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Masculinity in Muslim media: a case study of Radio Islam

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Radio Islam is a South African community radio station. Broadcast primarily to a Muslim audience in the Gauteng province of South Africa via medium-wave radio, it also has satellite and web-streaming which expands its reach nationally and globally (Radio Islam 2016). This dissertation seeks to examine the ways in which masculinity in the South African Indian Muslim community is constructed in some texts disseminated via Radio Islam.

The theological body whose teachings the majority of South African Indian Muslims follow is the Jamiatul Ulama (JU). Radio Islam is a medium through which ideologies from the JU are disseminated; as Murkens (2009: 104) found, "a major part of Radio Islam's content comes from its role as transmitter of Islam and gatekeeper of Islamic values and culture as interpreted by the Jamiatul Ulama". Many of the teachings of the JU stem from Islamic "schools found in the Indo-Pak subcontinent" (Ismail 2002: 9), including the Deoband school, and were brought to South Africa by Indian immigrants. Some of the JU's positions in terms of gender have been criticised for their conservative nature, and the extents to which they promote the subjugation of women under the guise of religion. Discourses from the JU originate from readings of Islamic texts.

Islam's holiest text is the Quran. The Quran is a doctrine by which Muslims are obliged to abide, in which the practice of Islam is outlined. It refers to history, and gives specific guidelines and orders for behaviour and actions, explicitly allowing and forbidding certain actions. The Quran is the primary text which is used to guide Muslims in their daily lives and consists of 114 chapters in total, grouped into 30 sections. Muslims also use *sunnah* and *hadith* as sources of guidance.

In October 2016, American activist Namira Islam posted on Twitter:

> Reminder: toxic masculinity (masculine gender role = violent, unemotional, sexually aggressive) is not the masculinity of the Prophet [Muhammed] (Islam 2016).

Muslims are taught to follow the *sunnah,* the example of the Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him), who was the messenger of God. Islam's statement makes the case for this study: how much of the enactment of masculinity, especially in the South African Indian Muslim community, aligns with the prophetic example?

Moosa (1998: 197) also highlights that religious ideals of the way that gender roles are enacted, based on scripture, are no longer always necessarily upheld; “the position of Muslim women today is less favourable compared to the status which early Islam in its true or original form (and the Quran) had conferred on them.” According to Barlas (2002: 21-22), “men and women tend to interpret the Quran’s message differently…since access to Divine Discourse is mediated by humans and in gendered languages, and since the humans who have interpreted the Quran historically have been men, we can certainly hear male voices and masculinist biases in exegesis.”

These kinds of patriarchal interpretations of religious scripture and texts are not limited to the South African Muslim community only. Barlas (2002: 3) writes that, worldwide, “Muslim women directly experience the consequences of oppressive mis-readings of religious texts.” Although there have been movements countering this, such as emergences of strands of Muslim feminism, there is not enough focus on men in this particular context.

Therefore, it can be said that certain South African Muslim media spaces, including Radio Islam, have an inherently patriarchal agenda which represents gender and ideal gender roles in a specific way.

Based on all of the above factors, this study will aim to look at whether manifestations of masculinity as perpetuated by Radio Islam uphold hegemonic ideas of what masculinity should be – ideals that are defined and articulated by patriarchy.

Rationale

For something to be constructed means for it to be built up. Castells (1997: 6) defines it as follows: “I understand the process of construction of meaning on the basis of a cultural attribute, or related set of cultural attributes, that is/are given priority over other sources of meaning.” Referring to "the construction of religious culture," Hoover calls "all cultural practices, including cultural rituals, social constructions anyway" (1997: 286).

Just as there is a simplistic construction of ‘the Muslim woman’ – absent from public space, and subjugated by patriarchy and burkas (Abu-Lughod 2002; Navarro 2010) – the Muslim man is often depicted as a traditionalist, who is threatened by the mere sight of women (Nash 2012).

There is therefore much room for discovery when looking at constructions of Muslim masculinity. In the specific realm of gender studies, while much has been done to look at women (both within the Muslim community specifically, as well as in general), there is less of a focus on men and masculinity. Even in academic studies on Islam and gender, while there has been extensive research on gender studies and the way that gender roles are constructed and performed, the bulk of it has focused on Muslim women. Ouzgane (2006: 6) reiterates:

> So much of the literature on gender and Islam … has been written and read with Muslim men as an unmarked category. The study of gender in relation to Muslim societies has almost always meant a study of women's lives, women's roles, and the representation of women in literature. The pervasiveness has led to a relative neglect of constructions of masculinities within Muslim communities.

This is not to say, however, that research on masculinity in general is lacking – as the theoretical framework of this study demonstrates, many theorists have discussed the complications and realities of masculinity as a performance. The question of Muslim masculinities is under-examined and therefore remains intriguing, more so when examining the way in which Muslim men's masculinity is negotiated in Western contexts. As Ali (2011: xiv) states, "the terms 'Islam' and 'the West' are oppositional but also interdependent; their relationship to one another is in a process of constant renegotiation, particularly now that one can speak of 'Western Muslims'." South Africa, where Radio Islam is based, could be classified as a Western context.

There remains little nuance when it comes to representation of Muslim people, particularly in Western contexts. In many cases, only singular narratives exist which fail to unpack the many dynamics at play when talking about 'Muslim men' or 'Muslim women.' As Nash (2012: 50) puts it, "frequently missing in Western constructions of Muslim male and female identities, beyond its function of signifying difference from Western norms, is the sign 'Muslim', which in effect becomes a term emptied of other meanings." Gerami (2005: 449) notes further, "gender discourses in Muslim cultures have a double life. Similar to other gender dichotomies, gender identities have indigenous faces and external stereotypes…it is the Western cultural references of these roles that are very visible and stereotypical." It is important to note that this study is particularly concerned with examining a certain type of masculinity, one that is constantly negotiating the varied elements of culture, religion, and

nationality, and exists in a Western context. Moyo (2012: 308) states, "'Muslim-ness' implies a singular view of Muslims as having similar values and beliefs which upon close inspection may actually be very different." It is therefore important to be clear about this typecasting, in order to be able to examine it critically and gain a nuanced understanding. As Bayat (2003: 5) reminds us, Muslim identities are "concrete, contested, and differentiated."

At times, the data demonstrates that men within this South African Indian Muslim community shift blame for women's oppression onto 'the West', a construction of a decadent space wherein rules do not apply. When it comes to issues around gender in Islam and the rights accorded to women, there is much room for introspection and improvement within the South African Indian Muslim community before indictment of the West. While 'the West' is oppressive, the role that patriarchal constructions of masculinity play in Muslim women's oppression deserves as much, if not more, examination than the role of 'the West'.

The specific masculinity that this study is concerned with is South African Indian Muslim masculinity. Although this does fall into studies concerning Islam, and specifically men in Islam, I am wary of using the term 'Islamic masculinities,' favouring instead 'Muslim masculinities'. Gerami (2005: 448) notes the way in which the former is more of a blanket term; "[Islamic masculinity] is more of a category recognised by others, [Muslim masculinities] is more representative of construction of masculinities within Muslim countries." In my own view, the term 'Islamic masculinities' promotes a narrative of Muslim men being a monolith, and erases the multiplicity of the experience of Muslim men. In Edward Said's words, "'Islam' defines a relatively small proportion of what actually takes place in the Islamic world, which numbers a billion people, and includes dozens of countries, societies, traditions, languages, and, of course, an infinite number of different experiences" (Said 1997: xvi). Lexical connotations of term 'Islamic' would imply that whatever is mentioned is linked to the religion and present in practice of it everywhere, whereas 'Muslim' reiterates that it is linked to individual experience of people (i.e. as Muslims). This distinction needs to be made to reiterate that this study is looking at discourses around certain Muslim people, and not at Islam, the religion. In this study, religion is discussed as a site of discourse, as opposed to as a doctrine (Mukaddam 2016: 28).

It is necessary to be cognisant of these nuances when it comes to this study, and to be able to locate it in the broader socio-cultural context that is being looked at. It is also important to

situate the community in question against the backdrop of South Africa's complicated history. South African scholars Jacobs and Wasserman (2003: 26) also note this:

> The challenge is to speak about Islam without reverting to binary thought ... Islamic narratives are being constructed using global and local symbols, which produce specific and hybridised Muslim identities. They are intimately connected to the 'routes' of these symbols produced within colonialism, globalisation and the post-apartheid period. It presents us with an assemblage of tensions that are intensely internal and local, while at the same time being external and global.

It must be made clear that South Africa's Muslim community is by no means a single entity. Extensive research (Mandivenga 2000, Vahed and Jeppie 2005, Vahed 2003) has shown that South Africa's Muslim community could roughly be divided into three socio-cultural groupings; namely, Cape Malay Muslims, Black African Muslims, and South African Indian Muslims.[1] The Cape Muslim community is primarily found in the Western Cape region and are mainly of Malay and Indonesian descent, and South African Indian Muslims, originating from India, primarily occupy Kwazulu-Natal and parts of Gauteng (Vahed 2000). This is not to suggest that these are the only spaces that these communities occupy or that there has been no mixing of the two, however these are the geographical contexts in which they are primarily concentrated. This is an important factor to note as the communities generally practise Islam differently; Mandivenga (2000) notes, "socially, the two groups of Muslims in question differ in terms of their Islamic interpretation in which the Cape Muslims are tolerant and liberal whereas the Indians are more conservative" (Mandivenga 2000: 352).

While a name as broad and general as 'Radio Islam' may suggest a platform that is rather general, inclusionary of diverse viewpoints and catering to Muslims across the board regardless of culture, race, or any other types of groupings and/or affiliations, the reality is not so. Based in Johannesburg, Radio Islam's primary listenership consists predominantly of the Indian Muslim community. Many of the presenters are also from this community, with the Cape Malay Muslim community having their own radio station, Voice of the Cape (Vahed and Jeppie 2005).

[1] This statement does not account for the concentrations of immigrant Muslim communities which have also settled in South Africa, such as Somali Muslims (Ripero-Muñiz 2016).

Although the South African Indian Muslim community has been subject to academic study, this has primarily been done from a historical and political perspective. Research has examined the origins of the community, as well as the characteristics of it both pre- and post-apartheid (Vahed 2000, Vahed 2003), but there is much room for further research to be done which subjects aspects of the community to further critical examination in many aspects – most especially gender (given the links to the JU and its views on gender).

Goolam Vahed, an historian who has done extensive research on the South African Indian community, reaffirms:

> Islam has never functioned as an organic unity in South Africa. The most obvious distinction is between Indian and Malay Muslims with their different histories, cultures and traditions. Most Indian Muslims are confined to KwaZulu Natal and Gauteng, while the majority of Malays live in the Western Cape; there has consequently been little interaction. But deep differences also exist among Indian Muslims due to distinctions of locality, class, ethnicity and language (Vahed 2003: 315).

It is important to draw this picture of where it is that the South African Indian Muslim community is situated in terms of various aspects in order to contextualise this study. “Muslim identities have never been fixed. Social, economic and political changes from the late 1980s drew Muslims together and widened definition of the salient community” (Vahed 2003: 333). Vahed (2005: 260) reiterates the general differences in terms of outlook of the two culturally-distinct communities:

> Islam in the Western Cape ... attempted to provide an alternative narrative of what it means to be a Muslim in contemporary South Africa ... [individuals] based in the Cape espoused what they called a 'democratic' Islam, one that was 'forward-looking', in contrast to the Ulama [ideological guides of the Indian Muslim community] who were seen as representing 'traditional Islam', with its gaze towards an international ummah, was seen as 'utopian, un-South African' and out of touch with South African social, economic and political realities.

Because Radio Islam originates in the South African Indian Muslim community, understanding its ideological grounding assists in understanding why certain status quos in the community are the way that they are.; “Radio Islam… [plays a] cohesive role that an Islamic station does, holding both an ethnic and a religious minority together” (Murkens 2009: 102). Vahed and

Jeppie (2005: 272) wrote that the JU “enforce oppressive Indo-Pak, male-dominated, cultural norms on the Muslim community under the guise of theological legality.”

From the time of its inception in 1997, Radio Islam had no women in its management, and did not allow women to be heard on air. Justifications for this exclusion offered by clerics from the Jamiatul Ulama stated, in the words of Farid Esack, that a woman's voice is *awrah* and therefore a potential source of evil. Esack (1999: 172) paraphrases the view; “what won't these men get up to once they are tuned in or turned on and unleashed by the allure of the female presenter's voice?” and further, “it also implied that this was the only truly Islamic position and that the whole world of Islam was wrong on this score” (Esack 1999: 172). According to Vahed and Jeppie (2005), the Broadcasting Act states that it is mandatory for women to comprise a third of management. In the late 1990s, complaints were laid against the station, and they were brought before the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) and Commission for Gender Equality (CGE).

> The hearing to consider the renewal of Radio Islam's license was attended by several hundred Muslims, some fully covered from head to toe, presenting a very powerful image. Radio Islam management remained adamant that to allow women to speak on radio would be a violation of Islamic beliefs and practices, but in order to renew its license, the station was forced to allow women access to the air four hours each day (Vahed 2005: 270).

Radio Islam lost its case, with the station’s management ordered to make concessions to accommodate women. When it came to putting the gender equality into practice, according to Esack (who sat on the Gender Commission),

> some mischievous fellow suggested that the radio planned a women's slot on cooking, in which a woman would come and offer a recipe on how to boil water: 'Let the water boil for two hours' - silence for two hours - 'Now let the water cool down for an hour' - silence - 'Now pour the water slowly down the drain' - silence for an hour until a man's voice comes on to resume normal broadcasting (Esack 1999: 172).

Despite these changes, the transformation was – and to an extent, remains – only surface-level. “Access and participation in community radio by all citizens is not enough because the process can still be undemocratic because of gender power relations that are embedded in the Muslim cultural citizenship discourse” (Moyo 2012: 314). According to Haron (2002: 139), “certain members of the [Jamiatul] Ulama and other theologians consider themselves to be

the gatekeepers of Islamic knowledge and think that they speak on behalf of all Muslims." Haron concludes that on this basis, "Radio Islam's notion of participation and empowerment is selective and indeed discriminatory."

Moyo noted from his observations of the programming in 2010 that although by that point Radio Islam was more diverse, "it was also clear how patriarchy in Muslim communities sought to reproduce itself through community radio" (2012: 313). While there may have been an evolution at this station in terms of the role that women play in it, and they are now given the chance to speak on air, women remain marginalised in terms of what content they speak on and what is targeted at them - women-hosted shows that currently air, for example, are named 'Women's Weekly' and 'Household Express'.

Understanding this history of the station as a contested space in terms of gender is integral to the purpose of this project. This reveals why it is so necessary for gender – and particularly masculinity, the way that it was initially manifested and the way that it continues to be – to be examined further in this particular context.

To a large extent, media in the South African Indian Muslim community remains ideologically stagnant. A major issue also facing South African Indian Muslim media is that religion and culture become conflated to the extents that they do. Despite the fact that Islam is not an inherently patriarchal religion, many cultural interpretations have led to patriarchal interpretations of the faith – including the predominantly Indian interpretations, a relic of the Deobandi teachings (Vahed and Jeppie 2005) which are used as the guidelines for the Jamiatul Ulama. "If women's rights are a problem for some Muslim men, it is neither because of the Quran nor the Prophet, nor the Islamic tradition, but simply because those rights conflict with the interests of a male elite" (Jeenah 2001: 45).

These hermeneutics are then used to justify and excuse patriarchy and manifestations of it in many spheres – and cultural practices or beliefs then become entrenched under the guise of religion. As de Sondy (2014) states, "the study of Islam has often been restricted to monolithic understandings, interpretations and commentaries, and often been defined through a patriarchal gaze without appreciating the significance of tradition of diversity. Most often, this has been disguised using the powerful force of tradition."

While there has been much criticism of both Radio Islam and those who have put into place the rules which have governed the management and content of the station, I am not interested in indicting a certain party and leaving it at that. Rather, through this project I want to attempt to understand why it is that certain patriarchal narratives disseminated via Radio Islam have remained unquestioned or unchanged.

Exclusion of women from certain spaces is not limited to Radio Islam's airwaves. It extends to women in the South African Indian Muslim community also being denied full participation in the broader social sphere, in physical spaces such as the mosque and Eid prayer gatherings. Referring to debates around the permissibility of Muslim women going to the mosque, South African Muslim gender activist Safiyyah Surtee gave an address in 2011 in which she stated, "Muslim women in South Africa are disadvantaged by not being included in these sacred spaces, through culturally and religiously unsound attitudes." Ismail (2002: 4) concurs, "inclusion in religious space is the first step towards involvement in decision-making."

But mosque access debates are vocally public, common debates. Arguably even more insidious are the subtleties which characterise the existing narratives of Muslim men and women. Issues such as sexist jokes, normalisations of and justifications for polygamy, and why women remain regarded as only capable of engaging on issues stereotyped as "women's issues," such as baking and marriage. Sanglay (2014) writes, "the lack of inclusion of Muslim women in key spheres of public life – not only in *masaajid* – is a pertinent social concern that must be confronted, particularly with the Muslim religious leadership."

A possible solution to this is to look more broadly at gender roles and the ways that they are constructed, particularly within the South African Indian Muslim community. While reactions to representations of women as well as dominant narratives around Muslim women generally have resulted in the emergence of Muslim feminisms, in this cultural space specifically, there has been little focus on two things: not only the way that men are complicit in upholding certain viewpoints, but also in the way that these viewpoints stem from patriarchal ideals, meaning that men too are victims of patriarchy.

Gender roles themselves – both femininity and masculinity – stem from patriarchal ideals. In unpacking how patriarchy manifests itself in this space, it needs to be examined from multiple angles. While many movements for gender justice focus on the way that women remain

victims of patriarchy as an oppressive system, men performing masculinity are too victims of this system; "[bell hooks argues] patriarchy, not masculinity, is the problem. This distinction recognises patriarchy as more than an economic system of male power and privilege and acknowledges the ways in which gendered relationships of power are also racialised, infusing identity, emotions and perspective" (Clennon 2013). Masculinity is learnt and not inherent behaviour; as Connell (2000: 12) clarifies, "masculinities are neither programmed in our genes, nor fixed by social structures, prior to social interaction. They come into existence as people act. They are actively produced, using the resources and strategies available in a given social setting."

The only way that masculinity can therefore be fully theorised, is when viewed in relation to patriarchy. As Gqola (2007: 119) states, "we cannot re-shape patriarchy without an honest look at our society, our language and our everyday practice." Through examining audio texts from three special-broadcast series on Radio Islam, this project will determine to what extent discourses of a common notion of masculinity in the South African Indian Muslim community are spread and upheld. Hopkins (2009: 4) states that "masculine identities were often constructed in terms of power, control and patriarchy," and Moosa (1998: 205) reiterates that "the lives of most Muslim women are governed by cultural and religious restraints". These gendered representations have significant real-life consequences for Muslim society as a whole.

These understandings are key to understanding the research questions.

Research questions

- How is Radio Islam complicit in creating gender stereotypes in the South African Indian Muslim community?

- To what extent does Radio Islam uphold hegemonic ideals of what masculinity should be, and how is this done in relation to the way that women are spoken of and to?

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This study examines the construction of a certain type of masculinity against a particular socio-cultural backdrop. It does so through the use of community radio station, Radio Islam.

This literature review explores a range of work on key ideas which shape an understanding of this study, the purpose of it, and where it can be situated. It examines the concepts of community, public sphere, alternative media, religious media, community radio, and radio in South Africa. This provides an understanding of the role that a media form such as Radio Islam has.

Community

It is impossible to discuss notions of community without mentioning Benedict Anderson. Anderson reiterates in his book *Imagined Communities* that much like the concept of gender, community is a social construct; "because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (1983: 15). Community construction takes place based on groupings around common interests, beliefs, or circumstances; in this particular study, it is based on having a common religion and culture. This study is concerned with understandings of masculinity in a certain social setting. As is discussed in the next chapter, masculinity is a socially constructed concept, and this construction does not occur within a vacuum; individuals do not live or exist in isolation from one another. They occupy both the public and private spheres, and understanding these concepts contextualises multiple factors within this study.

A public sphere, according to Jurgen Habermas, is a "coming-together of private citizens on a basis of presumptive equality" (1962: 198). Within a public sphere, communication is key; "in a large public body this kind of communication requires specific means of transmitting information and influencing those who receive it. Today newspapers and magazines, radio and television are the media of the public sphere" (Habermas 1962: 200). According to Eisenlohr (2009: 3), "recent anthropological studies of religion, media and the public sphere have highlighted the significance of affective experience for the interlocked processes of mediatised religion and the transformation of public spheres." Radio Islam falls into such a category.

Hackett and Carroll (2006) state that alternative media tends to be "relatively autonomous from corporate capital and the state" (2006: 58). This financial independence provides them with more freedom in terms of what content they report and also in how biased they are in their reporting. Community radio is a form of alternative media, and Radio Islam falls into this category.

Radio Islam claims to serve the community; the slogan of the station is "the world is our community!" The European branch of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, AMARC-Europe (1994), recognises the multiplicity of the term 'community radio' and narrows down a single definition of it as "a non-profit station, currently broadcasting, which offers a service to the community in which it is located, or to which it broadcasts, while promoting the participation of this community in the radio" (Bailey et al 2008: 7).

Bailey et al (2008: 15) identify how "the concept of community has often been reduced to its geographical meaning," and Hillery (1955: 111) reiterates this, saying, "community consists of persons in social interaction within a geographic area." Non-geographical conceptions of community include the ideas of 'community of interest' and 'community of practice', with Lewis (1993: 13) making a case for the former by saying that a community can exist "across conurbations, nations and continents". Leunissen (1986) argues that ethnicity is another way in which people organise themselves into communities.

It is useful to situate the community of people who comprise the majority of Radio Islam's constituency: this is the ethnic group that can be identified as South African Indian Muslims. While this is not the only group comprising the listenership of the station, it is the main one (Radio Islam 2016). Bailey et al write, "a community is actively constructed by its members and those members derive an identity from this construction" (2008: 10), resulting in communities becoming "worlds of meaning in the minds of their members" (Cohen 1985: 20).

> By choosing a specific community as a target group, the concept of community itself is validated and strengthened. The audience is not defined as an aggregate of individuals with common socio-demographic or economic characteristics, but instead is defined as a collective of people incorporating a series of identifying group relations (Bailey et al 2008: 14).

Radio Islam is also a form of religious media. Hosseini (2008: 67) defines religious media as "the utilisation of media, through its unique identity, to achieve religious objectives, ultimate goals, and divine aspirations." Eisenlohr (2009: 11) argues that religious media is integral in the "making of pious citizens…which in turn raises the question of the relationship between affective and meaningful dimensions of such publics created by the circulation of religious media". Hoover recognises that contention exists around the role of religious media, as some may query whether religious texts in their pure form can adequately be relayed in media spaces. Hoover (1997: 287) dismisses this however, and suggests that in addition to being able to properly disseminate religious texts, religious media also offers the opportunity to break new ground.

