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NARRATIVES OF IMMIGRANT MUSLIM WOMEN IN FORDSBURG



UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG

A minor dissertation submitted in *partial fulfilment* of the requirements for the award of the degree of Masters of Arts in Community-based Counselling Psychology

Faculty of Humanities

University of the Witwatersrand

2018

By

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole or any part for the award of any degree. It is now being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in Community-based Counselling Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. I declare that this is my unaided work. Each significant contribution to this report has been acknowledged through the use of citations and references.



Signature: _____ Date: _____2019/04/26_____

Word Count: 34 311

Acknowledgements

First & foremost, I would like to thank my God, Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Your teachings of the five Human Values have kept me grounded and constantly working towards “Love All. Serve All”.

I would like to thank all the women who agreed to be a part of this study. Their contributions and sharing of their stories have been incredibly rewarding. Without their participation, this study would not have been possible.

I would like to thank my phenomenal supervisor, Professor Hugo Canham for his extensive insight. His constant advice has helped me tremendously in the completion of my study. I am tremendously grateful for his drive and patience he has shown to me over the years with regards to my study as well as development as a professional. Thank you for all that you have done and continue to do.

I am extremely grateful for my family for their constant support throughout my life. Their support in every manner, has enabled me to reach greater heights that was beyond my greatest dreams. Thank you to my parents, Roshini Moodley & Vasuthaven Moodley, for their continued belief and investment in me and my education. I would not have been able to achieve this without your continued support in this regard. You both are my biggest supporters in an emotional, mental, physical and financial manner. I cannot express how grateful I am to you both. Thank you to my sister and brother, Preshika Moodley and Jasveer Moodley, for their support and “keeping it real” with me when I needed to step out of the academic mental world.

A special thanks to my fiancée, without whom I would not have been able to complete this study. Thank you, Shaun Naidoo, for all that you have done and continued to do for me.

Thank you for encouraging me and motivating me to stay focused on the goal; for being a constant support and having confidence in me when I didn't; for all the emotional and mental support when times were tough. You are truly my strength and inspiration. Your insights are truly appreciated. Thank you for embarking on this journey of life with me.

Abstract

The narratives of immigrant Muslim women in Fordsburg are depicted through multiple lenses in this study. The research was primarily focused on exploring the sense of belonging that this subaltern community felt whilst residing and working in Fordsburg. Fordsburg is constituted of a unique historical, political, economic, social and cultural background which immigrant Muslim women constantly navigate within. The intersectionality of these constructs provides a unique sense of place upon which they can shape their identities. This report sets to explore the narratives that immigrant Muslim women tell within the space of Fordsburg. These narratives engage with various themes around sense of belonging, reading silence in narratives, feminism, xenophobia and exploitation. Based on these narratives, the study seeks to determine how immigrant Muslim women narrate the experience of the space of Fordsburg in relation to their home country. Methods of accessing this subaltern narrative were explored including the manner in which reading of silences was analysed as an alternative and important form of communication. It also analyses how these women gain a sense of self which is related to sense of place and how it plays out in terms of sense of belonging. Lastly, it explores the interface of the researcher in working with the subaltern community. Findings suggest that sense of place is intimately linked to sense of belonging, which is integral in determining one's sense of self. The narratives are found to be a method in which the subaltern community can be heard and is able to speak.

Keywords: *Narratives, Immigrant, Muslim, Women, Fordsburg, Belonging, Subaltern*

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1. Introduction

The research studied the narratives of immigrant Muslim women within the context of Fordsburg. It explored the narratives through multiple lenses of the various theories and literature that was engaged with. It also focused on the sense of belonging and alienation that immigrant women reportedly experienced within the space of Fordsburg, while exploring the ways that sense of self was constructed in relation to sense of place in Fordsburg. This was of interest to the study as it was anticipated that the country of origin of the immigrant Muslim women was important in constructing their identities and that their new home would also contribute to their sense of self. It also highlighted the interface of the researcher with subaltern communities in Fordsburg which uncovered various factors when using the narrative method.

The outline of this report starts with the rationale for this research. It proceeds to elaborate on the purpose for the study being conducted by stating the research aims and questions that will be posed. It then provides the background of Fordsburg and of the Muslim people who live there. This is followed by the literature review which explores the relevant literature that seeks to contextualize the present study. The theoretical framework chapter then introduces various theories that are relevant to the study. Following this is the research methodology chapter which includes the constitutive value of narratives and the ontology of qualitative research. It additionally poses the research aims and questions, as well as research design elements such as the sample, and data collection procedures. Following this is the data analysis approach which delves into the data and ethical considerations that were grappled with in this study. This chapter is then concluded with the self-reflexivity section, including a reflective piece discussing the content and process of the research as experienced by the researcher. The subsequent chapter details the findings and discussion of the research which

endeavours to link themes within the literature review to the emergent themes from the research. The report is then concluded with the discussion of limitations of the research as well as future recommendations.

1.1 Rationale

The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which the immigrant Muslim women's sense of self is constructed by sense of place. According to Ballard (2004), space and social differences are intimately related. For this reason, the research sought to study the way immigrant Muslim women made sense of their space in light of the social difference they experienced upon arrival in their new country and how this was depicted in their narratives. Their choice of area of residence in a new country was of interest to the study as this could be the space they mostly resonate with in terms of class, opportunities, race, language and culture. This space could be where immigrants felt most comfortable due to its resemblance of their country of origin. The researcher was interested in understanding the ways immigrant Muslim women were welcomed and rejected by local communities in their daily interaction within their place of residence. This additionally highlighted the way subaltern communities conducted their lives and navigated through the space.

Given how under explored immigrant Muslims on the African continent are, it was particularly important for the researcher to listen and account for their stories. The study sought to understand their narratives in relation to their country of origin and their current area of residence. Life stories were of interest as these constructed their sense of personhood. Immigrant stories shed light on the way they live within South African society and how they navigate the landscape. With immigration rates having escalated since the beginning of democracy (Posel, 2004), exploring the quality of belonging in post-apartheid South Africa is integral in understanding the narratives of immigrants. Ballard (2004) also notes that white

South Africans have the expectation that immigrants in South Africa were to assimilate into local ways of being.

The purpose of this study was to explore the ways immigrants navigate their fit into the nation, to the local ways, and whether these norms were congruent with their core beliefs. This was more important because:

> As Muslim communities continue to grow in non-Muslim majority countries, and issues of identity and belonging only become more salient, it is imperative to understand more fully the intersection of demographics, media and attitudes towards Muslims and Islam (Ogan, Willnat, Pennington & Bashir, 2013, p. 29).

Unlike Ogan et al., (2013), this study did not look at the attitudes towards Muslim immigrants, but rather focused on the narratives of their own experiences. A gendered lens was used to highlight the reported experience of Muslim women within their communities. For Puwar (2004), the exploration of the positioning of women and minority groups in relation to their daily occupation of space "has not been granted the attention it deserves" (Puwar, 2004, p. 8). It has also been found that oral accounts of Muslim women regarding their own lives have been a largely missing body of knowledge. It is as though they are hidden from all historical accounts (Badran, 2006). This sought to highlight an important aspect of the silence around the voice of a subaltern community and explored their ability to speak within the public sphere. The study sought to fill the missing accounts of Muslim women by requesting immigrant Muslim women to tell their stories and actively listen to the voice of their subaltern nature. This highlighted the positionality of women in relation to their navigation of space in Fordsburg. Given the pressure for immigrants to work, the roles of Muslim women who were not home bound were of interest to the study therefore women in

the workplace were sought. This interest was focused on the way women constructed and told their narratives in this space and the way they governed their navigation of the space. Being the minority and subaltern group in the Islamic community (Badran, 2006), the study facilitated a space for immigrant Muslim women to narrate their life stories and the aspects of their lives that they deemed important and necessary to tell. In addition, it facilitated the active listening of their stories, the reading of silences and ability of subalterns to speak. Minority is not necessarily a numerical attribute but one related to power in the valorisation of males within the Muslim religion (Badran, 2006). Moreover, their status as immigrants also consigns them to minority status when understood in relation to citizens of the host country. Furthermore, the way their sense of self is defined and possibly altered post-immigration, was of interest to this study. This thesis contributes to this body of immigrant and feminist literature by exploring how immigrant Muslim women make meaning of their sense of self in the immigration context of Fordsburg. The aims of the research are to understand how immigrant Muslim women experience of the space of Fordsburg in relation to their home country. It is additionally aimed at exploring the way immigrant Muslim women narrate their experiences of sense of self and sense of belonging in Fordsburg. This will add to the largely hidden accounts of women's migration process within Fordsburg and South Africa (Hiralal, 2017). This migration process will also locate the analysis at the intersection of identity, belonging, agency, employment and livelihood within Fordsburg. Because working class Muslim immigrant women are a subaltern group, this study contributes to surfacing their lives as residents of the city. Below, the research questions and research aims for the study are listed.

1.2 Research Questions

1. How do immigrant Muslim women narrate their experience of the space of Fordsburg in relation to their home country?
2. How do the narratives of immigrant Muslim women convey a sense of belonging in Fordsburg?
3. To what extent is their sense of self constructed by their sense of place in Fordsburg?
4. How does narrative research unfold when a researcher works within a subaltern community?

1.3 Research Aims

1. To understand how immigrant Muslim women report the experience of the space of Fordsburg in relation to their home country.
2. To explore how Muslim women narrate the experience a sense of self and belonging in Fordsburg.
3. To understand how narrative research unfolds when the researcher works with a subaltern community

1.4 Background: Muslims in Fordsburg

The first wave of Indian Muslims to have arrived in South Africa was in 1653, with the second wave from 1860 onwards, as they took up work as indentured labourers and traders (Hassan, 2011). These immigrants were predominantly from the west coast of India and some of these immigrants eventually were located in Fordsburg. This is elaborated on below. The Muslim community was firmly established in the 1960s in South Africa. Indian Muslims constitute 42% whereas Black African Muslims constitute 11.4 % of South Africa's Muslim population (Lehohla, 2012). According to the Lehohla (2012), Islamic communities

in South Africa constitute 1.46% of the population. Islam is a minority religion when compared to other religious affiliations in South Africa (Vahed, 2000).

Fordsburg is Region 8 within the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality (Mahomed, 2007). After the arrival of Indian people in British Colonial SA in 1860, the government forced these labourers to stay in an Indian location which is now known as Newtown (Mahomed, 2007). Newtown did not meet the requirements for healthy sanitation and living conditions in 1887, and as a result, was affected by the bubonic plague, forcing residents to be relocated to Klipspruit where an emergency camp was set up (Mahomed, 2007). The sanitation of Klipspruit was also questioned as it was located next to a sewerage plant. This slum was deliberately burnt down due to the sanitary issues (Sadouni, 2013). Due to this relocation of the Indian community, "small pockets of Indian residences were thus created on the fringes of the suburbs" (Mahomed, 2007, p. 74), including that of Fordsburg where Indian families subsequently maintained their residence. Fordsburg was established in 1888 and is among one of the oldest suburbs in Johannesburg (Mahomed, 2007). During the early 1880s, Fordsburg had initially been established specifically for white miners (Sadouni, 2013). By the 1970s, Fordsburg was described as "a landscape of streets, yards, balconies and doorways; no gardens, no river, no kopjes, no mealie fields" (Essop, 1978, p.20).

Indians within the Fordsburg region gradually started creating a sense of belonging based on common origins, ethnicity and similar religions. The 1996 census indicated that Muslims were numbered at approximately five hundred thousand, out of the population of forty million in South Africa at the time (Vahed, 2000). The concentration of people of Indian origin in the area transformed it into a place that held onto its strong Indian character (Mahomed, 2007). The building of schools, praying facilities and Indian cinemas within Fordsburg was evidence of the transformation of Fordsburg into a predominantly Indian enclave (Mahomed, 2007). Since then, Fordsburg has always been associated with Indians, as

a place of residence and business. Oriental Plaza, a mall built in Fordsburg in the 1970s, worked as a symbolic representation of Indian Muslims in the community and the growth of their urban engagement (Sadouni, 2013).

In the early 1900s, Fordsburg was constituted by a multicultural character which included English, Afrikaans, Indian, Lebanese, Jewish and Chinese groups (Mahomed, 2007). During the apartheid period, the government passed the Group Areas Act in which the city of Johannesburg was declared a white area (Sadouni, 2013). Therefore, the Act changed the initially diverse character of Fordsburg (Sadouni, 2013). The 1950s saw the forced removal of people to other racial ghettos in Gauteng (Sadouni, 2013). However, some of the residents of Fordsburg rejected the apartheid laws by avoiding the relocation to the newly established Indian areas through the use of political strategies (Sadouni, 2013). Therefore, Indian's managed to firmly establish their presence in Johannesburg. Since South Africa's transition to democracy, Fordsburg has received high numbers of Indian, Pakistani and Bengali immigrants (Mahomed, 2007). Their countries of origin have always been characterized by political instability and tension, famine, unemployment (Hiralal, 2017). However, Mahomed (2007) reports that these groups are peaceful in their shared space of residence and work in Fordsburg. The draw card for Bengali and Pakistani immigrants to settle in Fordsburg is said to be due to the shared religious beliefs, language and customs with the inhabitants of the area (Mahomed, 2007). This resulted in the creation of an ethnic enclave of Fordsburg which is identified with the Indian community. More recent arrivals to Fordsburg have included Muslims from countries on the African continent, most of which are from Somalia, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Nigeria (Sadouni, 2009; Hiralal, 2017). Sadouni (2009) & Crush (1999) attributes their movement to South Africa as having been a result of the civil war waging in Somalia and Mozambique. Additional reasons for migration could be famine, poverty and unemployment experienced in their home country. South Africa provides a

livelihood which is more economically and politically stable in comparison (Hiralal, 2017). Malawians entered South Africa due to the recruitment of immigrants within South African mines (Crush, 1999). In the past few decades, the Islamic community has grown and established educational institutions and centres for training within Fordsburg (Haron, 2003).



Fig1. Geographic Location of Fordsburg highlighted in Green (GCRO GIS Viewer, 2017)

2. Literature Review

This section explores various studies conducted on exploring the spaces in which immigrants construct and experience their sense of belonging. The concepts of xenophobia and Islamophobia are briefly discussed to depict possible challenges faced. It then goes onto explore Muslim women within their communities and navigates the gendered role of Muslim women as deemed by their religion. The following section reviews the migration of the lower to middle class to South Africa and explores other studies that have documented this. Thereafter, it explores the legal status of residency within South Africa and exploitation of immigrants within sectors of the economy.

2.1 Space

Over time, an established occupancy is formed for a specific space. These established occupants are considered as being the bodies that have the right to belong in that space, whilst other bodies who do not fit the status quo for the space are labelled as trespassers (Puwar, 2004). For Puwar (2004, p. 32), “It is by means of the body that space is perceived, lived and produced”. This study is interested in space as a social phenomenon. Here then, space is socially constituted. Puwar (2004) claims that space is not a fixed entity and has an affinity for changing. This change is based on factors that are inflicted upon it, and on how open it may be to the changes that occur to it. The transformative nature of the spaces is illuminated when the historically excluded groups from specific spaces are then included (Puwar, 2004). This transformation in the space guides us in exploring the ideals of the constituents of a national space as can be done in the national space of South Africa (Puwar, 2004).

2.1.1 Immigrants in new spaces

Aronson and Mills (1959) argued that those who go to great lengths to attain a goal, will value it more than individuals who don't put effort into attaining their goals. Therefore, it could be that immigrants value their ability to have arrived in the new country due to the great lengths to which they went to attain it. This highlights the agency of immigrants which was considered as integral to recognising their efforts in entering the new space and making the choice of living in it. Decisions that are made by immigrants to leave their country of origin and move elsewhere are complex and may be influenced by multiple factors. Immigrants consider various factors, including the socio-economic and political environment of the new country (Taran, 2000). These factors act as buffers to the reasons of their move including survival, protection, general well-being (Taran, 2000). Immigrants have to negotiate the options of countries, conditions within countries, ease of travel, family and ethnic ties, as well as career development (Taran, 2000). In addition to this, immigrants have to employ coping strategies in the new country upon arrival in order to deal better with the new space. These coping strategies include "individual values, connections, personal development, distractions and help-seeking" (Kuo, 2013, p. 23).

A person's sense of self greatly depends on their sense of place – this relationship provides a basis for the reason for which people construct boundary maintenance of the space they occupy with access of outsiders being regulated (Yuval-Davis, 2006a). People's belonging to a space empowers them to claim the space, to be able to control access to outsiders from that space; and, by virtue of shunning or giving access to outsiders, a new sense of identity is created because of this spatial dynamic (Ballard, 2004). The space takes on an identity of its own, which new arrivals accept, reject or negotiate once associated with that space. In addition, individuals whose characteristics are congruent with the values of the

space, find themselves drawn to the space and desire to be accepted into it. For instance, spaces with religious tolerance might attract people who belong to minority religions.

Immigrant communities are perceived by the host country as belonging to their countries of origin. However, their decision to immigrate may be because they lacked a sense of belonging in their countries of origin. This could be due to the experience of economic marginalisation experienced in their country of origin. However, host countries, such as South Africa, might be hostile towards immigrants and as a result immigrants might not experience a sense of belonging in their host country for various reasons (Settles, 2001). As a result, immigrants tend to gather in enclaves that assist in the re-creation of original values of their culture and country, which then provides security due to shared values and language within that enclave (Settles, 2001). However, that does not delegitimize the sense of belonging that some immigrants do experience. Within the space of Fordsburg, it is a belief that immigrant Muslim women have a particular set of values and beliefs from their country of origin. This set of values and beliefs may be different to that of the new country of residence. Due to the difference in values, it may result in the discrimination of them within the new space (Aroian, Katz, & Kulwicki, 2006). The discrimination and/or ease of belonging within a community setting is important to consider when exploring the belonging or alienation that immigrant's feel within that space. The subset of immigrant Muslim women can be examined more intricately when considering their race. It is found that African Muslim women may experience alienation on multiple levels due to their race. The African Muslim community might experience tension due to their race, religion and occupations in predominantly Indian occupied spaces such as that of Fordsburg (Daniel, Southall & Lutchman, 2005). According to Daniel et al., (2005), African Muslim's feel that they face more difficulties than their other racial Muslim groups in South Africa due to the limited availability of resources they have access to within African communities.

