrow analysis geared towards limiting the awareness and advancement of women’s struggles in mining communities.

The idea is not to create a false impression that the mountain was a smooth process. There were some tensions between women and the striking miners at the beginning. Some of the miners opposed the presence of women and saw it as a challenge to male supremacy since they did not understand what the women were doing in the men’s struggles. But it was through ongoing solidarity that was formed between the women and the men that made it possible for the strike to be maintained. In this instance, the women were not seen as foreign and out of place, they became allies in broader struggles for community survival.

6.5 The Marikana Commission of Inquiry

The Marikana Commission of Inquiry was established by President Jacob Zuma on 23 August 2012 seven days after 34 striking miners in Marikana were gunned down by the police. The commission was mandated with the task of finding out exactly what happened on the days leading to the tragic events of the 16 August 2012 and officially opened on the 1 October 2012. The unity and solidarity that was formed between the striking miners and women was extended to the attendance of the commission. In the absence of the miners who had to go to work, the women of Marikana have tirelessly
demonstrated their commitment to the workers’ struggles and justice, by regularly attending the commission and continuously supporting the struggles of the miners.

The regular attendance of the commission was modelled on the principles of solidarity. Commitment and sacrifice were an important aspect of attending the commission and this meant that the women were willing to wake up early in the morning and prepare the children for school and leave to support the miners. Most of these women have sacrificed searching for jobs to attend the commission. This has resulted in a loss of income for many, lack of social security and makes these women even more vulnerable to poverty.

The regular attendance of the commission by the women bridges the distance between the Eastern Cape, Lesotho, Marikana and other rural based homesteads. Through their on-going support, they have come to join the grieving families who are waiting patiently for the commission to deliver justice. This support has proven to be important for both the miners and widows as they have been able to get regular updates irrespective of their absence. The attendance of the commission by the women highlights the fact that their experiences of discrimination and exclusion on the basis of their gender influence their understanding of rights and identity:

We wake up every single day and go to the commission to support the miners’ because what happened was not good we want the commission to do justice by the miners’, the deceased and the widows left behind to pick up the pieces we want justice to be served in the commission as women living in Wonderkop/ Marikana we want peace and justice (Primrose, date 53).

The commission was an extension of women’s activism; it was a forum in which they could fight for their rights and those of their community. At the same time, women were redefining and inserting their role in public spaces. Even so, their activism reflects the centrality of gender discrimination in their motivation to organise independently as women and attend the commission and, to a certain extent, challenge mining management, patriarchal institutions and the government. This formed the basis on which collective solidarity and identity in the community in Marikana were achieved between women and men on the basis of community struggles. This collective identity dismantled the boundaries between workers and the community and it was used as a tool to challenge aspects of patriarchy.
In chapter four, the personal relationships and unequal power relationships between men and women were stressed. Before the strike, women were subjected to control and dominance by the men particularly in the households. Prior to the women’s involvement in the 2012 strike, it would have probably been considered disrespectful for women to be involved in the affairs of the men let alone attend a commission in their absence. In the absence of the women who regularly left at 7 am for Pretoria to attend the commission and came back home around 6 pm, it was the men who were left at home to take care of the children and household duties thus reversing gender roles:

Usually when I get home from the commission I find my bed made and my husband preparing supper. He knows that I am going to the commission to represent and support him, so he also supports me by taking care of household duties (Mamsekula, 56).

As Mamsekula clearly highlights, there has been a deviance in the responsibilities of men and women as men are starting to help out more in the homes and women are involved in broader struggles outside the households. For the women attending the commission, they have transformed social dynamics in their personal lives and in the community. Their shifting gender roles both at home and in the community influenced how they perceived decision making concerning individual choices.

This also resulted in the transformation of relationships between women and men in society. As highlighted above by Nompendulo Fakwe’s autobiography, it was not common to have women and men socialise together in public. The solidarity that was shared during the strike resulted in stronger relationships between women and men. It is now common to see women and men sitting and socialising in public.

Photograph 6.1 shows a woman and man socialising in public, something which, as many respondents pointed out, and my own observation highlighted, had not happened prior to the 2012 strike at Lonmin.
Although the women displayed competency, by generally facilitating involvement in the commission this was however not generally accepted by all the men. Some of the miners exerted resistance and displayed their dissatisfaction with being overtaken by women. The collective contribution of women was then noticed by some as opposed to the respect and leadership role of men. In the absence of the miners, women had decision-making authority and this gradually extended to other spheres of their private and public lives such as family and social affairs. The involvement of women in the commission increased the representation of women in social life and decreased their vulnerability to domestic and social violence. But this also resulted in gender conflicts between some of the miners and members of the community who opposed the women’s activism in the men’s affairs. This was largely because of lack of community interest in community based struggles in Marikana, particularly amongst the unemployed and especially women. The women encountered criticism and lack of support from those who did not understand why they were attending the commission
in the first place. The women were accused of providing support in a gender insensitive way. But, the women refused to be shifted from their focus, because this activism heightened their awareness about the importance of active involvement in community struggles and encouraged the women to fully exercise their social and political rights.

6.6 Marikana Commemoration

The 16th of August 2013 saw the one year commemoration of the Marikana massacre. Normal activities were halted to mark a day of mourning in remembrance of fallen miners. According to Sinwell & Mbatha (2013,np) ‘exactly one year after the Marikana Massacre, 20,000 workers peacefully commemorated that fateful day’. The commemoration praised the heroic role of all the miners who participated in the strike and remembered those that lost their lives on the day of the massacre.

Women in the community were tasked with the responsibility of preparing the food for the guests during the commemoration. While one might argue that this role limited women to lower status than their male counterparts who were there for a higher purpose, this was no different from the dual roles played by women in the mountain. It is true that women were tasked with more communal roles, but this is not to say that they lacked legitimate authority; they also played a significant role in the program. Though the leadership role played by women during the day was conditional, this led to greater scrutiny of the roles played by women in the community and the influence of this on their daily lives. Without the coming together of both men and women on the day of the massacre, there could have been no victory and this is what the commemoration demonstrated. When people unite against a common enemy they are liberated.

A group of women also staged a play that displayed the events leading to the massacre. This suggested that women were becoming more actively involved in community work. In this instance though, there may be patterns of women maintaining patriarchy in so far as cooking and preparing food was an extension of their roles in the homes. However, they were outside their homes and the cooking was intended for a public event in support of strike activity. This meant that women went beyond just their traditional activities as their roles were coupled with the newly acquired skills of organising and ensuring the event was a success. It also highlighted the importance
of women’s involvement in community issues. This involvement was not only domestic but it was also political in that the women did not only get involved because there was a need to help, but because of the connection they had with workers and broader community struggles.