> We are left with an evolving view of the nature of contemporary religious practice that should be challenging understandings of the relations between religion and media It challenges as well the notion that 'religious media' is a category wholly coterminous with those texts constructed by religious groups or with religious intentions. [We need to] centre on the notion of the audience as cultural and social practice ... we know who we are by our practices of textual consumption, and media texts now serve as important maps through which we see ourselves on local and global landscapes (1997: 287).

Haron localises the religious media viewpoint; specifically looking at the context in which Radio Islam operates, he states, "although religion and the media have enjoyed adequate scholarly attention in the USA and elsewhere in the European world, the area is still very much an untapped sector in Southern Africa" (2010: 28).

Radio first began in South Africa in 1924 and was taken over by the state in 1936, when it became the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) (Gunner 2000). This was the only form of radio in South Africa at the time. The SABC was a state broadcaster; "in addition to operating as a national network of radio and television, the SABC was the propaganda arm of the Afrikaner-controlled National Party. The corporation's affiliation with the ruling National Party influenced the programming, channel structure, staffing, and language policy of all radio and television outlets under its management" (Olorunnisola 2002: 129).

Chiumbu and Ligaga (2013) contextualise these changes and explain how the end of apartheid in the early 1990s resulted in South Africa bringing about changes in legislation as well as

adopting a multi-tier broadcasting system – public, commercial, and community broadcasting. Public radio, run by the SABC, is owned solely by the state. Commercial radio is privately owned, and is licensed to freely broadcast its specific content. Community radio is also usually privately owned, for non-profit purposes. Haron explains the way that those behind Radio Islam took advantage of this change in legislation.

> When new opportunities came their way, South Africa's religious communities quickly took advantage of the Bill of Rights as well as the legislation that covers the media. The broadcasting regulations opened the airwaves and permitted its communities to vie for and establish community radio stations. As a consequence of these exciting developments, Christian and Muslim organisations were among those who successfully vied for community radio licenses (2010: 45).

Referring to the very specific primary audience that engages with Radio Islam, Haron writes that "South Africa's Muslims have been actively using their media to propagate their ideas and mediate news items and programmes that are not generally broadcast by the state and commercial media" (2010: 35). Chiumbu and Ligaga (2013: 250) also reiterate this, and emphasise the role that ownership plays in the content that is broadcast. "It is impossible to completely separate radio institutions from its contents when trying to theorise new emerging publics. Listenership is still largely dependent on radio stations to guide its participation in the various radio cultures." This boom in community radio equated to a rise in media spheres serving various niche publics, which resulted in the media form solidifying the idea of the 'public' or imagined community.

Alternative media

This section discusses alternative media in more detail. Bailey, Cammaerts and Carpenter (2008: 10) state that "alternative media are oriented towards a community." The four approaches they identify to approach are: serving a community, being an alternative to mainstream media, linking alternative media to the civil society, and alternative media functioning as a rhizome (a stakeholder in a model in which there are various players and organisations, including the state, but the influence is not viewed as hierarchal).

While a community radio station with clear objectives of serving a community, Radio Islam can also be examined from Bailey et al's other approaches. The second approach focuses on

problematising alternative media as directly oppositional to mainstream media, thereby acting as an alternative to it. In Atton's words, "we might consider the entire range of alternative media as representing challenges to hegemony" (2002:15). While mainstream media may serve the interests of a larger community (such as a nation), alternative media spaces serve niche audience needs. As Bailey et al state, "alternative media are one of the many available sites that provide these societal groups with the opportunity to produce these non-conformist and counter-hegemonic representations" (2008: 17).

In the case of Radio Islam, for example, it can be seen how the radio station, as an alternative media space – and whose listenership largely consists of Muslims – attempts to depict Muslim women in a different way than mainstream media does. As Moyo notes in his research on the station, "Muslim women were portrayed as leading happy and fulfilling lives, hindered only by a western and Eurocentric view of their lives" (2012: 313).

Bailey et al's third approach links alternative media to civil society – itself a contested notion. In a democratic society however, there is no way to look at the media in isolation from civil society; civil society, according to Bailey et al, is "a societal segment considered crucial for the viability for democracy" (2008: 24). Haron highlights the way in which community radio spaces such as Radio Islam, despite being privately owned structures, still contribute to national discourse around pertinent national societal issues, thus acknowledging the role that they play in a democracy.

> Community radio stations [such as Radio Islam] which proudly claimed ownership and control have generally reflected preparedness to participate in the democratic structures even though there existed disagreements regarding various controversial bolts which were implemented by the democratic state (Haron 2004: 154).

In Bailey et al's words again, "by defining alternative media as part of civil society, these media can be considered the 'third voice' between state media and private commercial media (2008: 23). Based on this definition, it can be said that alternative media is a form of media that is necessary in a democratic context such as South Africa. As Bailey et al explain, "these forms of micro-participation are to be considered important, because they allow people to learn and adopt democratic and/or civic attitudes, thus strengthening macro-participation" (2008: 25).

The final approach identified is the rhizomatic approach, which "focuses on three aspects: [alternative media's] role at the crossroads of civil society, their elusiveness, and their interconnections and linkages with market and state" (Bailey et al 2008: 27). This approach is one that really highlights the interconnectedness of alternative media across state and market boundaries; "like rhizomes, alternative media tend to cut across borders and build linkages between pre-existing gaps." Rhizomatic structures tend to emphasise the ways in which multiple stakeholders play roles in a situation, without classifying them in a hierarchy of importance. "In the case of alternative media, these connections apply not only to the pivotal role alternative media can play in civil society. They also apply to the linkages alternative media (and other civil organisations) can establish with segments of the state and the market without losing their proper identity" (Bailey et al 2008: 28).

To reiterate this point Haron discusses the ways in which South African Muslim radio stations, including Radio Islam, have far-reaching impacts that go in tandem with overarching state goals, such as nation-building.

> Civil society has thus benefitted from the inputs of the community in more than one way via [stations such as Radio Islam]. The stations' support and call to assist demonstrated that the media were used not to merely project a Muslim identity but to put this identity into action by responding to those communities who were or are in distress ... They have been able to make a direct contribution towards nation-building and successfully break down barriers of communications which the state stations could not easily accomplish (Haron 2004: 155-156).

In this literature review, I have contextualised the role of Radio Islam as a medium which disseminates discourses to a certain community. I have also explained the notion of community and the ways in which it is a space in which ideologies become reproduced, and highlighted the degree of influence that alternative media has.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter outlines the theories and ideas which frame the approach being taken to conduct this study. It discusses the concept of gender, and ties that in with a preliminary discussion on feminism. Some theorists claim that Western feminism is a movement that is inherently exclusionary as it ignores intersections of race, gender and class, and therefore intersectional feminism can be considered a better approach when it comes to employing feminist ideals. This will be discussed in detail in the section below. Muslim feminism specifically is looked at in more detail, which is necessary for this study due to the faith-based aspect of it. Finally, masculinity is discussed in depth. I also specifically highlight that there is little literature available on Muslim masculinity.

Jeenah's (2001) research highlights the way in which the South African Muslim community overlooks a gender perspective, and his findings make the argument that this should not be the case.

> Among various religious traditions there is increasing amount of research being done in reviewing the role of women in the religions and attempting to reinterpret religious scripture from feminist perspectives. And, more broadly, gender has become a crucial benchmark in the framing of social dynamics. No reasonable examination of any society can afford to omit a gender perspective. As far as the South African Muslim community is concerned, there is very little scholarship that looks at it as the subject of an examination that uses gender as a basis (Jeenah 2001: 4).

Jeenah's work emphasises the fact that polarised gender roles exist in this community, and suggests that they should be subjected to further examination.

A point which will be expanded on in the next section is that while there is much work centred around arguments and studies regarding Muslim women, Muslim feminism, and the identity and role of Muslim women, the same cannot be said about Muslim men (Ouzgane 2006:).

This very same point can be applied to South Africa, and South African Muslims. While there has been work done around gender and Islam in South African contexts, not much has focused on masculinity. This study will contribute to the bridging of that gap.

Gender theory and feminism

Donna Haraway writes that all modern feminist meanings of gender have roots in Simone de Beauvioŕs claim that one is not born a woman (1991: 131). de Beauvoir writes in 'The Second Sex', "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman … No biological, psychological or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature." (2009: 2) Despite the fact that people are assigned a sex at birth based on their reproductive organs (and then categorised as 'males' and 'females'), they become conditioned to perform their gender by the environment that they are in. While traditional categorisation as male or female is determined by biological sex at birth, it is important to note that biological sex assignment is not as rigid as is commonly believed – there are many instances of deviation from the binary. Butler (1990: 135) also challenges the notion that biological sex determination should even occur, as it is the root cause of the facilitation of gender construction.

Butler (1990) theorised that gender be viewed as a performance. Essentially reiterating de Beauvoir's point, Butler says that gender is something that is learnt, and picked up from one's physical and social environment. As Connell (2001: 14) states, "gender is a living system of social interactions."

In her work, Butler (1990) attempts to understand how gender ideologies produce 'women' and enforce normative subjectivities. She refutes binary divisions between "the symbolic and the material, the abstract and the concrete, the individual and the social, the psychic and the institutional, the subjective and the political" (Scott 1997: 699), instead continually questioning these conventions.

Essentially then, heteronormative gender can be said to be the categorisation of people into one of two groups: male or female. Fulfilment of heteronormative gender roles is developed and acted out by individuals based on ingrained, heteronormative societal conceptions of what males and females should be like – and based on assumptions of biological sex. Ratele states that "males are not by nature men. It is in families, most times, that the processes of turning babies into boys and boys into men is usually begun; families which, with the help of available knowledge and power, saturate the bodies, psyches, desires, and daily practices of youngsters with images of and ideas about masculinity" (2008: 520). These forms of

behaviour are called femininity and masculinity, all-encompassing terms for the types of expected and stereotypical behaviour exhibited by and expected from females and males respectively (Ratele 2008). Robert Morrell substantiates this – as he writes, “masculinity [is] something constructed … gender identities of men are socially constructed, changeable and often contradictory” (1998: 7-8).

Some theorists dispute this idea, and believe that biological determinism is what influences gender-specific behaviour. Basing their arguments on evolutionary biology and other scientific notions, they suggest that gender behaviour is always biologically implanted. Dobson (2002: 26-27), for example, argues that hormonal differences and other differences in the physiological structure of men and women are what “accounts for behavioural and attitudinal characteristics traditionally associated with masculinity and femininity.”

However, Ratele (2008) argues that masculinity, as a gender performance, is in fact neither a uniform, homogeneous thing nor an infinite, original set of objects. It is rather “always ready made, always social first and personal second” (Wetherell and Edley, 1999: 342), limited and coloured by social-psychological realities and “fictions”. Regardless of whether it is nature or nurture that constructs masculinity and femininity however, there is little question that when it comes to gender relations there are a multitude of power dynamics at play. “Gender and power … form the constituents of gender theory,” argues Van Zoonen (1994: 4).

Male privilege is a form of inherent power which men hold, solely based on the fact that they are men. This is linked to power dynamics. Harrington (2002) writes, “feminist scholars have shown that masculinity translates into institutional and economic power, that at the local national and international level political and economic elites are overwhelmingly male.” Further substantiating this idea of male privilege, Connell (2001: 26) writes that “men as a group gain real and large advantages from the current system of gender relations; the scale of this "patriarchal dividend" is indicated by the fact that men's earned incomes, worldwide, are about 180% of women's.”

Patriarchy, according to bell hooks, is a political-social system that states that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females; “men are endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain that dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence …

patriarchal ideology brainwashes men to believe that their domination of women is beneficial when it is not" (2013: 1).

Patriarchy can thus be said to be the form of power inextricably linked with gender, and developed on the basis of it, which continues to privilege one group while subjugating others. As Ratele reiterates, "the least difficult route for any male to achieve successful masculinity in much of the world is to be dominant over females and other males" (2008: 525). This will be further discussed below, in the section under 'Masculinity'.

When it comes to critically approaching gender issues, feminism is necessary as it is a resistance movement against patriarchy. As Van Zoonen (1994: 3) highlights, "[feminism has] an unconditional focus on analysing gender as a mechanism that structures material and symbolic worlds and our experiences of them, [and this is] hard to find in other perspectives on humanity and society."

That said however, traditional understandings of feminism prove to be limited. Mainstream feminism has been critiqued as problematic by many scholars and activists for being exclusionary (discussed further below). For the most part, this is because feminism has only been understood to be white/Western feminism, as opposed to being a concept in which brown and black women are also included. Patel (2016) writes, "white feminism is not about white women who happen to be feminists. It is about feminism that prioritises the voices of white women over the voices, and lived experiences, of women of colour. Too often white feminism is the negation of a Muslim woman's agency." This critique also relates to other women of colour or non-normative social groups.

In listing shortcomings of Western feminism, Ouzgane and Morrell find that it relies too much on binary constructions of gender, and further that contextually (particularly with reference to this study), it is not a framework that is applicable in an African context, particularly as this space is one which challenges "the very building blocks of gender theory" (2005: 18).

Western feminism, in the way that it examines gender and provides a lens through which to determine gender equality, is not an effective model in either a South African context or a Muslim context. Although this type of feminism does examine a broad range of societal issues, it does not address the core fact that multiple struggles can be linked and experienced at the same time by different members of society. It is thus an incompatible gender lens as it is

inherently exclusionary. As a case in point, Gqola (2007: 115) argues that discourses of gender in South Africa's public sphere "are very conservative … they speak of 'women's empowerment' in ways that are not transformative." This highlights how, often, discourse around women's rights have not fully succeeded in actively promoting or championing change from the status quo.

"Feminism is made possible by theories of equality and justice that are also sometimes the source of inequality and injustice. Feminism exists because of these contradictions and as a contradiction in societies that represent themselves as democratic" (Scott 1997: 701). As such, it is necessary to have alternative movements in which women who do not subscribe to Western feminism can advocate for gender justice, against the backdrop of the other struggles and injustices that they face and that both affect and remain affected by their gender – struggles such as race, class, religion and so forth.

From a Muslim feminism perspective specifically, Haddad (2007) argues that Western feminism and its narrative of 'saving' Muslim women – assuming that Muslim women are oppressed and controlled by patriarchy, and wanting to liberate them – is damaging as it denies Muslim women their agency and stereotypes them as oppressed, ill-informed and submissive. Ahmed (1982: 526) problematises the way in which Western feminism does little to advance the plights of Muslim women. "Although Western feminists have succeeded in rejecting their culture's myths about (Western) women and their innate inferiority and irrationality, they continue to subscribe to and perpetuate those myths about Muslims, including Muslim women". The next section will discuss Muslim feminism in more detail.

Muslim feminism

In 1989, Kimberlé Crenshaw articulated a response to mainstream Western feminism and coined the term 'intersectionality.' Intersectionality refers to a paradigm of thought which – in very simple terms – advocates that forms of one's identity, particularly when being scrutinised in relation to oppression, cannot ever be looked at in isolation (Crenshaw 1989). It is a response to Western feminism; in relation to gender for example, the oppression of a white woman would differ to that of a black woman, just as the oppression of a Christian woman may differ to that of a Muslim woman. Thus, when using the term feminism, one must realise that it has different meanings, for different people, in different contexts.

As Hasan (2005: 51) puts it,

> Forming a universal sisterhood of women from all national, ethnic, and religious backgrounds needs an accommodative approach. White women have to disaffiliate themselves from racial or imperial domineering implements. If the woman implied in the term feminism is not solely white and Western, and if feminism at its core denotes a "consciousness of all sources of oppression – race, class, gender, homophobia – and resists them all," feminism should have no affiliation with neo-colonialism or neo-racism.

As such, feminism cannot be looked at in isolation from colonialism and its lasting impacts. Mahmood (2005: 189–90) argues that "colonialism rationalised itself on the basis of the "inferiority" of non-Western cultures, most manifest in their patriarchal customs and practices, from which indigenous women had to be rescued through the agency of colonial rule." Abu-Lughod (2002: 784) makes mention of how this ideology continues to operate; post-9/11: the USA justified their invasion of Afghanistan by claiming that it was for the sake of rescuing the oppressed women in that country.

Scharff (2011) demonstrates that the marginalised – in this case, Muslim – woman does not have a place in traditional, Western feminism; her characterisation is solely as an Other. This then makes the case for a Muslim articulation of feminism, where the Muslim woman's role is looked at contextually and her rights and dignity are afforded to her.

Muslim or Islamic feminism can therefore be defined as a form of intersectional feminism – operating within the framework of religious constraints, but acknowledging that Muslim women have rights afforded to them by their religion, and supporting their advocacy for justice against cultural and patriarchal dilutions of the faith. As Hoel and Shaikh (2013: 91) put it, "the Islamic feminist project advocates for the full recognition of women's moral agency and personhood."

Muslim women remain under continuous scrutiny as they attempt to navigate their "hybridised identity negotiations within Orientalist, Islamic and multicultural discourses" (Saliba 2000: 1091).

"The concept of an Islamic feminism is controversial – is it an oxymoron?" poses Abu-Lughod (2002: 788), and argues that feminism is not exclusively something tailored for the West. There remains contestation around the validity of 'Islamic feminism'; Ali (2011: xiv) states that

“too often, Muslims, especially females, who challenge certain widely accepted views [through frameworks such as feminism] are met with warnings to desist; that way, it is said, lies heresy, blasphemy, apostasy.” Despite this, Barlas (2004), articulates the ways that it is possible for ‘Islamic feminism’, as a discourse of gender equality and social justice, to be more widely accepted amongst Muslims.

If feminism aims for equality between the sexes, Hassan (1991: 59) refers to Islam’s holiest text: “not only does the Quran emphasise that righteousness is identical in the case of man or woman, but it affirms, clearly and consistently, women’s equality with men,” something reiterated by Badran (2005: 12) – "Islamic feminism is built upon Quran-centered discourse."

Finally, Jeenah reiterates the ways that Muslim women themselves need to remain key parts of the equation when it comes to the real-life application of Muslim/Islamic feminism.

> The question of the centring of women is also important in addressing the imprisoning of Islamic feminism in academia. Academic discourse about women and Islam itself needs to be tempered in a way that it addresses the experiences of disadvantage and oppression that Muslim women face rather than addressing only ‘abstract’ questions. Women’s experiences and voices need to be granted greater importance (2001: 124).

It is important to consider feminism and feminist theories in this project. Feminism advocates for gender justice, which requires breaking away from the bounds of patriarchy. These theories guide the way that the research is undertaken; a feminist perspective means that the way the texts are examined can be viewed from a gender-justice perspective. In this way, the underlying gendered elements of the discourse can be clearly unpacked. As Mukaddam (2016: 17) states, “feminist knowledge production is an attempt to challenge and provide alternative theoretical and conceptual methodologies to mainstream research.”

The concept of gender studies is usually imagined to relate to women rather than men. By talking about masculinity, men become a focus and conversations around patriarchy become more nuanced.

Masculinity

Connell originally talked about hegemonic masculinity as being the way in which ideal masculinity is conceptualised at a given moment. This later developed, as cultural difference

came into perspective, into what can be described as the criteria for being the ideal man in a particular culture. According to Harrington (2002), “it signals that not all versions of masculinity are equal, masculinities are valued differently in different contexts.” This is important to note, as factors such as race, culture, and religion influence the ways that masculinities vary, particularly when it comes to the authority that they command or the power that they hold. “The hierarchy of masculinities is an expression of the unequal shares in that privilege held by different groups of men” (Connell 2001: 17).

Connell wrote of the concept in 2001,

> "[H]egemonic" signifies a position of cultural authority and leadership, not total dominance; other forms of masculinity persist alongside. The hegemonic form need not be the most common form of masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is, however, highly visible … Hegemonic masculinity is hegemonic not just in relation to other masculinities, but in relation to the gender order as a whole. It is an expression of the privilege men collectively have over women (2001: 17).

The media play a key role in the maintenance of hegemonic concepts, ideas, and ideals; Van Zoonen (1994: 24) calls the media “contemporary mediators of hegemony.” Hegemony is also linked to the way that power operates, by favouring a dominant ideology; Denzin (1997: 239) states that “power and ideology operate through systems of discourse.” This is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Thompson (2000: 217) demonstrates the connotations attached to masculinity, which play themselves out in the development of boys:

> masculinity is a social construction, it is not a biological given, and it is very hard for boys to define…They enforce on one another an extremely stereotyped version of the male ideal. Size, strength, and verbal cruelty are considered good; anything tender, compassionate, thoughtful, or artistic is considered feminine and dangerous. Without a clear definition of male, boys build themselves up at the expense of others.

At a seminar given at the University of the Witwatersrand on 9 May 2016, Michael Kimmel reiterated that masculinity is hierarchically arranged; much like in the idea of intersectional feminism, factors such as class and race play a role in the power dynamics between men.

Kimmel also highlighted the way in which men have more power than women do, although "nobody likes to think they are the oppressor" (Kimmel 2016).

"Historians and anthropologists have shown that there is no one pattern of masculinity that is found everywhere. Different cultures, and different periods of history, construct masculinity differently" (Connell 2001: 16). This can also be said to be true of Islamic/Muslim masculinities. A leading scholar in the field, Ouzgane, identifies that "masculinities in Islamic contexts emerge as a set of distinctive practices defined by men's positionings within a variety of religious and social structures" (2006: 2).

Ouzgane is careful to note that there cannot be an essentialist definition of the terms 'Muslim' or 'Islamic', and states in his edited collection that – as in reality – "the experiences of masculinity described in the articles collected here are not uniform, not generalizable to all Muslim men." He cautions against using the word 'Islam' as a category, "especially when it is deployed in the West", and cites both Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) and *Covering Islam* (1997) to explain why, saying that "'Islam' is an easy catch-all term, an Orientalist construct which thrives even more today than in the nineteenth century" (2006: 2).

Although Muslims are present all over the world, the Middle East and North Africa remain seen as the primary geographic 'Muslim world.' Ouzgane notes in the introduction of his edited collection of essays on Islamic Masculinities (a benchmark publication): "in the last three or four decades, scholarly attention to issues in the Middle East and North Africa has been focused almost exclusively on a quest to understand femininity: what it is and how it is made and regulated" (2006: 1). He outlines how issues such as *hijab* – itself a universal concept, applicable to men and women (Qamar 2016) – and other issues linked to women's oppression, have remained the most discussed in terms of Islam and gender. The same cannot however be said about masculinity; "by contrast, studies of Muslim masculinities are surprisingly rare. At a time when masculinities studies is experiencing a tremendous boom in the West, masculinity in Islamic cultures has so far remained an unexamined category that secures its power by refusing to identify itself" (Ouzgane 2006: 1).

Muslim masculinity is constructed as polar to Muslim femininity; in his research amongst Muslim men in Scotland, for example, Hopkins (2006: 343) found that Muslim men "place a

central emphasis on earning capacity and the control of appropriate Muslim femininities, and draw upon a range of reference points such as religion, heritage and gendered expectations."