Ahmed (1999) says the narratives of migration should be treated as a metaphor in which the experience of dislocation from home may catalyse the reaction of many homes being produced. She describes home as not being a particular place, but rather a location in which one feels secure (Ahmed, 1999). This secure location could be in between homes for migrants and not necessarily at the fixed points of departure and arrival. A factor that may be important could be the journey that creates the space for belonging. In this, the home is considered the space from which one has originated but not in which one has to remain (Ahmed, 1999). Home can be a concept of community characteristics rather than the actual house that people have lived in previously (Settles, 2001). Therefore, the concept of home is different for different people (Settles, 2001). This was important to consider when studying immigrants in relation to the way they locate themselves and their sense of Fordsburg as home as well as how this could affect their sense of self within the space.

2.1.2 Xenophobia

Ballard (2004) supports the claim that is held by communities in which people who occupied space first belong to that space. This means that a newcomer's experience is fraught with censure in the new environment that they enter (Ballard, 2004). The claim to being indigenous to a space in relation to the arrival of immigrants brings about its own set of norms that both the current residents assimilate to and newcomers are expected to adopt. However, immigrants bring with them the norms of their country of origin into their new country of immigration. Dependent on the community context, there are generally differences between the norms of the indigenous people or dominant groups and the immigrants that occupy the same place. This claim does not just allude to the fact that they are outsiders, but when indigenous communities explicitly invoke their sense of belonging, newcomers are presented as outsiders who do not belong in the same way. This concept is integral towards

understanding the sense of place for groups of people and what it means for their livelihood within that space.

The presentation of immigrants as outsiders may foster a sense of an underlying xenophobia. This had been defined as the fear or hatred of foreigners that may be present within a community (Harris, 2002). Whitaker (2005) explains that xenophobia may stem from the application of the elite ideal to members that belong to that community based on their citizenship by birth. If people are perceived as not belonging to this ideal, then fear and hatred are inflicted upon them by some of those who belong. This then enables the behaviour to exclude groups of people amongst others. This consequently widens the social gaps that may be present as in the case of immigrants within a new country. If this particular 'foreign' group is large enough, exclusion occurs to further deepen the social cleavages, and then the situation may fester to warrant the experience of non-belonging, instability and may even elicit social unrest (Whitaker, 2005).

The post-apartheid immigration laws of South Africa are deemed as being discriminatory and restrictive, and sometimes, to the extent of being xenophobic (Munshi, 2013). This is attributed to the change of immigration policies towards more stringent laws managing the entrance and permanent citizenship of immigrants (Munshi, 2013). However, in a study conducted on immigrants in South Africa, it was found that once immigrants are in the country, they feared crime and harassment more so than xenophobic attacks (Munshi, 2013). Their non-permanent immigrant status of residence increases their susceptibility to being victims of crimes. Criminal's target immigrants as it is assumed that they carry large amounts of cash on them with improper secure surveillance systems due to the assumption that immigrants do not use facilities such as formal bank accounts (Munshi, 2013). This makes immigrants vulnerable to being victims of crime. Moreover, they seldom report these crimes (Munshi, 2013). However, despite these experiences, immigrants describe South

Africa as being a land of opportunity. For this reason, there is a high attraction for Asian and African immigrants based on possibilities of jobs and livelihoods for themselves and their families (Munshi, 2013).

Considering the attacks on African immigrants in South Africa in 2008, some researchers have deemed the cause to be more specifically Afrophobia rather than the broader term xenophobia (Thompson & Grant, 2015). This was because non-African immigrant groups were attacked less than African immigrant groups and some have suggested that the racism that African immigrants faced is linked to it (Thompson & Grant, 2015). The 2008 attacks shed light on the increasing violence against black working-class immigrants in the townships of South Africa (Munshi, 2013). The attacks may have had a significant impact on the immigrants that live in South Africa. The impact on the narratives and experience of the community by immigrants may be affected as well. This was briefly explored in this study as narratives sought to uncover the decisions that are associated with choosing Fordsburg as a place of residence and the way the xenophobia may have influenced the formation of their sense of belonging.

2.1.3 Islamophobia

In addition to African Muslim immigrants being victims of xenophobic attacks, the Islamic community also experiences a global phenomenon characterized as Islamophobia. Islamophobia is a described by scholars as the growing sense of anti-Muslim feelings which encompasses fear and hatred of the Islamic community. These sentiments are predominantly expressed by the Christian population in European and Western countries since the settling of Muslim immigrants in the 14th century in Europe (Ogan, et al., 2013). Islamophobia as a normative term only surfaced in the 1920s to describe the disapproval and negative judgments of individuals against the Muslim population and its Islamic practices (Taras,

2013). Studies have shown that Islamophobia is due to the citizens believing that there are too many Muslim immigrants in their country, that Muslim immigrants are too demanding and that the Islamic religion is intolerant (Ogan, et al. 2013). These views are often expressed through the influential public discourse of media. Since September 11, 2001, when parts of the United States of America were attacked by Islamic terrorists, there has been many discourses regarding Islam in the media which portrays Islam negatively (Mamdani, 2002). Given the circulation of prejudicial tropes across the world, some of these anti-Islamic beliefs may be present in South Africa. This was partially explored in this study to determine if it was present in the narratives of immigrant Muslim women.

2.2 Muslim Women

An important concept to understand when geographically locating Muslim immigrants is that even though they may have originated from 15 countries that comprise the Middle East – there is still an underlying unity in the Islamic religion due to the shared Arabic language and culture (Aroian, et al., 2006). As per Islamic law, there are certain rules that an Islamic family has to adhere to in terms of its structure and the responsibilities of the members of the family. These roles and responsibilities are highly associated with gender roles where there is a hierarchy of respect rather than equality (Aroian, et al., 2006). The gender roles and status within the Islamic society are primarily guided by the Qur'an and Shari'a laws (El-Solh & Mabro, 1994). This may directly speak to the gender roles of Muslim women within their homes and their community. "Women's main obligations are to marry, maintain the home, care for children, and protect the honor of the family" (Aroian, et al., 2006, p. 26). There seems to be a clear distinction of the role of Muslim women within their family and communities. However, these gendered roles and their traditional Islamic identities are taken into consideration in the context of the modern world and social demands. An example of this

are Muslim women who have careers. They undergo a process of renegotiating their career goals against their Islamic responsibility of being a woman and fulfilling household duties (Chantler, 2005). They must strive to achieve a balance that feels comfortable and acceptable for them (Chantler, 2005).

The Islamic community is seen as patriarchal based on the social injustice that is imposed upon women in the way that they are treated and the way they may be perceived as inferior (Smith & Haddad, 1982). The treatment of gender within the Islamic community is seen to be governed by both the patriarchal society that they are entrenched within as well as the religious ideology that they identify with (El-Solh & Mabro, 1994). Islamic feminists describe this as being political Islam, which promotes the message of a patriarchal gendered system that seeks to uphold the value of hegemony over women (Badran, 2006). Furthermore, this is said to be supported by the male dominance within a familial and societal context which acts as the primary anchor for its propagation (Badran, 2006). The rise in women Muslim converts and the slow-growth of the Islamic feminist movement has been attributed to the broader Islamic cultural revival that is said to have taken place (Badran, 2006). This in turn has surfaced the variation of political Islam that has been witnessed (Badran, 2006). This variation has shifted the Muslim women within this changed political climate towards Islamic feminism. Included in this shift, is African feminism which has to be considered within the changed climate. The study will use this literature of migration of these working class women and build upon it.

2.3 Migration of Working Class Women to South Africa

Lower-to-middle class immigrants from Africa and Asia arrived in South Africa during the late 19th century to early 20th century. This arrival of immigrants changed the demographic landscape of South Africa in which middle class women formed an integral part

assuming the status of migrants, labourers and refugees (Hiralal, 2017). Posel (2004) describes the integral role that labour migration plays in the development of the South African economy. Historically, South African labour migrant legislation only permitted the working person entrance to the country and did not allow spouses or families access to their places of work (Posel, 2004). This migration process therefore positioned women as being adjuncts to men if permission was granted to the families to enter the country (Hiralal, 2017). Also, men mostly made up the labour migration population within South Africa. Migrant labourers were not granted permission to permanently settle in their places of employment. This resulted in migrants having to maintain labour ties and economic opportunities with their country of origin to act as an alternate plan if their labour in South Africa ended (Posel, 2004). Due to this, the circular migrant ideal became entrenched amongst labour migrants due to South Africa's legislation and sustained the status of immigrants to lower-to-middle class. However, this legislation changed in 1980, which then permitted legal labour migrants to reside in South Africa permanently with their families (Posel, 2004). The expectation of this change in the legislation was that more labour migrants would settle permanently in South Africa rather than a temporary settlement. The change in law led to an increase in the number of migrants entering South Africa (Posel, 2004). However, this also propagated the view that many migrants gained access to South Africa illegally and that their intention was to settle down permanently in South Africa which fuelled a xenophobic association even further (Posel, 2004). Due to this, immigrants who currently enter South Africa still associate themselves with being circular migrants due to the negative stereotypes they receive from others and the growing unemployment in the country. Unstable employment could leave migrants without a job for an indefinite period of time. In this period, migrants may wish to return home. In this regard, circular migrants are labour migrants who work in South Africa with the knowledge that this is not a permanent solution (Posel, 2004). This insecure labour

market and economy perpetuated the circular migrant identity and class belonging. Therefore, this group of migrants seem to have very little interest in staying in the country permanently. While they remain working in South Africa, they retain their economic ties in their country of origin (McDonald, 2000; as cited Posel, 2004).

With the changing legislation, female labour migration increased in South Africa by 34% (Posel & Casale, 2003). The majority of immigrants come from various parts of Africa, including Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe; as well as from China, India and Pakistan (Hiralal, 2017). Women constitute a large percentage of migrants today with the population increasing significantly when compared to before (Kiwanuka, 2008). This increase was attributed to the change of gendered roles which enabled women to travel alone and enter the labour market. Posel (2004) notes that during the early 1990s, the marital rates of African women decreased. She contends that this depicted a change in the relationship held between men and women (Posel, 2004). This changed relationship meant that within households, women had to work, were less likely to be with men, and therefore less likely to be faced with male resistance to migrating for work (Posel, 2004). Dodson (2000) claims that women were more likely to consider their male partners/parent's opinion on migration before this period. Additionally, this highlighted the importance of the mobility of women with regards to the position held in their household before the early 1990s (Todes, 2001). However, the account of female migration has been somewhat hidden according to feminist scholars who deem it necessary to include in the analysis (Hiralal, 2017).

2.4 Legal Status of Residency and Exploitation of Immigrants

South Africa is a primary destination to consider for migrants who seek economic opportunity (Landau & Segatti, 2009). Much information about immigrants within South Africa is unknown, including the number of immigrants, the length of their residence and

their activity within the country (Landau & Segatti, 2009). This is due to many immigrants entering South Africa covertly (Segal, Elliott, & Mayadas, 2010). Corrupt immigration procedures within South Africa allow people that have money to almost always buy their South African citizenship and documentation in the form of bribes (Landau & Segatti, 2009). The lack of the implementation of policy has resulted in these corrupt procedures being implemented regularly (Landau & Segatti, 2009). In a paradoxical manner, South Africa has a framework that advocates for the human rights of migrants, however migrants are still exposed to exploitation and made vulnerable to various socio-economic factors (Landau & Segatti, 2009). When this happens, immigrants have to make decisions between remaining silent and tolerating exploitation or speaking up and risking deportation or arrest (Cunningham-Parmeter, 2008).

The lack of documentation further affects the economy as immigrants who may be highly skilled will not be considered for highly-skilled employment (Landau & Segatti, 2009). Due to the desperation for employment, immigrants may turn to illegal and dangerous economic activities that further entrench corruption and violence (Landau & Segatti, 2009). Due to the possible illegality of residency or unauthorized status of residency, immigrants are considered to be "an ideal reserve of very flexible labour" (Taran, 2000, p. 14). The lack of authorization affects the nature of their employment in which protection and safety regulations are almost non-existent for immigrants (Taran, 2000).

The Immigration Act 13 of 2002 in South Africa states that police or immigration officers are allowed to arrest individuals for deportation without a warrant if the official has enough reason to suspect that these individuals are illegal residents (Landau & Segatti, 2009). This creates a sense of fear of harassment for many immigrants if they are in the country illegally or engaged in the process of acquiring their legal residential documentation. Their status of legality has much impact on the access to resources that immigrants have.

Undocumented immigrants experience a range of challenges related to housing. Accommodation is often a point of concern as landlords charge higher rent, refuse to engage in general maintenance of the property, and sometimes do not return security deposits that were paid by immigrants (Landau & Segatti, 2009). However, sometimes landlords treat legal migrants, such as asylum seekers or refugees in this way as well. Another resource that cannot be accessed by illegal migrants is financial services. This prevents immigrants from investing in South Africa or developing a financial foundation in the country.

The widespread violation of immigrant's human rights has shed light on the exploitation of migrants and is a poignant feature of migration at present (Taran, 2000). According to Shelley (2007, p.1) "Migrant workers surround us, doing jobs we shy away from, providing skills we no longer have, working hours we prefer to spend at home". Within the country, the labour force is an integral part of maintaining and sustaining the economy (Burawoy, 1976). In 1999, The United Nations estimated that 150 million people live outside their country of origin. Of these, 80-97 million of those people contributed to the labour force (Taran, 2000). Immigrants are found to be vulnerable to exploitation, which amplifies their low status and the propagation of illegal economic activity. Usage of migrant labour is deemed as a manner of sustaining the economic enterprise with a low cost attached to it (Taran, 2000).

The informality of some economic sectors has increased the practice of businesses that avoid legislative regulations, thereby allowing the extreme forms of exploitation to go unnoticed (Shelley, 2007). Migrants are therefore exposed to not only low pay, but to exploitation in terms of lack of job security and obscure employment and labour regulations (Anderson, 2010). This includes labour practices that expect them to be flexible in the type of labour that they conduct, to be undemanding in terms of salary and employment benefits, as well as to be readily available when required (Anderson, 2010). Immigrants fulfil a gap in

society and are deemed as the reserve workforce to the economy as they are excluded from primary citizenship, which thereby excludes them from the labour rights within the country (Castle, 2011). Due to all the unfair labour regulations, immigrants are forced to accept sub-par working conditions and wages of employment due to their desperation for work (Castle, 2011). They accept this exploitation within the workplace as they fear deportation more than they fear the unfair labour practice (Cunningham-Parmeter, 2008).

Immigrants are further exploited due to the growing threat they pose to citizens with regards to their national cohesion and identity (Castle, 2011). Institutions and work places therefore allocate low- or semi-skilled work to immigrants, which will limit their abilities and capacity to work fair practices (Shelley, 2007). Another reason for immigrants' stagnancy in these low- to semi-skilled roles is due to discrimination in relation to language proficiency, the possible illegality of their citizenship and their lack of accredited qualifications in their new country of residence (Anderson, 2010).

3. Theoretical Framework

Community psychology as a sub-discipline was important in the framing of this study which honed in on Muslim women's sense of belonging within the community that they reside in. Community psychology is aimed at studying "the social and psychological processes of community from the perspective of human development and incorporates the values of the field" (Chavis & Newbrough, 1986, p. 335). These values include the personal, relational and collective wellness of the community and its' members (Prilleltensky, 2001). Promoted values of community psychology are social justice and social action (Prilleltensky, 2001). The conceptualization of the psychology of a community includes the study of an array of constructs that range from the structures of social support and networks of the community; to the human development that is sustained and benefits individuals in the community to have an increased quality of life (Chavis & Newbrough, 1986). Community psychology is distinctive in that it offers an alternative way of understanding the behaviour of people within the context of the behaviour of the community (Moritsugu, Vera, Wong, & Duffy, 2015). To understand community psychology, theorist's (e.g. Chavis & Newbrough, 1986; Moritsugu, et al., 2015) claim that the process underlying the community needs to be understood.

Using this lens, the theoretical framework sought to lay a foundation upon which the study was grounded. Various frameworks are used, beginning with the theory of belonging and non-belonging. The review then progresses to engage with the intricacies of intersectionality to highlight the multitude of factors involved in sense of self and sense of place. It then engages with African and Islamic feminism which seek to better support the narratives of immigrant Muslim women. It lastly navigates Spivakian theory which highlights the subaltern community's voice and whether they can speak and be heard.

3.1 Belonging and Non-belonging

Yuval-Davis (2006a) describes belonging as an "emotional attachment, about feeling 'at home' and… about feeling 'safe'" (p. 197). These attributes are crucial to this research, as immigrant's narratives are understood in relation to the emotional attachments. These narratives are also understood through stories about their empowerment, ability to call Fordsburg home and the feelings of safety within their new place of residence. The construct of belonging can be understood from a psychological perspective, in which the individual experiences an evaluative feeling or perception of the space they occupy within a community. The connection between the self and the surrounding environment is linked through the thread of people, places and things – this is known as sense of belonging (Hagerty, Lynch-Sauer, Patusky, Bouwsema & Collier, 1992). Anant (1966) describes sense of belonging as the recognition and acceptance of a person by the members that belong to the group. Hagerty et al. (1992) built on Anant's (1966) definition of sense of belonging by describing it as "the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that person feels themselves to be an integral part of that system or environment" (Hagerty, et al., p. 173). Yuval-Davis (2006a) explains this to be a person's self-identification within a community as well as the way members of the community identify the individual in question.

For sense of belonging to be fostered, Hagerty et al. (1992) suggests that there are three antecedents which include "energy of involvement, potential and desire for meaningful involvement and potential for shared or complementary characteristics" (p. 174). The acceptance of the person by the host that may be established from a sense of belonging includes social support as a complementary characteristic constituting being loved and valued (Lindgren, 1990). Social support that an individual receives may be inclusive of all the dynamic relationships that are present within one's life (Parratt, 2002). Two defining

attributes that constitute belonging include the value assigned to people, as well as their fit within the system (Hargety et al., 1992).