The play did not only remind us of the brutal killings of miners. The crowd got to relive the strike through the women’s interpretations and demonstrations. The demonstrations stretched far beyond retelling the story. They raised awareness about the undignified treatment, community struggles and injustice both the miners and women were experiencing. This was similar to the role the women played during the strike. In both cases, these roles resulted in links that united the struggles of women with that of the miners in the community.

The inclusion of Primrose Sonti as one of the keynote speakers during the commemoration was crucial in raising the awareness of women and their struggles. Primrose Sonti was an activist and one of the women who mobilised other women in the community to support the striking miners. Her participation as one of the keynote speakers in the commemoration strengthened the profile of women in the community. Through their experiences in the home, community and in the workers’ struggles, the role of women was highlighted. The inclusion of women in the program ensured that the struggles and needs of women in the community could potentially be included within the broader working class struggles.

6.6 Sikhala Sonke

The resilient support of the women in the 2012 strike, together with the subordination and dominant attitudes towards women, reflected the limited extent to which the involvement of women in working class struggles would lead to changes in their lives. In fact, the continuation of the strike also resulted in the emphasis on the interests and needs of the striking miners, and not much on those of their female supporters. While the active involvement in labour and community struggles brought about greater awareness to challenges faced by women, this did not adequately address the interests of women. The women needed an organisational structure that would be dedicated to the individual interests and socio-political issues faced by women. Sikhala Sonke was a crucial expression of agency by women following the massacre. It was
formed as a socio-economic organisation that would be adequately placed to advance the interests of women both socio-economically and politically.

The organisation exhibits the struggles and some of the prevalent issues in Marikana. Before the 2012 miners’ strike, struggles against issues that directly affected women tended to be ignored or overshadowed by mining labour struggles. Issues directly affecting women such as: unemployment, social violence, domestic violence, HIV/AIDS and struggles for women’s rights were masked by labour struggles. The fact that these issues are also a direct result of labour struggles is ignored; this is why the women organised independently to draw awareness to these issues. Given the absence of existing women’s organisation or movements in most mining communities, women decided to organise themselves after the strike with the hope of creating an environment in which issues directly affecting them were given greater awareness. The absence of women’s organisation in Marikana can also be largely attributed to lack of promotion of women’s basic rights, especially amongst unemployed women. This weakens and constrains women’s ability to make choices and decisions in the homes and in society and thus leaves no space for the implementation of these rights.

The women’s ability to exercise influence in the struggles of the workers opened opportunity for some of the women to organise independently:

During the strike we were hungry because no one was working and we were depending on the striking miners for support. We then took a decision as women that we will organise independently and form an organisation so that we can make our own money and ensure that if the men were to decide to go on strike again our children will never go hungry (Wendy, 34).

This resilient support of women on the mountain brought significant meaning to independent organising. The strategic role of women’s organisation and the built networks can be viewed firstly as part of an empowerment process that allowed individuals to organise around immediate and practical needs. Secondly, the organisation of women was strategically developed to reach the most marginalised (women) in the community. Both these strategies have played a significant role in increasing the visibility of women and raising their awareness.
Sikhala Sonke was officially formed on 22 August 2012. Sikhala Sonke is an umbrella organisation inspired by the struggles of the community, which resulted in solidarity and unity in the mountain between the women and the striking miners. The formation of the organisation was a crucial moment in the lives of women in Marikana. It aimed to provide women with skills that would help them go beyond the current struggle and to create a sustainable source of income for the organisation’s members and their families. Sikhala Sonke provided a collective space where women could increase their access to resources, through vegetable gardening, farming, starting a crèche and skills development such as teaching women to sew. This would not only generate income and promote skills development, but also boosted the profile of the women as important contributors to the economy and community development.

The organisation is deeply rooted in the community and its struggles and in many respects represented the experiences of women in the community. But not all the women who participated in the miners’ struggle joined the organisation. Therefore, the organisation is not representative of all the women in Marikana. However, the members of the organisation form part of this community and the leaders engage with a wide range of women living in Marikana on a fairly regular basis. As such, it is to a certain extent representative of the daily lived struggles faced by women in the community. Sikhala Sonke is made up of 36 individual women coming from different cultural backgrounds. All these women have one thing in common and that is, they want to transform their current circumstances to create a more sustainable future for themselves.

The organisation brought legitimacy and reflected the need to participate and have access to public spaces. It provided a forum that acknowledged, promoted and united the differences of individual members. The formation of Sikhala Sonke strengthened the various interests of the women and promoted the idea of collective identity, which was driven by the social experiences and observations of the community struggles. It therefore provided a neutral space in which women could put their differences aside and organise independently and address their collective needs and issues as a group. Sikhala Sonke gave women an opportunity to make demands at both the social and political level. Through their active engagement and awareness of community struggles, women in Marikana were able to influence and participate in public debates about community and workers’ struggles.
It is also undeniable that within this new social context women still face a number of challenges which hinder their ability to advance their interests. The composition of the organisation has also elevated the image and status of women in the society. This had drawn the attention of political parties and non-governmental organisations who have been working closely with the members of Sikhala Sonke. But most of these collaborations are between middle class, educated and influential individuals who have the ability to dictate the women’s decisions and choices. The majority of the members have no previous experience in social and political engagements. As such, these outside forces have made little attempt to develop these women so that they can bring about a sustainable and meaningful change in their community.

As highlighted above, the majority of the members are unemployed, which means the organisation faces huge financial constraints. The high dependence on donations and financial support slows the progress of the organisation and makes the women highly dependent and susceptible to influence from outside forces. This poses a constraint on regenerating and sustaining resistance. Issues of solidarity amongst the members of Sikhala Sonke also form an obstacle to advancing the development of the organisation. Cultural identity was also an important factor in determining the forms of loyalty within the organisation. The different cultural identities which dominate society have resulted in internal dynamics within the structures of the organisation. This has had a significant impact on decision making, electing candidates into leadership positions, and voting on issues. These women make decisions based on loyalty as opposed to what is in the best interest of the organisation. There is therefore a greater and urgent need for these donors to initiate a broader discussion and engage these internal issues if these women are to be truly liberated and advanced.