De Sondy's work focused on "exploring the many colourful and diverse images of masculinities in India and Pakistan. A key finding is that their appreciation or rejection within Islam is dependent upon idealized notions of masculinity, femininity, morality and ethics that are essentially derived from patriarchal structures, such as the 'family' and 'procreation'" (2009: Abstract). De Sondy is a key scholar in the field on Muslim/Islamic masculinities, exploring in his research whether there is only one valid and ideal conception of what Muslim masculinity is supposed to be. He writes in the blurb of his book, "rigid notions of masculinity are causing crisis in the global Islamic community. These are articulated from the Qur'an, its commentary, historical precedents and societal, religious and familial obligations. Some Muslims who don't agree with narrow constructs of manliness feel forced to consider themselves secular and therefore outside the religious community" (De Sondy 2014). In order to make his findings, De Sondy "explores key figures of the Qur'an and Indian-Pakistani Islamic history, and exposes the precariousness of tight constraints on Islamic manhood" (2014).

De Sondy's work is more focused on readings of Islamic texts, which provide the basis of his findings and suggestions. Speaking at the 2009 Faith, Homophobia, Transphobia & Human Rights conference at Ithaca College in New York, De Sondy said:

> [T]he emphasis of the Quranic message places no emphasis on uniform norms of gender, sexuality, masculinity or femininity, as its message of strengthening piety and submission is not restricted by a specific form. The heterosexual man has interpreted the Quran in a patriarchal Islamic culture. Are we so surprised with the results? The codification of gender has also strengthened a limited understanding of Islamic masculinities, through the establishment of Islamic law as it was also shaped in a deeply patriarchal culture of Arabia (2009).

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 835) note that "international research has strongly confirmed the initial insight that gender orders construct multiple masculinities," and refer to Morrell's 1998 work on apartheid South Africa to reiterate the point. Morrell suggests that social changes result in men feeling vulnerable, meaning that constructions of masculinity are fraught with fragility, and this results in men lashing out and acting violently, which is an unfortunate manifestation of hegemonic masculinity (1998).

While there has been work done examining masculinities in South Africa, much of it has focused on black men and white men (Ratele 2008, Falkof 2016). As Goolam Vahed notes,

> [T]he men of Southern Africa have frequently been fitted into the binaries of black/white or indigenous/settler. While this framework distinguishes the different histories and power positions, it conceals the presence of men whose geographical origins, ethnic affiliations, and position in the racial order escape these neat divisions (2005: 239).

Ouzgane and Morrell write, "the subject of masculinities in Africa remains neglected" (2005: 1). In relation to Africa, they "acknowledge diversity, difference, and inequality in the continent, which make claims that simplistically link identity to race and geographical location highly problematic" (2005: 4). They state further, to contextualise the idea of an 'African masculinity',

> [N]ot all residents of Africa are black … there are Christians, Muslims, Hindus, and traditional believers. There are white settlers and Indian labourers. But there are also communalities … all men have access to the patriarchal dividend, the power that being a man gives them to choose to exercise power over women. In addition, in Africa, men have the legacy of colonialism and the current impact of globalisation to contend with (2005: 7).

That said, it is impossible to look at masculinities in South Africa without regarding apartheid and the way that men of different races and classes had and continue to have different lived experiences, thus affecting the types of masculinity that they embody (Morrell 1998). Referring to apartheid, Connell paraphrases Morrell to call it "a system of segregated and competing patriarchies" (2005: 835).

Ouzgane (2006: 6), although referring to a different context, makes a similar point:

> [A]lthough gender theories can be productively deployed to understand Islamic masculinities, we have to bear in mind that the Muslim world is diverse and ever-changing. We also need to take into consideration local realities, religious and political agendas, the consequences of Western colonialism and imperialism, and the marked effects of globalisation … while [we must be reminded] that all masculinity studies must be grounded in historical, cultural, and geographical contexts, this attention to and recognition of the diversity of masculinities must not divert our attention from men's social dominance both in the Muslim world and everywhere else.

The divide-and-conquer approach of colonialism continues to manifest in the legacies of it, including in the way that gender is enacted in many contexts. In this sense then, colonialism remains a violent system, and so does patriarchy; there are a number of factors related to structural and systemic violence which need to be unpacked in order to properly rationalise and understand these constructions of masculinity.

Further, while there may be variation in the degree of privilege that men hold in different contexts, for the most part they are often viewed as superior to women. Pressingly, and fittingly to all of the forms of masculinity described above, South African feminist scholar Gqola (2007: 120) asks the question: "at which point do violent men in this country stop using 'culture' as a way to justify violating us?"

At the same time, Muslim men must negotiate multiple factors, particularly when they are not in Muslim-majority contexts. "There is a fine line, especially for Muslim men in the West. While they are striving for acceptance, they are being singled out by the public and profiled by the authorities" (Gerami 2005: 455). Further, and most importantly, Hopkins (2006: 350) reminds us: "simplistic stereotypical understandings of Muslim masculinities have limited value."

As mentioned in the first chapter, South African Indian culture is not a diasporic Indian culture, but rather a culture of its own. This carries with it its own consequences when it comes to defining identity from this aspect, meaning it is important to look at the nuances of national, religious, and cultural identity.

It is at the intersection of these varying forms of hegemonic masculinities and ideas of masculinity that a South African Indian Muslim masculinity is constructed.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

Discourse analysis

In this study, the data that is collected and analysed is approached through a qualitative method – namely, discourse analysis. Qualitative research is a method which considers an inductive approach, which is an approach concerned with generating new findings through research, through the use of research questions (Gabriel 2013). This is unlike the method of quantitative research, which employs a more rigid and scientific design and approach (Riffe et al. 1998:25). Sherman and Reid define qualitative research as "research that produces descriptive data based upon spoken or written words and observable behaviour" (1994: 1). Qualitative research is a subjective method, examining texts from a specialised view, remaining cognisant of the contexts of social and cultural life (Gabriel 2013).

Within qualitative research there are a variety of methods to undertake research. One such method is discourse analysis. Mullany and Stockwell (2010: 19) state that "the most important, defining characteristic for *discourse* is conceptualising it as language above the level of the sentence … [with] discourse analysis concerned with a focus on context." They elaborate on the usefulness of discourse analysis as a research tool, which aligns with the aims of this project: "discourse analysis focuses upon producing examinations of the structure of the text itself" (Mullany and Stockwell 2010: 19).

Therefore, while Crystal's (1992:25) definition of discourse as "a continuous stretch of language larger than a sentence which constitutes a coherent unit" is not incorrect, I must reiterate that the concept of discourse in this context is not purely linguistic. Rather, it focuses on the relations between language, power, and practice. As Foucault states, "if I spoke of discourse, it was not to show that the mechanisms or processes of the language were entirely preserved in it; but rather to reveal, in the density of verbal performances, the diversity of the possible levels of analysis" (1972: 200).

This demonstrates the relationship that language – especially spoken language – and power have with one another. The purpose of the media is communication, and the primary tool of communication is language. This further demonstrates the importance of examining media representations, and problematising the extents to which they create and reinforce certain narratives and ideals, particularly of groups of people. This is due to the fact that the media

plays a key role in supporting or promoting certain ideologies. Ideologies are sets of social values, ideas, beliefs, feelings and representations by which people make sense of the world within which they live and which then in turn constitute a world view which becomes naturalised (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler 2008: 176-177). Ideologies become embedded in texts through discourses and become naturalised in the same way, then framing and perpetuating a narrative in a certain manner. A text is any piece of media which relays any sort of message, itself being something constructed; Barthes (1968: 146) defines it as "a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture." Texts carry power due to how they are a means of disseminating ideology; "ideologies are not merely particular systems of representation or ways of seeing. They are also ways of excluding and limiting. Ideologies are also not neutral" (Grossberg 2006: 199).

When it comes to examining media texts, discourse analysis is an effective tool as it examines the power structures that are at the root of creating and postulating certain narratives. According to Denzin (1997: 10), discourse asks "how words and texts and their meanings play a pivotal part in those decisive performances of race, class, and gender." Further, "discourse is part of social practice and contributes to the reproduction of social structures," states Fairclough (1989: 74). This point highlights that meaning is not inherent, but is rather constructed. Once meaning is constructed, it is then represented by various signifiers. "Representation is the process by which members of a culture use language (broadly defined as any system which deploys signs) to produce meaning. Things do not have in themselves any fixed meaning. It is us who make things mean" (Hall 1997: 61). Machin and Mayr state further:

> [I]f we really want to reveal power processes through language in order to challenge them, then they must be understood not only at the level of the text, but also in how they are assembled often in institutional contexts and how they take on and are used by people in everyday life (2012: 14).

An important function of discourse analysis is also the analysis that it provides of what is 'between the lines'; that is, what ideas and suggestions are implied in a text, as opposed to explicitly laid out in signs (such as words).

> We do not seek below what is manifest the half silent murmur of another discourse; we must show why it could not be other than it was, in what respect it is exclusive of any other, how it

> assumes, in the midst of others and in relation to them, a place that no other could occupy (Foucault 1972: 28).

Elements such as culture, media, community, and language facilitate the way that ideology (and therefore hegemony) becomes constructed and embedded. Therefore, discourse analysis is a necessary method to unpack the issues that this study seeks to consider. By utilising discourse analysis to examine the broadcasted content, I show the ways that issues regarding gender are spoken about, and broach discussion for why it is that these discourses are the way that they are. This is because discourse analysis is a method of research which "systematically examines the structures and functions of text and talk in their social, political and cultural contexts" (Van Dijk 1995:10).

Furthermore, discourse analysis is a method that seeks to actively unpack the ways in which media representations and narratives are constructed, which is a key concern in this study. As Grossberg states, "the history of media representations is not a progression from stereotypes to truth, but a struggle to constantly articulate the meanings of people's identities. There is no single narrative that can be told" (2006: 248). It is important, for purposes of this study, to understand Pinseler's (2015: 60) point:

> [A]nalysing talk on radio programmes should be concerned with form and content, i.e. with what is said, which ideas are framed as ordinary and unquestionable and which are problematised as deviating from common knowledge, and how talking is organised in a way to allow some people to talk on air while others do not get that chance or are discouraged from talking and for some arguments to be made while others are excluded from being aired or put in a context that invalidates them.

This study focuses on the idea of a hegemonic masculinity in the South African Indian Muslim community. To be more specific, it examines what form hegemonic masculinity takes in a certain community, against the backdrop of religion and culture. As Jeenah (2001: 44) writes, "femininity and masculinity are not created characteristics imprinted into the very primordial nature of female and male persons, neither are they concepts the Quran discusses or alludes to. They are defined characteristics applied to female and male persons respectively on the basis of culturally determined factors."

There are a number of other research methods which could have been used to undertake this research, including approaches such as an ethnography, or a specialised feminist critical discourse analysis. My choice for not selecting to do an ethnography stems from my desire to approach the data with a reading based on the texts; as opposed to doing interviews and gathering data from respondents, I wanted to do my own reading and compare it with theory in order to formulate my conclusions. I am not undertaking an ethnography to see how or whether this affects people's personal lives and experiences, all things which could be taken further in further research.

A feminist critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a framework that would have worked for the undertaking of this study, however there are a couple of reasons why I did not choose to use it. As a media studies scholar, I enjoy the flexibility of not being confined to working within certain research frameworks. As a social-sciences based approach, CDA is a more stringent framework (Lazar 2007).

I have, however, undertaken this research as a Muslim, feminist, scholar. This positionality can be perceived as both an asset and a liability to this project. This is what led me to undertake this research, as in my approach to this project I bring with me my own ideas stemming largely from my own lived experience. This understanding of the context in which my research is situated means that I have a strong understanding of the arguments that I am making, as well as why they are arguments that should be made. It does also mean that my arguments can be perceived as biased; at the same time, I theoretically substantiate all of the arguments that I make. My biases do not invalidate the study, but they do have to be acknowledged.

The case study of Radio Islam was selected after careful consideration. I did not choose it based on any particular research interests in radio; rather, my research interests revolve around gender and Islam. I therefore chose to study Radio Islam due to the popularity it enjoys in the community of which I am a member (the South African Indian Muslim Indian community), and the fact that it broadcasts content which promotes certain discourses around gender.

A South African community radio station, Radio Islam has a website with an archive of podcasts and articles, community notices (marriages and funerals), and one of the most

renowned recipe sections in South Africa. It has a large amount of reach and sphere of influence, with an estimated 89 000 South African listeners annually[2] as well as an international audience, with the platform recording close to two million international hits (Radio Islam 2016).

In addition to its website, Radio Islam also has a large social media presence. It is clear that as times have evolved, technologically, so has the platform of Radio Islam. At the same time however, it can be suggested that perhaps the ideological advancement has not been as swift.

Text selection

The chosen texts of study for this project have been sourced directly from the Radio Islam website. They are three categories of broadcasted audio content, each containing a number of podcasts. The categories are 'Concept of Hijab' by Moulana Sulaiman Ravat (14 podcasts), 'Marriage is in the air' by Moulana Habib Bobat (35 podcasts), and 'This could have been us' (20 podcasts) by Ejaz Khan.

Each of the podcast categories are special content broadcasts on the Radio Islam website. This means that the content was produced especially around a certain topic, and is categorised separately from regular content. Each of the three categories – which comprise multiple podcasts broadcast over varied periods of time – have been selected for two reasons: the cultural themes which they centre around, and the fact that they are special broadcasts. All of the content was first broadcast live on radio, and then uploaded to the Radio Islam website as podcasts. Whenever the broadcasts are referred to in this study, I am talking about the radio shows; the website was the archive I used in order to obtain the files in podcast format.

The fact that the selected texts come from special broadcast categories is important to note, as they were specially produced to address specific topics. Therefore, they serve a specific need, or a demand in the community. Further, each category contains multiple episodes. This gives space for a multitude of content, which assists in drawing up findings that are consolidated and thorough. As mentioned above, the chosen special broadcasts all centre

[2] As of the 2011 South African census, Muslims in total make up 2% of South Africa's population of 55.9 million. There is however no way to prove whether all of these listeners are from the South African Indian Muslim community or even the Muslim community.

around certain cultural themes. These are marriage, *hijab,* and Ramadan. Each of these themes are of common community interest, and also have gender roles strongly attached to them within the South African Indian Muslim community. This means that there is already a strong element of discussion around the concepts of ideal femininity and masculinity in the South African Indian Muslim community around each of these themes. For the most part, each of them is generally spoken about in terms of what ideal femininity is. This is not to suggest that conversations around notions of ideal masculinity are neglected; it is sometimes discussed, and sometimes alluded to, implied, or assumed to be inhered – much like whiteness, as a form of privilege, "inheres in its invisibility" (Bell 2013: 17).

In some discussions of gender, men are also 'inherent yet invisible.' Although discussions are primarily focused on women, men are still present in the conversation – just not spoken about, because their role/attitude is assumed. Men, and men's issues, are seldom spoken about by men.

The content on *hijab* is a 14-part podcast series, which aired live from 2009-2012. The programme centred around outlining and reaffirming a certain dress code for Muslim women to observe. It is a necessary and interesting inclusion in the study as it is an Islamic concept of behaviour which is a requirement of Muslim men as well, although the idea of '*hijab*' is usually reduced to and only linked to Muslim women's dress. Discourse around *hijab* generally however – and in this podcast series as well – continues to centre around Muslim women's dress only. Chapter five discusses *hijab*, and the way that misinterpretation of it has resulted in further subjugation of Muslim women by Muslim men. This occurs through the framing of female sexuality as the root cause of moral decay in society, and the attempts that are then made to squash it. This approach reveals a lot about masculinity, and men's roles in upholding this stereotype.

The second category of content is marriage. There are 35 podcasts in this category, which were broadcast on air during the course of 2014-2016. With each episode being 40-60 minutes long, I took a sample of five episodes – the five parts of a series within the category, 'Mutual rights of men and women in marriage' – to determine the way that a man's role in marriage is constructed and whether this contributes to fulfilling an ideal masculinity. Chapter six discusses this, and reveals the ways in which men remain viewed as superior to women

within the context of marriage due to their breadwinner role, and the ways in which that translates into other forms of power for men to maintain over women.

The final chapter looks at Ramadan. The content on Ramadan is taken from a special series of jokes which were broadcast in June 2016. Ramadan is a holy month in the Islamic calendar, a period of fasting prescribed for all Muslims. There are a number of cultural influences which affect the way that the month is practised in different Muslim communities all across the world, in terms of traditions, cultural practices, and perceptions of various issues including gender roles. The content chosen is taken from a joke series which aired during the holy month, entitled 'This could have been us.' This title presumedly alludes to the fact that the content – 1-2 minute-long jokes, broadcast daily – is relatable to the audience. Chapter seven discusses how Ramadan has different roles for men and women – despite there being no religious directive for such to occur. This reveals the ways in which patriarchal ideals continue to dominate many of the lived experiences of Muslim men and women.

As mentioned above, I accessed the texts via the Radio Islam website, where there is a catalogue of podcasts of broadcasted content. I downloaded the audio files, fully transcribed them, and performed my analyses once I had the transcripts of all of the episodes.

My discourse analysis of the selected texts from Radio Islam unpacks some of the ideologies around gender that are disseminated to the South African Indian Muslim community. This method of research assists in not only looking at the messages on their own, but also contextualising the way that they are disseminated.

A limitation of the research is that the sample of data that was chosen is a very select set of data. There are a number of resources available which could have been selected, but I chose texts which I felt were most representative, and were best suited to answering my research questions.

CHAPTER 5*: HIJAB*

The aim of this chapter is to examine how discourse around the Islamic concept of *hijab* helps to construct masculinity in the South African Indian Muslim community.

This chapter considers the ways in which *hijab* applies to all Muslims, regardless of gender. Through discussions of perceptions of morality and gender roles, this chapter also highlights the ways in which the pervasiveness of rape culture has not escaped the South African Indian Muslim community. This will be demonstrated through the discourse analysis of content on *hijab* which was broadcasted live on Radio Islam in 2012. The content analysed in this chapter is from a 14-part series, categorised as 'Hijaab[3] Focus' in the Special Features section on the Radio Islam website. The podcasts of this series were retrieved from Radio Islam's website and the audio was fully transcribed.

Discourse around *hijab* in general, and in this podcast series as well, continues to mainly centre around Muslim women's dress only. Ruby (2006: 56) writes that "one complexity regarding the subject of hijab is that the term veil is often used synonymously, or interchangeably, with the word hijab." Stowasser (1997) points out that the term *hijab* is complex and has entailed various uses in different periods of its development.

Hijab is initially acknowledged by the presenter in the series as a concept applicable to both men and women – "*hijab* is not merely drawing a veil over the face, it is the entire concept of the role of a man and a woman" (Concept of Hijab, Ep. 14 – hereafter referred to as COH); *"hijab* is the Islamic practice of separating the sexes*"* (COH, Ep. 1)*;* "it is observing *hijab* when you control your eyes (COH, Ep. 1)." It however also used throughout the series in relation to women only – "*hijab* is the Arabic word. *Purda* is the Urdu or Farsi word, and in English we refer to it as the veil" (COH, Ep. 1) "adorn the *hijab*" (COH, Ep. 2) "Islam has made *hijab* a symbol of honour and dignity for women" (COH, Ep. 4).

There are different rules which apply to men and women in Islam when it comes to certain things, such as dressing. Such distinctions may lead one to believe that gender roles within Islam seem polarised, and that there is a clear and distinct idea of 'the ideal Muslim woman'

[3] The change in spelling is due to the fact that the term is a transliteration of an Arabic word; this is the name as listed on the Radio Islam website. Either spelling is correct.

next to 'the ideal Muslim man.' Gender roles in Islam, as they are with most cultural gender roles, are deeply intertwined. Not only are the constructions of femininity and masculinity inter-dependent on one another, but when they are constructed from selective interpretations in some contexts (such as this one) they have certain agendas – they elevate men, but do not do the same for women. This most likely stems from a patriarchal agenda which has been passed down and taught as the norm, when they are in fact only an interpretation of religious texts from a patriarchal perspective; "many people either have not read the Quran or accept its patriarchal exegesis unquestioningly. However, as numerous scholars have pointed out, inequality and discrimination derive not from the teachings of the Quran but from the secondary religious texts" (Barlas 2002: 3).

Hijab in the Quran

The word '*hijab*' is mentioned in the Quran multiple times, and none of them are in relation to women's clothing. This use of the word stems from its Arabic etymology; according to Lane (1984), the loosely translated meanings of '*hijab*' are: thing that prevents, hinders, debars, or precludes; a thing that veils, conceals, hides, covers, or protects (because it prevents seeing), a partition, a bar, a barrier, or an obstacle. In its Quranic mentions, *hijab* refers to such incidents as asking for things from the prophet's wives from behind a screen (Quran 33: 53) or a metaphorical barrier between the hearts of believers and unbelievers (Quran 41: 5). Zaidi (2015: 125-126) writes:

> [T]he Quran has some references to hijab, none of which concern women's clothing or dress code … The diaphragm separating the heart from the stomach is also called 'hijab'. Other references further stress the separating aspect of hijab. For example, al-hijab is mentioned in non-gendered contexts separating deity from mortals (Quran 42:51), wrongdoers from the righteous (Quran 7:46, 41:5), believers from unbelievers (Quran 17:45), and light from darkness and day from night (Quran 38:32).

In both academic spaces and Muslim spaces, there is confusion about and misuse of the term. Thus, for the purposes of this study, it is important that I clarify the definition of it.

There are numerous definitions of *hijab*, especially as the term has also gained prevalence in Western discourse. Hegemonic and general understanding of the term *hijab* is that it refers to a woman's headscarf, which serves as a physical marker of Muslim women. Through its

identity as a headscarf, it carries an "intricate web of symbolic meanings (religious, ideological, and societal)" (Dabbous-Sensenig 2006: 61) woven into it, as a result of Western colonisation and globalisation (Ahmed 1992: 144-68).

El Guindi (1999) states that *hijab* is a blanket term for over 100 clothing items, many of which are used to cover the female body. It is important to note cultural nuances and differences in terminology, particularly in Arab and other Muslim-majority countries. While a Saudi Arabian woman may wear a *niqab* (face veil) and refer to it as '*hijab*', Muslim women in other geographic contexts could wear Western clothing and only a headscarf, which they would identify as 'a *hijab*'. As Ruby (2006: 56) writes of the term 'veil', "[it is] often interpreted in Western traditions as a covering of the head, [which] does not illuminate the complexity of the practice in the Muslim context."

The more holistic definition of *hijab* is that it is a concept of behaviour guided by notions of modesty. *Hijab* remains a central concept to the understanding of what it is to be Muslim – regardless of gender – and a guideline for how to carry oneself out in day-to-day life. Zaidi (2015: 131) writes that through the concept of *hijab*, "Islam gives due emphasis to the dignity, modesty and purity of human conduct."

Muslim women are required to cover their *satr.* This comprises their entire body, with the exception of their hands, face, and feet. To dress in this way is a means of satisfying some of the conditions of *hijab*. For Muslim women to observe *hijab* physically – by dressing modestly, and covering their hair – is to perform an act of worship, exercising the agency to fulfil a religious command, and to choose to be visibly Muslim. But it is important to note that one does not observe *hijab* in its totality through dress only, and that dress is only a component of a much larger concept.

Hijab, in theory, then, can be described in very general terms by this quote from Ruby (2006: 58): "Islam requires lowering the gaze [especially aimed at men], avoiding seeing what is forbidden … whether a woman wears a headscarf or not, modest behaviour is a fundamental aspect of hijab."

In one of the early episodes of the series in question, the presenter states that *hijab*, in terms of practice and gaze, is something applicable to both men and women.