Social locations are described as the intersectionality of various groups of belonging within society that are played out upon a grid of power dynamics (Yuval-Davis, 2006a). Included in social location are constructs such as gender, class, race, age group, sexual identity, opportunities, etc., which is the first social division that is considered as it is the most concrete of the social divisions. The next social division works to interpret the way these items constitute each other, rather than to understand them in mutually exclusive manner (Yuval-Davis, 2006a). This will further be explored in a later section titled Intersectionality. Identity and emotional attachment are particularly important as they focus on people's identity by exploring the way they interact with various elements (Yuval-Davis, 2006a). People's identities are constructed by the stories they tell themselves and others. These stories are indicative of the perception they hold about their group belonging and what belonging means to them (Yuval-Davis, 2006a). These narratives are more than just cognitive recollections of the past as they have an emotional value that people attach and invest in (Yuval-Davis, 2006a). These two levels are important to understanding the way belonging is constructed and accessed, to be able to make meaning of it thereafter.

Another tenet of analysing belonging is to consider the politics through which its members imagine their communities. The term 'imagined communities' stems from the understanding that it is unlikely that all members of a community will have met each other, there still exists an image of their belonging and communion (Yuval-Davis, 2006a). This is to say, members of a group also imagine themselves and others into being. For example, one can imagine the South African community even though it is in excess of 55 million people. The composition of these different imagined communities are constructed by people's sense of self, their varying experiences and social locations (Yuval-Davis, 2006a). Imagined

communities are governed by politics of belonging which create boundaries and separate communities into ‘us’ and ‘them. Therefore, South African’s of Indian descent might imagine themselves as separate from a broader imagining of the South African state. “The politics of belonging includes also struggles around the determination of what is involved in belonging, in being a member of a community, and of what roles specific social locations and specific narratives of identity play in this” (Yuval-Davis, 2006a, p. 205). This further determines how people navigate and assign belonging and citizenship.

Dasberg (1976), and Kestenberg and Kestenberg (1988) studied people who experienced adverse environments ranging from violent battles to oppression in their country of origin. They reported an overwhelming sense of rejection and abandonment among the communities that they studied. This was noteworthy when considering immigrants whose previous living conditions were adverse. This may have created a different experience for immigrants with various countries of origin, as their perspective of their new living conditions differs across a wide spectrum. The differences in perspective were important for contextualizing and understanding their narratives. This was due to their personal narratives interacting in a unique way with their community narrative in an integrated manner (Duff & Bell, 2002).

Diversity signifies the existence of different bodies within a certain society (Puwar, 2004). The inclusion of these different bodies results in a coexistence of individuals that have similarities and differences within a particular context. Coexistence encompasses the presence of minority groups like immigrants into a system where previously they may have been excluded from (Puwar, 2004). This is different to South Africa’s apartheid history wherein the majority group was excluded. Puwar’s (2004) conception of minorities is apt for this study because immigrants occupy the tenuous position of outsiders who enter a space that is pre-occupied by others who have particular claims to ownership of the space. Both new

arrivals and citizens that previously occupied space have to do some work in relation to adjusting to the shared space. The experience of belonging of both groups is important as this cultivates the possible culture a space produces and the concept of the imagined community. This coexistence of minority groups and majority groups within the same space results in initially disruptive consequences to the original state of the space (Puwar, 2004). This entrance, even though it may be welcoming, causes a disturbance, as it is an introduction of a new entity into a possibly balanced system. Immigrants bring their own set of beliefs and ideals, along with hope for their new country, but upon arrival, they could be immersed into the existing community's beliefs and set of standards. The beliefs of the immigrant have to be reconciled with the beliefs of the existing environment to foster belonging to that space. The reaction of the 'native' people who have previously occupied that space will be an important determinant of the experience of belonging that immigrants have.

3.2 Intersectionality

Davis (2008) described intersectionality as a way of understanding the "interaction of multiple identities and experiences of exclusion and subordination" (p. 67). Intersectionality is described as the subjective reinforcement of constructs such as race, gender, class and sexuality as a manner of engaging the discourse around the feminist hierarchy, hegemony and exclusivity (Nash, 2008). Davis (2008) included other categories of an interaction as the "difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power" (p. 68). Crenshaw (1991) described the theory of identity whilst studying the intersectionality that women experience based on the discrimination faced due to gender and race. She describes an imagery of crossroads that assists in the encapsulation of intersectionality by saying:

> Intersectionality is what occurs when a woman from a minority group . . . tries to navigate the main crossing in the city. . . The main highway is 'racism road'. One cross street can be Colonialism, then Patriarchy Street. . . She has to deal not only with one form of oppression but with all forms, those named as road signs, which link together to make a double, a triple, multiple, a many layered blanket of oppression. (Crenshaw, 2001; as cited in Yuval-Davis, 2006b, p. 196).

Intersectionality was therefore a criticism of early feminist discourses that understood women in discrete categories rather than exploring the multiple dimensions that constitute women's identity (Crenshaw, 1991). The introduction of intersectionality was to challenge the binaries of gender and race that existed in theoretically constructing identity of women by emphasizing the simultaneity of these two constructs (Nash, 2008). Crenshaw (1991) goes onto say that the traditional boundaries that had existed which were discriminatory towards women cannot be examined in parts to understand the whole, but rather should explore how these boundaries and concepts intersect to form the structural and political world of women. Nash (2008) describes intersectionality as demonstrating the racial variations within gender as well as the gender variations within race. In addition to this, intersectionality explores the way gender and race are linked to the transformations of social class in which the empowerment of women is constructed (Davis, 2008). In this way, intersectionality gives importance to groups who may have been previously ignored (Nash, 2008). The key function of intersectionality is to encompass the multiple positions of marginalization by avoiding locating disadvantage and oppression into a single dimension such as gender (Chantler, 2005). In this way, the engagement with power relations within the minority group is explored to reveal the process by which the group is made to be the minority (Chantler, 2005).

A critique of intersectionality is that the categories of gender and race are too simplistic to capture the complex nature of lived experiences within narratives (Nash, 2008). However, the narrative approach to uncovering multiple identities will provide a platform for women to express themselves in relation to gender-race binary that they may encounter, as well as still give allowance to the lived experiences. This study sought to utilize this tool to give importance to the voices of immigrant Muslim women who may be marginalized due to the multiple labels that are assigned to them by themselves or by others. This will be further discussed in the following section of the voices of subalterns. These labels encompassed their foreigner, religious, race, class, and gendered status. This study explored and uncovered the narrative that may be shaped by this, and the narrative that shaped the label that people ascribed to. The multidimensionality of constructs seeks to constitute the narrative of lived experiences of people rather than treat the constructs in isolation from each other. The narrative of the lived experience of an immigrant Muslim woman may be different to the narrative of the lived experience of a male immigrant in a new country. This is because gender adds an alternate and additional dimension to the story. This is complicated once more when considering the additional construct of being Muslim, which is a religious minority status in South Africa.

New spaces that people are immersed in are often riddled with gendered values (Puwar, 2004). Women, as a minority group, have begun to occupy spaces that were previously forbidden to them in ways that have led to shifts to those spaces. This is not to suggest that patriarchal norms have been overcome but there is more overt contestation over gendered norms than ever before. Women's entry into spaces because of displacement or more progressive gender norms in their host countries means that there is a bidirectional influence where both the new entrants and the host society must adapt. Puwar (2004) reminds us that "the presence of the feminine as a bodily entity disrupts the partition between the

private and the public even if it does not render it altogether invalid" (p. 14). This is to say that because Muslim women historically occupied the private space of the home and not the public space of the mosque and workplace, their entry into public life disrupts the binary between these spaces.

With the introduction of women into public spaces, came a societal revolution in Western countries. Women in the colonies were pivotal in the advances made in the West:

> The fashioning of Western women as enlightened agents who took on the mission of relieving the patriarchal plight of women in the colonies was pivotal to the yielding of political rights and agency by Western women (Puwar, 2004, p. 23).

Below, African and Islamic feminism is explored. It provides a useful lens through which the narratives of immigrant women can be viewed. Importantly, African feminism can be understood as more closely aligned to the realities of African women's lives. Islamic feminism is also considered to contextualize the discourse that surrounds Muslim women.

3.3 African and Islamic Feminism

Three decades ago, the feminist notion of the past encompassed a homogenized view of women-hood as being that of a middle-class, white women (Ampofo, Beoku-Betts & Osirim, 2008). Their experiences and lives were seen as normative and were generalized as the basis for comparison of all women, with very little to no regard for race, ethnicity, culture, religion, nationality, sexual orientation or class (Beoku-Betts & Njambi, 2005). This hegemonic tradition disregarded the multiple contexts that feminism could exist within. It therefore did not fully engage with the understanding of women in various social and cultural contexts (Beoku-Betts & Njambi, 2005).

This homogenized view only included a specific group of women, whilst simultaneously excluding and dismissing marginalized groups of women whose identity did not match the conventional discourse. This resulted in feminism being dismissive of the agency of marginalized women that did not fit the Eurocentric model. The result of being excluded and being out of place was not previously recognized by those who occupied positions of privilege or inherently belonged to the Eurocentric model. Therefore, this one-sided discourse which feminism constituted, represented African women as "victims of oppressive and unchanging traditional practices" (Beoku-Betts & Njambi, 2005, p.122). This notion has been challenged and alternate directions have been taken. This includes an analysis of women that is more complex and beyond the scope of Eurocentrism.

African feminism perspectives required a more complex understanding due to the parallel between cultural realities and African lifestyle. Previously, feminism was based on a dichotomous perspective of the women's social context being private or public, as well as their group as being individualistic or collectivist (Beoku-Betts & Njambi, 2005). This dichotomy is relevant as it aids in the understanding of how African women's experience was located in Western feminist discourses (Beoku-Betts & Njambi, 2005). However, this dichotomy is insufficient for many African regions where, not only, the concept of space is fluid, but gender itself is a fluid construct that is subject to change over time. Beoku & Njambi (2005) give various examples to showcase the fluidity in gendered identity, sexual orientations and marital roles in relationships. It is also important to recognize that there is no generic 'African woman' and that women are fluid, and can change, just as any individual can (Ampofo, et al., 2008).

In addition, Islamic feminism is also a tenet of feminism that needs consideration. This paradigm had arose in the late nineteenth century and became evident in the Middle East in the late twentieth century (Mojab, 2001). It is built around a religious discourse with the

Qur'an as its central text of reference (Badran, 2005). This feminism occurred in the period of late post-colonialism as a consequence of dissatisfaction with the States refusal to embrace democracy in the Middle East (Badran, 2005). A major point of dissatisfaction for women was the States interpretations of the Qur'an in relation to the expectation that working women should retreat to their "rightful" places in the home. This call was made in the name of Islam, however, many of the women had been working for a lengthy amount of time and their monetary contributions to their household was needed (Badran, 2005). It became compulsory for women to wear the veil, and any women who did not obey were forced underground or fled to avoid arrest, imprisonment, torture and assassination (Moghadam, 2002). The previous absence of the restrictions also meant that they had access to highest levels of education, including religion. This education equipped them with knowledge to be able to hold men accountable and to be able to reason for themselves in a religious discourse (Badran, 2005). This rise of Islamic feminism also coincided with the introduction of new information technology that gave many access to information. Information technology and education enabled women to question patriarchal readings and interpretations of the Qur'an and to articulate a feminist Islamic interpretation (Badran, 2005). However, it was difficult as male-power was nurtured to the extent that religion, class, state, language, law, media and culture fuelled the patriarchal system (Mojab, 2001). Woman were also banned from certain occupations including legal occupations which formed part of a campaign to rejuvenate Islamic society (Moghadam, 2002). This voice demanded a different reading of the Qur'an. Islamic feminism separated itself from a gender-conservative narrative and adopted a more progressive discourse (Badran, 2005).With this demand, women were now considered to be a social force that was affecting change in the power dynamics of the private and public spheres (Mojab, 2001). Gradually, women became increasingly visible in the public domain which was a consistent trend (Moghadam, 2002). Just like African feminism, Islamic

feminism does not pay heed to feminism being derived solely by the West, but states that this feminism is derived of itself in ways that respond to contextual realities of women. Islamic feminism arose simultaneously in various countries including Iran, Egypt and South Africa.

Feminism has now shifted to be inclusive of issues surrounding race, nationality, ethnicity, class and globalization (Ampofo, et al., 2008). The perspective currently allows the experiences of women to be viewed from multiple angles, by using the intersectionality of constructs to make meaning. This, in turn, allows for the generation of new questions to be asked, thereby creating awareness around the various issues and interpretations women may be faced with (Ampofo, et al., 2008). This intersectionality of constructs takes into consideration "the historical, political, economic, and cultural forces that shape women's differentiated lives and produce forms of individual and collective action" which introduce diverse feminist movements (Ampofo, et al., 2008). African women are simultaneously decision makers in the home by virtue of many being unmarried or single heads of householders, breadwinners, while also being marginalised and oppressed. African women's lives are therefore quite different to those of white women in the global north and theories that take the complexity of their lives into account are required. African feminism is one such theory that allows for this exploration. This was also true for Islamic women who were working and made valuable monetary contributions to their households in the Middle East (Badran, 2005). Therefore Islamic feminism is also an integral theory that will broaden the exploration.

African feminism emphasizes the spectrum of experiences of women by analysing their historical and contemporary legacies over space and time and it studies the manner in which they intersect. In this way, it challenges the complicit notion of Eurocentric feminism by addressing issues of race and the structure thereof. It is interested in solidarity and structured inequalities which have exacerbated the social construction of gender (Mohanty,

2000; as cited by Ampofo, et al., 2008). Islamic feminists distinguish themselves from conservative and conventional groups of Muslim women. They advocate for new ways of thinking about religion, freedom, relationships and work in order to advance their lives as women subscribing to the Islamic faith (Badran, 2006). The goal of Islamic feminism is affirming the "unqualified equality of all human beings" (Badran, 2005, p. 14). This equality was not only demanded within the privacy of their household, but also within the public sphere (Mojab, 2001). Early works from Islamic feminists depict a demand for the fair treatment of women and varying degrees of resentment toward oppressive males (Mojab, 2001). This contemporary insight allows for researchers to explore the broader diaspora to enable the growth of feminist knowledge production.

Additionally, early literature portrayed women as being vulnerable individuals who did not have choices and were passive participants in their own livelihoods. African feminism has however contended that African women have the agency to transform societies (Ampofo, et al., 2008). There has been a significant growth in the body of knowledge that allows for the new perspectives of female migration to be assessed and the early literature of women's vulnerability to be challenged (Ampofo, et al., 2008). Feminist studies suggest that the migration process is also gendered through how host societies may discriminate against African women according to race, ethnicity and gender. This disjunction is felt in the transition between the education they have received and the occupation that they secure in new host countries (Ampofo, et al., 2008). Contemporary feminist theories challenge this early literature of vulnerability and oppression, with regard to migrants, as they are now being seen as head of their households, independent and primary wage earners, especially in new countries of residence (Hiralal, 2017). Women actively participate in the migration process by making decisions about location of migration, and their relationship process (Kihatso, 2007; as cited in Hiralal, 2017). However, this is contentious for women as they

embody multiple identities including wives, mothers, women, entrepreneurs, workers and various others. Whilst navigating the space with these identities, they still have to contend with living in over-crowded spaces and have disadvantages in accessing employment and therefore are subject to abuse and patriarchal oppression (Hiralal, 2017). With low literacy levels in the new country, women may encounter difficulties when trying to articulate their needs, therefore this complexity needs to be accounted for within feminist methodologies of enquiry (Kihatso, 2010; as cited in Hiralal, 2017). African feminism encapsulates the complexity that women face when entering a new country. In this new host country, women have to navigate the various challenges and opportunities that arise. Language barriers are a major challenge for immigrant women as they feel vulnerable and stigmatized for being unable to communicate in the local spoken language (Hiralal, 2017). Islamic feminism as well has seen a relatively slow progression through the indigenous histories of the Middle East due to various factors including language and the widely held notion that Islamic feminism is a Western notion (Badran, 2005). In this regard, their voice may not be heard or they are unable to speak for various reasons. This is explored below.

3.4 The voice of the subaltern

Women immigrants are disadvantaged due to their limitation of resources in terms of low literacy levels, poverty and being unemployed (Hiralal, 2017). Spivak (1988) would contend that this group of women is part of the subaltern group. The subaltern group features people who are oppressed by various factors. Spivak (1988) emphasizes that poor, black women are oppressed the most due to the effects of colonialism and patriarchy. Spivak (1988) problematizes the question of the subaltern voice and whether the subaltern is heard. She notes that to be able to uncover the voice of the subaltern, research within an Anglo-American framework is not useful (Spivak, 1988). She discusses an intellectual form of

oppression and marginalization conducted through the use of the Anglo-American framework solely (Spivak, 1988).

Therefore, research with an alternate foundation and theoretical framework is needed which the South African context provides with regards to the subaltern group of immigrant Muslim women. The third-world woman is said to be displaced due to being in the middle of traditional values and modernization that exist simultaneously within their communities (Spivak, 1988). She contends that the women disappear in this context and as such the subaltern's voice disappears (Spivak, 1988). For her, the patriarchal conditions lead to the disappearance of the voice of the subaltern due to the reproduction of hegemonic work, but also the danger faced by subalterns when they try to speak (Riach, 2017). When accounts of history leave out subalterns, Spivak calls this epistemic violence (Riach, 2017). This violence is imposed on another "through thought, speech and writing, rather than actual physical harm" (Riach, 2017, p. 11). However, when oppressed people's contributions are not recognized or they are not allowed to speak, this virtually excludes them from the world (Riach, 2017). In this way, a privileged group of people may speak on behalf of the subalterns which further renders the subaltern group silent by taking away that voice (Riach, 2017). This privilege is governed by gendered power and access to knowledge differentials which exist and further oppresses the subaltern group (Riach, 2017). Spivak's (1988) concluding statement is that subalterns cannot speak, cannot be heard and cannot read if we are to view through lenses of colonialism and patriarchy. Maggio (2007) alludes to the notion that even when attempting to speak, subalterns are silenced. Maggio (2007) goes on to say that the only way the subaltern community can be heard is if we acknowledge the various ways in which they might communicate but to which scholars are unattuned.