This means that real issues and struggles faced by unemployed women are at risk of being pushed aside and side-lined. The research does not in any way discard the important contribution and support of all the outside forces that have closely worked with the women of Sikhala Sonke since the 2012 miners’ strike. It however is important that the women speak for themselves and make decisions that are in their best interest without the interfering voices of others who might not necessarily understand these struggles as much as the women do.
There have been other structural and organisational issues which hinder the growth and development of this organisation. Some of the members are unable to regularly attend the meetings and participate in significant debates. The pressures and household duties that need to be performed and the struggles for basic services such as water means that some women are not often able to commit to the needs of the organisation. The majority of the members of Sikhala Sonke have no social movement background. The organisation is rooted in traditional gender forms of work, such as cooking, sewing and looking after children. This means that they will take time to rise to the challenge and organise formally. This undermines the developmental potential of the organisation. Organisational skills are therefore needed. The formation of Sikhala Sonke, however, demonstrates that there is more to women in mining communities besides being mothers and wives of miners. It has the potential to become a positive developmental organisation even though it was built on the tragic labour struggles of the miners.

6.7 Relationship between the women of Marikana and the EFF

Women form a significant part of the voters in South Africa. Over the years there has been a noticeable increase in gender representation in parliament. The ANC has a proud gender quota in parliament which stands at 49%, and the Democratic Alliance (DA) and National Freedom Party (NFP) have powerful female leaders including Helen Zille (DA) and Zanele Magwaza Msibi (NFP). While this has to some degree resulted in a significant contribution to gender representation and equality in politics, it has not necessarily translated to political shifts. Despite these improvements there has been a gender blindness that continues to impact negatively on women centred political participation. As such this continues to have negative effects on the ability to identify political opportunities relevant for putting the struggles of women on the political agenda and ensuring that their rights are considered and upheld.

For instance, the EFF in its election manifesto, promised to increase social grants and to ensure the safety and security of women. They promise these will be possible through the creation of sustainable jobs and the opening up of educational and training opportunities for women who receive child support grants, so that child bearing is not seen as a basis to receive social grants (EFF Election Manifesto, 2014). If the EFF
manifesto is anything to go by, then it promises to make women visible and bring greater awareness to the representation of women in politics. The party also made some progress in drawing the attention to the marginalised. Through its public announcement of its declared support for the miners in Marikana, the party won popular support in the community not only amongst the miners themselves but also amongst women.

The Marikana massacre was a defining moment in the history of the women in Marikana. It transformed the political dynamics within the community and saw the rise of the newly formed Economic Freedom Fighters. Since the day of the massacre, women in Marikana have engaged in and led protests against the police and the government. Challenging the injustice and dominant hierarchy transformed the traditional roles of women. Women embarked on actions that challenged and demonstrated their dissatisfaction with the ruling government and the ANC. In spite of the women’s short involvement in political and labour struggles, it was largely after the formation of the EFF that an emerging interest in politics amongst the women was witnessed. This interest was sparked by the ill-treatment of women and violence against the entire community in Marikana, which the EFF recognised and spoke out against. Through this, they were able to recognise the daily challenges that women faced at home and in the community and promised to tackle these issues. One of the ways the party sought to tackle these issues was through offering political opportunities to women in the community, who paved the way for gender equality to begin to be introduced.

One of the most noted moments in the political history of Marikana was that following the massacre, the EFF has gained momentum and the ANC witnessed a drop in the ANC votes from 65% to 61% in 2014 (Paret, 2014:2). The activism of the women in this newly formed political party should be analysed within the political context of the social dynamics in Marikana, which is characterised by gender exclusion. The tension between some of the women and the ANC and their treatment under the rule of the political party influenced the resentment and organisation against the set of discriminatory treatment that the women had to endure under its rule. Women affiliated with the EFF campaigned against the rule of the ANC. Since the launch of the EFF in Marikana, women actively participated and campaigned for votes for the party. Although the EFF has only been in existence for a short time, it has created a new
atmosphere and mood that promoted and acknowledged the struggles of the marginalised and less fortunate. It also implemented progressive shifts such as advancement of equal opportunities for both men and women in the political party.

Through their involvement in Sikhala Sonke and in the organisation of the first one year commemoration of the massacre, women advocated for the rights of the ordinary people in society, therefore promoting confidence and assertiveness amongst the miners and women in the community. Before the strike, women rarely achieved political office let alone election to national political careers. The election of Primrose Sonti into parliament informed and motivated the participation of the less privileged and marginalised, especially women. It increased the awareness and understanding of political issues and policies that directly affect and influence their lives.

With its formation, the political party has emphasised the importance of solidarity between women and men against exploitation and injustice both in the workplace and the community. The growing interest in politics has implications for the transformation of gender roles and identity, in terms of women getting access to leadership positions. Through the formation of the EFF, hope for better and new democracy has been restored because of women’ roles as advocates of the EFF. In these roles, women helped breakdown discriminatory traditions of male political supremacy.

The election of Sonti into parliament has brought hope to many in Marikana. It has also strengthened and highlighted the role of women in the community. Primrose is supported and respected by both the men and women and this is one of the noticeable changes that the EFF has brought into this small mining community. Her non-religious affiliation has also meant that there were no ambiguous implications for participation in politics. Women were previously underrepresented and discouraged from participating in politics because of lack of socio-economic structures such as unemployment, illiteracy and the dual burden of taking care of domestic chores and working. This disregard of women in such positions has limited the active involvement of women in politics.

Photograph 6.1 EFF offices in Marikana
The ability of the EFF to show remorse and concern to the miners and the community of Marikana following the massacre is without a doubt one of the reasons that it gained popularity in this community. The political party serves as the official opposition party in the North West province having attained 13.2% of the total votes. It resulted in the birth of an alternative ideology of anti-capitalism that people identified with, especially the less privileged. With the rise of the EFF, women criticised the ANC’s failure to recognise women as an important part of the community. Furthermore, the ANC’s mistreatment promoted a patriarchal institution which sustained the subordination of women. It dictated who could be employed in the community projects, which put migrant women at the bottom of this list. This restricted engagement in economic activities for the women, making them dependent on the men for remittances. The involvement of women in the EFF offered an alternative to these practices and opened up a space where women could fight in everyday community struggles, which defied customs that viewed women as inferior.

By being actively involved in the EFF, women have taken initiative and leading positions which challenge the dominant view of women in mining communities as subordinate, passive and politically unconscious. The involvement of women in
miners’ struggles has then emphasised the role of this activism in challenging gender discrimination. These struggles are a significant part of the wake in political consciousness of the women in Marikana.