> In a hadith narrated by Umme Salamah RA, (she was the one wife of Nabi SAW) and another wife of the prophet, Maimuna RA, were with the prophet when Abdulla ibn Maktoun RA - who was a blind sahaba - arrived. She says that Nabi SAW immediately ordered us to conceal ourselves from him, and they said "But oh Nabi he is blind, he cannot see us." So Nabi SAW replied - and what a beautiful statement - "Are the two of you blind? Can you not see him?" This indicates to us very clearly that *hijab* is a two-way street (COH, Ep. 4).

This use of *hadith* relays how the presenters use religious texts to emphasise certain points and how they are then framed as non-negotiables.

Due to the limited view that *hijab* is a physical veil, and only meant for women, the role of Muslim men when it comes to *hijab* is not always clear – even for Muslim men themselves.

"*Hijab* is a critically important Islamic teaching," Qasim Rashid highlights. "No one denies this. But it seems to me that too many men forget it applies to us first. In Islam, men have an obligation to God and to women to observe hijab" (2017). The Quranic ordainment to 'lower the gaze' precedes the instructions to dress in a certain way; this instruction highlights the power that human beings have over themselves to control what they see, and how they respond to it. By lowering the gaze, Muslims practise discipline, self-control, and are taught to respect the person that they look at. Lowering the gaze is not a gender-specific instruction; "the instruction to lower the gaze is applicable to both men and women. Lowered eyes elevated towards high character and sign of good morality" (Zaidi 2015: 127).

As I have previously written (2016), by referring to the headscarf only as *hijab*, Muslim men are absolved of their duty to observe *hijab*. Instead of emphasis being placed on the fact that *hijab* is a holistic concept rooted in principles of respect, Muslim girls are often taught that *hijab* is only for them. This occurs when Muslims understand *hijab* to only be a physical item, and sends girls the message that they must cover themselves to detract from being sexualised, so that they do not attract male attention.

There is evidence of Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) in his time reminding his companions of their responsibility to observe *hijab* by controlling their gaze. According to a

hadith in Bukhari[4], the Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) was once travelling on the road with a companion when a woman stopped the prophet to ask him a question. The woman was very beautiful, and her body was covered. Because of her beauty, however, the prophet's companion could not help but stare at her. Seeing this, the prophet reached his hand out to turn his companion's face away. He didn't tell the woman to cover her face, or tell her that her appearance was tempting and a distraction for men. Reminding his companion of his responsibility as a man to observe *hijab* through controlling his gaze, the prophet averted his companion's stare instead. This instance highlights how though some interpretations of the scriptures construct Islam as patriarchal, when looking at some instances of the religious texts, this is not the case; "many rules, as they exist within the Muslim community, have been interpreted by males and, therefore, are patriarchal. However, it is hard to conclude that Islam itself is antipathetical to equality of the sexes" (Domingo 2005: 68).

When it comes to Muslim men's dressing, the rules are simply that the *satr* be covered – that is, the area between the navel and the knees. The instruction that Muslim men too are required to dress in a certain way is often ignored. Zaidi (2015: 127) provides a reminder that "the Quran instructed both Muslim men and women to dress in a modest and proper way."

Hijab on Radio Islam

The content examined in this analysis is centred primarily around outlining and reaffirming a certain dress code for Muslim women to observe. While the show is named Hijaab Focus, the presenter states in the audio that it is a part of a series called *Guidance For The Muslim Woman.*

The entire series is hosted solely by Moulana Sulaiman Ravat, a member of the Jamiatul Ulama. It was broadcast in a morning slot, and is not an interactive show – unlike the series analysed in the chapter on marriage, for example, listeners are not encouraged to call in or send messages.

[4] Al-Bukhari is one of the most trusted sources of *hadith*. According to scholar Jonathan AC Brown (2007), in some circles his teachings and recordings are the most authentic source of Islamic guidelines after the Quran.

Due to the name of the series, it can be inferred that its assumed audience is women. The timeslot it is broadcast in also supports this, as it is assumed to be a time when men are at work and women are in the home (this binary of gender roles will also be further discussed in this chapter).

Based on some of the theory mentioned above, I argue that that the way that *hijab* is spoken about in this series serves patriarchal purposes. It makes mention of the way that, theoretically, *hijab* applies to men and must be observed by them as much as it must be observed by women. But discussions of practical application of *hijab* tend to focus on women and their role in ensuring that they resist the male gaze, without as much emphasis on the ways in which males should temper their gaze.

Despite the discussions being directed at women, they still offer much insight into the way that masculinity is constructed in this context.

The intention of this show is to inform women of an interpretation of how they should behave, dress, and carry themselves, both within their homes and in the world. As is the case in any text that is subject to discourse analysis, it is important to examine the relationship between the form and the content of the text. In this series, the tone of the presenter, as a male speaking to an imagined majority-female audience, deserves as much examination as the content that he delivers.

In the context of this series, the presenter's voice carries an air of authority afforded to him not only by his qualification as a *moulana* or his standing as a member of the Jamiatul Ulama, but also due to what Connell (1995) calls the 'patriarchal dividend.' Taking Mullany and Stockwell's (2010) contention that discourse analysis emphasises examining a text in relation to the broader context within which it is operating, in this context the presenter's voice holds more power and authority than a woman's voice would, solely by virtue of him being a man. The presenter is benefitting from the "advantage men in general gain from the overall subordination of women" (Connell 1995: 79). It is also necessary to note that the Jamiatul Ulama has historically not had female members in leadership positions. This may have contributed to the fact that many of the teachings and traditions that have been passed down read as patriarchal. Hoel and Shaikh (2013: 72) reiterate, "contemporary South African

Muslims have inherited a history of patriarchal religious narratives that continues to dominate many of the authoritative clerical discourses of Islam."

Throughout the series, it is clear to see the ways in which the imagined audience of women are spoken down to, as the presenter – speaking from a position of male authority – demonstrates the ways in which the message that he is relaying is correct and should go unchallenged. For example, he states:

> [U]nfortunately sometimes we say certain things on the radio - not from our own pockets but that which is in the Quran and the *hadith* - and certain listeners are guilty of perpetrating that particular evil … they try and justify themselves, and try and make it then the fault of the speaker … It is a sign of arrogance that you now and try and justify the wrong that you are doing. (COH, Ep. 4)

This sort of statement provides insight into how, from the presenter's perspective, there is no grey area when it comes to 'right' and 'wrong' in the content that he is discussing. Use of the word 'arrogant' signifies concepts of 'evil' and 'guilty' (words which are frequently used, discussed more in the chapter). Ultimately, this kind of use of religious rhetoric is used to strengthen the accusations against those who may disagree.

The presenter believes that what he is saying is an absolute truth. This kind of perspective ignores the fact that what he is relaying is merely an interpretation of the scriptures, and not the text of the scripture in its pure form. Furthermore, from the way that he relays the message, there is a hint of anger displayed by him that anyone would question what he is saying – and that if they do, they are the ones in the wrong, and guilty of sin. Such examples substantiate Barlas' (2002: 3-4) argument; "since different readings of the Quran (and of other texts) can yield what are for women fundamentally different Islams, it becomes crucial for them to reinvestigate the normative religious texts'' (Barlas 2002: 3-4).

In another instance, the presenter says:

> [I]f we are guilty of any of the things which we have discussed is not permissible, then let us acknowledge it is our weakness and mistake and we make *tauba* (ask for forgiveness) to Allah and beg of Him to grant us *taufeeq* (help) and make us strong, but let us not try and justify our wrong because justifying a wrong is even more serious than a wrong itself. (COH Ep. 7)

This quote cannot be considered in isolation from the audience at which it is aimed – while it appears as a general message about sinning and forgiveness, it functions as a message addressed specifically at the women who are its assumed audience. While the 'we/us' pronouns may indicate inclusion of anyone regardless of gender, it in fact heightens a tone of condescension of the presenter's behalf as he is set aside from the 'we'. There is a sense that he is preaching, and it is due to the simplistic assumption that women are in constant need of guidance and direction from men. This stems from the patriarchal assumption, rife in the South African Indian Muslim community, that women are not as educated or as intellectual as men are. Mukaddam (2016: 41) notes "women's lack of access to education due to upbringing and cultural beliefs" within the community.

In another instance, the presenter uses collective pronoun forms to include himself in a discussion directly relating women to sin. The "we" and "us" serve to function as heightening the condescension mentioned above:

> [W]e cannot even remember, we went out and exposed ourselves, how many men saw us, we have to answer for that. How many men we spoke to when we were not supposed to speak, or we spoke seductively, or we spoke with evil intentions, or we shook hands etc etc. For all of that we have to give account, and if you cover yourself, you safeguard yourself from all those evils (COH, Ep. 9).

The pronouns are merely a show of including the presenter in the discussion; "we spoke seductively" and "how many men we spoke to" make it clear that the presenter is speaking at women. This is obvious due to him speaking from a heteronormative context and perspective. He is speaking in accusatory tones, using emotive terms, and subtly – through the use of the pronouns – creating the binary of 'good' women being "you" and 'bad' women being "we." "You" obeys his instructions and is a 'good Muslim woman', while "we" do not care for rules. "When we were not supposed to speak" also offers interesting insight into the construction of the 'ideal Muslim woman' – that she is to remain quiet and submissive.

These discursive tactics come into play in yet another instance, when the presenter relays a story about two men discussing the fact that one of them had dinner with a male colleague and his wife, who did not physically observe *hijab* by wearing a veil. The man asked his friend if he had had evil thoughts regarding the woman while at dinner, and his friend said no. The man then asked his friend if he could guarantee that the woman had not had any "evil

thoughts" towards him, which his friend said he could not confirm. According to the presenter, the man then said to his friend, "I swear by you, evil thoughts were aroused in your heart for her - you were saying there were none but I can say by Allah that there were" (COH, Ep. 9).

The use of the passive voice in this instance ("were aroused in your heart for her") is a strategy which assigns blame in one direction only – on the woman. The (hypothetical and possibly fictional) woman is automatically assumed to have been a source of "evil thoughts", which feeds into discourses around victim-blaming. As Waseem (2015) states, "[It is as though] Muslim women who do not wear a *hijab, deserve* cat-calling and sexual harassment, as some sort of retributive divine law, taking away all responsibility from men to behave morally and guard their gaze (as mentioned in the Quran)."

The simplistic nature and elementary level of this story speaks to the assumed limited level of education that the women in the assumed audience have. This kind of language used – "evil thoughts" – is also used to incite a level of fear, as a means of reinforcing authority; as mentioned above, it feeds into the way that religious rhetoric is used to vilify anyone who may disagree with what is being purported. Denzin (1997: 10) states that "power and ideology operate through systems of discourse." The discourses attached to these kinds of words and tone amplify the belief that there is a certain way that women need to be spoken to for a message to be effectively relayed to them; that they are submissive, and need to be kept that way. This also provides revelations about men. It demonstrates that men are perceived to always be correct, that they are always automatically assumed innocent and assigned the benefit of the doubt in any situation, and that they always know better than and are more learned that women. The fact that the (hypothetical and possibly fictional) man who is quoted in the presenter's story has the confidence to say "by Allah", and testify in the name of God despite the man's insistence that he was not aroused, is testament to the level of conviction which men have in their beliefs.

The amount of repetition of the points brought up in each episode must also be noted. The content of almost every episode contains a full recap of the points discussed in the previous episode, and even when new content is discussed, the same points are repeated multiple times within the same episode. On one hand, the repetition could be seen as reiteration of the points so that they are made clear and not missed. This is important as it is easy to mishear

or miss things on the radio, and repetition to this extent would fully consolidate the content for listeners. But it could also be seen as interpellation; "where individuals become the 'subject' of the meaning system; the individual is addressed and responds" (Tolson 1996:56). The amount of repetition could be accounted for by the fact that women in the assumed audience are being targeted, and it is being made sure that they have no excuse for missing any of the points that are brought up. They are treated as subjects who have to be 'fed' this knowledge, and respond accordingly – that is, by remaining subservient to men, and embodying the preferred stereotype of the 'ideal Muslim woman' (discussed later in this chapter).

The above reveal much about masculinity in the South African Indian community. Through the ways that women are spoken of, at, and to, it is clear how masculine power remains exerted. Discourse analysis is a means of unpacking the power dynamics at play in a text, and through both the form and content of what the presenter presents on this show, male empowerment and authority clearly remain central. It is clear how patriarchal beliefs have in some instances trumped religious directives, and male dominance in thought, ideology, and practice remains emphasised. Mukaddam (2016: 42) interviewed a Jamiatul Ulama representative in her own research and states, in response to issues around Muslim women, "he did not comment on cultural or religious views but rather reinforced his belief in conventional hetero-normative gender roles and the fact that in his opinion men and women have different functions to fulfil."

Discourse around *hijab* by Islamic scholars remains rooted in the idea of *fitna* (temptation) – a point Khaled (2001) corroborates. Hoel and Shaikh (2013: 77) state that "traditional Islamic discourse reflects a profound andro-centrism in that female sexuality is often framed in relation to male desire." This lens immediately vilifies women, and is centred around unspoken sexualisation of women's bodies. Khaled (2001: 233) notes that while the term *fitna* is used in other parts of the Quran and *hadith* to refer to "non-sexual temptations," it has become reductively naturalised in common discourse to be associated with sex. Fear of *fitna* remains strong, to the extent that the *ulama* cautions women (who are addressed specifically) that even in the home, "it is preferable and it is better that you keep your entire *satr* covered in front of your own mahrams even though it may be your own father or brother." (COH, Ep. 6) This suggests that women should remain covered, in their own homes, as a preventative

measure against 'evil thoughts' which may lead to incest. This is the assumed overwhelming and immoral power that female sexuality holds.

Based on this understanding then, a constant theme throughout the series is the idea of *hijab* functioning as a means to achieve morality in society, "especially in such a time when the entire world is facing a moral anarchy and decay" (COH Ep. 4). This positions women's bodies as the sites responsible for "moral decadence" (COH, Ep. 12).

> Islam has made *hijab* a symbol of honour and dignity for women … *Hijab* has been ordered by Allah SWT and not as the Western authors and writers would have us believe to subjugate and oppress women, but rather to give our mothers and sisters, daughters and wives, the respect and dignity that they deserve (COH Ep. 4).

With reference to "*hijab* as a symbol of dignity for women", it must be explicitly clarified that in this context this means through the wearing of the veil/modest clothing. Terms such as "our mothers, sisters, daughters and wives" suggest that the presenter is speaking to an imagined audience of males. He is also speaking of women in their proximity to men, thereby inadvertently reinforcing a gender hierarchy. The words "deserve", "respect", "honour", and "dignity" are all again used in a religious rhetoric sense; it is implied that should women not act in line with what the presenter is saying, they will be guilty and not worthy of being respected or dignified.

There remains a rhetoric of fear and vilification around women and their dressing. In one episode, the presenter mentions that the dominant group in hell will be women, because of their behaviour on Earth; "they remove their head coverings, their veils, etc so that people can see them. They walk in an attractive and seductive manner" (COH, Ep. 9). This suggests that women are purposely rebellious, and make a show of themselves when they do not adhere to preferred religious dress codes. The use of "attractive and seductive" tie into discourses of women existing solely as sexual objects, which constructs the binary narrative: this is 'bad,' and women who cover in order to observe *hijab*, are 'good'. This also builds on the idea that women exist solely to be temptresses to men, and using fear of the after-world and the consequences therein to drive this, further vilifying women – and making men once again seem morally superior. Waseem (2015) states, "the intellectual level of discourse that

surrounds Muslim women is excruciating, and is more or less concerned only with notions of modesty."

The presenter builds on these discourses around fear and vilification in order to emphasise the way in which *hijab* – as the physical veil – is the solution to the way that "in today's world we live in very funny times" (COH, Ep. 6).

> By disobeying the commands of Allah SWT, we can never ever be successful. And look now, when this concept of *hijab* has been eradicated and people have left this command of Allah SWT, and the veils have been taken off and dressing has become immoral. Look at what has happened in our society - adultery has become rife, premarital relations have become rife, fornication has become rife, extramarital affairs have become rife, and now we are sitting with this huge problem of HIV/AIDS. (COH, Ep. 2)

Again, religious rhetoric is used to vilify women who do not cover themselves. All of the 'consequences' of not observing hijab, as presented in this context, are related to the Islamic concept of *zina.* Although roughly translated to 'adultery,' *zina* and adultery in this sense mean having any kind of sexual relationship outside of the constraints of a heteronormative marriage, the only framework in which sexual relations are permitted in Islam. As the presenter advises in another episode, "safeguard your chastity via the avenue of marriage" (COH, Ep. 3).

Once again, the presenter is relying on the idea of female sexuality posing an extreme threat to men and morality in society. As Clare (2000: 6) states, "men fall because women tempt them. This remains THE explanation of male sexual behaviour most favoured by men." The presenter is suggesting that women are not covering themselves, which is tempting men, resulting in all of these unsolicited sexual relationships occurring and moral decay then taking place.

There are numerous issues with this argument. Not only does it completely ignore female sexual agency[5], but it also fosters rape culture. Gqola (2015: 2) suggests that rape culture is "part of a collective socialisation," and at the root of it lies patriarchal masculinities. "Rape is a crime of power, and in patriarchal societies, all men can access patriarchal power" (Gqola,

[5] Female sexual satisfaction is in fact emphasised in Islam. According to prolific Islamic scholar Al-Ghazali, quoted in Ali (2011: 8) "it is a matter of the husband's duty, rather than the wife's right."

2015:11). It does this by changing the intention behind women's *hijab*. Instead of emphasis being placed on the fact that observance of *hijab* through wearing of the veil is a means of worship for Muslim women, it remains implied that the act is done solely to resist the male gaze (and by extension then, whatever the uncontrolled consequences of male sexuality are). Ali (2011: 10) states that "historians have demonstrated how anxieties about temptation and female sexuality translated into insistence (never fully achieved in reality) on restricting the appearance of women in public spaces." This places the onus on the women in the situation for appearing a certain way, as opposed to on men for acting a certain way. What would be useful instead is, as Clare (2000: 6) suggests, "a rigorous analysis of the nature of male sexuality and its relationship to power, social status, aggression and control."

Finally, the presenter's contention that "now we are sitting with this huge problem of HIV/AIDS" as a result of lack of observance of *hijab* on the part of Muslim women ('the cause') must be noted. Continuing in the vein that the cause results in unbridled sexual activity ('the effect'), it can be said that he ties HIV/AIDS solely to sexual morality, and ignores all social and economic factors related to it. It must be noted that, according to UNAIDS 2017 data, South Africa continues to have the highest prevalence of HIV in the world. This is due to a number of reasons, including lack of education. With this kind of statement, the presenter is contributing to stigma as well as lack of education when it comes to HIV.

In another episode in the series, the presenter says "what is the actual purpose of *hijab*? The actual purpose of *hijab* is not to attract menfolk towards a particular woman*"* (COH, Ep. 7). This amplifies how it is taught that Muslim women's physical observance of *hijab* is viewed as a practice done for man, as opposed to one done for worship. This kind of argument can arguably work to absolve men of their responsibility to observe *hijab*; *hijab* is viewed as a physical thing worn by women only, functioning to resist the male gaze.

In a separate episode, there is a disjoint in how much emphasis is placed on content directed at men and content directed at women. When the concept of a *mahram* – "a mahram is that person to whom marriage is forbidden, for example your father, brother, son, your father's brother, grandfather, mother's brother - and the opposite in terms of a man" (COH, Ep. 2) – is explained, it is initially addressed at both men and women. Immediately however, the explanation for prescribed behaviour when it comes to *mahrams* becomes directed at women only:

> [N]ow we need to understand that when you say you don't have to make *hijab*, you don't have to cover your face, and as man you can show yourself in front of them. But women misunderstand this and think now you can act as you please in front of your brother, uncle, you don't have to cover your hair, some women would only wear a skipper with the sleeves open, some dress extremely casually in front of their parents, their uncles. (COH, Ep. 2)

The presenter's tone is harsh and accusatory – as though he is assuming that if he does not make this information clear enough, the default actions of women would be to act 'indecently' in front of the men that they are forbidden to marry and incite incest to take place. The subtext of this is that women are, by default, temptresses; "show yourself in front of them" implies that women will always show themselves off if they are not told to conceal.

In a different discussion exploring the same theme, the presenter again uses emotive terms in the addressing of women only: "so it does not mean you can flaunt yourself in front of your father-in-law and dress indecently, it just means you can expose your face to your father-in-law, you don't have to make *hijab* from him" (COH, Ep. 3). When discussing how a husband may cheat on his wife because of her hypothetical sister not properly observing *hijab* around him, instead of the man's responsibility being highlighted, blame for the infidelity is immediately placed on the women in the situation:

> [I]f a sister's husband cheats on her with her sister which is becoming more common, even in the Muslim community unfortunately, and it is because we feel 'this is my sister's husband he's not going to do anything wrong.' Allah SWT has prohibited you and there is benefit for you in it, tomorrow when your own husband goes and commits *zina* (adultery) with your sister, then you sit and cry. (COH, Ep. 3)

In addition to blaming the wife and mocking an emotional response she may have, instead of addressing the fact that the husband is responsible for his own actions, this argument also emphasises the very reductive thought-process that the less a person wears, the more tempting they are (sexually) to the opposite gender. "It is this idea that women need to cover up because men can't help themselves, quite simply, that fuels rape culture in our society today," writes Anne (2012). Women, in the South African Indian Muslim community too, remain viewed only from the lens of the male gaze, which positions them as objects. "The obsession with the *hijab* is, in fact, a form of sexual objectification. Objectification, after all, involves the lowering of a person to the status of an object," corroborates Waseem (2015).

"By reducing Muslim women to their bodies and pretending that modesty is their primary religious duty, we strip them of their personhood and rob them of their agency as human beings."

And while further discussion does take place which reiterates that men have a Quranically-ordained duty to observe *hijab* – "Allah SWT first commands that 'lower your gazes' and second 'protect your private parts from all kinds of acts which fulfil sexual desire'" (COH, Ep. 3) – mention of men's duties in observing *hijab* in everyday situations is done in very general terms, without threats of death or crying because of breaking up a family.

The idea of *fitna* is linked to men's sexuality, and their easy arousal around women. Women are told in another episode, for example, that they should cover their face and palms when faced with the possibility of being in a situation where men are, as the men would be inclined to be tempted by women. This is despite the fact that these parts do not constitute part of their *satr*. Tape (2017) writes of this, "why do we continue to point out the *hijab* of the woman when Allah SWT specifically speaks to man /first/ about *hijab* – the gaze. Why do we continue to protect men from being held accountable for harassing, assaulting and sexualising women?"