However, in studying the subaltern, the question remains whether intellectuals speak for subalterns or pretend as if they can speak for subalterns (Maggio, 2007). This concept is

further complicated in that the act of speaking is connected closely to being heard, and there can be no clear distinction between the subjects (Maggio, 2007). The distinction of a 'true' subaltern and carefully finding this subject is also a difficulty that needs to be acknowledged Maggio (2007) poses the notion of the subaltern's communication and ability to speak being limited according to their ability to communicate in a recognizable Western language. Subalterns also communicate in various and different modes. It is the responsibility of the intellectual to tune into these different modes of communication to be able to hear them because the subaltern speaks all the time (Maggio, 2007). This theory is useful for thinking about the subaltern group of women that constitute this study. The ability of this subaltern group to speak and be heard will be of interest and needs to be acknowledged. Canham & Langa (2017) suggest that subalterns do have a voice, they can and do speak. It is through their storied accounts of their lives and through narrative means that they are able to make meaning of their position within the context (Canham & Langa, 2017). This is important due to the post-colonial and urban context of South Africa that this subaltern group lives and works in. Within this post-colonial context, it will be interesting to note how they interact with the very factors that constitute their subalternity. This includes their race, gender, status of immigration, culture, identity and religion, and the intersectionality of all of these factors. Moreover, given all the reasons that silence subaltern women, it is important to be attuned to how they might communicate through 'silence'. What narratives are woven through acts of refusal?

4. Research Methodology

Research is deemed as a voyage of discovery of knowledge in which people contribute original data to an existing body of knowledge. This further contributes to the advancement of knowledge within the field. The main purpose of research is to discover answers to questions posed that would allow the achievement of new insights. Research methodology describes a systematic manner in which the research problem can be answered by the implementation of research methods (Kothari, 2004). This study adopted a qualitative research approach and was chosen due to the insight it could provide into realities that were relevant to the study and engage with the narrated experiences (Ampofo, et al., 2008). The qualitative nature of this research gave an allowance of understanding the behaviour of immigrant Muslim women with regards to a reference point of meaning and their narrated experience (Kiwanuka, 2008). This further helps in gaining useful insight into the social and cultural contexts that people navigate. It endeavoured to access the life stories of immigrant Muslim women through narrative research. This led to accessing a more in-depth understanding of their reported experiences regarding their sense of belonging within their community. The aim of qualitative research is to uncover the meaning making and desires of the participants by the use of in-depth interviews to access the information (Kothari, 2004). This was in line with African feminist methodologies that use oral histories in the form of narrative (Ampofo, et al., 2008). This enabled working class women to express their experiences in their own voices. The research interviews sought to elicit the life stories of the interviewees spanning their lives in their countries of origin to their present lives as immigrant residents of Fordsburg. Once collated, the various factors in the data are analysed to explore the meanings that emerge. A qualitative approach is unique in that it seeks to access subjective views through the opinions, attitudes and behaviour of people. The researcher’s insights and beliefs are important in the collection and interpretation of

qualitative data (Kothari, 2004). Thematic analysis was used to understand and interpret the themes that emerged from the documented narratives. The qualitative paradigm is valuable for in-depth understandings of social relationships and social phenomena. This form of research contributes in two ways; the first is a contribution to research for its own sake and the second is to contribute to knowledge for social and practical relevance and solutions to social problems (Kothari, 2004).

4.1 Ontology of Qualitative Research

Ontology of qualitative research refers to the body of knowledge of qualitative research which encompasses various concepts and categories that work together. The ontology of these concepts highlights the relationship between the categories that comprise qualitative research. Ontology of qualitative research includes the researcher's view of the nature of reality or being. Within qualitative research, the ontological perspective that is adopted is to explore what there is to be known within the world. It is a network of beliefs that are constituted of various interpretations by individuals about what constitute reality. Ontological questions within the research paradigm seeks to assess whether social realities exist without the presence of human interpretation (Ormston, Spencer, Barnard, & Snape, 2003). Qualitative research is predominantly focused on the attainment and production of descriptive data which includes people's own stories and observable behaviour (Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015). It encompasses the collection and interpretation of empirical data in the form of various sources including "case study; personal experience; life story; artefacts; historical and observational data" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 4). The aim of the interpretation is to access the meanings people attach to these various sources in their lives by using their own frame of reference and thereafter analysing through text and visual analysis (Taylor, et al., 2015; Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). For Taylor, et al., (2015, p.8) researchers adopt a position of experiencing the information without using "their own

perspectives and accessing their taken-for-granted views" but rather with viewing it as if it were their first time being introduced to the idea. However, this process is impossible as the researcher does come with their own, unique perspective consisting of their particular class, gender, race, ethnicity and culture (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Therefore, the process of qualitative research includes the understanding of the biography of the researcher as "every researcher speaks from within a distinct, interpretive community that configures… the multicultural, gendered components of the research act" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 28). This is in line with feminist research methodologies which position the researcher as central to the research process (Kiwanuka, 2008).

Methodologies that are used by qualitative researchers are employed to gain further understanding of the individual (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). There are multiple approaches to accessing qualitative data, however, triangulation methods are employed to attain an in-depth knowledge and further understanding of the subject (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). The process of triangulation includes the access to data using various approaches which include collecting data at different times, from different places and different people. This results in acquiring a full, richer data set (Wilson, 2014). Research interviews are used to access a deeper understanding of social phenomena rather than just accessing basic knowledge or generalizable knowledge gained through quantitative methods (Gill, et al., 2008). There are various structures of interviews that can be employed by the researcher to access this knowledge. These include: Structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. For this study, the semi-structured interviews were used which were primarily guided by open-ended questions.

A semi-structured interview is defined as a "verbal interchange where one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information from another person (*participant*) by asking questions" (Longhurst, 2016, p. 143). Within a semi-structured format, the interviewer

prepares a list of predetermined questions based on various sources of information. It, however, allows the interchange to unfold through a conversational manner (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006; Longhurst, 2016). The trajectories that the participant may take provides insight into the nuances of the account. However, if the participant is veering off topic, the interview will use the predetermined question to redirect the interview towards the points of interest (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Open-ended questions are preferred as they provide enough guidance to steer the direction in relation to a particular topic. However, they still allow the participant an opportunity of an open response on the topic in a conversational manner rather than 'yes/no' responses (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006; Longhurst, 2016). This allows for deeper and more insightful understanding of the participant. This additionally allows the researcher to reflect on the co-construction of meaning that occurs between her and the participants which enables an in-depth understanding of the constructs and theories being studied.

Researchers use the montage of information shared by participants to juxtapose slices of reality together and in doing so, they create a pattern that illuminates the psychological and emotional experiences that are interpreted (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). During this meta-analysis process, many other factors come into play such as the different voices and perspectives that are conveyed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). The data is deductively analysed which uses predetermined patterns and theories to search for meaning and develop concepts that will lead to further insight and understanding of the subject (Taylor, et al., 2015). This is line with the thematic analysis employed in the study. Due to a deductive approach being used, attention should also be given to what is missing in the data as this could be revealing of concepts that are entrenched within it (Taylor, et al., 2015).

4.2 The Constitutive Value of Narratives

According to Bamberg (2006), the study of autobiographies of individuals has adopted a multidisciplinary approach and has been employed in many disciplines. While people have always told stories, the study of the lives of individuals is said to have begun in the early 1900s. It then progressed into various methods that evolved from a focus on thematic assessment towards a more specific and detailed account that didn't only give importance to knowing the entire story, but also allowed the focus on the importance of people's choice of story to share (Schutze, 1948; as cited in Bamberg, 2006). Wengraf & Chamberlayne (2006) analysed two parts of decisions that people made – firstly, the decisions in their lives that led them to certain experiences, and secondly, the decision to share that experience through narrative with the researcher. This orientation influenced the present study of immigrant Muslim women narratives. In this instance, 'narrative' is defined as "accounts of events in the world which are organized in a time-related sequence" (Watson, 2009, p. 429). Alternatively, a 'story' is defined as "temporally sequenced accounts of events which unfold through plots involving inter-play of characters with interests, motives, emotions and moralities" (Watson, 2009, p. 429). Aguirre (2000; as cited in Vincent, 2008) explains stories to be "social events that instruct us about social processes, social structures and social situations" (p. 1429), which shows the socially constructed impact that social structures could have on people's decisions and livelihoods.

Polkinghorne (1988) described narrative theory as follows:

> Narrative is a scheme by means of which human beings give meaning to their experience of temporality and personal actions. Narrative meaning functions to give form to the understanding of a purpose to life and to join everyday actions and events into episodic units. It provides a framework for

> understanding the past events of one's life and for planning future actions. It is the primary scheme by means of which human existence is rendered meaningful. Thus, the study of human beings by the human sciences needs to focus on the realm of meaning in general, and on narrative meaning in particular (p. 11).

The choice of narrative research to engage with the stories of immigrant Muslim women is informed by the above contention that narrative renders human existence meaningful. Using narrative theory, the narratives of immigrant Muslim women could be understood by explaining how they make meaning of their life story. They also make meaning of their narrative with what is available to them in terms of their environment, and the integration of new events (Duff & Bell, 2002). Through this, it is seen that narratives do not occur or get constructed in a vacuum, but rather are fluid and can be re-constructed (Duff & Bell, 2002). Researchers use narrative research to "delve beneath statistically driven generalizations that are made but also because they have the potential to validate the knowledge of 'ordinary' people" (Fraser, 2004, p. 184). The intention is then to acquire experiential accounts during the process of conducting qualitative research. Narrative research has been an important facet to qualitative research as it produces rich insights into the lives of people and the contexts which shape the manner in which they conduct their lives (Walker, 2006). Researchers are on a constant search for knowledge and narrative research in particular is beneficial to understanding the complex nature of stories (Callahan & Elliott, 1996). Narrative research includes acknowledging and exploring the strengths of a person through their lives as well as creating meaningful dialogues that contain important information (Fraser, 2004). Narrative research contains important information about how people perceive themselves in the context of the stories told. Stories that are told are the product of a person's life, including their perceptions of the past, realities of the present, and

visions of the future. Narrative research is both a process and a product. Bujold (2002) explains it: "As process, it consists of the meaning making of one's experiences and is a form of self-construction or fluid self-awareness. As product, it is a story" (p. 472). This insight aptly describes the duality that narrative research has. This provides the opportunity for lives in a genuine world-context (Callahan & Elliott, 1996), which is also influenced by both the researcher and the person narrating (Bamberg, 2006).

Following on the preceding understanding of narrative, Squire (2013) explains that narratives are used to understand how people make sense of themselves as well as shed light on all the constituents that make researchers explore personal lives. Additionally, narratives are valuable in that they constitute human culture and provide an external exhibition of life stories and identity for people through which their thoughts and experiences are expressed (Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou, 2013). Here, culture is understood as a collection of stories which people believe and narrate to themselves and others (Fraser, 2004). Narrative research is also useful in the way it provides important information about the social aspect of people and the underlying attribute of how they navigate their daily interactions (Reissman & Quinney, 2005; as cited in Hoosain, 2013). Fraser (2004) adds that lived stories are constituted of all interactions that a person may encounter with themselves, within groups and society at large. The societal impact and framework that narratives adopt is inherently shaped by these constructs (Andrew, et al., 2013). Therefore, the narratives of immigrants were expected to be dense because their stories are shaped by an interaction between significant personal events, social factors and broader socio-political systems. An example of this is a variety of immigration difficulties, and the adaptation to the new host country. Additionally, immigrants consider the vagaries of everyday life in the present and their hopes for the future. However, in keeping with Spivak's (1988) caution of how subaltern voices communicate, there is the inherent possibility that their narratives might be expressed in

alternative ways. Furthermore, Spivak's theorisation informs scholars that subaltern voices can be inhibited by the researchers approach and social location, linguistic barriers and resistance to dominant modes of expression. Moreover, the possible mistrust of the researcher wanting to enquire about their life stories may also inhibit their expression. In targeting a marginalized group, the narrative has both possibilities and challenges.

From a narrative therapy perspective, retelling of the narrative is equally important, as stories allow for additional ways of understanding and cathartic expression (Hoosain, 2013). In this regard, understanding of these narratives entails elaborating the link between the events. Of significant interest is the way in which people portray these events and through this - the value they assign to stories (Hoosain, 2013). Therefore, exploring narratives of immigrant Muslim women uncovered content of the narratives themselves but also the value that they have assigned to narratives. This revealed the extent of the influence that certain stories had on their lives compared to others. Moreover, the narratives of immigrant Muslim women gave insight into their socialization as well as the social contexts. This was important as it enabled the analysis of the social factors that influenced the terms of their well-being in the new community and how they constructed their narratives. A group of people may also create a narrative that they adopt in defence of themselves against cultural norms (Levy & Storeng, 2007). In the context of South African politics, it was interesting to explore the identity that people adopted according to their experiences of acceptance or rejection by South African communities. However, ordinary everyday stories are equally important, in that they feature stories that are not necessarily well-known, or constrict the person to a specific theme, but rather display the nature of stories that are told in daily interactions (Bamberg, 2006).

4.3 Research Questions

5. How do immigrant Muslim women narrate their experience of the space of Fordsburg in relation to their home country?
6. How do the narratives of immigrant Muslim women convey a sense of belonging in Fordsburg?
7. To what extent is their sense of self constructed by their sense of place in Fordsburg?
8. How does narrative research unfold when a researcher works within a subaltern community?

4.4 Research Aims

1. To understand how immigrant Muslim women report the experience of the space of Fordsburg in relation to their home country.
2. To explore how Muslim women narrate the experience a sense of self and belonging in Fordsburg.
3. To understand how narrative research unfolds when the researcher works with a subaltern community

4.5 Research Design

4.5.1 Sample

The sample was obtained through purposive sampling and was chosen because it was most advantageous to access people who were suited to this study to obtain understandings of the community of subaltern women. The sample constituted seven participants who were identified as being appropriate for the research. Seven participants were deemed suitable for this study. It was hoped that a more focused analysis of a smaller number of participants

allowed for the depth in the narratives to be accessed (Taylor, et al. 2015). This sample additionally constituted observations that were made through the data collection phase in the research. This observation consisted of the various shops and women that were approached but declined or were not suitable according to the inclusion criteria. However, the interaction with them, the shop owners and observation of Fordsburg were deemed necessary in documenting for added richness and depth in the data by process of triangulation. These observations were documented with the aid of field notes.

Participants that were interviewed met the inclusion criteria that are discussed below. The first specification was that the women had to be immigrants who had been working or living in Fordsburg for a minimum of one year. This criterion was selected to be able to engage with participants who chose to live or work in Fordsburg for a length of time and have "adequate" knowledge of living and being in the community. This criterion was also employed so that a relative level of English language fluency was attained. It was assumed that the more time participants spent in Fordsburg, the more fluent they would be in English. Fluency of English was an aspect of the inclusion criteria as the presence of a translator was thought to inhibit the story-telling that is required in narrative research. The analysis of the data was focused on the content of the story and the way that the form or story unfolds. This process would have been hindered by the presence of a translator. Additionally, there was no funding for this research, which made the use of translators unaffordable. It was understood and expected that there would have been limitations to the study as some participants may have been excluded based on the factor of fluency. These instances were documented as observations that still could be used in contextualizing Fordsburg. However, a one-year period in which participants have resided in Fordsburg was expected to be sufficient for English fluency and comprehension. An initial and introductory conversation was held with the participant to ensure that there would be a basic mutual understanding during the

interview process. This was done by basic conversational skills before the interview to ensure that they understood the researcher and the researcher could understand them. Secondly, participants had to have been Muslim for about 5 years of their lives or currently be practicing Islam. This criterion was to ensure that they had followed the religion or had practiced it for a period in time in which they would engage with it. In addition, women had to be above the age of 18 years to be able to consent to the interview. It was important for them to be able to give an informed account of their sense of self through the narrative as well as be able to elaborate their experiences of sense of belonging through the narrative. These inclusion criteria guided the sample to be close enough to the requirement for the study, and it assisted in differentiating the level of understanding that was elicited.

4.5.1.1 Biographical details of participants

Table 1 provides a demographic breakdown of the participants. Participants ranged between the ages of 22 -35 years. Three of the participants were from India and they all belonged to the Indian race group. Four of the remaining participants were black women from Malawi and Mozambique which are neighbouring African countries. All participants were employed in Fordsburg. Only one, of the seven women, owned her own business while the remainder were all employed in shops in Fordsburg.

Table 1: Participants Biographical Details

Participant	**Mumtaz*1**	**Amina*1**	**Nazima*1**	**Zahraa*1**	**Salma*1**	**Adeela*1**	**Hafsah*1**
Age	22	31	27	25	24	35	30
Country of Origin	India	Malawi	Malawi	Malawi	India	Mozambique	India
Race	Indian	Black	Black	Black	Indian	Black	Indian
Length of Time in SA	1.5 years	4 years	1 year	3 years	7 years	12 years	9 years
Relationship Status	Married (arranged)	Married	Married	Married	Married	Married	Single
Dress Code	Eastern clothing	*Hijab**2 and *abaya**3	*Hijab* and *abaya*	*Hijab* & *abaya*	*Hijab* and Eastern clothing	Western clothing	*Hijab* and *abaya*
Children	0	1	3	1	0	3	0
Reason for coming to SA (Fordsburg)	Employment	Employment	Employment	Employment	Assist Family Members in Business	Employment	Employment
Employment	Beautician	Shop Assistant	Seamstress	Seamstress	Beauty Parlour Owner	Shop Assistant	Beautician

*1 – Pseudonyms are used *2 *Hijab* – headscarf/veil worn by some Muslim women; *3 *Abaya* – simple, loose garment resembling a cloak worn by some Muslim women

4.5.2 Data Collection

The participants were accessed by the researcher walking around Fordsburg and the Oriental Plaza, the business hub of Fordsburg, and identified possible participants. The researcher found this approach to be useful in recruiting participants within this space. Identification of participants was done by an observation of their dress code, the name of the shop they had worked in or their accents. This was done to identify their religion as well as to

decipher their country of origin. In this way, the participants were chosen based on the symbolism of their perceived religion, dress code and accent. The identification process of possible participants was done in this way by close observation and evaluation to be able to meet the inclusion requirements (Seidman, 2006). These assumptions that were based on visual cues were tested with participants to ensure accuracy. Participants were introduced to the research project. They were also engaged in a discussion concerning their possible input into the study. If interest was expressed, contact details were exchanged as well as future arrangements made for the logistics surrounding the interview process. Snowball sampling was also used to access and contact other participants that would be viable for the study. This method accesses the sample through requesting referrals of people with similar characteristics needed for the research from existing participants (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). Snowball sampling is the most widely used method of data collection in which informants share contact details of other informants that are suited to the study and thus repeating the process (Noy, 2008). This sampling method is key in accessing populations which are "hidden" and therefore uncovers a unique bank of knowledge (Noy, 2008). This assisted the researcher in appropriately identifying populations that may not have been otherwise naturally accessed. Four participants were accessed through the snowballing method, whilst three participants were initially approach by the researcher. All interviews were conducted in their place of work in Fordsburg. Amina, Nazima, Zahraa and Adeela were located in the Oriental Plaza, whilst Mumtaz, Salma and Hafsah were in Fordsburg Town. Most of them readily agreed to do the interview; however, two of them were tentative regarding the reason for the interview and questioned the researcher about the intention of the research. Reassurance was provided by patiently answering the questions that they posed as well as going through the reason for the request of the interview. The researcher reaffirmed the confidentiality and the aims of the

research to ensure that the participants felt confident enough to participate in the interview process (Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003).