6.8 The Marikana Strike

The participation of women in the 2014 miners’ strike emphasised the importance of solidarity between women and men in the workers’ struggles and broader community. It therefore challenged existing structures in the community. These included bringing greater awareness to women’s issues and rights. The participation of women in the strike was a significant opportunity for women to bring greater awareness to gender issues and representation of women in the broader social and political context.

The 2012 labour struggles show that the principles of democratic equality do not necessarily apply to all. The participation of women in the strike opened up an opportunity for women to influence the transformation of gender consciousness and ensure that equal rights and opportunities are promoted. With the extension of the 2014 strike, a significant number of women in the community became involved in mobilising food for the striking miners and the community. The work that was provided by the women during the strike was without any expectation of any form of reward but within the greater need to promote community survival. This solidarity thus highlighted the value of the work performed by women whether in the homes or in the broader community.

The participation of women in the strikes was therefore significant not only for the striking miners but also for the broader community as it demonstrated the strength of women to stand against dominant patriarchal and institutional systems. With continuous participation, this strength grew and created new opportunities which allowed women to broaden their interests and focus on creating sustainable developmental projects. These were created with the sole purpose of sustaining the women, their families and the community. Women were also able to organise and exert their claim by putting gender issues on the broader socio-political agenda. This research therefore argues that the participation of women in the 2012 miners’ strike provided an important tool for women to increase their representation and re-instate their agenda within organisational and social structures.
The solidarity that was created during the 2012 miners’ strike made it possible for miners to sustain the 2014 protected strike for five months. However, the duration of the 2014 strike put a lot of pressure on family structures and relationships between men and women in the community. While some women opted to go back to their rural homesteads to wait out the strike, some of them remained to support the miners. The medical benefits of the miners were suspended during the duration of the five month long strike. That is why women like Noncedo went to the local clinic on behalf of their spouses pretending to be sick so that they could get medication for them. In the face of the strike, women had to use social grant money for their children to buy food and keep the family together. Mining activities were put on hold during the strike. This affected those women who relied on collecting scrap metal in the mines to sell for money. Angelina was also affected by the strike:

No one had money during the strike, so people did not spend on luxury items such fizzy drinks, this made it difficult for me to collect and recycle cans. Since the strike began I have not even managed to fill up 3 sacks because I cannot find the cans (Angelina, 46).

With these ongoing struggles, women mobilised on the principle of organising food for the entire community. Several women, accompanied by their male counterparts, went to various organisations including the University of Johannesburg to mobilise food into the community. Women like Thumeka Magwanqgane, Nomfanelo Jali and Wendy Pretorius, were the leading figures in this plea for support. A few weeks later this initiative drew scores of support from a number of organisations and stakeholders who came out in support of the mining community. It saw organisations such as the University of Johannesburg, Marikana Solidarity Campaign, and Gift of the Givers and the Methodist Church come together to provide relief and support to the community.

Some of the women interviewed for this research were at the forefront of mobilising other women to join in the struggle. Through this mobilisation, they became the driving force of the solidarity. Their bravery in joining the struggles of men at the risk of being labelled and facing resistance from some of the striking miners themselves can therefore be viewed as the real victory. In these roles, women have come to support and defend their male counterparts against unjust and unfair treatment. It was during this time that women exerted their leadership capabilities through development of a
consciousness which showed that women are as strong as their male counterparts. For most of these women, the distressing experience of brutal police violence against their loved ones and their communities influenced their decisions to participate in the miners' struggle.

**Photograph 6.2  Food parcels that were distributed in Marikana**

*Photograph 6.2 Shows the food parcels that were distributed to Marikana*

*Photograph: Taken 20 May 2013.*

**Photograph 6.3 Distribution of the food parcels**
The significant involvement of women in both strikes has resulted in a contribution to the workplace movement, but it also contributed to community survival. It was important in terms of mobilising and raising awareness of the community’s struggles. This resulted in unity amongst the working-class, women and the broader community. The involvement of women in labour movements and political activism has expanded the meaning of their identities as women, wives, sisters, mothers and activists.

However, drawing from the experiences of the women who participated in the strike, the research argues that constitutional advances and democratic principles protect and advance the principles of only a selected few sections of the population in society. Furthermore, the advocacy of gender rights does not necessarily translate into upholding these rights and initiating the promotion of gender equality. As such, the struggles and experiences of women that were observed during the strike and days after the massacre reflect the true struggles in the community. There is therefore a greater need to address these issues if women are to truly reap the true benefits of democracy.
6.9 Conclusion

The Marikana miner strikes of 2012 and 2014 have demonstrated that the existence of women in mining communities cannot be denied or simply swept under the carpet. The organisation and mobilisation of women flourished amidst conflict and despair. It also showed the crucial importance of women in ensuring the survival of their families and community. Though there has been a shift in the traditional domestic roles of women, this paper does not in any way make the assumption that these roles have transformed or are no longer in existence. It, however, argues that there has been a noticeable shift in these domestic roles since the strike, and that this shift was brought about by the dramatic changes in society which opened up a new space which women occupied to demonstrate their agency and contribution in society. It has also revealed the newly found activism of women trying to survive in a masculine environment.
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

This research has examined how and why the women in Marikana participated in the 2012 Marikana strike and how this has impacted their lives. It has investigated the role of women in promoting agency and the movement of women in mining communities in contributing to the history of South African grassroots organisations. Central to this research and the analysis presented in the provided six chapters is a nuanced and balanced analysis that focused on how women understand their agency as well as the ways in which the gender dynamics that exist both within the households and public serve to either facilitate or limit the exercise of this agency.

When focusing on the activism of women, it is also necessary to look at their social surroundings and their historical experiences during the years they have lived in Marikana. Belinda Bozzoli’s (1991) Women of Phokeng which focused on the experiences of migrant women in a small town in Rustenburg, tells us of the rich history of South Africa and how these women’s lives are shaped by and fit into this history. Similar to the three autobiographies presented in this research, the rich autobiographical narratives presented by the Women of Phokeng allows women to tell their stories from their own point of views and in so doing provide a broader syntheses into the agency of women in small towns.

The emphasis of this research was also on the importance of the autobiographies of the individuals in getting a deeper understanding of the women and their participation in community struggles. The autobiographies brought a unique qualitative dimension into the research, they tell of the daily lived experiences and challenges of each woman. Each woman is ordinary and extraordinary in their own kind of way, because each exercises a different kind of agency, one that allows us to trace their lives through their cultural backgrounds, upbringing, daily lived experiences and participation in both the 2012 and 2014 miner strikes.