Muslim women are therefore continuously told that *hijab* is the key to maintaining morality in society. They are reminded that if they do not observe *hijab* ("If her entire body is covered, including her hair - very important - besides her face, hands, and feet, in the eyes of the S*haria* she will not be considered to be naked" (COH, Ep. 5)), they are responsible for the way that men will inevitably react. Therefore, they are urged to observe *hijab* with arguments such as this:

> Allah beautifies your inner and outer countenance with *hijab*. Outwardly, your *hijab* reflects innocence, purity, modesty, shyness, serenity, contentment and obedience to your creator. Inwardly you cultivate the same, because the outward has an effect on the inward. The *ulama* are very unanimous and very staunch on that particular point. (COH, Ep. 10)

This speaks to the ideals of an 'ideal Muslim woman,' with characteristics such as "innocence, purity, modesty, shyness, serenity, contentment and obedience to your creator." By explaining to women what is expected to them, they are being told exactly what they need to be like; deviation from this expectation is an infraction on their part. "Allah defines your

femininity through the *hijab*. You are a woman who respects her womanhood" (COH, Ep. 10). This suggests that there is only one way for Muslim women's femininity and self-respect to be defined. It is implied that when Muslim women fulfil this role, they are acting in a way that is most pleasing to men, and most complementary to the 'ideal Muslim man;' a man who is in control and intelligent.

There is a strong preoccupation with "the West", as a space which not only oppresses women, but also puts Muslim women under pressure to behave in certain ways. The presenter implies that it is the West that puts pressure on women to advocate for women's rights, as opposed to women doing it on their own accord. In an ironic instance, he presenter poses the rhetorical question, "what respect, dignity, and human rights does the West offer [Muslim women]?" (COH Ep. 4) – adopting feminist discourse, to undermine feminism. This argument stems from the line of thought, often repeated in Muslim circles, that 'Islam already gave women rights so why do they need feminism?' What this also does is assume that gender justice frameworks, such as feminism, are incompatible with Islam. This may be because feminism is viewed as a solely Western concept, understood only in terms of its articulation as imperial Western feminism that is concerned with ideals of 'saving Muslim women' (Abu-Lughod 2002).

Muslim women who do not observe *hijab* when it comes to their dressing "are very oppressed by the West system where they feel they need to expose themselves and sell their bodies and their morality just to get accepted into the world" (COH, Ep. 3). This kind of statement implies that Muslim women who do not observe *hijab* in their dressing are akin to prostitutes, and have no agency in terms of the way that they choose to dress. Again, very simplistic logic and very emotive language is being used to drive home the point.

The series posits that, unlike 'the West', "Islam protects [women] from the evil eyes of men with sinister motives and protects them" (COH, Ep. 4). The use of the word "evil" in relation to men in these discussions is tied to male sexuality. It implies that if women cover themselves, they resist tempting the sexual desires of men. This quote is used to reiterate why women should cover themselves with a veil, but fails to make a convincing argument; Muslim women, regardless of the way that they are dressed, continue to be harassed and abused by men, including Muslim men. A 2008 study on sexual harassment in Muslim-majority Egypt, for example, found that 72.5% of the women who reported being sexually

harassed observed *hijab* by wearing a headscarf (Zuberi 2011). Ultimately, arguments from both sides (Muslim scholars as well as 'the West') continue to focus on female sexuality. As Ali (2011: xiv) states, "Muslim authorities may attempt to reverse the values assigned to Muslim and Western treatment of women by criticizing lax moral standards or other elements of Western social life. Although these works are ostensibly concerned with women, the rhetoric on both sides tends to revolve around sex and sexuality."

Further, in creating this binary of 'West vs Islam', it is being suggested that the two are mutually exclusive and cannot be complementary to one another. In one instance, for example, the presenter states:

> [N]owhere is a woman safe in this world, even though they [the West] say they have accorded her many rights. If you look at rape, indecent assault, illegitimate children, abortion, increase in homosexuality, unwanted children which results in child abuse, reversal of roles meaning females doing males' work and males doing females' work, identity crisis, all of these can be attributed - whether directly or indirectly - to the rights that the woman has been accorded in today's times. The world, rather than becoming a better place, has become cheap. Morals, respectability, honesty, selflessness religion - they are mocked instead of being applauded, whilst deceit, avarice, selfishness, immorality, the mocking of religion are all applauded today. (COH, Ep. 4)

In this extract, the presenter makes a series of very dangerous statements. He attributes sexual crimes, illegitimate children, rape, and homosexuality to women being accorded rights by the West. Almost all of the issues that he lists are linked to sexuality. This builds on the argument in the section above, which puts female sexuality at the root of moral decay and *fitna.* An argument like this, once again, implies that women who are not 'controlled' are the cause of a host of social issues. It is also implied that should a woman be advocating for rights, she is out of control, aligning herself with the West and going against Islam. Further, this argument also detracts from the fact that the reason that women's rights movements exist is because of a failure to accord women the rights that they are entitled to, whether from a religious or secular perspective. Statements such as "nowhere is a woman safe in this world" and "the world has become cheap" amplify that Muslim women are not safe in this "world" of the West, which works to set up the argument for why they should remain in the home.

This binary which categorises men and women into their 'ideal' roles is that between the home and the working world, and the respective roles that women and men are expected to fulfil within them. As Clare (2000: 9) states, "the contemporary world is still, for the most part, divided into two spheres – the private sphere, inhabited for the most part by women, and a public sphere where men find and cultivate their identity and assert their dominance." *Hijab* is viewed as the necessary means of maintaining this binary between the public and private spheres. It maintains the superiority of the former – especially due to the economic implications of it, and the status of having a public life – and the inferiority associated with the latter.

The presenter states, explicitly:

> [Y]ou know ideally in the Muslim environment, the man is the one who goes out to earn the livelihood and the woman in the one who stays behind at home. (COH, Ep. 3)

This statement reinforces an idea of the man being the protector/provider/breadwinner, which affords him (and justifies) a power role in this dynamic, especially economically. The role of the ideal woman, on the other hand, is tied to the domestic sphere. Moving out of this is seen as taboo and discouraged. Coontz (2005: 8) writes that "traditionally, marriage also organised the division of labour and power by gender, confirming men's authority over women." The presenter states in episode 14,

> [I]t is not any form of oppression or suppression and any form of anti-liberation – you are performing a very great role within the confines of your home… you are playing a very important role in the community. And where the woman is removed from this very important role for which she was created, then the consequences are there for all to see. (COH, Ep. 14)

The constant reminders of the woman performing a "role" described by positive adjectives, such as "very important," is interpellation of the way that the 'ideal Muslim woman' is one who remains in the home. It is implied that deviating from this ideal is a negative thing, which will have a negative domino-effect on the community ("the consequences are there for all to see").

This argument draws on the demands of the early feminist movement, which advocated for the right of women to work. In 1963, Betty Friedan wrote of the frustrations that American

women tied to the domestic sphere (in the way that the presenter notes above that Muslim women should be) faced:

> [W]hat is there in this recital of comfortable domestic detail that could possibly cause such a feeling of desperation? Is she trapped simply by the enormous demands of her role as modern housewife? ... We can no longer ignore that voice within women that says: "I want something more than my husband and my children and my home" (Friedan 1963: 32).

The presenter rejects this early Western feminist argument to counter-argue that it is best for women to remain in the home, an idea which he strongly markets to female listeners. The subtext of what he is saying is that if women remain confined to the home, they pose less of a threat to society due to the power of female sexuality. As Denzin (1997: 38) states, "the unsaid, the assumed, and the silences in any discourse provide the backdrop against which meaning is established." This is evident in the way that it is emphasised that women's confinement to the home is not only beneficial and necessary for a woman and her own marriage, but also for the whole community. Auchmuty (2008: 494) states "the social construction of women as wives and mothers was built into the very fabric of society, affecting everyone, whether she conformed or not." Should a woman move out of this preferred role, she is setting off a series of negative implications. The presenter even states, in another episode, "to protect the dignity of the mothers and sisters and wives and daughters of the *Ummah*, Allah SWT has ordered them to remain in the confines of the home" (COH, Ep. 4). The word "dignity" again highlights the ways in which the honour of the family is tied to the honour of the woman remaining in the home, a space where her sexuality is kept under control.

The tone of the presenter remains condescending; while painting 'the housewife' as a praiseworthy role that women are lucky to have while men have to go out and work hard, he is also cementing that this kind of role is actually a non-negotiable. If a woman does not fulfil this, it is implied that she is a source of moral decay. Further, through this 'firm but gentle' kind of discourse, the presenter dismisses female agency: as opposed to making it clear to Muslim women that they have the choice to decide whether they would like to be housewives or not, they are told that if they do not do it, they do not fulfil the role of the 'ideal Muslim woman.'

> [B]ecause a man's role since time in memorial has been that of a breadwinner, where a man has to go out and he has to leave the home, Islam has out of common sense not ordered him to cover himself - but at the same time Islam has told him to protect his honour and his dignity, to protect his gaze, and to refrain from unnecessary intermingling. (COH, Ep. 4)

That it is "common sense" that men do not have to "cover" when leaving the home suggests that this logic is totally normalised, and does not need to be thought about further to consider why. Further, that men do not have to "cover" also "reinforces the patriarchal assumption that public space is a sexualized, male space" (Shaikh 2003: 52). Massey (1994: 255) states that "the social and the spatial are inseparable." This urges one to consider the implications of the limitation of women to the private sphere only, and the way that they are discouraged to work as it does not fit the mould of the 'ideal Muslim woman.' The presenter states that employment may be sought by women only when "those males who are supposed to be looking after her are not fulfilling their duties" (COH, Ep. 12). This is yet another instance of the reiteration of gender roles – men are supposed to look after and sustain women. For a woman to provide for herself is considered emasculating.

The presenter states that women are permitted to leave their homes only out of necessity.

> There is the *ayah* of Muslim Sharif, where Nabi SAW, addressing the wives said: "Permission has been granted to you that you leave your house for your needs and your necessities", so this also indicates to us that when there is a need and necessity then a woman may leave her house. (COH, Ep. 12)

It is interesting is to consider the definitions provided of what "necessities" may be. The quote above, used to substantiate the statement that women may leave, does not specify what kind of "needs" these may be. General interpretations of "need" and "necessity" may refer to dire and emergency situations, or something serious and out of the ordinary. It is implied that if there is no "need" for a woman to leave her house, she definitely should not. As examples of situations in which she may leave (i.e. necessities), the presenter lists "acts of worship, such as going for *Hajj* or *Umrah*… doing good deeds, like going to visit your parents, the sick, etc." It should be noted that *Hajj* or *Umrah* (both are pilgrimages to Mecca, but with different intents) require travelling to Saudi Arabia, and worshipping in mosques is actively discouraged for women in the South African Indian Muslim community. This demonstrates how, even

though this example is offered, women leaving the home for these reasons would be a very rare occurrence.

If a woman does leave the home, according to the presenter, there remain strict conditions for her to fulfil:

> [W]hen you have to leave your home for necessity, then too do not walk in the centre of the road where you become the centre of attraction. Do not put yourself on display, walk on the side of the road. There were no ifs or buts - after this command, the women walked so much on the sides that their clothing used to get caught on the walls on the sides of the streets. (COH, Ep. 12)

Even when they leave their homes, women are told to minimise the visibility of their presence. As Shaikh (2003: 52) states, "women who enter [public space] need to erase the femaleness of their bodies in order to be legitimately present." This is arguably due to the degree of fear surrounding female sexuality. "do not…walk in the centre of the road" and "do not put yourself on display" are very clear instructions to women to minimise being attractive to men in any way when out in public. In episode 7, the presenter states "when you are in front of men or there is a possibility of the sight of a man falling on you, then at that particular moment, you exercise restraint." The point about restraint is targeted at women and the way that they are dressed or appear, and not at men, to control their gazes. This use of passive voice suggests further that a man does not look at you but rather that his sight happens to passively fall on you; this kind of phrasing absolves men of their accountability for their gaze.

These are the same rules that she has to follow if she wants to attain employment: "if a lady has a need to earn a living, either to supplement her husband's salary or to sustain her basic needs, it is Islamically permissible provided she adheres to the laws of *hijab*" (COH, Ep. 12).

Men are constantly viewed as being at the mercy of female sexuality, and this is why *hijab* is as overemphasised to women as it is. For example, men are told to conceal their gazes to resist seeing women who may slip up in terms of observing *hijab*, whether intentionally or not.

> If she makes a mistake, you know, as she's walking, her dress lifts up slightly - you are not permitted to look. Or even if the woman is negligent and disobedient to Allah SWT and she

> dresses very scantily and unIslamically, it does not give men the permission to look at them. (COH, Ep. 5)

Ironically however, the presenter states that within the home, women should make an effort in the fullest possible way to beautify themselves for their husband's pleasure. Despite female sexuality being criticised to the extent that it is and blamed for being the cause of moral decay in the world, it is encouraged in the home. He states:

> This is what I cannot understand – when our womenfolk go out they want to dress smart, but when they're inside and in seclusion with their husbands, then it is a case of, outside its lipstick and eyeshadows and perfume, and inside its Zambuk and Vicks, to make a comparison between the smells and the attractiveness outside and unattractiveness outside. What is the main purpose? You should be beautifying yourself for your husband. (COH, Ep. 7)

The presenter is suggesting that women are only willing to make an effort in terms of their appearance when they leave the home, and that they are reluctant to make an effort at all within the home. This kind of logic paints women as temptresses, making it seem as though they only exploit their sexuality in public. It is also suggesting that women do not make an effort to beautify themselves for their husbands, within the home. Whether women are within the home or out of it, men are perceived to be at the centre of their behaviour; when they go out, they do it to attract the attention of men, and when they within the home, they are there to function as a caretaker of men (Auchmuty 2008). This also reinforces the idea that there needs to be male ownership of female sexuality; this is the correct order of things.

Ideal gender roles are maintained when men and women remain tied to the public and private spheres respectively. Clare (2000: 9) reiterates:

> The power of patriarchy, that set of relations of power that enable men to control women, is grounded in the belief that the public takes precedence over the private. Men, as a consequence, feel little need to reassess the priority they give to the public; indeed, the very desire of women to establish their own public legitimacy is interpreted as further proof that the public is indeed superior and the private is legitimately regarded as inferior.

Chapter conclusion

The findings in the examination of this specific group of texts indicated that men are perceived to always be at the mercy of female sexuality. "Muslim worry over *fitna* – chaos and disorder

– has often focused on the sexual temptation caused both by women's unregulated desires and the troublesome desire that women provoke in men," states Ali (2011: 10). Abusing the definition of the concept of *hijab* allows patriarchal power to be maintained; as opposed to an act done for worship of God, it becomes a means of concealing female sexuality. It becomes men's duty to ensure that women are kept 'controlled' and in their 'place'

Ahmad's (2017) contention that many Muslims have lost sight of the ways in which Islam promotes conscientious and considerate behaviour through *hijab* also holds here. "Our discourse on *hijab* is often devoid of any meaningful consideration of it as an act of devotion, which is its primary purpose," she writes. "In our times, we have reduced *hijab* to a headscarf that serves as a badge of one's Muslim identity, and have removed it from a larger understanding of *haya'* (modesty) and how this beautiful quality should cultivate our behaviour in the public sphere and in our relationships with others." Radio Islam plays a part in maintaining this trend, and this continues to have an effect on the way that gender in the South African Indian Muslim community is enacted.

CHAPTER 6: MARRIAGE

This chapter examines the way that discussions around marriage on Radio Islam inform a particular construction of masculinity through attributing stringent gender roles within marriage. The content analysed for this section is taken from a series on mutual rights of a husband and wife in a Muslim marriage, from a Radio Islam special broadcast series entitled *Marriage Is In The Air,* which aired in 2014.

What is marriage?

In multiple contexts, views on the concept of marriage remain varied. There are many definitions offered to explain it, but as Grossi (2014: 19) puts it, "arguably the most decisive of the institution's meanings comes from the fact that it entrenched the dominance of the male/husband, and the complete subordination of the female/wife" (2014: 19).

The validity of marriage as an institution remains questioned, particularly in the 21st century. As discussed in detail below, marriage as it has traditionally been understood has had an upheaval in the way that it is conceptualised; Coontz (2005: 3) notes "the forms, values, and arrangements of marriage are indeed changing dramatically all around the globe."

In line with this, there has also been much criticism of the way that marriage is viewed as an accomplishment to aspire to, particularly for young women. South African struggle stalwart Fatima Meer wrote about this from a localised perspective in 1972; referring to the South African Indian Muslim community she wrote: "marriage is the ultimate and the 'natural' career for Indian women in South Africa, and it is toward this end that the life or an Indian girl is geared" (Meer 1972: 43). Despite the fact that Meer wrote these words over 40 years ago, the ideas and conditions still hold within the community. This will be shown further below.

It is interesting to consider the varied definitions of marriage that exist, and the way that they provide insight into what the primary purpose of marriage is. As Falkof (2007) notes, the concept of a love marriage only became popular in the 1900s. Prior to that, she argues, it was about group survival as opposed to individual happiness.

Falkof cites several working definitions that academics have worked with when describing 'marriage': American anthropologist George Peter Murdoch in 1949 called it a "universal institution that involves a man and woman living together, engaging in sexual activity and

cooperating economically." The Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland called marriage "a union between a man and a woman such that children born to the woman are the recognised legitimate offspring of both partners." Suzanne Frayser referred to it as "a relationship within which a society socially approves and encourages sexual intercourse and the birth of children." Falkof herself notes that despite the fact that marriage and faith are inextricably linked in many of the world's predominant religions, the two were not always linked in this way; "marriage pre-dates the world's current major religions, although they have co-opted it as a duty and holy sacrament" (2007: 4).

While elements of all of the above definitions could certainly be said to be true, to take them as absolutes would be a disservice to marriage as an institution, as they are too simplistic. They offer only a heteronormative perspective, and limit actions in the marriage to seem transactional and tied to duties and responsibilities. There is no mention of the aspects of modern romantic relationships, such as love or the comfort of a partnership and mutual support in any of these definitions, but it cannot be assumed that this is because these aspects do not exist in marriage. Gough (1959: 23) also highlights the weaknesses of some of these definitions: "over time it became clear that cohabitation, ritual recognition, definition of sexual rights or stipulation of domestic services each had too limited a distribution to serve as a criterion for all the unions anthropologists intuitively felt compelled to call 'marriage'."

Garrison and Scott (2012) describe marriage as an institution which is at a crossroads. Grossi argues that marriage "has meant different things at different times" (2014: 17), and "while many of these functions are not denied by a contemporary understanding of the institution, a significant argument now exists that marriage in contemporary society is, and should be understood primarily as an institution that gives expression to love" (2014: 17).

But not everyone sees this as suitable. As Smart (2007: 60) puts it, feminists have identified love as an aspect of "patriarchy's ideological armament through which women became hooked into dependent relationships with men, entered into an unfavourable legal contract (namely marriage) and ultimately ended up with care of the children."

Mary Evans has described love as a "plot by men to sugar the evil pill of patriarchal domesticity" (1998: 273). Simone De Beauvoir's arguments that, due to the unequal positioning of men and women, love becomes a burden on women, also resonate here.

Martha Fineman argues that it is only through the removal of marriage as an institution that women will be able to receive treatment as equal beings, as opposed to being looked at only in proximity to men (2006). Further, she argues that many of the functions which marriage fosters, such as child-rearing and the attainment of individual happiness, can be attained through different relationships and institutions.

Quite simply, the idea that marriage stemmed from love is a romantic notion. Coontz (2005: 8) notes that, historically, "marriage was not fundamentally about love. It was too vital an economic and political institution to be entered into solely on the basis of something as irrational as love." In the same vein, Grossi (2014: 86) argues that "despite the many negative associations especially for women, marriage retains a significant degree of status and respectability. The continuing popularity of marriage as a goal can be explained by its legal and social meanings, and by the practical benefits it bestows on couples." Perhaps it is a combination of these factors that leads to the fact that even in the 21st century, there remains plentiful pressure on young women to attain a husband. As Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2014: 27-28) notes:

> [B]ecause I am female, I am expected to aspire to marriage. I am expected to make my life choices always keeping in mind that marriage is the most important. Now marriage can be a source of joy and love and mutual support but why do we teach girls to aspire to marriage and we don't teach boys the same?

Looking at these definitions, one can infer what dominant discourses around men in the context of marriage are: that they hold a position of authority and are seen as the provider. There is emphasis on the idea that a woman should seek a 'good' husband, meaning one who may be able to financially support and maintain her. This is oppositional to the idea of marriage being a partnership of shared responsibility and forms of support other than financial, such as emotional. Second-wave feminism highlighted these "gendered economics of marriage". Auchmuty (2008: 492) writes; "even during the subsistence of the marriage, the breadwinner's access to financial power gave him physical and psychological power over a dependent homemaker, at the same time devaluing her own (unpaid, and therefore 'not-work') contribution and undermining her confidence and self-esteem."

Muslim marriages

"It is important to acknowledge that, for many, marriage still retains importance through its traditional meanings," states Grossi (2014: 28). In Islam, marriage is seen as a good deed that is a means of completing one's *imaan* (faith) (Laluddin, Hayatullah, et al. 2013). In an Islamic context, marriage is the only means through which men and women are permitted to have and maintain a physically intimate and/or sexual relationship. Marriage in Islam is also only recognised as a heteronormative relationship: "a Muslim marriage is defined as one between a 'man and a woman only' … lesbian and gay marriages are not allowed in Islam." (Domingo 2005: 75). Muslim women remain at the mercy of Muslim Personal Law, a religiously-based private law which pertains to "among others, marriage, divorce, inheritance, polygyny, custody and guardianship" (Moosa 1998: 197). This legislation accords men the right to take up to four wives, and to issue divorce (women do not hold the same power). Some Muslim men abuse this power, and thus oppress Muslim women.

Within the cultural context of the South African Indian Muslim community, marriage remains characterised by features which could classify it as a patriarchal institution. It is an event for which many parents prepare their daughters; due to cultural norms and expectations, even in 2018, Meer's (1972: 43) words resonate: "unmarried daughters continue to cause great anxiety to parents and to settle them adequately is still one of the major problems parents face." Marriage remains a goal which girls aspire to, in particular due to the honour attached to it and the importance of it to the broader community. "Marriage is the only process through which families are brought into existence; therefore it is of magnificent importance for human society (Laluddin, Hayatullah, et al. 2013: 139). Further, it is a means of spiritual reward: "marriage comes under the form of *ibaadah*" (Laluddin, Hayatullah, et al. 2013: 143). This narrative stigmatises Muslim women who remain single, as there remains an implication that by not getting married, they are not fulfilling religious obligations.

As the discussion around the home/work binary in the previous chapter demonstrates, power dynamics within the stereotypical marriage in the South African Indian Muslim community remain unequal. Men are the breadwinners and therefore maintain total economic power, which translates into other forms of power within the marriage context. This cultivates a dynamic of dependency on the part of the wife, as articulated by Meer (1972: 42): "the secret

of the Indian woman's inferior role, the product of generations, lies in her emotional bondage to the male, a bondage in which her active 'love force' is immobilised by son and husband."

As previously discussed, many of the teachings of the Jamiatul Ulama – the ideological body which much of the South African Indian Muslim community follows, and which influences the content that Radio Islam broadcasts – originate from teachings in Deoband, in India. One of the biggest institutions of Islamic learning in India, Dar-ul-Uloom, is based here, and many prolific teachings which continue to be passed down today originate from here. One highly respected scholar originating from this school, Ashraf Ali Thanvi (1863-1943), penned a publication, *Nikah [Marriage] in Islam*, which deals specifically with issues related to Muslim women in the context of various rules concerning Muslim marriage. "Thanvi's description of the rules and norms that he argues must govern Muslim marriage clearly indicates that he conceives it to be a patriarchal institution based on a series of hierarchies: men above women; husbands over wives" (Sikand 2011: 36). Quoted in Sikand (2011: 38), Thanvi advises Muslim men: "you should continue teaching your women-folk and inculcate respect and good manners in them. Do not allow them to become impudent and disrespectful. The intellect of women is deficient; it is therefore, incumbent to take special measures in re-forming them."