Seven Muslim women that had been living or working in Fordsburg for a minimum of one year agreed to participate in this study. Consent forms for interviews and audio recording were required to be signed by participants before the interview commenced. Interviews were conducted at the venue chosen by the participants. All seven participants opted to be interviewed at their workplaces. A semi-structured interview guided by open-ended questions was employed which was framed using the theories of immigration and belonging to access the narratives of participants. These open-ended questions were used as a guide for the researcher to probe participants on relevant themes in the study. It was designed to include questions regarding their perspectives on gender, immigration to South Africa and culture. Probing questions were included in the interview schedule in the event that participants encountered difficulty with answering the questions. Probing questions were designed to elicit further narrative and in-depth explanations from participants. An in-depth, face-to-face narrative was planned; however, participants mostly adhered to the limited range of probing questions that had been prepared. The duration of the interview was approximately 20 – 25 minutes on average and was comprised according to the narrative approach. The limitations of the length of these interviews is engaged below. Interviews were recorded using a portable voice recorder. Recordings were used for verbatim transcription of the interviews.

Once the interview was over, the researcher thanked the participants for agreeing to be interviewed. Participants were additionally asked if they felt they needed counselling services due to the revelation of possibly traumatic incidents. The participant that expressed a need for these services were given pre-identified sources within the Fordsburg area that she could contact. Contact has been made with this organization to offer services to participants

prior to the data collection phase. Although most participants did not express a need to, they had the information necessary should the need arise at a later stage.

4.5.3 Procedure

The sample was accessed from Fordsburg and the Oriental Plaza by recruitment and snowball sampling. This sampling was directed towards accessing participants who met the inclusion criteria, namely immigrant Muslim women who had been living or working in Fordsburg for more than one year and who had a certain level of English fluency. Participants were addressed, as well as employers of the participants if the need arose. This was to inform them of the procedures for the interview period. If participants showed interest and agreed to participate in the study, they were then given an Information Sheet (Appendix A) depicting all the relevant details of the study. Potential participants were restricted from being interviewed in the study due to them not meeting one of the inclusion criteria. Some participants who were eligible for the study were reluctant to participate due to various reasons which will be elaborated on below. Confirmed participants were then contacted to arrange a convenient time and place to conduct the interview. Participants were given consent forms for the interview and audio-recording of the interview (Appendix B & C). All interviews were conducted at the participant's workplace. The duration of the interview was approximately 20-25 minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded.

The second phase consisted of the transcription of interviews to document an accurate record of the content (Fraser, 2004). The analysis of the narratives used a deductive approach which sought to give importance to the narrative, and in doing so, the analysis was guided by the data that was presented and existing theories. All interviews were transcribed verbatim. The audio-recordings and the transcriptions were safely stored in a password-protected computer which only the interviewer and her supervisor had access to.

4.5.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted in phases, which included listening to the stories being narrated as well as the level of emotion invested in their storytelling (Fraser, 2004). It expanded the scope of study as it gives more insight into the life of the participants as well as adds the emotional value to which they invest in their narrative. This may sometimes inhibit the general flow of the narrative due to the difficulty that some may have in recalling highly emotional events in their lives. However, this information is important to the analysis of the narrative and the alternate information it may produce. Whilst exploring narratives of immigrant Muslim women, assessing and listening for the emotion provided information that sought to uncover the value they assign to the story in its retelling. The value immigrant Muslim women assigned to the story was also understood through the choice of story that was told. These interviews were transcribed and subjective information about the interview was noted in the form of field notes, to better contextualize the interview. The analysis of data moved towards interpretation of the transcriptions, which sought to closely analyse the content in relation to categories, themes, and the form in which the story unfolds (Fraser, 2004). Due to interviews being predominantly semi-structured, the narrative was given space for the story to take its' own path. In some interviews, certain aspects and stories were portrayed in detail whereas in others, details were omitted at the participant's discretion. These may be factors that influenced the analysis and the depth to which it could be accessed. Bamberg (1947) also claims that certain aspects of the story is chosen and analysed by the researcher.

For this report, thematic analysis was employed. Thematic analysis sought to investigate and identify themes that emerged in narratives at different levels, and finally form a structure, which provides more information about the way people structure their thoughts

(Attride-Stirling, 2001). Thematic analysis is defined as the identification, analysis and reporting of patterns within the narrative (Braun & Clark, 2006). This identification process focuses on finding common threads through the interview across the interviews (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). It achieves this aim by breaking up the narrative into smaller units of information of content and thereafter reviewing the units as descriptive of a phenomenon (Sparker, 2005; as cited in Vaismorandi, et al., 2013). Thematic analysis was chosen to extract a rich and detailed account of the data whilst still being able to portray the complexities thereof (Braun & Clark, 2006).

Attride-Stirling (2001) further explains that a thematic analysis aims at extracting three types of themes from the data. Basic themes are first extracted which are accessed from the raw text. This process consists of the researcher transcribing and reading the data. Thereafter, the researcher re-reads the data and identifies initial ideas. This is done for the researcher to familiarize themselves with the data (Braun & Clark, 2006). Codes are then generated by the researcher that code interesting findings within the complete data set which is then collated (Vaismoradi, et al., 2013). Potential themes are then produced from the collated data codes with the use of coding which are then reviewed against the data to create a holistic picture of the themes at play (Vaismoradi, et al., 2013). Basic themes are then grouped together to form an organization theme (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

This organized theme is constructed by the qualities of the basic theme that are categorized (Attride & Stirling, 2001). An ongoing analysis is employed thereafter to be able to refine the specifications of basic themes found in the over-arching narrative (Vaismoradi, et al., 2013). These organized themes feed into global themes that describe a principal theme that encompasses the text (Attride-Stirling, 2001). These specifications assist with gaining clear names and definitions for the themes (Vaismoradi, et al., 2013). The global theme is not based on a quantifiable measure, but rather the analysis on whether the theme encapsulates

important features for the research question (Braun & Clark, 2006; as cited in Vaismorandi, et al., 2013).

The stories that were uncovered from participants provided the researcher with the value that they assign to the stories they chose to share (Shefer, 2013). Upon recognition, the researcher was cautious, as these themes may not have corresponded to the reality of the participants (Parker, 2013). Braun & Clarke (2006) describe this further by stating that thematic analysis seeks to identify "patterns (themes, stories) within data, and theorizes language as constitutive of meaning and meaning as social" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). Through the thematic analysis of the narratives, main global themes were drawn by identification of the pattern throughout the interviews and this is discussed below.

4.5.5 Ethical Considerations

Researchers have a dual role in the research process of narrative inquiry in which they assume the roles of a professional who is accountable to the world of academia, but they also have the role to initiate a social, almost intimate relationship with the individual to acquire the data researchers seek. These roles are often contradictory to each other and therefore have to be carefully monitored (Josselson, 2007). Researchers also have the obligation of protecting their participants from harm and the risk of harm. Therefore, measures were taken to ensure that the interviews were treated in a sensitive manner.

Prior to data collection, approval for the research had been obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Witwatersrand. Before the interviews could begin, participants were afforded information about the research and informed of the interview process. An information sheet with the relevant details was presented to the participants (See Appendix A). Participants were not misled or given false information regarding the purpose of the study. Upon reading the information sheet, participants could

choose to volunteer and were informed about their basic right to withdraw at any stage during the course of the interview. When asked, the participants were also informed regarding the nature of questions that would be asked. Participants were then requested to sign an informed consent form which included the relevant details. An additional informed consent was signed by the participants, which allowed for the audio-recording of the interview. The use of the audio-recorder was to enable the researcher to award full attention to participants instead of note-taking which would feel impersonal. However, a small journal was kept on hand, in the case of the researcher needed to document an observation that would not be heard on playback of the recording later on.

Anonymity could not be assured as the researcher conducted the interviews and therefore knew the interviewees, but confidentiality was assured. Confidentiality was ensured through the use of pseudonyms to mask the identity of participants. The storage of drafts, audio recordings and transcriptions were kept in a password protected laptop which only the researcher and supervisor had access to. The audio-recordings were used to transcribe the data verbatim into text after the interviews were completed. This was done to preserve the information and amplify the text with additional observations made by the researcher during the interview. This was later used for the analysis. Confidentiality was also explained thoroughly to participants to ensure that there was an understanding of it.

The researcher did not anticipate any adverse effects of the research on the participants. In saying this, due to the participants originating from a minority group (gender, ethnicity, and citizenship), care was taken to afford them protection during the interview process. This was done through the location of the interview and the security of the dialogue by ensuring that other people did not overhear the interview. Participants were also assured that the information that they chose to share could not be linked to them specifically in any manner.

The participants were not a vulnerable group as they were over 18 years of age. These participants have dealt with potentially difficult situations travelling across multiple borders to get to South Africa. This may suggest that they are a resilient group. However, the researcher informed participants that they could access the Emthonjeni Centre at the University of the Witwatersrand for counselling support should they require it. An alternate facility in Mayfair was identified which is supportive of Muslim women. One participant did request support in terms of counselling services therefore appropriate information was given regarding the facility in Mayfair.

There were no advantages or disadvantages to participating in the study. Data is stored safely in a password protected computer. Participants had a chance to withdraw from the study during the interview but no participants expressed a wish to do so. A summary of the research report will be sent to those participants who request it. Contact details of the research supervisor and the researcher were provided to the participants if anyone needed to contact them for any reason.

4.5.6 Self-Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a process which shapes the knowledge and the way we acquire this knowledge from research (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Reflexivity occurs at every stage of the research process in which there is a continuous critical reflection of the research itself (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). This reflexivity defines the research in terms of the question's researchers chose to ask, over the questions they discard; the literature that they chose to include that forms the framework of the research; and the research methodologies they prefer, etc. (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004).

In building rapport, I believed that my age and gender increased the fluidity of the connection established with participants. This was due to me being the same gender and in a

similar age range to that of the participants. Rapport was important against the backdrop of the probing and personal questions that participants were asked. The conservativeness of the religion concerning the segregation of men and women also made the participants more accessible to a women researcher. It is possible that, had a male conducted the interviews, more resistance might have been experienced.

I tried to understand the life stories of immigrant Muslim women and explore the agency and marginalisation in their stories. Immigrant Muslim women in the media are portrayed as voiceless victims of their sometimes patriarchal and oppressive communities that inflict various "backward" practices on them such as forced marriages and honour crimes (Mirza, 2013). I wanted to understand these discourses directly from the participants. Despite participants belonging to a subaltern group, they had voices and agency that they used in constructing the narrative and choosing the extent of their disclosure. Most, if not all, women interviewed in this study appeared to have an apt knowledge of their rights and exercised them. However, it was also observed that patriarchy was a difficult subject for participants to talk about with me, as the nuances of power are more complex than what could have been uncovered during the period of the interview. For me, patriarchy within society was directly linked to the oppression of women. However, for the participants, their narratives extended only as far as acknowledging that a difference in privileges existed amongst others based on gender. I expected the narratives to predominantly reflect the patriarchy and oppression that participants experienced. However, it did not feature as a prominent theme, as much as I identified with it. The platform tried to target their narratives of oppression, but this was not a prominent theme. This made it difficult to uncover the power at play or the oppressive mechanisms that they may have experienced.

I used dress code to identify potential participants for the research. In doing this, it sought to target an even more specific participant pool than was already stipulated. The dress

code of Muslim women has become synonymous with the perception of being oppressed and "backwards" which has now extended beyond the symbolism of religion through the construction of western ideals (Mirza, 2013). Western ideals reinforce that the dress code of Muslim women is presumptive of them being non-agentic and people who cannot speak for themselves (Abu-Lughod, 2013). I was cautious and conservative in my own dress code as well as in my manner of approaching possible participants. This distinction, from a feminist positioning, is highly erroneous due to the presumptions of oppression based on dress code and the narratives that were pursued because of it (Abu-Lughod, 2013). My positioning of feminism led me to pursue this research topic that would help in me understanding gendered discrimination and shed light thereon. I understood that individual agency is imperative to feminist theory, as it is a way in which people can understand and act towards social change (Badran, 2006). An important agenda was to access the perception of the participants own sense of agency through the exploration of their decisions, thoughts, actions, and roles.

5. Findings and Discussion

The data analysed from the interviews with immigrant Muslim in Fordsburg resulted in five themes being identified through the thematic analysis. These five themes are namely; employment, exploitation and Fordsburg; religion, identity and culture within Fordsburg; sense of belonging of immigrant Muslim women in Fordsburg; data collection in Fordsburg; and reading silences in the narratives of immigrant Muslim women. These themes will be discussed in detail below.

5.1 Employment, Exploitation and Fordsburg

Immigrants describe South Africa as being a land of opportunity and for this reason, there is a high attraction of Asian and African immigrants to South Africa (Munshi, 2013). Immigrants began to fit into niche markets, which provided them with opportunities to construct their own economic networks (Grant & Thompson, 2015). As these grew, Johannesburg became known to be an immigrant hub to which immigrants were drawn to the economic potential that South Africa had to offer relative to these in their home countries (Grant & Thompson, 2015). Gauteng attracts immigrants who expect to accumulate wealth that is needed for their future journeys (Landau & Seagate, 2009). All participants that were interviewed relayed that the primary reason for coming to South Africa was for employment and financial gain. Amina articulates this by saying that "*I come here* (to) *South Africa to work"*. She describes having no money in Malawi to feed herself. She goes on to say that she wouldn't go back to Malawi permanently, but would like to visit her home country. It seems as though opportunity for work and financial gain is very limited in their respective home countries. Hafsah elaborates on the opportunities that are available to her in India. She says "*I don't like to too much study, because no job in India. You can study but you can't get a nice*

job". This indicates that there is a possibility of studying in India which she has not chosen for herself. However, this suggests that even with furthering her education, there remains little hope of securing a job. Therefore, she identified a gap in employment opportunities in her country of origin. Her reason for coming to South Africa was to address this employment gap. She describes the way she acquired a job in South Africa:

> *Somebody called me. If you want interest in beauty work. So, I said yes, I want. So, he say take visa and everything and come South Africa then go Durban first. Then I'm work 6 month. Then move here.*

A belief to consider within Islam is that the duty of Muslim women is within the home, and to not to have a job. According to Mumtaz: "*A woman should be in house. She can't work outside*". With this, it is important to understand the context which highlights the conflict between Qur'anic ideals and the actual practice of Islam (Badran, 2006). For her, it is possible that traditions based upon Qur'anic ideals are important to maintain her ethnic identity within her home however, its expression is difficult in reality (Read, 2002). Religious ideals have to be negotiated in relation to the realities of economic instability and the need to work to sustain a livelihood. Also, many Muslim people are seeing that there is a distinction between their religion and culture in which they need to live. In so doing, they can follow their Islamic values and a Western life in a compatible manner (Read, 2002). This enables Muslim women to express themselves religiously and maintain their ethnic identity, without jeopardizing it by working or being present in the public sphere (Read, 2002). Badran (2006) explains that the Qur'anic text may have been interpreted in context of the patriarchal culture due to it being received by a patriarchal culture. Therefore, women being employed and present in the public sphere is related less to a Qur'anic ideal, but more to the expression of the Qur'anic ideal in a patriarchal society which Fordsburg subscribes to in some ways. In this regard, even though Fordsburg is clearly gendered, women engage in economic activity.

There is also a sense that even though they may have better paid jobs in South Africa as compared to their countries of origin, many of them have settled for less in terms of their careers. According to Mumtaz: "*For me is like, I want to do job in an office. Not like here. So, ya. But I'm not so educated so I can't get nice job here so I have to stay*". Many of the participants are motivated to achieve more in relation to career advancement and financial gain. Zahraa describes her days being spent in the following way: "*I just work. Go home. Do what I want. Raise my capital. Go back home. If I can get capital, I can just maybe come home for business. Working*". In this way, she seeks to return to her country of birth, but still call South Africa her temporary home. The sharing of her future plans for her life depicted the value that she placed on her ability and focus to realize her goal. Here, the role of the narrative in enabling future imaginings from the present is seen. Adeela also endorsed the above by saying, "*I can say the job is difficult to get in Mozambique, but here is better. You can get something*". This suggests that access to employment is easier in South Africa which may make it an attractive site for people whose countries may not offer the same. Many narratives suggested that the reason for being in South Africa was for economic gain only and not to make South Africa their permanent residence. When Hafsah was asked whether her trip back to India would be permanent next year, she said "*No, no, no. not permanently. Just visit for mummy daddy*". The lack of desire in making South Africa the permanent residence of certain immigrants was an interesting concept when considering their migration to South Africa. It suggests that working class women immigrants primarily immigrate to South Africa for economic reasons and do not see themselves living in the country permanently but rather as circular migrants (Posel, 2004). However, returning to the countries of origin was also not an option that they wanted to consider at present. When asked whether she would choose to live elsewhere, Amina said *"I* (would) *stay for Ethiopia",* rather than going back to Malawi. However, she would prefer staying and working in Fordsburg to send money to her mother in

Malawi. Temporary migration to the country seemed to have increased by virtue of the rise in female labour migration to South Africa (Posel, 2004). This is evident in considering that the majority of the women interviewed had temporarily migrated to South Africa due to their need to work.