Some of the women who participated in the research explained that their participation in the miners’ struggles was influenced by the injustice that has been taking place in their society including gender discrimination. For instance, women who have lived in Marikana since the early 1990s have experienced both the repression and democratic
transition process, indicating that issues of high unemployment amongst migrant women and lack of proper services such as water, sanitation and housing were some of the critical issues raising the political profile of the women. The actions of the women were sparked by the events leading to the massacre, including the mistreatment and injustice endured for years in their social environment. This created a sense of agency and opportunity to take action against a dysfunctional labour movement and discriminatory government practises. This further demonstrated that the injustice, discriminatory treatment and everyday lived experiences were frustrating for both the miners and the women in the community. The commonalities of such experiences were crucial in building and sustaining the solidarity that was formed during and after the strike between the women and miners because the strike was not only about earning a decent living wage but involved broad socio-economic and political issues.

It is on the basis of these shared struggles that women in Marikana were able to unite, develop and maintain relationships with the striking miners. Within the context of this research, the participation of women played a significant role in linking the experiences of the miners to the broader community and as a result a better future was restored through the struggle. It resulted in unity that merged the ‘us’ (men or miners) with ‘them’ (women or community).

The Minerals and Petroleum Resources Development Act (MPRDA) discussed in chapter two made a sober and official call to expand equal opportunities for women through their inclusion into occupational mining work. This was drawn from a specific need to incorporate women into mining work, but the framework gave little consideration to the struggles of these women beyond the work place. The framework was crucial in ensuring the incorporation of women into the underground work force, but did not make a distinction between their experiences at home and at work. It failed to ensure a conducive environment in which men and women interact with each other regardless of their gender, employment and class status. It did not acknowledge that the experiences of women in the workplace were affected by their gender status in society. Therefore, a framework that did not include the gender related issues and experiences of women both in the work place and in society could not adequately address the forms of injustice and discrimination experienced by women both in the workplace and in the community.
Chapter six has highlighted the divisions and changes in treatment of women who participated in the strike and asserted themselves by promoting their agency and gender equality. The community of Marikana and some of the early publications on the Marikana strikes were reluctant to shine the spotlight on the activism of these women who selflessly extended their solidarity into fighting for life and justice. This has resulted in a series of tensions between women and some members of the community. At the centre of these tensions are gender dynamics which shape the type of relationship the women have with the men and broader community. Acknowledging the crucial roles played by women whether it be in the households or in the community would mean fully recognising women as an important part of the community and questioning the legitimacy of patriarchal domination.

The active involvement of women in the miners’ struggles resulted in consciousness that took place on four levels: class, gender, society and race. The research has shown that even though the women who participated in the miners’ strike experienced levels of exclusion, the striking miners faced obstacles in mobilising their female counterparts to join in the strike. Gender identity was an important factor in determining the key role players in the work place. The privileges and immunity that was awarded to the women who assisted in ensuring the strikers ate and had warm blankets at night resulted in unity and strong bonds between the working class and the community. The discussion presented in this research highlights women’s agency in community mobilisation and struggles. The active role of some of the women in the 2012 workers’ strike resulted in greater visibility of the struggles of the miners in the work place and at home.

The active participation of women in the strike continued into the 2014 five month protected strike. The majority of the women who participated in the research were the key role players in mobilising fellow women in the community to support striking miners. By mobilising other women to support the struggles of the miners, they were key role players in forming the first women’s organisation in Wonderkop. Their bravery and selfless efforts in supporting the struggles of miners put the women at risk of assault and name calling at the hands of the locals and the police. In these supportive roles, the women have protested outside the courts demanding the release of detained striking miners, buried some of the 34 deceased in their rural homesteads, supported the widows in the Marikana Commission of Inquiry, led strikes against police violence,
poor living conditions, and mobilised food for the striking miners in 2014 during the five
month long strike.

This activism challenges earlier reports on Marikana (see for instance Benya, 2013) which characterises the role played by women in the strike as care and welfare centred. This study has found that there are limitations in the conceptualisation and understanding of the gender consciousness and that women are also a strong instrument for change, capable of standing against mine management, government and longstanding societal norms. The involvement of women in the workplace struggles brings greater awareness to the struggles of the working class not only in the workplace but also at home. Activism such as this highlights the importance of community struggles, something that is often pushed aside when conceptualising and analysing miner struggles. Women’s involvement in workers’ struggles calls for reconsideration of the ‘domestic theory’ discussed in chapter two. Women’s activism outside the home is too often explained in terms of their housework, maternal instincts, care and protective nature. The participation of women in the miners’ strikes from 2012 until 2014 calls into consideration this theory. The activism and commitment of the women has intensified over the years, supporting the miners daily by attending the commission on their behalf and wearing AMCU t-shirts to show their support. This activism has a far more important meaning that goes beyond the women just being wives and mothers. There were a number of factors that encouraged the commitment of the women in the workers’ struggles, such as providing opportunities for skills development, learning and consciousness. The women were able to gain crucial skills such as leadership, negotiation, persuasion and communication and this enabled the growth of self-esteem and confidence of the women activists.

The research also argues that the early experiences and life events that took place in Marikana influenced the women’s ability to be gender conscious. Factors such as gender inequality and discrimination, including male supremacy, precipitated the gender consciousness process and encouraged women to participate in miner struggle. Such power relations were often displayed in their private homes and in society, where the men served as the head of the households and controlled the money. The activism of these women in the miner strike questions the very notion of men as figures of authority. Some of the women interviewed in this research contradict
this notion of men being in control. They explain that they keep the bank card of their spouses and often decide on how much to give their spouses to spend for leisure.

Furthermore, the experiences of women in their own private homes challenges male supremacy in the household. Some of the women explained that when they are not feeling well, their spouses resume domestic duties in the home; they cook and do the washing and take care of the children. However, these experiences differ with each individual. The different experiences and approaches that women adopt are influenced by their social upbringing and context. Also, the generational experiences, social differences and locations often determine how some people react and address certain issues.

The research contributes to a broader understanding of how community struggles produce gender consciousness within the South African social movement context. It also advocates for the creation of spaces for women where they can fully exercise their rights and exert their influence in public debates about gender issues on a broader socio-political context. This research contributes to a broader understanding of the way in which women’s activism in labour movements may promote gender consciousness and independence. But, as demonstrated in chapter six, in spite of the crucial role played by women in both strikes, gender inequality is still an issue; women are still not fully recognised. Their access to resources is still limited. The major challenge facing women in Marikana is being equipped with the necessary skills that make leadership and activism of women in societies a practical and sustainable reality where all women can reap the benefits of these provisions.