Despite the fact that progress has occurred since his death, Thanvi's teachings and prescriptions are still considered a source of guidance for some Muslims (Sikand 2011), and they continue to endure. This has real-life implications for many Muslim men and women, particularly within the context of marriage: "Muslim women in South Africa, like their female counterparts the world over, suffer discrimination and bear the brunt of patriarchal structures in marriage and divorce" (Domingo 2005: 71). Thanvi's conflation of Indian culture and the Islamic religion is a result of his origins, claims Sikand (2011). "This context played a major role in shaping his ideas of what he regarded as normative or 'Islamic' rules for Muslim marriage. It was a context characterised by stern patriarchy and women's subordination" (Sikand 2011: 41).

In traditional understandings of marriage in the South African Indian Muslim community, there are very stringent gender roles. The wife's role entails being a custodian of the domestic space, keeping the house and "following routines approved by her husband" (Meer 1972: 42). The husband, however, is enjoined to have many liberties: "[he] is not obliged to consult her, and will often keep his business affairs secret from her. He may move in and out of the house

at will … It is his prerogative to be angry, hers to anticipate his anger and assuage it" (Meer 1972: 42). This point highlights male ownership of acceptable public emotion; men have the freedom to conduct themselves as they please within both the public and private spheres, while women do not. Another thing which remains prevalent is "economic abuse as a form of domestic violence" (Mukaddam 2016: 78); as the breadwinners, men maintain strict control of the finances in the home, which translates into other forms of power.

In recent times, there have been efforts to remedy these kinds of understandings and promote a shift towards a more egalitarian understanding of men and women's rights in Islam, particularly within the context of marriage. A close-reading of the Radio Islam texts will reveal one such attempt, and evaluate the extent to whether it works to dismantle or uphold these patriarchal ideals of Muslim men when it comes to marriage.

Mutual rights in a Muslim marriage, according to Radio Islam

The series is called 'Mutual Rights in a Marriage', and discusses ten mutual rights of husbands and wives over one another. The series was aired over a five-week period during August-September 2014, broadcast in a late morning slot around 11am. The format of this broadcast is structured as an informative talk program which consists of the host, Moulana Habib Bobat, in conversation with another moulana, Moulana Junaid. In normal talk radio fashion (Pinseler 2015), there is a call and SMS line for listeners to interact with the presenters around this theme, and they also invite listeners to tweet them.

The ten rights discussed in the programme are: Overlooking each other's shortcomings, mutual respect, concealing each other's secrets and weaknesses, providing each other emotional support, conjugal relations, adornment and personal hygiene, assisting each other in obeying Allah, respecting each other's family, seeking Islamic knowledge, and chastity.

It must be noted that the term 'rights' as it is used to describe each of the above points do not originate from *Sharia* law; rather, they are concepts that have been deemed necessary enough to be discussed and remembered by married couples. While some of the points do come from key Islamic beliefs, such as the section on conjugal rights, others are tailored to relate to the specific community context (such as the section of respecting each other's family). The series adopts human rights discourse and terminology to talk about factors

related to marriage within the South African Indian Muslim community which are not necessarily rights.

Throughout the entire series, all five one-hour-long episodes, every message and call that is received is from a woman, except for one from a 70-year-old man. While the programme may claim to be aimed at both men and women, it seems to reach a largely female audience. Much like the case with the broadcast discussed in the previous chapter, this may be due to the morning time slot being a time when it is assumed that women are at home, tuning in while their husbands are at work.

The series begins with a broad discussion about rights to foreground the discussion on rights within marriage, and highlights that rights are an inherently *Sharia* principle. Irrespective of whether a person is Muslim or not however, their rights are to be fulfilled and respected. As the presenters say:

> [W]ith regards to the rights of the creation of Allah, they have certain rights upon us and we have certain rights upon them as well. It is the responsibility of every human and every Muslim to respect the entire creation of Allah and to fulfil the rights of every single person on the face of the face of this Earth. (Mutual Rights, Ep. 1, hereafter referred to as MR)

Presenter Moulana Bobat uses multiple plural pronouns when dispensing his content and advice throughout the show ("we understand that fulfilling each other's rights" (MR, Ep 1); "we'll be much happier with our partners" (MR, Ep. 1); "it's for us to have a happy life" (MR, Ep. 1)). This functions to show the presenter is including himself in his address – i.e., whatever advice he dispenses is aimed at him too. It could also be used to indicate gender neutrality due to the audience consisting of men and women. As Pinseler (2015: 65) states,

> [L]isteners are constantly present in radio programs, but in the role of being talked 'to' rather than being talked 'with'. They are present as imagined listeners … the communality produced here is emphasised by the use of the personal pronoun 'we' in a way that it refers to the community of presenters and listeners.

The use of “we” also strengthens the imagined community of South African Indian Muslims who are being addressed. This reinforces a sense of community unity and agreement, suggesting coherency in all of the views that are presented on air – even if this may not be the reality.

In the discussion of the first mutual right - overlooking each other's shortcomings – Bobat says the following: "we think that the person is supposed to be perfect. He is supposed to having no mistakes in his life, he supposed to be flawless" (MR, Ep. 1) – but then adds, "there is supposed to be no blemishes in him or her" (MR, Ep. 1). While initially, in this case, only talking about men, he then also quickly mentions "her." This reveals an unconscious bias towards the assumed gender of the audience; that it is female. In the same breath however, he then also says, "it is inherent within him to make mistakes. It's inherent within him to forget things" (MR, Ep. 1) and then, "be realistic in life. Don't expect your partner to be 100%, 100% that he makes no mistakes at all because it's not possible. You can't do it so how can you expect your partner to do it?" (MR, Ep. 1).

It is important to consider the kind of tone that is being taken here, and again the use of gender pronouns. These infer that the imagined audience is female, and there is an air of condescension as though women specifically are being spoken at, and lectured to. It is as though they are being made examples of because of an assumed emotional reaction that they are prone to have, and this example is then used to deflect the behaviour of the hypothetical man when he makes mistakes. What is ultimately being said, without being explicitly said, is that because women make mistakes, they should not hold their husbands accountable when they make mistakes. There is then further the sense that because women are more flawed that men are, they cannot judge men for having flaws. By analysing the discourse, “larger issues of power and control come into play” (Denzin 1997: 93). Before the presenter corrects himself to clarify that he is talking about men and women, through this kind of discourse women are being castigated for being ‘unreasonable,’ which feeds into existing gender prejudices. Further examples also amplify this point:

> [Y]our husband is going to forget to buy bread, don't make *qiyamat* in the house. Say “honey please go buy the bread again.” Or “when you go out again for *salaah* (at the mosque) buy the bread”. I mean, you can't break your marriage for one bread, it's ridiculous. (MR, Ep. 1)

There are a couple of dynamics to address here. The first is the obvious gendered example which is used, which plays on the stereotype of the nagging wife reliant on her husband to provide groceries. This also links to gender stereotypes of men needing to keep women under control so that they do not nag, and ‘behave.’ The second thing to note is the way that it is implied that marital strife in inherent in femininity, and that women will always pick fights

("don't make *qiyamat*"). This also implies that it is a woman's duty to ensure the efficiency and smooth running of the marriage. The final, more insidious thing to note from this example is the way that it is implied that only the husband will leave the house to go to the mosque for prayers, suggesting that the mosque is a place reserved for men only to pray in.

The *moulanas* use *hadiths* to substantiate some of the points that they make in the different discussions. The *hadith* used in this example can be translated from Arabic to mean "have mercy on people and Allah will have mercy on you and people will have mercy on you." While a pertinent and arguably harmless reminder, the way that this *hadith* is used in this context is slightly disingenuous; still on the example of the bread, it is used to demonstrate why a wife should be patient and understanding with her husband should he forget to buy bread ("one loaf of bread and people are willing to throw their marriage down the drain" (MR, Ep. 1)). This demonstrates that there is an assumption that Muslim wives need to be merciful and forgiving of their husbands for the most contrived of reasons, and overlook the faults of the husband because of the simplistic assumption that he is only forgetful due to being tired, and his being tired is due to having been at work, which he did to provide for his wife. When looking at some of the other content in the same episode, it puts into perspective how gendered and ultimately unfair this kind of understanding is.

Too little of the emphasis in this context is placed on men and the role that they play in fulfilling this right of their wives. This is possibly due to two reasons. The first is that men are assumed to already be in possession of this knowledge (a point also discussed in the previous chapter), and therefore the apparent equality in the discourse (the explicit suggestions that the content is aimed at both genders) is for cosmetic purposes only, in a show to appear progressive. The second reason is that the assumed audience is only female, due to the time slot choice; as discussed above, based on the stereotypes associated with the work/ home binary, during the late morning, men would be assumed to be at work and women assumed to be in the home.

When talking about mutual respect, it is initially discussed in neutral terms and addressed at both spouses – it covers basic etiquette such as greeting one another and speaking in a cordial tone, as well as being respectful in "intimate matters" (MR, Ep. 1), all of which is important for men and women in a marriage. In the next breath however, Moulana Bobat says "love and respect goes hand-in-hand, you can't claim to love a person and disrespect him at the same

time" (MR, Ep 1). Immediately, through the use of the pronoun “him”, the assumption is made that only a woman can be disrespectful towards her husband and therefore she must be 'warned.' Moulana Junaid states an example in which he quotes a wife asking her husband why he doesn't give her jewellery and gifts the way he used to before they were married, to which the husband responds, "Have you ever seen a fisherman feed worms to fish he's already caught?" (MR, Ep. 1). The analogy is crude, suggesting the wife is a commodity who has been ‘caught’ and is therefore no longer desirable by the husband as he has already attained her. Further, it feeds into existing tropes of women being viewed as objects to be owned by men. But he uses this analogy to make his point to men because of the assumption that this humour will be relatable for them. While this may work, it is still a sexist statement to use uncritically.

It is mentioned very briefly that some men do speak to their wives in a disrespectful manner after a listener sends in a message that her husband treats her badly. While Moulana Junaid mentions that children then disrespect their mother if they hear their father speaking to their mother in that way, the point is left at that and not further acknowledged or discussed. This failure to engage male behaviour in this context the way it does females ("you can't claim to love a person and disrespect him at the same time" (MR, Ep. 1)) entrenches it; there remains a dominant patriarchal notion that men are inherently respectful and by not making the above point clearer, this is then reinforced. Making the point that men disrespecting their wives is bad because it will lead to their children also doing so entrenches the idea that women are a function of their domestic roles and responsibilities as opposed to an end within themselves.

On the topic of concealing each other's secrets there is a lot of reference to intimacy and the private sphere; "[marriage] is a sacred union. Whatever happens behind doors, whatever happens in that home should remain there, not the entire world should be involved in there” (MR, Ep .1). Moulana Bobat uses a quote from the Quran to state how this right is divinely ordained: "your wives are a garment and you are a garment for them" (MR, Ep. 1). In unpacking this definition, Bobat speaks to an imagined male audience: "if you have a scar you don't want people to see," he says, "you put on a t-shirt or *kurta*. Now that garment is a seal. Nobody can say, 'ay that man is scratched ya check him there'" (MR, Ep. 1). While he uses this example to demonstrate his point, he does also explain the analogy: "in marriage also we'll have our ups and downs. Those things need to be kept inside. Like that garment does not

reveal what's beneath it, likewise our partners should not reveal what's happening in our lives to other people" (MR, Ep 1).

While this point is clear and understandable, the example which is used is lacking due to how it only addresses men – particularly puzzling when much else of the show is addressed at an imagined audience of women. A possible explanation could be that, because of what a strong force female sexuality is presumed to be, men need to be particularly in-tune with this discussion in order to know how to navigate this issue.

Social media and its use are very topical in modern discourse (Montag et al. 2015), and it is therefore a relevant and timely conversation to be had on air. "Unfortunately social networking has played a very negative role in our relationship," (MR, Ep. 1) says Bobat. There is an interesting conversation around the way that the proliferation of social media has blurred the lines between the public and private sphere, particularly in the context of marriage and especially marriage in this community – according to Bobat, referring to people discussing their private lives on chat rooms, "it's really sad that people are washing their dirty laundry in public places" (MR, Ep. 1). Again, there is the direction of the content at a male audience – "I mean, it's between you and your wife"(MR, Ep. 1) – and the discussion that social media can be a catalyst in the breakdown of the marriage. As discussed above, women are blamed for being demanding and disrespectful, and through this example (and the way that men are directly addressed) it appears that men are being blamed for lack of discretion. This is due to men's ties to the public sphere, meaning it needs to be made clear to them that what happens within the private sphere – the domestic realm – needs to remain out of the public sphere. Should they deviate from this, they are not fulfilling their responsibility of 'being a garment'.

The incidents discussed on air in relation to this topic are interesting in terms of the way that they discuss – or don't discuss – gender. Despite the direction of content at a male audience, the examples and case studies used are of women not fulfilling their responsibility of 'being a garment' and instead 'airing dirty laundry'. Bobat makes mention of a wife who caught her husband with another woman and then publicised the incident by posting about it on Facebook, and comments that through doing so, "she has brought herself into the public arena for nothing" (MR, Ep. 1). This kind of wording highlights how being in a public sphere such as Facebook is undesirable for women. On the same incident, Junaid comments, "it

should have been a quiet thing and you bring yourself into disrepute, you are bringing the children also and your family into disrepute" (MR, Ep. 1). It is interesting to consider how the response is not that the wife brought the husband – the one who transgressed in the marriage – into disrepute, but that she brought herself into it. This also ties into discourses rooted in the patriarchal belief that the honour of a woman is tied to her husband; both *moulanas* frame the wife's reaction as negative, because of how it will stand in the way of potential reconciliation between the husband and wife.

Bobat then shares an SMS received from a woman who has kept her husband's affairs a secret for 20 years, and says she is unable to take it anymore. In a pleading manner she has also asked, 'how much more [can I take]?' Junaid responds by saying,

> [D]ifferent secrets are of different natures and if, we're not saying that you should conceal your husband's faults in all cases but if something that is affecting other people and that is really going to cause problems then you feel it is something that you need to expose then it is necessary … perhaps Allah will reward you for keeping the sin of a fellow Muslim concealed. (MR, Ep. 1)

For wives to be told that "different secrets are of different natures" makes it sound as though, again, wives should be more open-minded and forgiving towards their husbands because as women they are more flawed than their husbands are (as discussed above). In these instances it is interesting to consider how the women – the wronged parties, the wives – are constantly given the advice to 'remain patient' and consider their actions and the consequences thereof. In line with patriarchal ideals, the pain and trauma of the wives in response to these situations they find themselves victims in is ignored. Instead, the women are directly addressed and asked to concentrate their responses on protecting their husband's secrets, again in line with protecting a man's honour at all costs. They are made to feel guilty if they do not do so, under the guise of it being a religiously honourable thing to do; "perhaps Allah will reward you for keeping the sin of a fellow Muslim concealed," instead of being offered solutions of how they can assert their own agency and get out of such situations, should they choose to (an option which they are not even directly offered).

The discussion of the next three rights – emotional support, conjugal rights, and adornment and personal hygiene – is done in a more informal way, with a lot of banter and joking between the two hosts.

The hosts emphasise the importance of understanding emotional support not just as a husband or wife, but "as humans" (MR, Ep. 1). They emphasise that mutual support in this sense is imperative, constantly using the gender neutral "spouse"; that said however, Moulana Junaid does let slip, saying "the wife needs to listen" (MR, Ep. 2). The language used strengthens the assumption that wives need to be told what to do, which reinforces the stereotype that women know less than their husbands and are inferior to them, and are therefore constantly reliant on them for guidance. Thompson and Walker (1989: 849) state, “many of the qualities that women display in marital conversation and conflict are traceable to their subordinate position. Subordinates must be more sensitive and responsive to those in power than the reverse.”

The discussions around a husband and wife providing each other with emotional support draws on the prophetic example of Muhammed (peace be upon him) and his relationship with his wife Khadija, who put him at ease and comforted him when he received the revelation of the Quran. When Bobat poses the question, "if you put the women of today in her shoes what do you think the response would be?" (MR, Ep. 2), Junaid is quick to point out that the "women of today" can't be generalised. "Women of today are greatly clued up on different trials and tests that people go through in their lives and by and large I think women of today are very supportive of their husbands and that is why you find so many husbands that are greatly successful," (MR, Ep. 2) he says. This kind of framing uses ‘modern’ discourse to entrench traditional ideas; while the role of the wife in the construction of the husband's masculine identity and the emotional support which she provides in order for him to be able to be successful are acknowledged, it is also subtly reinforcing that Muslim women who do this enact the ‘ideal Muslim woman’ role. This contribution of the wife is not something that is always acknowledged and is therefore noteworthy, but it must again be taken into consideration that this could be a show of being ‘progressive’ by moving away from traditional sexist ideals, and does not translate into other anti-patriarchal actions that the radio station takes.

What is interesting is how much of this discussion seems to be aimed at providing men with advice and providing examples of the way that a husband could be attentive to a wife and the ways in which he too is responsible for providing emotional support. This is in contrast to the dynamic earlier in the series, where women are directly addressed. But it also highlights how

because men are sometimes assumed to already have knowledge they are not always directly reminded of their responsibilities; by discussing them in this show the presenters are aiming to resolve that.

Bobat suggests for example that when a wife is ill, the husband should take over her "mundane activities of everyday" (MR, Ep. 2) – feeding, clothing, transporting, and looking after children – and "she will say my husband is so busy, so busy, has such a hectic schedule and yet is taking time out for me" (MR, Ep. 2). The foundation on which this advice is built reiterates stereotypes of women in this community being tied to the domestic sphere, and men being busy and hardworking as the providers for the family. This assumed positionality of men and women is made reference to several times, when the hosts will refer to how the husband has "certain responsibilities" (MR, Ep. 2) and should call his wife despite having "busy meetings" (MR, Ep. 2). The helplessness of the wife in this kind of hypothetical situation affirms the value of the husband; the way that he is lauded for doing these basic domestic tasks which she completes daily and barely receives recognition for speaks to how undervalued female labour remains. As Thompson and Walker (1989: 850) state, “family work is unseen and unacknowledged because it is private, unpaid, commonplace, done by women.” The presenters saying “and yet” highlights that should men assist with any kind of ‘household’ tasks, which are for the women to do, they are exceptional – as opposed to making the point that men have as equal a responsibility in maintaining the home as the woman does.

The discussion on conjugal rights is rather brief, with a good part of it centring around repeated mentions that it is an important aspect of marriage and that there is much literature available on it, and a lot of skirting around the actual topic. That said, the hosts cite several *hadith* to make their points. The first is not mutual, but rather refers to male desire: "when a man calls his wife to share a bed and she refuses, the angels curse her until the next morning" (MR, Ep. 2). When this kind of *hadith* is looked at surface-level only, misinterpretation of it can give way to effects such as marital rape. In another *hadith*, the Prophet Muhammad is quoted as saying "your wife as your partner also has a right over you" (MR, Ep. 2). While an important point to make, particularly following up from the previous one, the tone of it is not as threatening as the previous one – there are no threats of curses from the angels if a man refuses to appease sexual desire initiated by his wife.

Importantly though, the hosts do then say that if a woman does not feel sexually satisfied by her husband, this constitutes grounds for divorce;

> [I]f you look at the books of *Fiqh*, if the husband is not able to fulfil some of the needs then the *ulama* have determined a period that the husband needs to be going for treatment and if it doesn't help then that is grounds for divorce. This alone speaks that it is a mutual right between the two of them. (MR, Ep. 2)

It is important for points like this to be emphasised, as there remains a lack of focus on the topic of female sexual satisfaction, particularly in the South African Indian Muslim community where the topic of sex remains taboo. Ali (2011: 8) writes that "significant texts in the Quran and hadith allude to the importance of female gratification and satisfaction in the sexual act."

The briefness of the discussion as well as the very general lexical choices (referring to sex only as "conjugal relations" and "fulfil the need", and referring to it as a "sensitive issue"), when it comes to discussing sex and the duties of men and women in Islam related to it highlight the way that it is viewed as taboo and awkward to discuss. When examining this kind of content and the way that it is touched on in very brief and general terms, one gains an understanding of how and why there is (as the previous chapter demonstrates) a lack of understanding when it comes to understanding sexuality in this community. This then feeds into the idea that the best way to approach sexuality is by concealing it and keeping it limited to the private sphere in every aspect, without broaching enough further discussion around it in the public sphere to promote a better understanding.

The discussion around the right of adornment and personal hygiene is very much geared towards men, and the ways in which they should present themselves. This could be perceived to be progressive and even subversive due to the fact that in general in a patriarchal society, there is much focus placed on the way that women should adorn and beautify themselves without similar messages inundating men on the same scale. The South African Indian Muslim community is not exempt from this ideal - in this community too, there is a strong focus on women fulfilling certain rites to be considered 'beautiful.' Aspects such as being fair-skinned and having other Eurocentric features as well as having a trim figure and straight hair are usually considered ways in which women are well-presented and 'beautiful' (Craig 2006). While these standards remain the norm for women, men are not subjected to them. The hosts

acknowledge the stereotype that exists within the South African Indian Muslim community around the differences in presentation of couples: "when you go for functions the wife is looking like a doll, and the husband has curry stains" (MR, Ep. 2). This kind of trope gives rise to the idea that it is a woman's responsibility to make an effort to look good in public. The terms "doll" and "curry stains" respectively objectify and infantilise men and women. It amplifies the idea that women beautify themselves to be viewed as beautiful objects, and that men are careless and therefore stain their clothes with their food because they cannot help themselves.

This depiction of men suggests that they are messy and do not have to make an effort not to be for the sake of anyone else (such as their wives) because it will be overlooked – however, the hosts then do emphasise that both men and women have a responsibility to take care of themselves, in order to be pleasing for their partner. They state, "adornment and personal hygiene is extremely important for any marriage no matter how long you have been married" (MR, Ep. 2) – and say that if either spouse neglects this responsibility, this could give rise to infidelity. This is a first, as in much of the previous discussions, women are blamed for male infidelity. A statement like this indicates that men need to be more accountable, especially if they want to avoid being victims of their wives' infidelity. It is important to consider that it is implied that men are only victims of infidelity when it is based on physical appearance; there is a lack of nuanced discussion around the way that there could be any number of causes for infidelity such as emotional absence or a spousal frustration for any number of reasons.