However, as much as the employment of women immigrants has increased, there has been exploitation within the employment sphere of immigrants in Fordsburg. Zahraa alludes to this when she describes how she sought employment because she was jobless and desperate for a job. She says that the only reason she stays in Fordsburg is due to her job there. However, she does feel that she is being exploited and says that "*here, the money is peanuts".* She is able to acknowledge the wage differential as she has worked elsewhere in South Africa, where she has been paid more than what she is currently being paid. She says that she was studying electronics engineering and later changed her field of career to catering in which she received accredited certification. She had hoped that this certification would allow for better employment options in Fordsburg, but this was not the case. In this regard, even with some level of accreditation, immigrants remain confined to low- to semi-skilled roles within the economy (Anderson, 2010)

Nazima says that "*I stay with a South African mama".* Therefore, renting is a viable option for her because of her kind landlady. Nazima states that "*no one is treating us like we are foreigner. She is staying with us nicely and she don't treat us badly. I stay like I'm staying with my mother and my father".* Therefore, in this case, it seems as though she has not encountered any exploitation and discrimination in relation to accommodation. She however elaborates on the other ways that she has faced exploitation. She describes living in fear in South Africa due to her possible encounters with the police or criminals. During these encounters, she explains that the police themselves are criminals. In this regard, they ask for her asylum documentation, ask for bribes, and then are required to get new documentation

which is a lengthy and expensive process. Nazima describes her situation emotively and says that she feels vulnerable and lost in Fordsburg due to the exploitation faced. She feels as if she is unprotected and unsupported in the context of Fordsburg. She also feels that the government should afford immigrants documentation quickly so as to avoid the exploitation faced when waiting for this documentation. She wishes to do this so that "*these people can't pay us less money… they pay us less money, they treat us like foreigners."* Therefore, it is apparent that the human rights and dignity of immigrants is compromised in Fordsburg (Taran, 2000). Salma says that she wouldn't want her children to be in South Africa because "*They don't have certain good rules in South Africa...They do something and they lives. You always hear of kills. So many times it happens"*. This speaks to the imagined livelihood that she foresees for herself and her family in which human dignity and rights are compromised, and she is exposed to being a victim of crime. She goes onto say that South Africa should enforce more lifetime jail sentences and introduce hanging as a punishment for rapists and murderers, as certain other countries do. This reinforces the idea that she fears being a victim of these crimes and would like harsher sentences enforced for the crime rate to be reduced, so that *"people's are living the life"* in South Africa. Fordsburg, in essence, operates a very informal economic sector with many vendors that avoid the implementation of legislative regulations. This leaves immigrants vulnerable to various modes of exploitation including low wages, lack of job security, subpar working conditions, and exposure to being victims of crime (Anderson, 2010).

This can be uncovered through the use of narratives, the historical accounts and legacies of these women over space and time which have been studied to address the complicit Eurocentric feminism that is used to contextualize their lives inaccurately. The intersectionality of their historical, political, economic and cultural factors has been collated to provide more insight into this using the more appropriate lens of African and Islamic

feminism. Immigrant Muslim women themselves have realized that they are active participants in their own livelihoods and have also recognise that they have the agency to transform themselves and societies (Ampofo, et al., 2000). Zahraa depicted this knowledge:

> *If someone is not treating you fairly, you can go to those organizations, they can help. Unlike at first, when you got… when you are facing a problem you can just maybe staying in a room and crying. But now, you can stand up and say 'No, enough is enough'.*

This suggests that she no longer wants to be spoken for, or be a victim of her circumstances and face exploitation. She has the resources and the agency to be able to state what she wants and ask for help. Her awareness of organizations that are supportive of the empowerment of women and immigrants depicts that she has the knowledge to empower herself when she feels as if she is being treated unfairly. In this instance, she shows that she is a woman who knows her rights despite being discriminated against or stigmatized in the past. She goes on to state that women should be independent even if they had not received a complete education to gain adequate employment.

5.2 Religion, identity and culture within Fordsburg

Since, September 11, images of oppressed Muslim women have been tightly bound to a message of rescue from their "oppressive" culture (Abu-Lughod, 2013). However, Abu-Lughod (2013) has been trying to uncover the reason why the Western sense of Muslim women is so far from the experience and perception that Muslim women have of themselves and their culture. Due to the extensive use of the Eurocentric model, there was a common discourse that marginalized, under-privileged women were victims of cultural oppression. While this discourse is being challenged through the knowledge and implementation of Islamic feminism, it still remains a prevalent perspective. Abu-Lughod (2013) describes the

shock that many Muslim women experience when told that they are oppressed by their religion. It appears a common misconception that people presume that Muslim women do not have any rights within the Islamic religion (Abu-Lughod, 2013). It is for this reason that Islamic feminism is based on the renewed reading of the Qur'an. This will entail that they may practice their religion differently but still is reflective of their identity and culture. People generalise a culture thereby creating a perception of its norms which then takes away from other people accounting for their experiences of their own religion (Abu-Lughod, 2013). This was also a result of trying to understand African women within Western feminism (Beoku-Betts & Njambi, 2005). An African perspective from Southern Africa illuminates the differences in experience between Muslim women in Saudi Arabia and those in South Africa. The Islamic feministic perspective accounts for Muslim women in practising their religion and culture the way they interpret the readings of the Qur'an.

Many Muslims consider their religion of Islam as an integral component of their identity (Malak, 2005). This was found to supersede the other factors that may contribute to their identity such as various social factors including race, gender, and ethnic affiliation (Malak, 2005). Religion is seen as an intense identity-shaping factor which transcends these other signifiers. This was present in most of the data analysed in which participants acknowledged that being a Muslim was "very important". Nazima says that she loves being a Muslim. She elaborates by saying *"To be a Muslim to me, it's important. I'm proud of Muslim. I'm proud of my religion"*. When further probed on this point, it emerged that the practice of Islam is an important facet of the lives of participants and governed their lifestyle. Salma describes that her religion and culture of Islam *"is very important compared to other cultures, because what we thinks is Islam is only one culture in the world".* Mumtaz clearly stated that the way she practices her religion is through her lifestyle and role as a woman. This primarily includes the food she consumes and the way she dresses. For her, religion is

culture and culture is identity. She described her practice of her religion by stating that although the norm for *namaaz* (prayer that is time-bound in which specific physical acts are conducted) is five times a day, she prayed whenever she had the time to. However, other participants did practice their religion through *namaaz* and making various *dua's* (prayer without any protocol). Fordsburg provides a platform for these practices to be expressed comfortably within the community due to the presence of Islamic prayer facilities and access to other resources needed to conduct an Islamic lifestyle. Amina recounted that living near a mosque and going to the mosque to pray is a practice that she enjoys doing, which Fordsburg provides. Fordsburg is a space in which she can freely express her religiosity and thus her sense of self. This illuminates the intersection between how sense of self is constructed by sense of place.

Through the narrative process, it was found that the participants enjoy the rules and behaviours that women must follow in their religion, especially in the form of dressing. In this way, it can be seen that their religion plays an integral part in their lives. This is evident in their practice of adherence to time-bound prayer and to dress code which dictate the manner in which they lead their lives. Therefore, religion is an important practice which is enabled by living in Fordsburg. Hafsah says that she would prefer staying in an area with a big Muslim community for celebration of festivals. She says "*Because you know festival like Eid. Eid is most important you know. Then you know all the people, your people is there. You can enjoy nicely. Otherwise you can't* (If you stayed elsewhere)". This highlights the important of sense of place in promoting sense of self. This suggests that religion is a central part of identity among the women that were interviewed. Choosing Fordsburg as a place of residence was also instrumental in being able to live that identity with relative ease. The media has highlighted that wearing a *hijab* opens Muslim women up to receiving both gendered and Islamophobic discrimination (Mirza, 2013). It is important to also note that all

but one participant wore a *hijab.* Adeela did not wear a *hijab* as she was married to a Christian man and converted to Christianity because of her second marriage. She grew up in a Muslim family and was first married to a Muslim man. Her second marriage introduced her to the Christian faith which she accepted. She was included in this research because she had identified herself culturally as Muslim and had been Muslim for all but 3 years of her life. She also has the perspective that she is Muslim, as she views Christianity as not being different to Islam. Additionally, she still practices the laws of Islam through her prayer, food consumption, and still adheres to all the fast's and celebrations. She also teaches her children the Islamic teachings and sends them to *madressa (educational institution for Islamic teachings).* Adeela finds that even though she is converted to Christianity because of her marriage, her practice and lifestyle are still according to her Islamic faith, therefore she believes she is culturally Islamic.

Zahraa had an alternative experience in terms of her converting from Christianity to Islam due to her marriage. Her country of origin is Malawi which is a predominantly Christian country with an Islamic minority. She mentioned that the transition was a difficult process for her. Conversion to Islam is a process which can be challenging for some people (Badran, 2006). The conversion to Islam includes the intersection of religious, gendered, cultural and societal beliefs which people need to adopt in their new faith which alters their lifestyle (Badran, 2006). The challenge of these various identities has to be navigated by people who convert (van Nieuwkerk, 2006). Zahraa still identified as being Christian at certain points in the interview. However, the transition between religions was described by her as natural as she highlighted her love for God in both religions, no matter who the God was. She noted the adoption of Islam as her religion was in some cases a burden in that she fears the practice of polygamy in Islam. She was not certain that her husband would follow a monogamous life which seemed to have caused her much anxiety. She stated that he had not

refuted the claim of taking another wife amongst their close-knit group of friends. She mentioned that while growing up as a Christian, monogamy was an important ideal for her and is something that she adopted as a religious and personal value. Therefore, the possibility of polygamy made her feel uncomfortable and insecure within herself, her relationship and her faith. Whilst relaying the narrative she became very emotional. She also felt isolated from other Muslim women as they accepted and supported their husband's potential for polygamy. She felt that the religion of Islam is "*like a burden to*" her. In this regard she felt a sense of non-belonging within her community for having an alternate belief. This is described by Badran (2006) as a process which many new Muslim converts undertake due to the issues of identity that are stirred in the larger community which is evident in this case. In this, Muslim women converts must undergo a process which repositions them in both their own and their new society in which many complicated elements are at play (Badran, 2006). Zahraa seemed to have reported the difficulties as described above, whereas Adeela did not report as much difficulty due to the degree of which they felt comfortable in practising their beliefs alongside the new converted beliefs. The ethnographic impressions of Fordsburg can be immediately deemed as culturally Muslim. This is witnessed in the culture of Islam that is embedded within the items being sold in shops, the restaurants there, and most obviously the dress code and appearance of the local people. By virtue of the appearance, the identity of being immigrants can also be assessed with ease. Most shop names are ethnic Arabic names, all the restaurants are *halaal,* and the majority of the retailers sell ethnic Muslim wear. Therefore, the religion, identity and culture of Fordsburg is seen as predominantly Muslim.

5.3 Sense of belonging of immigrant Muslim women in Fordsburg

The reported experience of sense of belonging that the participants had within Fordsburg is explored through Anant's (1966) conception of sense of belonging which

centres on acceptance and recognition. The experience of acceptance and recognition of participants by South African's were varying. Upon asking Mumtaz where her home is, she replied:

> *Because we have to stay here. Gujarat* (state in India) *is like our memory you know? Whenever we go, then we go. If we can't go, so we can't go. So, we have to say that we in… South Africa is our country.*

In this regard, Mumtaz acknowledged that South Africa is her country and her new home. However, there remains a distinction between South Africa and India. She elaborates:

> *India is India. South Africa is South Africa. Because India is our family. South Africa is giving food for our… us. We working and giving us money. So, we can't say that South Africa is not our house. This is our also house.*

India provides the familial support which still retains the feeling of home, however South Africa provides financial stability for her. In this way, there still remains an emotional attachment to India, but South Africa provides for an alternate need. South Africa is ultimately sought out due to its promise of economic and employment opportunities. In this regard, both countries provide different forms of value and belonging to immigrants. Settles (2001) describes how the concept of home is different for different people. Therefore, the need for belonging in Fordsburg is not the same amongst its residents. South Africa has material value while their countries of origin have emotional resonance. Fordsburg bridges the gap between material value and emotional resonance due to the cultural familiarity it presents paired with the economic opportunities. In this way, the coexistence of various immigrant groups enhances different levels of sense of belonging within Fordsburg depending on their need (Puwar, 2004).

Even though Mumtaz is displaced from her country of origin, another space that can be called home is created. In addition, the characteristics that Fordsburg offers to some participants presents a sense of belonging (Lindgren, 1990). Mumtaz mentions that a characteristic adding to her sense of belonging would be "*Fordsburg is full of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi. All from India are here*". India, Pakistan and Bangladesh are neighbouring countries on the Asian continent. Therefore, living and being amongst many other immigrants of a similar culture is a source of recognition which is shared amongst the residents of Fordsburg. This fostered a sense of belonging for Mumtaz. This same sense of belonging was fostered for Salma in being able to celebrate Eid with the Muslim community, and for Hafsah in having many halaal options within Fordsburg. In this way, immigrants find acceptance from the coexistence of their fellow immigrants in the unique setting of Fordsburg which enhances their recognition and sense of belonging in the space (Anant, 1966; Puwar, 2004). However, she feels that when her clients ask her where she is from, then her experience of being "*an outsider*" is amplified. She recognizes that she would want people to see her as not being from a different country. Therefore, she acknowledged her desire for wanting to belong more than just with other immigrants from her country of origin. She later noted that she would like to move away from Fordsburg and live elsewhere in South Africa which would be towards building a better future for herself. Therefore, while Fordsburg might enhance belonging, it does not contribute fully to economic prosperity and the promise of a better future.

Nazima also longs for a better future for herself. She does this by working in Fordsburg to raise enough money to pay for and complete her studies in Malawi in the future. However, she stated that she enjoys living in Fordsburg as it provides her with an income, but she believes that "*It's not my home here. I going to go Malawi*". Her reported experience of Fordsburg is different as she feels that she is still treated like a foreigner due to the low

income that she receives. This supports Taran's (2000) notion of immigrants being targets for exploitation. In this way, her desire for meaningful involvement within the community of Fordsburg is decreased because she does not feel valued due to her low financial compensation and exploitation from her employers. This extends to the community itself in terms of the low standard rate of compensation set by many employers in Fordsburg. Therefore, her sense of belonging in the community is compromised. The experience of belonging differs across a wide spectrum which highlights the various factors at play. The data suggests that African immigrants seemed to not want to make South Africa their permanent home, whereas the Indian immigrants wanted to stay in Fordsburg or elsewhere in South Africa. This highlights the different reported experiences of Indian and African immigrants, and their need for belonging. African immigrants historically experience xenophobic violence more than any other immigrant group. Race and country of origin therefore appear to influence sense of belonging and alienation reportedly experienced within a multinational community such as that of Fordsburg. The intersection of these factors highlights the various ways in which the sense of belonging is experienced by immigrants. Immigrants themselves have a different sense of belonging in the space of Fordsburg as they have different backgrounds, different countries of origin, and different race groups which are simultaneously played out within the same context. This creates unique sense of place which in turn creates different levels of belonging.

The narratives of immigrants suggest that a sense of concealed sadness and suffering is experienced. Hron (2009) believes that the attitudes that people have towards immigrants stem from the stigma and assumptions around the law and policies regarding migration. These beliefs, that provide a platform for these attitudes to be heard, disallow people from engaging with immigrants at a human level in order to understand their stories. Nazima was particularly disturbed by the crime she encountered in South Africa. She says:

> *It is difficult even for me. Sometimes you know we come with passports from home, neh? We coming here to work. We meet with tsotsi's* (criminal/thug) *they take our passports. We just walking like a baby without a mother or a father.*

In this excerpt, she expressed the difficulty and the experience of crime and exploitation that leaves her feeling lost and vulnerable within the space of Fordsburg. She feels like an orphan. This influences her sense of belonging. While crime affects all working class people, its impact is worse on immigrants because not having a passport leaves them vulnerable to exploitation and deportation. The suffering of immigrants is present in some of the narratives that have been shared. The level of suffering may inform the desire to remain in Fordsburg or not. For some of the participants, it appears that it is a space in which they feel as if they belong because they may feel safer and less exploited. However, for others, Fordsburg is a place where they endure the suffering with the hope that it will aid in a better future for themselves. Adeela described her better future thus: "*In my dreams, I think one day is can change. My love. My children may be to be in good life for him* (them)". She hopes for change and a good life for her children in which they can "*be good person also"*. Therefore, participants have various hopes that they have tied to Fordsburg with the faith that belonging to the city may sustain them, and they can experience economic prosperity and academic success for themselves and their children in future. This showcases the need for Fordsburg to sustain them in fulfilling their goals, not only for themselves, but for their children as well. However, these hopes and dreams are not limited to Fordsburg, as some of the participants do express a wish to leave. In this case, Fordsburg is treated and seen as a transitionary space which will aid them to proceed to another space.

From the accounts of the participants, it appears that they have not experienced Islamophobic discrimination. This could be attributed to the absence of negative perceptions

in South Africa, and Fordsburg in particular, towards Islam and women who choose to embrace the religion (Badran, 2006). According to Badran (2006), this is to be contextualized in the ending of apartheid and the implementation of democracy in which there has been an increase in equality and justice. However, working in Fordsburg might shelter the women from Islamophobia that might exist in other parts of the city. Participants did not speak about the process of immigration and the narratives of their journey to South Africa. Wengraf & Chamberlayne (2006) explains that people make the decisions about whether they would want to share a story or not with others. Therefore, it appears that participants decided not to share the narrative about their migration journey with the researcher. This could be due to them not wanting to reveal the status of their citizenship which might be revealed in the accounting of their journey to South Africa. Moreover, this journey may be personal and possibly traumatic. Sharing of the narrative may be a painful process and they might not wish to speak of or re-experience it through the narrative. As much as their story of immigration could add an alternate dimension to their narratives, the narratives about their livelihoods before, and within, Fordsburg added even greater depth. Stories of their past and present livelihoods provided a greater pool of knowledge, rather than solely focusing on the transitionary period. However, it was noted that this they were not keen to talk about this transitionary period.