Because of time constraints, the research acknowledges that it had its own limitations and was unable to delve more into some of the arising themes. It is therefore clear that in order to understand the broader struggles of women in mining communities one needs to document the in-depth daily experiences of women including their views and attitudes on these issues. The research therefore suggests that in order to fully understand the gender struggles of women in mining communities one needs to thoroughly explore their cultural contexts and the changing nature of their surrounding environment.
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INTERVIEWS

Pseudonyms were used for all the women who were interviewed

Malitsabisa, 34, Unemployed, Wonderkop 7 May 2014
Matsepo, 35, Unemployed, Wonderkop, 7 May 2014
Priscilla, 55, Unemployed, Wonderkop 7 May 2014
Matsapi, 39, Vendor, Wonderkop 7 May 2014
Masihle, 27, Employed, Wonderkop 7 May 2014
Olwethu, 21, Unemployed, Wonderkop 7 May 2014
Nomthandazo, 45, Unemployed, Wonderkop 7 May 2014
Caroline, 28, Vendor, Wonderkop 5 April 2014
Mamsekola, 52, Unemployed, Wonderkop 6 August 2013
Mavis, 52, Unemployed, Nkaneng 7 August 2013
Mazulu, n.a, Unemployed, Nkaneng 6 August 2013
Nomfanelo, 47, Unemployed, Wonderkop 6 August 2013
Noncedo, 32, Unemployed, Nkaneng 6 August 2013
Nonesi, 43, Unemployed, Nkaneng 6 August 2013
Ntebogeng, 28, Unemployed, Wonderkop 6 August 2013
Nozuko, 36, Unemployed, Nkaneng 8 August 2013
Thumela, 47, Employed, Wonderkop 8 August 2013
Sindiswa, 51, Unemployed, Nkaneng 8 August 2013
Kelly, 46, Unemployed, Nkaneng, 6 August 2013
Nompendulo, 39, Employed, Wonderkop 7 August 2013
Nokwakhe, 49, Unemployed, Nkaneng, 8 August 2013
Zukiswa, 39, Unemployed, Wonderkop, 6 August 2013
Wendy, 35, Unemployed, Nkaneng, 6 August 2013
Primrose, 52, Unemployed, Nkaneng, 7 August 2013
Ntombencinci, 34, Unemployed, Nkaneng, 6 August 2013
Nolast, 44, Unemployed, Nkaneng, 6 August 2013
Nomanono, 45, Unemployed, Nkaneng, 7 August 2013
Dora, 43, Unemployed, Wonderkop, 8 August 2013
Appendix 1: Solidarity Letter to the Marikana Widows and Families from Women in Durham, UK
To the Marikana Widows and Families

Please accept this small gift to help you in your struggle for justice.

We are a mining community in the North of England. A hundred years ago we were the biggest coalfield in the world with 250,000 miners. In 1984 we had a long strike to save our coal industry. We lost. All the mines closed down and we still suffer to this day.

We saw your film ‘Miners Shot Down’ and listened to Margaret Renn talk about the Marikana widows. We can see so many similarities between your struggle and ours. We remember how important it was for us in our year long strike to get letters of support and money to feed our families.

Perhaps the greatest similarity is the way we women became activists and learned much about politics and the ways the state can work in the interests of the owners and not working people.

Women involved in the 1984 Miners’ Strike made this collection for you.

In memory of the 1984 Miners Strike, families march in Durham, 12 July 2014

Our best wishes

In solidarity

Friends in Durham, UK
Appendix 2: Sample of the Women in Marikana Survey conducted in September 2013 in Nkaneng and Wonderkop.
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Name of Field worker: 

Checked by Researcher: 

**PARTICULARS OF VISITS**

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<th>Time Ended</th>
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</table>

Complete after last visit (Mark appropriate box with “X”)  

1 Interview Completed  
2 Participant was unavailable  
3 Participant refused to participate/ provide reason:
Hello my name is ________________ I am a student at the University of Johannesburg, I am conducting my research on women around Marikana.

This survey is conducted in both Wonderkop and Nkaneng. The purpose of the survey is to collect information about women who live in the selected areas and their living conditions and opinions. This is part of a Master's project.

We want to interview one woman from this house. This woman is chosen because the research specifically focuses on women around the area and their living conditions. The information is confidential, it will only be used for research purposes and will not be shared with anyone.

Demographic Information

1. **Date of Birth:**

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2. **Residence:** Please indicate how many people live in your household (include yourself): __________________

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</tbody>
</table>
3. Occupation status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>3.1 What is your occupation status</th>
<th>3.2 If employed please specify</th>
<th>3.3 Please specify if 3.1 is other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Employed</td>
<td>1. Lonmin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Unemployed</td>
<td>2. Other mine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Student/school</td>
<td>3. Receiving regular paid wage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Pensioner</td>
<td>4. Other/specify</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. 1 In which year and month did you move to Marikana?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month e.g May</th>
<th>Year e.g 2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4.2 What was the reason that made you move to Marikana?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>reason</th>
<th>reason</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
5. What is the highest Level of Education that you have completed? (Mark the appropriate box with “X”)

1. No formal education
2. Primary School (Grade1-7/sub A std5)
3. Junior Secondary School (Grade8-9/std6-7)
4. High School (Grade 10-12/std8-10)
5. Matric Passed
6. Certificate
7. Diploma
8. University Degree
9. Postgraduate Degree

6. Your Marital Status:

1. Single
2. Married
3. Polygamous marriage
4. Living together as (boyfriend/girlfriend) but not married
5. Divorced
6. Separated
7. Widow(er)

SECTION B. RELATIONSHIPS AND EXTENDED FAMILY
This section contains statements about the nature of your relationship and extended family. Please respond by marking “X” in the appropriate box that best describes your personal relationship.

7. Relationship:

Are you married to anyone who lives in the same household?

Are you married to anyone who does not live in the same household?

Do you have a boyfriend living in the same household?

Do you have a boyfriend that does not live in the same household?