The hosts quote a *hadith* saying that women love "attractive spouses", and state that "if you groom yourself and if you look after yourself they will do the same for you" (MR, Ep. 2). The imagined audience here is male. It is important to unpack the definition of attractive here – it doesn't just mean good looks, but rather the effort that is put into personal grooming and appearances. The hosts emphasise that men should wear clean and neat clothing and be sure to practise oral hygiene and keep facial hair and nails trimmed. While this discussion is generally imparting messages that are relevant and important, they do at times defect to gender stereotypes; talking about moisturising and the way that women supposedly usually have softer skin than men, is put down to "a man works with tools and he does physical work and their hands are rough and a woman's hands are different" (MR, Ep. 2). Even in this discussion, it is clear how the way in which men and women's bodies are spoken of are tied

to the spheres that they occupy; women have soft hands because they are in the home and have time to take care of themselves, whereas men are out in the public, dealing with a number of conditions which result in him having a rough and rugged physical condition.

The rights that the programme posits that wives and husbands in Muslim marriages have over one another to assist each other in obeying God (through the fulfilment of religious obligations), and respecting one another's family, are discussed in two single episodes. Each episode focuses on each of these single rights only. The degree of detail of the discussion warrants them each a full hour, as both of these topics have a great deal of points attached to them.

It is important to bear in mind that this series is focused on specifically Muslim marriages, and therefore the role of religion in the marriage is significant. 'Islam' means submission (in Arabic), and as with most forms of organised religion, submission to a deity lies at the core of the religion. Muslims believe in a single God (Allah), and being a Muslim ultimately constitutes submitting to his will through following the tenets of Islam. To support another person in maintaining this obedience is considered a good deed. As Junaid puts it, "the unity that is created upon collective *ibaadah* for Allah is a unity that cannot be matched by any other activity that we indulge in" (MR, Ep. 2).

Bobat makes it clear in his opening up of this topic that women are central to maintaining the piety and levels of God-consciousness of a family:

> [T]he entire world is a commodity which Allah has created for the benefit of mankind and the best commodity that you can find and the best item of use will be a woman that is brimmed with piety, a woman that is coming from a rich and holistic background. The reason being that she keeps the spiritual barometer ticking in the home. So husband and wife should assist each other in obeying Allah. (MR, Ep. 3)

It is interesting to consider the dynamics of the framing here. Firstly, the way that the word "you" is used indicates that he is addressing an imagined male audience. Secondly, the idea that both the world and women exist as commodities. It is demeaning to refer to a woman as a "commodity," as though her existence is only to be a means of use for her husband. Further, while Bobat may mean to motivate women to take an interest in practising their religion in the best possible way for both themselves and their husbands, it is made to sound as though

women should prioritise this kind of spiritual development and practice, solely to be a means of benefit for their husbands. There is also the unsaid judgement that is cast on women who are not "brimmed with piety," who may be looked down upon, and viewed as less desirable for marriage by men. The statement that the wife is the one who "keeps the spiritual barometer ticking in the home" again reinforces the stereotype of women being limited to the domestic sphere and existing as the custodians of the home, and maintaining it as a Muslim home through her own spirituality and worship She should set the standard which her husband and children should aspire to. The message that this kind of framing then sends about men is that they are dependent on attaining a pious woman as a wife in order to develop their own religiosity, whereas women should have that kind of strength of belief and practice already at the time of marriage. Despite women seemingly being the elevated party in this kind of discourse, their positioning as such rests on their domesticity; this is also reminiscent of the literary trope of the 'Angel in the House' (Woolf 1942). In this sense, these tropes function to subtly undermine women, by keeping the relegated to the home only. With regards to this aspect, women – generally demeaned and seen as lesser – are elevated as having an inherent spiritual status. What this does is take away focus from viewing women as an end in terms of their physical or intellectual development and contributions, as these are arenas reserved for men.

While the presenters state that "there should be mutual support to remember between husband and wife as advice and guidance and it should be with language of encouragement and motivation" (MR, Ep. 3), the choice of examples and points that they do and do not elaborate on only serve to reinforce stereotypes and promote the idea that women have more of a role and responsibility than men do. For example, when talking about the fact that a husband should make his daily prayers, the wife is encouraged to carry out very mundane tasks to assist him in fulfilling this task – "the wife can prepare the husband - she can put out a prayer mat in the cubby for the husband, put out a pair of sandals for him to go to the mosque" (MR, Ep. 3) – while nothing is said about how the husband could similarly assist the wife. Further, the wife is encouraged to keep her husband accountable: "we need to support each other and if the husband is doing something wrong then the wife mustn't encourage it" (MR, Ep. 3). This forces one to consider: if practising religion is a means of a personal

relationship between an individual and God, is it necessary for a man or woman to be responsible for holding one another accountable for their deeds?

On the topic of respecting each other's families, it is emphasised that this "is a very important element of a very successful marriage" (MR, Ep 4). Much of the discussion is general, unpacking the way that relationships with in-laws are negotiated and the topic is aimed at both men and women. The main take-away is the emphasis on the importance of communication between husband and wife, and how this should guide husband and wives' interactions with each other's extended families. A caller complains on-air about her daughter-in-law, and the hosts make it clear that they're "not going to go into mother-in-law debates" (MR, Ep. 4). This kind of discourse amplifies the stereotype of negative mother-in-law within the South African Indian Muslim community: that she is overbearing, critical of her daughter-in-law, doesn't view her daughter-in-law as good enough for her son, and views her daughter-in-law as someone in a position of servitude to her.

In one instance, the presenter directly addresses women:

> [D]aughter, respect your mother-in-law and your father-in-law even though, even though you might not agree with them and you might not understand them. Because remember they are not the problem. We need to now discuss it with our husband what we need to do about it. (MR, Ep. 4)

This kind of discourse indicates that women need to be reminded that even in extended family relations, they exist in relation to their husbands and not in their own right. "We need to discuss with our husband" is not only patronising (due to the use of "our"), but also highlights how if a woman has an issue with her in-laws, she should get her husband to intercede for her instead of approach them directly. Further, the reminder to "remember they are not the problem" assumes that in any given situation, the wife is at fault – and the way that this is said reiterates it. Further the way that it is addressed specifically at women suggests that they need to be addressed about this because it is an issue.

The final broadcast in the series covers two rights: seeking Islamic knowledge, and chastity.

There is an immediate assumption made about the intellectual superiority of men in the host's initial statement on the first topic; "usually when we are discussing rights in the marriage we say that it is the husband's duty to educate the wife" (MR, Ep. 5). This is reliant

on the idea that men are naturally cleverer than women, and predisposed to having more knowledge on many topics solely because they are men. Further, as men they are often granted access to far more opportunities - especially educational opportunities. The word “duty” also implies that men carry the heavy responsibility of looking after women in this aspect. Despite the fact that there is this division in ‘ownership’ in knowledge, from a purely Islamic perspective, both men and women are encouraged to read and study Islam; the presenters state, "the seeking of Islamic knowledge is both the responsibility of the husband and the wife. And it is the right of both the husband and wife" (MR, Ep. 5).

It is also noteworthy that in this discussion, there is an advertorial-style promotion of texts and online classes produced by the Jamiatul Ulama, which – as previously discussed – is the ideological body behind Radio Islam. This kind of subtle mentioning highlights that the knowledge disseminated by this body should be sought for educational purposes; while this may not be incorrect, it also fails to account for the fact that this body’s texts are based on certain interpretations of the core religious texts only.

The final mutual right, "a very important concept that both husband and wife should try to uphold," (MR, Ep. 5) is chastity. In Islam, marriage is the only framework in which sexual intimacy is permitted; sex outside of marriage is considered a grave sin. As Bobat puts it, "it is important both husband and wife should look after themselves. You cannot transcend the boundaries which are set out by Allah" (MR, Ep. 5). To have a sexual relationship outside of marriage is not only considered a breach of trust to your spouse, but also to God; "how can you betray your spouse and sell out in that regard? And how can you betray the trust of Allah?" (MR, Ep. 5)

While the discussion is aimed at both men and women, it is thematically structured in a binary fashion; for men, it is centred around "the man going into the corporate world and faced with temptation," (MR, Ep. 5) and for women "mothers and sisters who are at home ... a pious woman is one who doesn't allow anyone into her home who her husband disapproves of. And we need to maintain that very strictly" (MR, Ep. 5). The former quote suggests that in the working world, men are tempted by ‘Western’ factors which result in temptation, such as non-Muslim women working in the same environment as them. The latter quote again highlights how women, who belong in the home, maintain the morality of society by being in the home. Ultimately, the binary reiterated here about gender roles remains that women

remain in the home while men go out and work. This picks up on a lot of the discussion in the previous chapter on this very point.

While for the most part the discussion is balanced – "a wife also deserves a chaste husband and a husband also deserves a chaste wife" (MR, Ep. 5) – it is noteworthy that Bobat does address men specifically as well. His reminder that "brothers, it is not a one-day thing. It is a lifelong effort," (MR, Ep 5) emphasises to men that they need to be aware of their responsibilities in a marriage. This point is important as it does not assume that men are automatically aware, and instead reminds them of the rights which they may sometimes forget or not be aware that they need to fulfil.

He also quotes a *hadith* of the prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him), which encourages one to guard "whatever is between the thighs and between the jaws" (MR, Ep. 5). This hadith is not gender-specific, and can be said to be a reference to one's private parts and tongue. What is inferred from this is that should you protect your tongue and your jaw, you will save yourself from promiscuity and infidelity – the greatest threats to a marriage.

Chapter conclusion

To summarise the series, Bobat reiterates that the mutual rights between a husband and wife should be something that both spouses should constantly strive to fulfil to make their partner happy and build their marriage – “we should be looking at fulfilling instead of demanding” (MR, Ep 5). Through the analysis of the ten mutual rights outlined in this series, much can be inferred about the concept of marriage within the South African Indian Muslim community. Fatima Meer wrote in 1972, “the system encouraged different expectations of male and female members in preserving family tone and family morality” (Meer 1972: 39). A reading of the texts disseminated via Radio Islam nearly 40 years later reveals that Meer’s words still hold true.

Men remain posited as the superior party in a marriage, a role assumed to be innate which is then reinforced by their economic responsibility. Thompson (1989: 864) writes of the labour division, “every day and ultimate responsibility for marriage, housework, and parenthood usually remains with women; and responsibility for breadwinning usually remains with men.” They are ultimately the decision-makers in the marriage, afforded this power as well as having many excuses made for them due to their role as the working breadwinner. This is not unique

to masculinity in the South African Indian Muslim community; Hopkins (2009: 11) writes that "dominant forms of masculinity are both "economically exploitative and socially oppressive."

Therefore, the power dynamics within marriage in the South African Indian Muslim community remain unbalanced, in favour of men. This is despite attempts to strive for a more egalitarian understanding of the role of men and women within marriage in this community. Ali (2011: 23) reiterates:

> In fundamental respects, in social practice at least, the understanding of Islamic marriage has shifted. Yet there has not been a coherent alternative to the classical understanding of marriage as a fundamentally gender-differentiated institution which presumes, at least at some level, male authority and control.

While there is signalling that men need be aware of their role and the responsibilities that they have towards their wives, there is not enough discursive emphasis on this in this broadcast; the use of examples and continued emphasis of women's role in the home detract from the overall message to men.

CHAPTER 7: RAMADAN

This chapter looks at the way that gender roles in the South African Indian Muslim community are defined in relation to the holy Islamic month of Ramadan, and more particularly then, how an ideal masculinity is constructed based on this.

The content on Ramadan examined in this chapter is a special series of jokes entitled 'This could have been us.' This title presumably alludes to the fact that the content – 1-2 minute long jokes, broadcast on a daily basis – is relatable for the audience. The series was broadcast in June/July 2016, which coincided with Ramadan 1437 in the Islamic calendar. The series comprises of 20 episodes, which deal with 'relatable content'-type scenarios. It was conceptualised and presented by a male presenter, Ejaz Khan.

The series was broadcast in the evenings, just before the community announcements and Maghrib *athaan*, which signals the ending of the fast. Many people who are fasting tune in to Radio Islam solely to hear the Maghrib *athaan*[6] in Ramadan so that they may know when to break their fast, and thus there is a larger than normal listenership at this time.

What is Ramadan?

Ramadan is a holy month in the Islamic calendar, a period of fasting prescribed for all Muslims. A 2015 census of South Africa showed that 2% of the population identify as Muslim. This therefore accounts for just over a million people in South Africa. Besides the norm of Muslims fasting, there are Muslims who don't fast, and non-Muslims who fast. There are numerous cultural influences which affect the way that the month is observed in different Muslim communities in terms of traditions, cultural practices, and perceptions of various issues – including gender roles.

Fasting in Ramadan, from an idealised Islamic perspective, means abstaining from consuming food and drink, and having sexual intercourse between sunrise and sunset for the entirety of the month (29-30 days, based on a lunar month). It also means practising patience and doing good deeds, including carrying out acts such as giving charity and helping those in need. Prayer time and worship is increased and encouraged, as well as more reading of the Quran. The Quran was revealed to the Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) in Ramadan. As a

[6] Including my own family

result, the night of its revelation – known as *Laylatul Qadr*, in the last ten days of Ramadan – is one of the holiest and most auspicious nights in the Islamic calendar. Those fasting should abstain from activities which are perceived to be sinful, such as lying, swearing, and gossiping.

According to the Quranic verse 2: 183, Ramadan has been ordained on Muslims to attain *taqwa,* which can roughly be translated to mean piety. Ultimately, from an idealised Islamic perspective, the purpose of fasting during Ramadan is to strip an individual down to confront the parts of themselves in isolation from material and worldly things, and reflect on who they are, what their purpose is, and whether they are doing their best to be the best versions of themselves in their lives. It is meant to inculcate a sense of self-discipline, of social responsibility, and to remind those observing it of what the important things in life are. It is also meant to function as a means of guarding oneself from evil and sin, and to stimulate the purification of body, mind, and soul. As a respondent in Robinson and Raisler (2005: 102) states, "Ramadan for me is a phase of time where I reduce my obligations outside and focus inward…It's hard to explain to non-Muslims that fasting is a very kind thing for a Muslim body, spirit, and soul.''

All Muslims, regardless of their class, race, gender, or socio-economic status, are ordered to fast and observe Ramadan in accordance with fulfilling religious commands (there are exceptions, such as those in poor health, those who may be travelling, or women who are menstruating). In this sense, it is a means of demonstrating that in isolation from material and worldly factors, from a religious perspective, every person is on equal footing and no one person is above another. This is, again, an ideal, and thus not always the reality. There is vast inequality amongst Muslim people, including in the realm of gender. Often, men and women are perceived to have different roles, responsibilities, and expected outcomes from the month of Ramadan.

During Ramadan, many practices in the South African Indian Muslim community can be viewed as ritualistic (Sandikci and Omeraki 2007); they are done out of duty and habit, every year, often without question. The same can be said of gender roles and expectations tied to this period. For example, as the texts show, while men are encouraged to go to the mosque, among other things, in many ways the expected role of the women is confined to the home and the domestic sphere. This is something which the broadcast does also highlight.

An interesting element of this broadcast is that, unlike the content in the previous two chapters, it is not talk-show style or presented by a single presenter. Instead, it is a series of short skits, many of which exhibit hypothetical situations involving men with other men. This makes for interesting study as it shows how masculinity manifests in dialogue amongst men, and not only in conversations which are also linked to women and femininity.

Humour

Comedy is, in itself, a site of discourse. As a genre, it is a space which offers room for what Turner (1977: 33) refers to as "plural reflexivity," which he defines as "the ways in which a group or community seeks to portray, understand, and then act on itself". Comedy is often a space in which topics and sentiments which are often regarded as taboo can be explored, without a fear of retaliation. There is a sense of vulnerability attached to it; Perez (2013: 484) states that "humour often blunts the critical sensitivity of the audience towards socially unacceptable actions or sentiments." At the same time, 'comedy' is sometimes also used to excuse the way that damaging ideas or stereotypes are promoted or normalised. "Joke-tellers justify the use of such stereotypes by pointing out that the role of comedy is to confront touchy subjects, breach norms of etiquette, name taboos, etc." (Perez 2013: 479).

Humour and comedy therefore become mechanisms through which identity is mediated – by their very nature, there is "powerful social critique inherent in [their] construction and performance" (Gilbert 1997: 328). Jokes and comedy are meant to evoke certain reactions – their very structure is ordered in a subversive manner, argues Mintz (1985: 73); "jokes tear down, distort, misrepresent, and reorder usual patterns of expression and perception." It must however be noted that not all comedy works in the same way; it is largely constructed according to its intended function. Therefore, there is a necessary discussion to be had about the ways in which humour is being used in this context to broach discourses around gender and the portrayals of it in this series. Perez (2013: 484) states that "humour such as irony allows a 'reduced personal responsibility' by creating distance and detachment between the author and what is said. This is particularly important for performers when using racist and sexist discourse."

The series examined in this chapter, as a joke series, uses comedy to relay its messages. Based on stereotypes and other relatable community norms, it constructs a humorous

reflection of the South African Indian Muslim community. Because Ramadan is a special time in the Islamic calendar, it is a time in which is marked by certain novelty events within the community. It is tradition for radio serials to play out on Radio Islam during this period, as a form of entertainment. This particular broadcast series therefore falls into a vein of tradition at the station.

South African Indian Muslim women and Ramadan

Before a more focused discussion on masculinity, this chapter will examine gender roles in Ramadan. Mukaddam (2016: 52) found that members of the South African Indian Muslim community maintain specific gender roles which come with certain responsibilities, and that the community is therefore ideally constituted of "a hetero-normative gendered society." She found that many respondents "expressed views that clung to the idea of a gendered society socialised within a Muslim cultural and religious context" (2016: 52).

Looking at the way that Ramadan is observed in the South African Indian Muslim community provides a strong insight into the way that gender roles are constructed and retained. A Pew Research Centre (2016) report found that in 28 countries – mostly places with Muslim majorities or large Muslim populations – men report greater weekly attendance at mosques than women. While on the surface it may appear that a result like this means that Muslim men are more religious than women are, it does not consider the fact that patriarchal constraints make it difficult for women to be a part of mosque spaces in many societies (discussed in previous chapters, as well as further in this chapter). Men and women remain on different footing due to the assumed responsibilities placed on women, and this gives men far more freedom in terms of time and access when it comes to practising their religion.

When it comes to the way that Ramadan is observed in the South African Indian Muslim community, there are usually specific gender roles attached to certain practices. In the podcast series, for example, there is constant reference to women cooking, cleaning, child-minding, and generally being attached and tied to activities in the home. This ties into much of the discussion in the previous two chapters around what the perceived ideal role of women in the community is supposed to be. That this role to be even further emphasised during Ramadan is not a phenomenon unique to South Africa. Asfour (2014) writes of her experiences in the United Arab Emirates:

> Ramadan is a particularly taxing time for women, not only for the time-consuming labour women have to put in producing meals on an empty stomach and deciding what to cook each day, but they sometimes have to do so while tending to children who are too young to fast or holding a full-time job or both. Many daily chores from the ironing and tidying up to planning the next day's meals, kids' activities and office meetings extend into the small hours of the morning leaving little time for worship and even less time for sleep.

In a month of fasting, which requires abstinence from food and drink during daylight hours, there is ironically a disproportionate amount of expectation placed on women to fulfil responsibilities attached to meal preparation for the sunset and pre-dawn meals undertaken during Ramadan. This is despite the fact that there is no religious obligation for this to be the case – from a religious perspective, men and women have equal expectations placed upon them when it comes to what should be fulfilled and done in this month (Yasin 2011).

> Fasting is just as tiring for women as it is for men, but there is no chance of down-time. Women are expected to produce *iftaar* [post-sunset] and *suhoor* [pre-dawn] meals – often of several dishes to make sure everyone gets their favourite – and keep the household running. And what of the spiritual focus that is the underpinning of the month of fasting. Women have precious little time for that either, resorting to listening to recordings while on the go, or snatching a few minutes of prayer (Janmohamed 2015).

In South African Muslim media, including Radio Islam, there is a limitation on what women are perceived to be able do, or the way they in which they are viewed and their capabilities measured up. They are seen as caretakers or wives or mothers, and rarely regarded as individuals. When not spoken about in their proximity to men, Muslim women remain continually represented as though they are only capable of writing/talking about subjects such as samoosas, marriage, cooking and baking, and childcare. This has become a naturalised narrative, which means that going about things differently or in an unexpected way is often considered deviant. As shown throughout this dissertation, the references to women contained in South African Indian Muslim community media such as Radio Islam relate to (for example): the kitchen, conflict between mothers- and daughters-in-law, women looking for spouses, and mothering. There is often a refusal to see women as something in themselves.

This podcast series proves this point, with two episodes (episodes seven and 18) speaking directly to this. In these two episodes, women are central and play the main roles, providing the bulk of the speaking and voice-overs.

Episode seven is entitled *'When mothers, wives, and sisters are deep in thought in Ramadan'.* It starts off with a man asking a woman why she is so deep in thought, and commenting that "Ramadan is easy-peasy man." Ramadan is a time of deep contemplation and spiritual reflection, and this could serve as an ideal answer on the woman's part – however, instead, a voiceover reveals what is going on in her head: She is unsure about what food to prepare for the different members of her family to eat for *sehri* and *iftaar* and deeply conflicted about all the options, and uncertain about how to decide what to cook. As mentioned above, this entire series was conceptualised by a male presenter. This episode reveals what men perceive women to be occupied with throughout the day: their domestic duties and responsibilities, even when it is the holiest time of the Islamic year. This is arguably also ironic, given the way that (as discussed in the previous chapters) women are perceived to be closer to God due to their ties to the domestic space. As discussed in the previous chapter, there is an idea that because women are inherently naturally spiritual, they should be preoccupied with domestic duties.

In episode 18 of the series, *Mother in law vs modern-day daughter in law iftaar saga*, a mother-in-law laments the way that her daughter-in-law does not assist her in the kitchen. *"*Ey, these daughter- in-laws of today. They sit on their phones, they don't help us set up, and then two minutes before iftaar, 'can I help you?' How about no! Why you don't come earlier?" she complains. When the daughter-in-law does come into the kitchen, she tells her mother-in-law that she was "just busy on Instagram" before proceeding to put drinking glasses on the table for *iftaar*. Her father-in-law notices her doing so and comments that she is working so hard, which agitates the mother-in-law (*"*typical. We do all the work, they don't say nothing. But no, his daughter in law…"). This reveals how these kinds of petty attitudes and conflicts are viewed as commonplace and humorous. There is little interrogation of why there is such fascination with such trivial matters; because of the assumption that it is reminiscent of situations which occur in many households, it is presumed that there is nothing problematic

about this kind of discourse. The same discourses also appear in the episode discussed above, that highlight women's ties to the home and specifically the kitchen.

Further, it is interesting to consider the discourses attached to the name of the episode. 'Mother-in-law vs modern-day daughter-in-law' plays on the ideas that the mother- and daughter-in-law come from different eras; the 'modern-day' daughter-in-law is described as too preoccupied with social media to care too much for domestic responsibilities. She is made to sound as though she is slightly scatter-brained and lazy because she has not been helping her mother-in-law in the kitchen. The mother-in-law, on the other hand, sounds resentful about the fact that she has no choice but to tend to these domestic duties as it is her role and duty. She receives very little assistance because of how it is assumed that the responsibilities fall on her, because she is the matriarch of the home. As the older woman, she has no choice but to tend to the home. The younger woman may have more freedom, which may cause the older woman to also resent that about her, but she is also expected to assist. When she does assist, she receives praise and recognition from the patriarch in the house, whereas the older woman receives no praise or recognition because it is presumed to be her duty.