Xenophobia was a theme that was present in a few of the narratives as illustrated below. According to Zahraa:

> *We as foreigners live in fear. You can find a good job. You can make. But you have got fear, that maybe someone… like the issue of xenophobia. Maybe they can just start. My life is at risk. So, this people (*shop owners*), they take advantage by employing us, not South Africans. So, they can give us less money.*

With xenophobia and the eruption of xenophobic attacks in May 2008 (Grant & Thompson, 2015), and April 2015 (Chinomona & Maziriri, 2015), many immigrants live in fear and acknowledge that living and working in South Africa is a risk due to the possibility of other xenophobic events. They are aware of how their employment status pits them against unemployed South Africans while simultaneously rendering them more vulnerable to exploitation. However, despite knowing this, they still choose to work and stay in South Africa. Hafsah said that she would not want to move to another country "*because you don't know about other countries. You don't know. Here* (South Africa) *you can settle down"*. However, Amina explained that she is scared to live in South Africa. She describes events in which "*tsoti's"* have stolen her belongings including robbing her and stealing money from her home. She relays that it makes her sad because she worked hard for the money which would have been used to provide food for her children in Malawi. She says that South African's don't like that "*Malawians, Zimbabweans and Mozambicans*" stay in the country. This was of interest as she only identified South Africans as having a problem with immigrants from other African countries. She says that she is treated differently because she has a job within this country. While crime affects most working-class people, it can also have a xenophobic element in which immigrants are particularly targeted (Landau & Segatti, 2009). Salma feels discriminated against when people question her about being foreign. She said "*I'm not from here, so if something can happen in Africa, maybe we have to go back because I'm not from here*". She fears deportation or a xenophobic event reoccurring in South Africa as this would have negative implications for her. This highlights the discrimination felt within the social gaps, such as linguistic, cultural, economic and religious differences and their intersections. These contribute to the perceived non-belonging of immigrants. However, as mentioned before, it was seen that xenophobic attacks were primarily inflicted on African immigrant groups which highlighted Afrophobia (Munshi, 2013). Amina supported this when

she recounted her experience of non-acceptance by South Africans. This highlights the non-belonging of immigrants from three African countries rather than the other Asian immigrants who also work and live in Fordsburg and its surrounding areas. This highlighted that the value immigrants felt varied according to the country that they came from and their ethnic identity. In this way, the sense of belonging of immigrants within the space of Fordsburg was also affected by the sense of place they had originated from.

Another social gap that exists is that of gender differences within their Muslim communities. This study explored two feministic perspective and how it relates to their sense of belonging and their gendered identity. Zahraa feels that she would like for "*men to treat woman, as woman, and not as a second thing"*, but feels that she is not respected. In this case, she reviews her role as a woman and all that the role embodies for her including her identity as a mother, wife, daughter and immigrant. She feels as though men should treat her and respect her as a woman. This would make her feel as though she can live according to her true identity and belief of wanting equality in terms of respect. This would also entail that she navigates her sense of belonging with confidence in herself within the community.

Salma says that *"woman is very important. I*(t)*s like a glass… anytime it can… break"*. She also describes that in her culture, men can drink and "run around" without any consequences, however women are not able to "*Because is like a respect… the girls* (have to follow)*"*. In this excerpt, she acknowledges that different standards of living do exist between males and females. However, she believes women should still conduct themselves according to this standard, because ultimately, *"woman is like queen".* In this way, she doesn't narrate it as oppression, even though she does acknowledge that her livelihood and culture are deeply gendered. She does also provide evidence that some women may find comfort in belonging to a gendered space.

Even though some Muslim women may not experience or narrate the oppression felt, it is still a fact known to them or others that they live deeply gendered lives (Abu-Lughod, 2013). For example, Zahraa feared that her husband might marry more women. This was expressed in terms of the role that women play in their households. Zahraa claimed that "*I have to make sure that I am providing for my children, the husband has to be happy"*. Adeela has an alternative experience of her role of being a woman as she described her plight of

having a dual role. Adeela says that "*to be woman in my* (life) *is too difficult sometimes… For me, now, I can say is difficult. Because I am woman. I am man.*" In this way, she feels the responsibility to encapsulate both gendered roles for herself and children. Through living within the parameters of their gendered lives, it is also seen that all of the participants moved to South Africa because of their husband's decision or their father's approval. This highlights that even though their migration is a gendered, it is also agential as it bears their personal desires and dreams for a better life, and a space to belong. The narratives of immigrant Muslim women in Fordsburg illuminate the complexity that informs their lives and possibilities. They are subalterns that strive to circumstances. They are simultaneously victims but they are also survivors whose everyday lives consist of both challenges and opportunities. They have crossed national borders, found employment and community, and are striving to support themselves and their families in a space where a sense of belonging is felt.

5.4 Data collection in Fordsburg

Fordsburg was an integral part of the study. It was not only the location of the interviews for the study, but also understood as a space in which people conduct their lives. It provided and created a base to explore their immigrant identity. The exploration of immigrant identities in Fordsburg can be understood through the way they navigate Fordsburg, but also the way their constructed story of immigration is shared in their interactions (Yuval-Davis, 2006b). The researcher approached many shops with women employees in both Fordsburg business district and the Oriental Plaza where more people declined the opportunity to be interviewed than those who agreed. This could have been for multiple reasons that are elaborated upon in the sections to follow. It was interesting that when women who were working in the shops were approached, the male shop owners would approach the researcher and question the intention of the research. In this way, male shop owners acted as gatekeepers to their women employees. This enhances the patriarchal view that males take ownership of public and work spaces whilst women are said to occupy the private sphere alone (Aroian, et al., 2006). When in public spaces, women are seen as wards of men. This further supported

the view that immigrant Muslim women in Fordsburg are a subaltern group as they were spoken for by others. This was further established as male shop owners did not consult with the women before speaking on their behalf. Sometimes women who were approached first looked at the male shopkeepers, who then declined on their behalf. This suggested that women themselves looked towards the men to speak for them. This may be due to various reasons from them seeking acknowledgement from the males, their employers, or because the men may have had a better command of the English language. Another possibility is that the male shopkeepers had warned them against speaking to non-customer "strangers".

Male employer gatekeepers highlighted the power differential that existed between employer and employee, and between men and women. This further highlighted the nature of conservative cultural and traditional ideals in the work space of Fordsburg which Muslim women seem to have negotiated well (Abu-Lughod, 2013). Patriarchy and the effects of colonialism was prevalent in these cases. It appeared that the majority of the women that were approached accepted their male employer speaking on their behalf. In addition, there is the possibility that the women were strategically acquiescing to male authority as a means of negotiating their livelihoods and employment status. These women seemed to subscribe to the gendered roles of patriarchal society which they had the agency to accept (Abu-Lughod, 2013). These roles may have been a source of ambivalent comfort for some due to the retention of traditional and cultural practices. In this way, the employment context of Fordsburg can be characterised as patriarchal where women are 'protected' by the men within the work context. Adeela depicted that she felt protected because her male employer is a foreigner as well therefore cannot treat her differently because they share the same immigration status. She says:

> "*See but some people, he cry, our boys, our madam, what he doing, because I'm a foreigner… But some people is not like that you see? Cause I can even*

> *say my boss is foreigner, he not from South Africa, so that's why he can't treat me like I'm dog"*

In this regard, it was seen that immigrant women felt protected within the work context when they worked for another immigrant. This prevented them being discriminated against within the work space. She goes onto say that "*You happy if someone he look after you. You look after him also. He look after me, I look after him job also".* This shows that there is a mutual protection that occurs in the space of Fordsburg, in which both men and women protect and look after the other. Here, the perceived threat is the South African citizen who treats immigrants as "dogs". What might initially appear as patriarchal protection in fact has strategic value to some of the Muslim women immigrant employees.

Some women protected themselves by declining the researcher's request for an interview by bodily gestures such as shaking of their heads. This was inferred as them not being able or not wanting to communicate with the researcher. This highlighted the difficulty of being unable to communicate in English and/or the protective strategy that may have been employed through gestures to avoid conversation with the researcher. Harassment or deportation are potentially more problematic and dangerous than patriarchal "protection". The preceding excerpt suggests that protective manoeuvres are mutually practised.

Six participants had a general understanding of English and were able to communicate with basic coherence. The researcher had most difficulty communicating with one participant in particular. This was due to difficulty in understanding each other's language. This is elaborated on in the following section. In some cases, male shopkeepers had to translate the intention of the research from English to the language that they spoke to the women. This immediately deemed them ineligible to participate as a core research criterion was fluency in English. In this way, male employers served as gatekeepers that had to be negotiated with or

navigated around. This highlighted the power that communication held within the community of Fordsburg. Older women seemed to decline the offer more than younger women did. This may have also related to older women being more conservative as compared to younger women. The general level of education of the participants was a basic primary education in which English may not have been taught. Many did not complete their high school education due to various reasons. The participants belonged to the working class, which is similar to most residents in Fordsburg (Crankshaw, 2005).

The location of the interview is an interesting phenomenon that is debated within qualitative research, as many pragmatic considerations are needed (Elwood & Martin, 2000). The first is convenience for the participant to travel to, the second is the power relation between the researcher and the participant that may exist based on location (Elwood & Martin, 2000). The location of interviews could inform the power positionality of participants and researchers and location could provide more geographic knowledge that would enhance knowledge of the context of the participant (Elwood & Martin, 2000). Participants were given a choice about the time and location of the interview. Four of the participants chose to commence the interview at the time that they were approached. The other three participants gave the researcher a specific time when they were not busy with clients to conduct the interview. However, all participants chose to conduct the interview at their place of work. This was possibly to shield specific information that they wished not to be shared with the researcher, which further enhanced the protection of their immigrant identity and their privacy. It could also be because of limited flexibility to leave their places of work during working hours. It was also important to note that due to all the interviews being conducted at work, 4 of the participants continued doing their job whilst the interview commenced. This shows that even though it was an interview space, they could not or did not want to stop working. This could have been due to strict regulations or deadlines that their employer gave

them, or could have been a defence mechanism in which they could distract themselves with work if the interview was uncomfortable. Fortunately, this was not the case and all interviews were completed with no, or minor, interruptions during the course thereof. The style of interviewing within this space points to the working class realities of participants as well as the lack of flexibility that characterises their jobs. A critique of the interview data would have to reckon with the realities of working class immigrant women. The context of the interview setting is thus crucial for meaning making of the lives of these women.

In the current study, multiple layers of social relations were witnessed with all participants as well as other recruits that declined. The various social relations that were observed were relationships with owners and co-workers; their relationships with their clients; and the engagement with an unknown researcher which all spoke to how their sense of self was connected to the sense of place. These observations depicted the way participants interacted with known and unknown people within the context of Fordsburg which partially gave insight into their attitudes and beliefs. The holistic experience allowed the researcher to understand participants in context. This illuminated the role that they played within their context, the activities they engaged in, the interactions with others which magnified their constitution of their space (Elwood & Martin, 2000). Understood in context, the data collection process illuminates the realities, limitations and possibilities of immigrant working class women within the workplace.

The location of data collection was useful for observing how the social, political and economic factors informed the narratives of the immigrant Muslim women. In this way, the location and community support the formation of their immigrant identity and the way the spatial dynamic affects its expression (Ballard, 2004). As mentioned before, Fordsburg has become known as a home to multiple immigrants predominantly from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh (Mahomed, 2007). This has been identified as the draw card of Fordsburg for

people from these countries due to their shared religion and beliefs, which provides a sense of belonging where they would be accepted. This was supported by Salma who stated that she "*like(s) Fordsburg cause it is more convenient about everything. And your own people, Indians… friend*". She has identified that she likes Fordsburg for the sense of belonging and convenience that is comforting to her. She proceeded to say that if she were to go out of Fordsburg, she would feel alone. This highlights the sense of non-belonging that may exist outside Fordsburg due to lack of emotional attachment that may be experienced with an alternate location (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Although some participants asserted that Fordsburg was chosen for them, this choice could be informed by the access to many resources such as multiple worship sites, employment possibilities, ethnic foods and a familiar community. Therefore, they displayed agency in choosing Fordsburg for its possibilities of economic potential and the acceptance of the practice of Islam and the support for their familiar livelihoods. The narratives of immigrants gave a sense of the way they assimilated to the local way of being which highlights the fluidity of immigrant identity with sense of self being related to sense of place.

The location has its own unique socioeconomic difficulties because many of the immigrants that live in Fordsburg have come from countries with high political tension (Mahomed, 2007). Understood in relation to South Africa's own climate of social, economic and political nuances, this provides a unique sense of being in a space such as Fordsburg. This also creates a domain in degrees of insider-ness, belonging and non-belonging occur. The outbreaks of xenophobia that occurred in 2008 and 2015, further altered the climate within Fordsburg. This is elaborated upon in the later sections. Fordsburg is the platform upon which participants experience their status of belonging and alienation which is affected by their country of origin, race, religion, economic possibilities and various other factors. For some participants, Fordsburg is place of comfort and companionship to which they now

belong. However, for others, their discomfort and fear has enhanced their sense of non-belonging because of the lack of feeling accepted and recognized by the community (Anant, 1966).

5.5 Reading silences in the narratives of Muslim women immigrants

Bamberg (1947) found that there were two functions for the choice of narratives that are told. The first encompasses the oral accounts of narrative with the aim of orienting the audience to important details. The second function is an evaluation in which the sequential orders of the stories are taken into consideration (De Fina, 2003). The evaluation of this order provides the researcher with essential information regarding the reasons that the narrative is told and the temporal significance within the story.

Even though the researcher had prepared open-ended interview questions, these questions were slightly altered as participants seemed more comfortable with questions with more direction and structure. Therefore, the researcher used the open-ended questions as a guide to constructing semi-structured questions which were used in the interview. Participants struggled to answer the open-ended questions and mostly responded to concrete questions posed by the researcher that they could give concrete answers too. The construction of the narrative was somewhat limited and information of a narrative-like structure was mostly elicited only when intensely probed by the researcher. Language also became a slight barrier for the narratives that were accessed. The lack of fluency in English communication led to the inability of women to elaborate on open-ended questions. The researcher then posed questions in a concrete manner for them to grasp the question adequately. Maggio (2007) urges scholars to tune into the different modes in which subalterns communicate in, thereby restoring the disadvantage that subalterns may feel. In saying this, the researcher altered the mode of interview to suit the concrete communication style of the participants and

for them to feel comfortable with the questions that were being posed. To be clear, the interviewees were not concrete thinkers but limited fluency in English meant that simpler communication was required. At the end of the interview, Adeela had a question for the researcher stating "*I just want to ask why you asking me these many questions*". This showed that even though an introduction was given and the interview was slightly brief, she felt as if the researcher had asked her many questions. This highlights the possibility of her feeling uncomfortable in the researcher posing that many questions to her. Again, the researcher had strategy to accommodate participants when they felt uncomfortable by using different methods of posing questions. This meant that the researcher had to re-explain the purpose of the study in case she had not understood the initial explanation.

The intersectionality of belonging of people is in the interplay of language, identity and immigration experiences which vary according to the context from which they came and in which they find themselves in (Barkhuizen & de Klerk, 2006). Immigrants often imagine themselves in the country they intend to live in. In this imagination, they explore their perception of living in the country as well as the way they will be able to deal with the varied linguistic environment that they will live in (Barkhuizen & de Klerk, 2006). This highlighted the importance of their perceptions of the environments and the difficulty that immigrants may face. An important consideration for people who will be immigrating could be thoughts regarding how they may linguistically cope if they have limited access to their native language in the new country (Barkhuizen & de Klerk, 2006). The researcher encouraged the participants in the beginning of the interview to share biographical information, and from there to begin their story-telling process. However, a mutually constructed conversation, which weaved into stories, was not as fluidly achieved, but rather stories were told only when probed by the researcher. The researcher would ask at the beginning of the interview "Can you please tell me something about yourself?" Their replies were:

1) Mumtaz: “What can I say? You can give me some, you know. Questions”
2) Salma: “Like how must I say?”
3) Adeela: “Like? I’m good. Everything is fine”
4) Hafsah: “No, you must ask me what you want”

The researcher had not counted on the extent to which the conversation was mostly a back-and-forth dialogue; therefore, it felt that some content was lost in terms of information and construction of their life stories and some important insights due to the participants only engaging within the parameters of concrete questioning. The way participants approached answering the questions posed by the researcher was also insightful into their narratives and the way they communicate. It was difficult for the researcher at the time as it seemed as if the narrative value was limited due to some participants not being able to, or not wanting to, construct a full storied account in English. This somewhat limited the extent to which the obvious narrative was accessed. However, this led the researcher to additionally review the narratives that did not arise during the course of the interview. These stories were about their early life in their countries of origin, their status of citizenship, Islamophobia experienced in the Fordsburg, and their journeys to the country. It is possible that they did not wish talk about these experiences out of possible fear of discrimination that may be inflicted on them by the researcher, or outcomes thereof. This is explored in later sections in the research. Additionally, Fordsburg is a community which displaces women between the traditionalized values it portrays and the modernized community it exists within (Spivak, 1988).

Therefore, the value of the narrative was understood in relation to accounts that they shared and the stories that they did not. Canham & Langa (2017) describe narrative accounts as being the way in which subalterns can speak, do speak and are heard. The stories that they do not share is a decision that is made by them and is equally telling of their narrative account. This was analysed as a strategy used by immigrants so they would not feel

compelled to reveal accounts of a more personal nature that they did not wish to. This strategy worked to enable a sense of protection of their story from being persecutory if the role of the researcher was not believed and if they suspected that sharing this information would result in negative legal, social, political and economic ramifications. This strategy also depicted that subalterns are not necessarily silenced, but rather choose to be silent (Maggio, 2007).