8. How Many Children do you have? (Indicate by writing down the appropriate number)
SECTION C. SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

9. What type of dwelling do you live in? (Mark the appropriate box with “X”)

1. House or brick structure on a stand or yard
2. House/room in a backyard
3. Informal dwelling/shack in backyard
4. Informal dwelling/shack in informal settlement/NOT in backyard
5. Room/ NOT in backyard but on shared property
6. Shack not in backyard but on shared property
7. Other/specify

9.1 Access to Drinking Water

I mainly drink water from: (Mark the appropriate box with “X”)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tap in house/room/shack</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plot/Yard/Stand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottled water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tap from elsewhere</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/specify:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9.2 **Access to Electricity**

**I have Electricity:** (Mark appropriate box with “X”)

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.3 **Access to Sanitation** (Mark appropriate box with “X”)

**I Have A:**

<p>| |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flushing Toilet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long drop/pit Toilet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical Toilet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bucket toilet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/specify</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9.4 How many meals do you have a day? (Mark appropriate box with “X”)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One meal a day</th>
<th>More than one meal a day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>More than two meals a day</th>
<th>No meal at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>
SECTION D. Marikana Information

10. Did anyone you know participate in the 2012 Lonmin strike? (including yourself)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I participated in the strike</th>
<th>My friends/neighbor participated in the strike</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A member of my household participated in the strike/specify</th>
<th>Other/Specify</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I do not know anyone who participated in the strike</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10.1 What are your views on the 2012 Lonmin Strike?

11. Did you vote in the 2011 Election?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
11.2 Which political party did you vote for in the 2011 Election? (Mark appropriate box with “X”)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANC</th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>UDM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>IFP</td>
<td>PAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPE</td>
<td>Other/ specify</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11.2 Are you planning to vote in the upcoming elections?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th></th>
<th>No</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I do not know</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11.3 If no specify______________________________

11.4 Which Political Party do you plan to vote for?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANC</th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>UDM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>EFF</td>
<td>IFP</td>
<td>PAC</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>COPE</td>
<td>Other/ specify</td>
<td>AGANG</td>
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12 Would you be interested in participating in an in-depth interview? I am very grateful to be allowed the opportunity to talk to you, will you be interested in participating in a follow-up interview?

Yes

No
Appendix 3: Appeal Letter of the Feed the hungry in Marikana Campaign
Greetings

We are Master’s students from the University of Johannesburg conducting independent research projects in the Rustenburg Platinum mining communities. Mineworkers of the Rustenburg Platinum Belt are currently engaged in the longest industrial action in the history of post-apartheid South Africa, in order to gain a living wage. The lack of income for over three months has not only affected the striking mineworkers, but also the women and children living in the informal settlements at Marikana. For many of the families in the area, having two meals a day is a luxury. The height of desperation for food and survival is to an extent that women of this community are forced to depend on wild spinach gathered in the area, to cook using firewood outside their shacks.

As socially conscious, early career researchers we simply could not ignore the situation of poverty and hunger unfolding in front of our eyes. We are making an urgent appeal to everyone and anyone, organisations and individuals alike, to lend a helping hand by donating food and toiletries. The most urgent of these basic needs are the following:

- Starch Food (Mealie-meal, Rice, Flour)
- Canned Food (Pilchards, Corned Meat, Baked Beans, Mixed Veggies)
- Soup
- Teabags and Sugar
- Cooking Oil
- Salt
- Sunlight Bar Soaps
- Petroleum Jelly (Vaseline)
- Toothpaste
- Deodorants
- Sanitary Towels

Any of these items or more which you or your organisation can donate would be most appreciated by workers and their families who are striking for a living wage.

Please bring any of these items to **House 4 at the Research Village, Bunting Road Campus, University of Johannesburg**. Items should arrive by 12.00pm on Friday the 9th of May 2014, so that we can take them to Marikana on Saturday the 10th of May 2014.

Yours Sincerely,

Ms Boitumelo Maruping and Ms Bridget Ndibongo.

or further inquiries please contact the following:

Boitumelo Maruping                                                Bridget Ndibongo
Appendix 4: Constitution of Sikhala Sonke
CONSTITUTION

1. Sikhala Sonke

1.1 The organisation that is constituted will be called Sikhala Sonke

1.2 Its shortened name will be known as SS

1.3 Body corporate

The organisation shall:

Exist as a separate body from its members and office bearers

Exist, irrespective of membership changes and new office bearers assuming the office
Collectively share the responsibilities and daily duties conducted within the organisation

Ensure the entire community benefits from the project, irrespective of social identity and socio-political standing

Accountable, fair and honest and fulfil its duties selflessly

2. Objectives

(a) The organisation’s main objectives are to: Empower women and children in the community through skills training, community development projects such as farming, teaching, sewing and starting a vegetable garden and job creation.

(b) The organisation’s secondary objectives will be to: To build continuous sustainable livelihood through the establishment of three programmes namely: Establishing a crèche in Wonderkop for children; farming of vegetables to be sold to the public, breeding pigs and chickens, to be later sold to the community.

(c) The organisation will also like to foster close working relations various sectors, that will assist towards the growth of the organisation

3. Income and Property

3.1 The organisation will keep a record of everything it owns and it sells.

3.2 The organisation may not give any of its money or property to its members or office bearers. The only time it can do this is when it pays for work that a member or office bearer has done for the organisation. The payment must be a reasonable amount for the work that has been done and it must be shared equally amongst all the working members, irrespective of their education background.

3.3 A member of the organisation can only get money back from the organisation for expenses that she or he has paid for or on behalf of the organisation.
3.4 Members or office bearers of the organisation do not have rights over things that belong to the organisation.
4. Membership and General Meetings

4.1 Membership of the organisation will be determined by the management committee. The management committee has the right to say no.
4.2 Members of the organisation must pay an annual joining fee of R 750, attending its two weekly meetings. At the annual general meeting members exercise their right to determine the policy of the organisation and the way forward. There will be no refund in the instance where a member of the organisation resigns for whatever reason.
4.3 All members of the organisation, irrespective of their position within the organisation have a duty to oblige to the rules and regulations of the organisation.

5. Management

5.1 An executive committee will manage the organisation. The executive committee will be made up of not less than 5 members. They are the office bearers of the organisation.
5.2 Office bearers will serve for one year, but they can stand for re-election for another term in office after that. Depending on what kind of services they give to the organisation, they can stand for re-election into office again and again. This is so long as their services are needed and they are ready to give their services.
5.3 If a member of the executive committee does not attend three committee meetings in a row, without having applied for and obtaining leave of absence from the executive committee, then the executive committee will find a new member to take that person’s place.
5.4 The executive committee will meet at least twice a month. More than half of members need to be at the meeting to make decisions that are allowed to be carried forward. This constitutes a quorum.
5.5 Minutes will be taken at every meeting to record the management committee’s decisions. The minutes of each meeting will be given to executive committee members at least two weeks before the next meeting. The minutes shall be confirmed as a true record of proceedings, by the next meeting of the organisation’s committee, and shall thereafter be signed to the secretary.
5.6 The organisation has the right to form sub-committees. The decisions that sub-committees take must be given to the executive committee. The executive committee must decide whether to agree on them or not at its next meeting. This meeting should take place soon after the sub-committee’s meeting. By agreeing to decisions the management committee ratifies them.
5.7 All members of the organisation have to abide by decisions that are taken by the executive committee.