Limitations of the unspoken themes and inability to place the accounts in a sequential order were encountered which will be explored in the Limitations section. However, this could have been employed as a protective strategy to conceal the narratives that they did not wish to share (De Fina, 2003). The construction of the narratives is dependent on the linguistic domain in which language is a base through which they are able to share this narrative (De Fina, 2003). In the case of the current study, the familiarity of the language was present but the language proficiency to engage was limited, therefore the structure for the fluidity of narratives was limited. An attempt to attain a basic temporal and sequential narrative was done to be able to further understand the context of the narrative. The researcher adapted the open-ended interview format to semi-structured questions wherein if participants answered a question, the researcher would try to access deeper and more insightful information by the use of probing questions. The researcher also took into consideration that as much as the narrative is healing for some, it could also bring about a renewal of the pain, trauma, and anxiety linked to the story (Jovchelovitch &Bauer, 2000). This renewal of pain through the narrative, also silences the story-teller because of the trauma that gets re-experienced (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). It is often found that in certain communities, there is a culture of silence that is preferred compared to talking (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). It is found that in these cultures, story-telling is brief or absent all together. In this case, silence can be a defensive strategy to withhold information or it can be a

consequence of general mistrust of the researcher (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). In this study, it is likely that narratives were impacted by both of these reasons.

The way the narrative plays out is also an indicator of the identity of the storyteller. The storyteller recounts events of their life in a complex manner because a life that is lived is constituted of growth that anticipates an imagined future (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Thus, when stories are recounted, the storyteller, by means of sharing, is able to relive those stories. Therefore, storytellers are engaged with the telling and reliving of the stories that they choose to share (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). De Fina (2003) contends this by stating that narratives are not necessarily expressed linguistically but through the material that people choose to share in addition to the possible psychological process that prompted them to share it. However, it is important to note that people are not able to grasp or share their experiences through the narrative without language (De Fina, 2003). This highlights the importance of language in the construction of a narrative. Therefore, in this study, language was identified as a barrier that partially hindered the construction of a complete narrative and further limited the process to a semi-structured interview. Narratives bring light to the way people understand their world of experience and themselves (Aguirre, 2000; as cited in Vincent, 2008). However, if the language of narration is restricted, the narrative is also restricted in terms of a global understanding of their experience (De Fina, 2003). This highlights the nuances of language within the study and the importance of language in accessing narrative.

The retelling of a story allows people to represent their social and personal lives (De Fina, 2003). In this way, participants may have been able to review their lives and explore their identity through the process of rethinking, reliving and recounting events in their lives. For two of the participants, the process of story-telling was visibly emotional as whilst they told their story, they got upset and cried before regaining their composure after a small period of time. Adeela retells a story of the way her life is very different from the life she had

dreamed of. She also relays that it is too late for her to realize these dreams and the only hope she has is that her children would be good people, unlike her. The emotive account by this participant indicated the degree to which the process of narrative was, indeed, powerful and moving for her. The participant's narrative included a reflection in which she discussed the various roles she has to play in her life. In this regard, she could express an unexpected event and evaluate herself which allowed for the researcher to gain insight into the values and beliefs that she has about her identity (De Fina, 2003). Her story depicted the value and priority she placed on being able to provide the best for her children; better than she could for herself. This also seemed to be a difficult story for her as she felt that she had to regain her composure. She did this by remaining silent for a few minutes, and sighing occasionally in that silence. After some time, the researcher asked her what she was thinking about at that time, to which she remained silent. She then expressed that she wanted the researcher to carry on with another question without dwelling on the matter any further. Following Spivak's contention that the subaltern does speak, this participants silence was a form of resistant communication. As much as these restricted further accounts about a topic that was important to her, it was still a useful insight in that she did not want to explore it further. This narrative allowed her to relate her identity with her true thoughts and feelings of situations that she may have otherwise been silent about (De Fina, 2003). However, as soon as the narrative allowed it, she closed off the line of conversation because it was clearly distressing to her. At this point, the researcher followed her narrative which led to the closing of that topic within the narrative. This highlighted the agency that she had in directing and prohibiting the narrative in whichever direction she felt comfortable with.

Zahraa had the same reaction when she started talking about gender inequality in the Islamic religion and how it enables her husband to have more than one wife. She became emotional when she was retelling the story about the way he did not refute the claim that he

would have a second wife. Thereafter, she whispered her sentences and remained silent. The researcher interpreted it as something too difficult for the participant to explore then, therefore the researcher asked whether the participant wanted to move on, to which the participant agreed. This possibly highlighted the pain of this narrative and that she did not wish to explore it further in a public setting with the researcher. It also highlighted the way participants interacted within their space of Fordsburg and the safety they felt in expressing these emotions. De Fina (2003) notes that immigrants may refrain from certain narratives due to the fear that it may implicate them and expose them to further prejudice. Therefore, they choose to represent themselves in alternate frames within Fordsburg. This may have led to the appearance of containment and resilience that immigrant Muslim women in Fordsburg have, which may be a coping mechanism for them (Kuo, 2013).

It was also found that their migration journeys were expected to be featured in their narrative but they did not share these journeys. By elaborating on the narrative of their migration journeys, the 'secondary citizenship' of immigrants would have been highlighted when compared to native South Africans. This may have been information that they did not wish to share with the researcher. This topic did not feature within their narratives therefore the researcher followed their lead and did not pursue it. Due to the secondary citizenship they may have, immigrants occupy a tenuous position of being both insiders and outsiders within Fordsburg (Puwar, 2004). National, primary citizenship suggests that people hold a firm position of status of belonging, which others with a secondary citizenship may not be able to experience.

In analysing the various factors, it appears that language differences and the intersectionality of gender, religion, and education may have affected the possibilities offered by narrative. This will be explored in the limitations section of the report. However,

notwithstanding the limitations outlined here, the data provided generative insights to the research questions of interest to the study.

6. Conclusion

The narratives of immigrant Muslim women were studied through multiple lenses. It was seen that the narrated experience of Fordsburg was varying for women who live and work there. This variation was explored and the predominant themes from the narratives were extracted. These themes were viewed in relation to sense of self and sense of belonging within Fordsburg, which is engaged below. This study additionally highlighted the nuances of working as a researcher within a subaltern community. It was analysed to uncover how they navigated the space and fostered a sense of belonging.

The social, historical, political and economic context of Fordsburg was integral in locating the narratives of immigrant Muslim women. The understanding of the location provided a foundation upon which they were able to conduct their lives. The interplay of various themes such as: Sense of Belonging, Reading silence in narratives, Employment and Exploitation, and Agency were explored and it contributed to the understanding of Fordsburg as being a unique space. This further informed the sense of belonging of immigrant Muslim women in Fordsburg.

All women who were invited to be participants in the study were accessed within the public space and were employed. It was found that accessing the narratives of these women was challenging. Various factors were explored to uncover the reason for this. This included the method of accessing the narrative, the language and the identity of the subaltern community. It was found that participants responded better to, and were more comfortable

with, semi-structured interview questions as opposed to open-ended questions which were initially prepared. The researcher had to tune into different modes of communication to prevent the subaltern community from feeling disadvantaged and remaining silent. However, instead of seeing silence as a problem, the research "reads" silence as a form of communication. The researcher had anticipated that various narratives, including Islamophobia, and their migration journeys would be dominant. However, these themes did not constitute the narrative that immigrant Muslim women wanted to tell or could tell. This further highlighted the interplay of language and identity within an immigrant subaltern community.

The primary reason for immigrant Muslim women to migrate to South Africa is due to the economic potential it offers. They seek financial gain and as a result they need to work in order to live the way they want to. Therefore, immigrant Muslim women in South Africa navigate between their places of work and their home. As a result, they are able to construct an identity for themselves in which they can follow their Islamic values within the context of both their homes and their workplace. In addition, Fordsburg has its own identity which consists of the intersection of South Africa's historical, social, and economic factors; alongside its own unique sense of space that accommodates many different cultures and religions. The intersectionality of religion and culture in forming the identity of immigrant Muslim women and Fordsburg indicated how they adopted and assimilated into the way of being within the space. This study found that Fordsburg allows and enhances the religious belief and cultural practices of immigrant Muslim women. It also explored the different ways women practiced their Islam when converting to, or converting from, Islam. This created alternate narratives regarding sense of place, acceptance and belonging within the community.

Temporary migration was seen to occur as many immigrant Muslim women did not want to stay in Fordsburg permanently. They chose to rather use Fordsburg as a temporary residence for sole purpose of being employed and economic success. They did not wish to make Fordsburg their permanent residence due to various reasons including crime, exploitation, and level of financial gain. It was found that African immigrants wished to return to their home countries whilst Asian immigrants wished to remain in South Africa, but not in Fordsburg. They also did not feel a sense of belonging due to them being targets of exploitation due to their immigrant status. Exploitation was a common theme that immigrant Muslim women reportedly experienced. This was reported to be experienced in different modes ranging from their employment, accommodation and livelihood. This discouraged women from wanting to be permanent citizens within Fordsburg which highlighted their experience within the space. An overarching African and Islamic feminist theory was used which allowed for understanding a non-homogenized perspective of the women. It was seen that immigrant Muslim women are active participants and have the agency to live liveable lives. They depicted a plan for their future lives which they work towards by empowering themselves.

The women's narratives illuminate the intersectionality of gender, race, culture, subalternity, class, and nationality in relation to various historical, political, linguistic, economic and religious factors. The interplay of all of these factors within the context of Fordsburg culminates in the establishment of a unique sense of place. It is within this sense of place that immigrant Muslim women conduct their livelihoods and experience the unique sense of belonging. This sense of belonging is governed by various factors which constitute the sense of place within the subaltern community being studied. The narratives of immigrant Muslim women depicted their sense of belonging. It was also seen how the location of Fordsburg was integral in constructing this sense of belonging. Their identities are

constructed by a multitude of factors including their immigrant status, gender, religion, culture and the nuances of their experiences. Ultimately, immigrant Muslim women in Fordsburg experience a variety of challenges which are exasperated by class, xenophobia, exploitation and patriarchy. However, these women have survived harsh conditions of poverty in their home countries and they navigate Fordsburg as survivors that are forging liveable lives for themselves and their families.

7. Limitations and Recommendations

7.1 Limitations

Generalisations are not the purpose of narrative research. Each narrative is unique and the elements that make it unique are the aspects that researchers wish to engage with. While wider variety of Muslim immigrant women including upper, middle and working class as well as unemployed women would have enhanced the study, the interests of this study were Fordsburg based on working class women.

The language barriers and general silence of narratives by participants was also be seen as a limitation as not all of the participants engaged with the narrative surrounding some issues. This was probably employed as a protective strategy in which they did not wish to share their narrative due to fear of their possible illegal status of residence being found out or due to the level of fluency in English. This limited the interaction within the narrative space that could have accessed a different depth of narrative. However, Spivak (1988) cautions us to see silence as productive and as a means of communication. I, therefore, offered a reading of the silent narrative.

The location of the interviews was a limiting factor as all women opted to be interviewed at their place of work. This location meant that interviews with participants were

not done in complete isolation and privacy. The interviews were usually conducted in the back corner or a quieter part of the shop where the participants were employed. Interviews conducted in the Oriental Plaza were even more difficult as the interview needed to be conducted in the alleyways within the Oriental Plaza. Given the location, there were a few minor interruptions by clients or shop owners. This caused the interview to be paused and resumed once brief quiet was restored. I attempted to keep the interview confidential by speaking in a softer voice so that the surrounding people would not be able to hear. While this is a methodological weakness, it points to the realities of the working class lives of immigrant Muslim women in Fordsburg.

These factors hindered the interviews from accessing a greater depth and length to which they could have been. I should have then considered follow up interviews for increased rapport building as well as greater time for engagement in the interview space. Some of the limitations of the interview could also be attributed to not wanting to share too much information with a person that is not known. This was especially because the nature of the interview was to share highly personal experiences. In this way, a follow up interview would have created greater width and depth to be able to access a richer background. However, I respected the wishes of participants to give me the information that they desired to share and to retain stories they preferred to keep to themselves. This is a form of agency and challenges the inquisitorial approach of western scholarship.

7.2 Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations for future research are discussed below. These are intended to enhance the understanding of the current research. It was evident that language fluency was crucial to the ease of the narrative process that the participant and researcher engaged within. Meaning making between researcher and participant can only be done through language. This

was an integral part of the research from introduction of the study to participants to data analysis. For future research, it is highly recommended that language fluency be addressed. This can be addressed by ensuring that the language fluency of participants is suitable for full expression of thoughts and feelings. Secondly, if this cannot be achieved, the use of translators would enhance the communication between both parties to ensure that a basic understanding is attained. If this cannot be ensured, it is recommended that follow-up interviews are implemented so as to increase the depth of the study.

In the case of this study, the workplace was not an ideal setting to conduct interviews. This was due to the interruptions at certain times that caused possible crucial moments of the interview to be disrupted. Flow of conversation is integral in the narrative process due to the co-construction of the narrative between researcher and participant. The interview space is also the workplace of participants in which they may be wary of the time and depth of the interview and will endeavour to keep both relatively short. It is recommended that the interview space for participants should be a quiet space in which the researcher and participant are able to unpack important moments of the narrative.

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Appendix

a. Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet



School of Human and

Community Development

Private

Bag 3, Wits 2050, Johannesburg, South Africa,

Tel: (011) 717-

4500 Fax: (011) 717-4559

Good day

My name is Kavishka Moodley I am conducting research for the purposes of obtaining a Master's degree at the University of the Witwatersrand. I invite you to participate in my research titled "Narratives of Immigrant Muslim Women in Fordsburg". Your participation will help me gain some insight into an area that has been under-researched in South Africa.

Involvement in this research requires your participation in 1 interview for approximately 1 hour, this will be scheduled at a time that is convenient to you; and it will take place at a venue convenient for you as well. With your permission the interview will be digitally recorded in order to ensure accuracy. Please note that your participation in this study is voluntary, you will not be rewarded or penalized in any way. You have the right to withdraw from the research at any point. You may also refuse to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable. All data collected in the interview (including digital recordings, notes, or transcripts) will be kept strictly confidential, all material will only be seen, heard,

and processed by myself and my supervisor. All the data collected will be kept in a safe location with restricted access. No information that can identify you will be used in the interview transcripts. The results of this study will be written up in the form of a research report. They may also be written up as a research article or presented at a conference. A summary of these results will be made available to participants on request.

It is my understanding that the study will not pose any risks or result in any benefits to you. However, if you feel you have any concerns regarding the study, or if you require any additional information, please feel free to contact me via email: kmoodley19@gmail.com , or my supervisor Professor Hugo Canham via email: Hugo.Canham@wits.ac.za

Kind Regards,

_____

Kavishka Moodley

b. Appendix B: Consent form for interview

I,_____have read the information sheet and I am aware of the nature of this study. I hereby voluntarily consent to taking part in an interview conducted by Kavishka Moodley for her study on Narratives of immigrant Muslim women in Fordsburg. I understand that:

- Participation in this interview is voluntary.
- I may refuse to answer any question I would not prefer to.
- I may withdraw from the study at any time.
- No information that may identify me will be included in the research report, and my responses will remain confidential.
- Direct quotes from the interview may be used in the final report, but my identity will not be revealed.
- Interview data will be kept securely with restricted access.
- I will receive a summary of the final research findings should I request it.
- The researcher will assist me in contacting relevant counselling services should I feel that I require such services as a result of my participation in this study.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

c. Appendix C: Audio Recording Consent Forms

I_____hereby voluntarily consent to my participation in the interview with Kavishka Moodley for her study, on Narratives of immigrant Muslim women in Fordsburg.

- The digital recordings and transcripts will not be seen or heard by any person at any time, except the researcher and the researcher's supervisor
- All digital recordings will be destroyed after the research has been examined.
- No identifying information will be included in the interview transcripts or the research report or subsequent research publications or conference presentations.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

d. Appendix D: Ethics Clearance Certificate

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SCHOOL OF HUMAN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: MACC/16/011 IH**
PROJECT TITLE:	Narratives of immigrant Muslim women in relation to sense of belonging in Fordsburg
INVESTIGATORS	Moodley Kavishka
DEPARTMENT	Psychology
DATE CONSIDERED	29/06/16
DECISION OF COMMITTEE*	Approved

This ethical clearance is valid for 2 years and may be renewed upon application

DATE: 29 June 2016

CHAIRPERSON
(Prof. Brett Bowman)

cc Supervisor:

Dr Hugo Canham
Psychology

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR (S)

To be completed in duplicate and **one copy** returned to the Secretary, Room 100015, 10th floor, Senate House, University.

I/we fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure, as approved, I/we undertake to submit a revised protocol to the Committee.

This ethical clearance will expire on 31 December 2018

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES

e. Appendix E: Interview Schedule

Interview Guide

Basic Questions:

Date of Interview: _____

Can you please tell me about yourself?

Age: _____ Occupation: _____ Relationship Status: _____

Family Chart:

Residence: _____ Religion; _____

Immigration:

- Where were you born?
- When did you move to South Africa?
- Can you tell me about your move to South Africa?
- Please tell me how you chose to move to Fordsburg?
- Did you stay anywhere else besides Fordsburg? If so, where and why did you move from there to here?
- Do you enjoy living in Fordsburg? Tell me why?
- If you were to choose again, would you still choose Fordsburg? Why?

Religion:

- How important is your religion to you?

- In what way do you practice your religion?
- What is your role according to your religion?
- In what way does Fordsburg help with practising your religion?
- Do you believe that you can freely practice your religion here? Tell me about it.

Gender:

- What do you feel your role is as a woman?
- What role do you think women generally play in the world?
- What role do you think you play in the world being a woman?
- Do you feel that women are treated in the same way to men? Why?
- How do you think women should be treated? Why?
- How would you like to be treated as a woman?
- Are there any differences in how you are treated in South Africa compared to how you were treated in your home country? Tell me about this.

Belonging:

- How did you feel about South Africa when you arrived?
- Did you feel welcomed? Why?
- Where would you say your home is? Why?
- Where would you like to call home?
- How did you make Fordsburg your home?
- Do you feel like you belong in South Africa or not? (Insider/Outsider). Why?
- Is where you stay important to you? How?
- Do you think people treat you differently because you are an immigrant?
- Is there anything else you would like to tell me, that I have not asked?

- Do you have any questions for me?