6. Powers of the organisation

The executive committee may take on the power and authority that it believes it needs to be able to achieve the objectives that are stated in point number 2 of this constitution. Its activities must abide by the law.
6.1 The executive committee has the power and authority to raise funds or to invite and receive contributions.
6.2 The executive committee does, however, have the power to buy, hire or exchange for any property that it needs to achieve its objectives, provided it has consulted all the members of the organisation first.
6.3 The management committee has the right to make by-laws for proper management, including procedure for application, approval and termination of membership.
6.4 Organisations will decide on the powers and functions of office bearers.
6.5 Organisation will also resolve arising conflict/ problem/ quarrel between members of the organisation.
7. Meetings and procedures of the committee

7.1 The executive committee must hold at least two ordinary meetings each year.
7.2 The chairperson, or two members of the committee, can call a special meeting if they want to. But they must let the other organisation’s members know the date of the proposed meeting not less than 10 days before it is due to take place. They must also tell the other members of the committee which issues will be discussed at the meeting. If, however, one of the matters to be discussed is to appoint a new management committee member, then those calling the meeting must give the other committee members not less than 30 days notice.
7.3 The chairperson shall act as the chairperson of the organisation’s committee. If the chairperson does not attend a meeting, then members of the committee who are present choose which one of them will chair that meeting. This must be done before the meeting starts.
7.4 There shall be a quorum whenever such a meeting is held.
7.5 When necessary, the management committee will vote on issues. If the votes are equal on an issue, then the chairperson has either a second or a deciding vote.
7.6 Minutes of all meetings must be kept safely and always be on hand for members to consult.
7.7 If the management committee thinks it is necessary, then it can decide to set up one or more subcommittees.

It may decide to do this to get some work done quickly. Or it may want a subcommittee to do an inquiry, for example. There must be at least three people on a sub-committee.

The sub-committee must report back to the management committee on its activities. It should do this regularly.

8. Annual general meetings

The annual general meeting must be held once every year, towards the end of the organisation’s financial year.

The organisation should deal with the following business, amongst others, at its annual general meeting:

- Agree to the items to be discussed on the agenda.
- Write down who is there and who has sent apologies because they cannot attend.
- Read and confirm the previous meeting’s minutes with matters arising.
- Chairperson’s report.
- Treasurer’s report.
- Changes to the constitution that members may want to make.
- Elect new office bearers.
- General.
- Close the meeting.

9. Finance

9.1 A treasure shall be appointed at the annual general meeting. Her duty is to check on the finances of the organisation.
9.2 The treasurer’s job is to control the day to day finances of the organisation. The treasurer shall arrange for all funds to be put into a bank account in the name of the organisation. The treasurer must also keep proper records of all the finances and transactions made.
9.3 Whenever funds are taken out of the bank account, the chairperson and at least two other members of the organisation must sign the withdrawal or cheque.
9.4 The financial year of the organisation ends on **31 April 2015**
9.5 The organisation’s accounting records and reports must be ready and presented to the entire organisation and independent auditor within six months after the financial year end.
9.6 If the organisation has funds that can be invested, the funds may only be invested with registered financial institutions. These institutions are listed in Section 1 of the Financial Institutions (Investment of Funds) Act, 1984. Or the organisation can get securities that are listed on a licensed stock exchange as set out in the Stock Exchange Control Act, 1985. The organisation can consult with the banks to seek advice on the best way to look after its funds.

**10. Changes to the constitution**

10.1 The constitution can be changed by a resolution. The resolution has to be agreed upon and passed by not less than three thirds of the members who are at the annual general meeting or special general meeting. Members must vote at this meeting to change the constitution.
10.2 Three thirds of the members shall be present at a meeting before a decision to change the constitution is taken. Any annual general meeting may vote upon such a notion, if the details of the changes are set out in the notice referred to in 7.3
10.3 A written notice must go out not less than ten days before the meeting at which the changes to the constitution are going to be proposed. The notice must indicate the proposed changes to the constitution that will be discussed at the meeting.
10.4 No amendments may be made which would have the effect of making the organisation cease to exist.

**11. Dissolution/Winding-up**

11.1 The organisation exists independently of its members as such that it may not close down even if two-thirds of the members present and voting at a meeting convened for the purpose of considering such matter, are in favour of closing down.
11.2 In such instances the remaining members may elect new executives members and continue with the daily operations and duties of the organisation.
11.3 In instances where the organisation will be dissolved, the balance of the funds and physical objects, will then be transferred to its sister organisation, Bokfontein Development Forum, which runs similar projects as Sikhala Sonke.

This constitution was approved and accepted by members of—SIKHALA SONKE-------------

At a special (general) meeting held on 12 January 2014

The Constitution was approved and accepted by members of Sikhala Sonke

SHASHA MOTHLASEDI

WENDY PRETORIUS

THULISILE MKHOTHELI
MAZULU SILANDANI
NOMANONO MHLANA
NOMANESI ZWEZWE
MAVIS RAWUKA
NOTHOBILE SARILI
NOMANDLA NDLALANA

At A general Meeting Held on the 12 January 2012

Nokulunga Primrose Sonti                                           Thumeka Magwangqana
Chairperson                                            Secretary
PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 1: Killing site (koppie) where 34 miners were gunned down by the police on 16 August 2012.
Photograph 2: Some of the women who participated in the 2012 miner strike.

Photograph 3: A typical yard in Nkaneng informal settlement.
Photograph 4: Formal House at Wonderkop.

Photograph 5: A Mozambique woman in her stall at Wonderkop.
Photograph 6: One of the women who has been living in Marikana for over 20 years in her two room shack.

Photograph 7: Dumping site near the road in Nkaneng.
Photograph 8: Dumping area near the road in Nkaneng.

Photograph 9: A road inside Nkaneng informal settlement.
Photograph 10: Tap stands dry without any water in Nkaneng informal settlement.

Photograph 11: Toilet in Nkaneng informal settlement used by more than four families.

Photograph 14: Group of Women in Marikana wearing EFF t-shirts.