Muslim women are faced with pressure in every day of their lives to create conditions in the home which are favourable to all of those living in it. During Ramadan, the pressure to fulfil this role with ease while at the same time fulfilling her own religious obligations is increased. Asfour (2014) reiterates this point; "the pressure to 'do it all' that weighs so heavily on women today – to manage the home, nurture the children, mop the brow of husband, to look gorgeous and somehow squeeze in a bit of 'me' time for their own pursuits – is heightened during Ramadan."

As Thompson and Walker (1989: 850) state, "work, paid and unpaid, is central to family life." That said, little consideration is given to women and little value placed on their contributions to maintaining the home and home life, due to the way that it is assumed to be their responsibility. Their labour is seldom recognised; "because men retain responsibility and recognition for family provision, families often give special consideration and support to men, but not to women" (Thompson and Walker 1989: 850). In relation to Ramadan specifically, Yasin (2011) emphasises: "it is pertinent to think about some of the issues faced by Muslim women in relation to Ramadan. My mother is a great example of this. She was saddled with

the double burden of strengthening her relationship with God and tending to a house full of really hungry people."

The series also makes a play on the stereotype of the long-suffering yet nagging wife, who constantly disturbs and hinders her husband. In episode two – *Wife plan backfires* – for example, a wife hears a *moulana* on the radio urging husbands not to take their wives for granted. She rushes to urge her husband to come and listen to what the *moulana* is saying, telling him, "you know how important it is to listen to what our Ulama says." Begrudgingly, the husband comes to listen, but not after commenting: "I'm sitting and relaxing on the couch. [under breath] This women of today. I don't know what do they want. Just to sit down and relax whatever, they just see our face and they already going on with us." He soon forgets his annoyance though when he hears the content being said aloud on air.

> On the flipside of the coin, my dear wives, why do you trouble your husbands when they're relaxing on the couch? Why do you find the need to nag them constantly? Why you always trying to point out their faults? It is time my dear sisters that you start respecting your husbands.

The husband is happy to hear what the *moulana* is saying, and comments, "Well said, *moulana*. Well said." To his wife, he says "*Jazakallah* (may God reward you) for calling me", to which the despondent wife responds, "ey, there's no winning here in this house."

This kind of sketch fuels the trope of the nagging wife, also discussed in the previous chapter – this stereotype of the wife who needs to be kept under control by her husband, and again also that marital strife is inherent in femininity and that women will always pick fights. It also amplifies the narrative of the Ulama taking on often patriarchal stance, speaking down to women and telling them to respect their husbands.

This kind of trope is evident again in episode four, *The over-chirpy talkative wife who purposely annoys her man for laughs.* In this episode, a perky wife is cheerily chatting to her husband at *sehri,* much to his annoyance. He even tells her that she is annoying him, and when she tells him to "rise and shine", he responds, "the only thing rising is the pitch of your voice." This serves to paint the ideal scenario as being one in which the wife serves her husband, and does not then communicate with him until *iftaar* time (i.e. when fast is broken) so as not to annoy him (because it is implied that that is the function of her chirpiness).

The subtext implied here is also that fasting is harder for men, because they need to go out and work while the wife gets to remain in the home all day; this kind of thinking also detracts from valuing the labour that goes into maintaining the home, cooking and cleaning while fasting.

There also exists a stereotype that women are prone to gossip; Islamic advice portal Islamweb (2017) states that "many women are in the habit of backbiting and tale bearing, and this is worse when done during this blessed month." As discussed in the previous chapters, part of the reason that this stereotype exists in reference to South African Indian Muslim women is due to the assumption that because women in this context and community do not work or are not educated, and remain confined to the home space, their primary pastime is gossip. There is the assumption that because men are working and preoccupied, they do not have the time for such trivial matters – instead, frivolous activities such as gossip are only applicable to women. The enforced separation of the Muslim woman from public space gives rise to these negative perceptions of her – that she has nothing better to do than nag, cook, or gossip, and this in turn amplifies the undervaluing of the domestic and care work that she undertakes every day (Thompson and Walker 1989).

Discourse around Muslim women, and especially Muslim women during the month of Ramadan, revolves around them being tied to the home in every sense, and playing a supporting role in the lives of Muslim men. Muslim media spaces in South Africa are complicit in normalising this narrative, and this narrative further allows for men in the South African Indian Muslim community to be posited as superior to the women in the community.

South African Indian Muslim men and Ramadan

The role-play in the series explores and exhibits everyday situations during Ramadan. It shows Muslim men in different spaces: in the home, at work, at the mosque, and carrying out mundane tasks in everyday life such as replying to text messages and doing last-minute grocery shopping. In some instances, it also plays on hegemonic stereotypes of men, such as a love of cars.

With women bearing the responsibility of the caretaking in almost every sense – "many people find it difficult to wake up for prayers during Ramadan due to sleeping late at night,

thus it is the woman's duty to assist her husband and encourage him to perform the prayers and other virtuous deeds" (Islamweb 2017) – men are freed up to focus on other aspects of the month of Ramadan. Therefore, they have nothing holding them back from making the most of their participation in religious activities during the holy month, and by virtue of the fact that they are given more space and time to engage in religious activity, they come across as morally superior (Pew Research Centre 2016). Asfour (2014) notes that sources offering advice to women on how best to manage their time and responsibilities during Ramadan are plentiful, yet "none offer instructions on how men could lend a helping hand."Episodes 8, 11, 14, 17, and 20 are set in a mosque. Each episode deals with different goings-on that relate to the mosque space, but it is important to note that it is only men who are spoken of in this space, which shows that it is viewed as a natural and normal space for men to be in, while not being as accommodating to women. It is also interesting to note what kind of attitudes men have towards being in this space; that they take their access for granted and sometimes appear in the mosque only out of expectation of the family and broader community.

For example, in episode 8, *How many rakaats left?,* a man continually asks the question – "how many *rakaats* left?" Ultimately, he is admonished by another man who says to him, "can you people stop counting the *rakaats* and concentrate on the *salaah*." In episode 11, When people don't want to give money to the *masjid*, a man on behalf of the mosque urges mosque-goers to contribute money to the maintenance of the *masjid*– "Masjid collection, masjid collection, open your hearts, open your wallets, and let it pour out, for the pleasure of Allah." A child at the mosque urges his father to contribute: "Daddy can we give some money? Please daddy? Please?" The father, reluctant to contribute, tells the child, "No son, this organisation got lots of money. No need to give them. They can build another three *masjids* with what they have," to which the child responds, "yes but daddy you come early and use the toilet and make *wudhu*" – reminding the father that he makes use of the mosque's facilities. After reluctantly then donating, the father tells his child, "tomorrow you can read at home with your mummy."

These excerpts highlight that while Ramadan is a time of increased prayer and worship, all the references to mosque-going and Eid prayers in the series tie-in with the experiences of men only. This may be due to the way that it is still largely considered taboo for women in the South African Indian Muslim community to go to the mosque (Surtee 2011, Sanglay 2014). As

Jeenah (2001) has written, there is a struggle amongst many Muslim women to attain gender justice, especially in respect to this area of life. Even when women do gain access to mosque spaces, however, they still face much opposition and hostility; “discussion on Muslim women’s exclusion from sacred space must necessarily begin with the mosque, her absence therefrom, marginalisation therein and her muted voice even when granted access” (Ismail 2002: 1).

It must also be made clear that, this is more of a struggle faced by Muslim women in the South African Indian Muslim community that is aligned with the Jamiatul Ulama and their interpretations of Islam. This affects those who are largely concentrated in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, and not so much Muslim women in the Cape, who experience more equality in all facets of their practcse of Islam (Ismail 2002). As Mandivenga notes, “the Indian Muslim women, although held in esteem, are subjected to social segregation, unlike their counterparts in the Cape who are socially treated as equals of men” (2000: 350).

Women in the South African Indian Muslim community are encouraged to conduct their prayers within the confines of the home, yet the mosque is still seen as a space of gathering for Muslims in the community. Hopkins (2009: 10) poses the question, “what emotional experiences and spaces are associated with exclusion or marginalisation from particular religious spaces or groups?” An answer to Hopkins’ question, with reference to this situation especially, is that a subconscious message gets relayed that women should be excluded from a crucial element of community life; the mosque is a space with which women do not need to concern themselves, as they should trust that men will make decisions related to them on their behalf. Ismail (2002: 1) states why this exclusion has such dire consequences for the women of the South African Indian Muslim community:

> the Mosque is the spiritual hub and heart of the community, the place of learning, the place where important social, political, economic and religious matters are discussed; in short, it is the place that moulds and directs a community. This sacred space and access to it therefore has a bearing on an individual’s experience of her religion and the extent to which she is involved in its public realm.

This exclusion of Muslim women from the mosque space is justified by certain patriarchal interpretations of Islamic texts; the fact that Muslim women in the Cape, and women in other Muslim communities all over the world, have access to a mosque space without contestation is testament that it is not a specifically-prescribed law in Islamic text. There are also other Muslim communities around the world who enforce the notion that women should not be included in the mosque space. According to Leila Ahmed (1982: 66), "Muslim women frequently insist... that Islam is not sexist, they hear and read in its sacred text, justly and legitimately, a different message from that heard by the makers and enforcers of orthodox, androcentric Islam."

Therefore, the exchanges in the series highlight how men take for granted the privilege afforded to them to freely be in the mosque space; a privilege which they hold only due to being male. It also demonstrates that even further, men are then afforded the choice to reject this privilege, should they choose to. These scenes also function as a means to lecture men who do not take their privilege of access to the mosque space seriously.

And while it has been noted by Glock and Stark (1965) that there is no way to quantify an individual's religiosity, Loewenthal et al (2001: 10) found the following:

> Among Jews and Muslims, there were marked differences between women and men, in keeping with observations about the roles of women and men in traditions. These differences are also consistent with the view that men's prescribed religious activities in traditional religion are more prestigious, and thus more likely to be engaged in.

Qamar (2016) reaffirms: Islam is extremely gendered, and it is in religious spaces such as mosques where the brunt of the effects of patriarchy are borne. "These are the same masculine men who are taught to take control of the entire community – the sermons, the large halls, the leaders of the mosque, the finances; yet the masculine men who supposedly can't control when to leave a woman alone."

Despite women's daily labour when it comes to keeping the home, men remain viewed as the providers for and therefore owners of the home. As Ali (2011: xvi) highlights (an ideal), "in contrast to 'Western women [who] are the most unhappy creatures on earth', Muslim women are protected by breadwinning husbands who provide adequately and consistently for their

dependents, a category that includes wives and children. A Muslim husband is the ultimate authority within his home."

Men are seen as hardworking and important, due to the role that they play in providing financially for the family. This financial control affords them a sense of power, and they may view this as a reason to be exempt from any responsibilities tied in to the day-to-day running of the home. This is demonstrated in episode ten, *How mothers feel in the school holidays*. After telling her husband that she is so happy to see him, a wife pleads with him to take their children from her for a bit. "The whole day I have to deal with them. You can spend this little while with them. It's the least you can do," she says to him. "But I've come from a hard day's work," he replies. "And you putting all [of this] on me. I understand its Ramadan. But surely, think about me." The men are shown to respond poorly to these kinds of situations, where they are asked to help out to carry out tasks that their wives usually would. In episode one, *Parking lot madness,* a man mutters to himself: "ey, this last-minute shopping. Why can't the *vrou* [Afrikaans word for wife] speak earlier?"

These incidents in the series highlight that men outright reject what they consider 'female' duties, which they excuse with the argument that they are tired due to having been at work; a narrative that the show seems to endorse, by employing a sympathetic angle when it comes to men (man: "[sighing] ah, what a hard day's work. I can't wait to relax on the couch"). It demonstrates that there is a clear demarcation between what constitute men's and women's duties, and the ways in which men are unwilling for those lines to be blurred. It also demonstrates how there is little room for negotiation on the wife's part when it comes to these kinds of situations, due to the power dynamics at play; "many of the qualities that women display in marital conversation and conflict are traceable to their subordinate position. Subordinates must be more sensitive and responsive to those in power than the reverse" (Thompson and Walker 1989: 849).

In terms of their interactions with one another, the men in the series are also shown to be very competitive with one another. This construction links to Connell's (2001) findings on competitive and aggressive nature being a defining characteristic of hegemonic masculinity. In this sense, it demonstrates that this feature is not unique to the men in this community, but rather one that aligns with the ways in which men are continually shown to be in pursuit of maintaining the 'power' in any given situation. The aggressive machismo that they

demonstrate in their interactions with one another is a means of trying to assert their power. This also links to the origins of the ideologies which are behind the running of Radio Islam, and the history of the station itself; the ways in which ideological body the JU aggressively maintains and asserts male power.

In *Parking lot madness,* for example, two men fight over a parking spot, and it quickly becomes physical: "I was here first, you had to go be *voor* [slang term, Afrikaans word meaning 'forward']. You must sort my car out. You must fix it up," says the first man, whose car gets hit by another man. "The only thing I'm gonna sort out is your face," replies the second man, before a fistfight ensues between the two. In episode 14, *Masjid chairmen mafia,* an interesting insight is given into the hierarchies of the men who frequent a certain mosque. A man hurts his knee while playing sport, and therefore decides that he would like to sit while praying at the mosque. But upon pulling a chair out, he soon learns what kind of hierarchy is in place.

> Man 2: Excuse me young man, what are you doing?Man 1: Uh, I'm taking the chair.
> Man 2: You can't just take a chair, you have to earn a spot in this space. We are the chairmen mafia.
> Man 3: I hurt my ankle seven years ago. *Bhai gora* only now allowed me to take a chair.
> Man 4: I hurt my back six months ago. I'm still on the waiting list. Don *Bhai gora* hasn't approved my application.
> Man 1: I'm in pain now. I'm going to sit now.
> Man 2: Guys, hold me back...before I pull this chair.
> Man 1: Okay, never mind. I'll sit here on the floor. I earned my spot.
> Man 2: Nothing goes without me giving final say, okay?
> Man 1: What's wrong with these *ous* [guys], man?
> Man 3: Ay, heavy *ous* man.

These kinds of caricatures show how men are competitive with each other in order to maintain a power role in any given situation. While within the home, they can clearly and unquestionably assume their power role, in the 'real world' and in interactions with other men, they have to compete for it. This gets relayed through the comedy; while using humour to mock the almost ridiculous aspects of the situations, it is also functioning as a reflexive tool here. It offers a criticism of this 'hierarchy' of men and how absurd their behaviour is; this is made clear by the use of the term 'mafia' to describe the men in the skit.

In another exchange in episode 15, *When you use slang at the wrong time,* a man gets upset when another man refers to him as "larney." When he voices this, the first man says "*Maaf* [sorry, excuse me] boss", to which the man replies, *"*you don't work for me, so I'm not your

boss, boss." In an attempt to diffuse the situation, the first man says that the second should "chow at *sehri* time," (eat more at the pre-dawn meal; he is suggesting that the man is snapping at him because he is in a hunger-induced bad mood) to which the second man coolly responds "I eat." This feeds into the points above, about the how it appears that within their interactions with one another, men have to constantly compete with each other to have the upper-hand. It is interesting to consider the use of the word "boss" in this interaction; it is used ironically, and in more of a mocking tone than a serious one. The slang and lexical choices in this context also highlight the reflexive nature of this skit; it highlights and pokes fun at the quick reactions that people have during Ramadan, due to being hungry.

In the final episode, *Eid day show-off,* two men discuss a fellow mosque-goer, Ebrahim, whom they term a "show-off." "I wonder what he's gonna tell us about now. I bet it's gonna be his *Eid* takkies," says the first man. "Either that or his watch or his phone or his car or everything he did the last time. Oh, here's he coming," says the second man. The man, Ebrahim, proceeds to show off his limited-edition Puma shoes, imported from the United Kingdom. The way that the men talk about Ebrahim, and the way that Ebrahim shows off his shoes, reveal the way that power in this context is attached to material things. Ebrahim is smug, due to the power that he commands by having his limited-edition expensive shoes; in this way, his wealth functions as the accorder of a higher status for him.

This is once again also a reflexive text – it showcases an element of masculinity in the community which is tied to economic status, and the way that it influences interactions amongst men in the community.

Chapter conclusion

The series shows once again that the type of masculinity that is the focus of this study lends itself to multiple simultaneous negotiations; that it is not only exhibiting a performance of masculinity as a gender role, but one that is also influenced by factors such as race, religion, and national identity.

Looking at the way that Ramadan is observed in the South African Indian Muslim community provides a strong insight into the way that gender roles are constructed and retained. Findings like this reveal inequality at the root of the construction of both femininity and masculinity in the Muslim community, which can be traced back to the fact that both are creations

determined by patriarchy. The texts analysed in this chapter demonstrate the way that men and women have their respective spaces. It also offers specific insight into the way that men remain competitive with each other to maintain a dominant role within particular contexts.

It must be noted once again that the series in question, Radio Islam's *This could have been* us, was designed as a comedy text. According to Mintz (1985: 80), comedy "confronts just about all of the profoundly important aspects of our culture and our society, and that it seems to have an important role allowing for expression of shared beliefs and behaviour, changing social roles and expectations." If this is the case, however, then it can be said that there is room within comedy to change normative narratives and use it as a tool for change, as opposed to sticking with tired sexist tropes and thus inadvertently lending support to them. By using a reflexive approach in some of the texts in this series, Radio Islam acknowledges some of the discriminatory discourses which exist within the community. They can therefore use their platform to ensure that change can come of this.

As Asfour (2014) puts it,

> Ramadan is also the time for spiritual reflection and self-examination. Having said that, might not Ramadan be the opportunity for members of the fasting community to pause, reflect, assess and re-evaluate the unrealistic expectations placed on women and the breaking free of the shackles of primitive stereotyping and gender inequality?

Gender roles within the Muslim community during Ramadan remain clearly defined, and certain rituals which only take place during Ramadan have strong gender roles attached to them, despite no religious requirement for this to be the case. That said, these polarised roles are beginning to be problematised and challenged in some spaces, which may pave the way for traditional understandings of femininity and masculinity to be rethought.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

Jeenah (2001: 116) identified a "need for Islamic feminists to locate themselves within the community which they claim to work with and for." This is what I have tried to do with this project. The aim of this dissertation was to examine the ways in which masculinity in the South African Indian Muslim community is constructed in some texts disseminated via South African media platform, Radio Islam. It provided a descriptive rather than prescriptive account of masculinity, as constructed by Radio Islam. It also clarified that Radio Islam is a medium through which discourses from the Jamiatul Ulama are disseminated.

Examination of the texts in each of the chapters revealed common upliftment of men and confinement of women in the South African Indian Muslim community to certain roles and spaces only. It also highlighted how, in Ali's (2011: xiv) words, "those who have appointed themselves the guardians of communal orthodoxy are particularly vigilant on matters concerned with women and gender."

Each of the thematic chapters covered specific elements of South African Indian Muslim life. In the chapter on *hijab*, discussion focused on the responsibilities of men and women when it comes to observing a religious practice outlined by principles of modesty. In the chapter on marriage, discussion focused around the mutual rights that husbands and wives have over one another in a heteronormative marriage, which is the only type of marriage that is accepted in Islam. In the chapter on Ramadan, the comedic texts examined provided insight into daily life amongst families during the Islamic holy month. As Thompson and Walker (1989: 846) highlight, "gender in families includes structural constraints and opportunities, beliefs and ideology, actual arrangements and activities, meanings and experiences, diversity and change, and interaction."

Looking at the interactions and doing closer reading of the texts in each of the sections provided insight into the way that the ideal masculine role remains constructed on Radio Islam. It is important to understand the contexts within which the text is produced and operates in; Hopkins (2009: 4) reiterates that "masculinities are developed in specific institutional contexts in relation to and against each other."

Each of the chapters highlighted the clear division between spaces that women should access; the narrative that women belong in the home remains strong. In the chapter discussing *hijab*,

men are perceived to always be at the mercy of female sexuality. In response to this, and in order to maintain a power dynamic, men are shown to have twisted certain religious rulings in order to make the case for why women need to be confined to the home space and hidden from society. This is the only means through which men can keep women under control because of the threat that they pose due to their sexuality, and letting them loose would upend moral society.

In the chapter discussing marriage, men remain posited as the superior party in a marriage due to their economic responsibility and the way that they are the providers for women – this translates into other forms of power and control. Looking at the way that Ramadan is observed in the South African Indian Muslim community reinforces this point.

Fatima Meer writes (1972: 39), "to preserve family tone [the mother] had to keep constant watch over her daughters, since it was they who threatened it. Theoretically, they could not go astray, since they were protected within the home and shielded from outside influences." Despite this having been over 40 years ago, it remains a dominant narrative, as disseminated via Radio Islam. This gives rise to the way that masculinity then gets constructed in polarity to this confinement of women; as Hopkins (2009: 4) articulates,

> Construction of masculinity is also bolstered by the young men's use of religious discourses in order to justify the association of Muslim women with the spaces of the home, and the greater spatial freedom afforded to the young men compared with their female counterparts … gender relations are constructed in relation to and against each other, rather than in isolation.

The discussions in all seven chapters also highlighted how, in line with patriarchal ideals, men remain posited as superior to women within this context in a multitude of ways which are linked to each other, namely: intellectually, morally, and economically. While women are portrayed as temptresses – one of the main motivations for keeping them confined to the home space, where they belong due to being 'naturally' and automatic homemakers – men are posited as resistant, despite constantly being at the mercy of female sexuality, and therefore morally superior. Further, due to their access to more public religious spaces (such as the mosque), men are perceived to be more religious than women (Pew Research Centre 2016). This links to the ways that men are perceived to be intellectually superior to women, as though they have a greater understanding of not only religious texts but also of the world,

which translates to them going out and working. That men are seen as gatekeepers of knowledge accounts for the patriarchal readings and interpretations of the texts upon which they base their rules for women.

As each of the chapters highlights, the fact that men occupy the role of the breadwinner within the home accords them economic power and control within the home (as discussed in the *hijab* chapter, for a woman to work is often considered to emasculate to her husband). This translates into other forms of power that men are able to wield over their wives. Based on the texts that are disseminated on Radio Islam (as well as the manner in which they are disseminated), it is implied that deviation from the norms and ideals constitutes a religious infraction. Thompson and Walker (1989: 850) further highlight, "broader culture offers husbands excuses and justifications for their violence[7]."

These representations have significant real-life consequences for Muslim society as a whole; they are not as simplistic as 'women are represented badly and men are represented well'. Rather, a consequence of this representation is that there are different forms of citizenship imagined for men and for women, although I do not discuss this in this study. Future researchers who may be thinking about the consequences of this representation, may want to build on this work.

This dissertation began with a tweet from American activist Namira Islam (@namirari): "reminder: toxic masculinity (masculine gender role = violent, unemotional, sexually aggressive) is not the masculinity of the Prophet [Muhammed]." Muslims are taught to follow the example of the Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him), who was the messenger of God. @namirari's statement urged one to consider how much of the enactment of masculinity in the South African Indian Muslim community aligns with the prophetic example. According to Esack (1999: 117), there is still a long way to go in terms of this:

> We can no longer escape the truth of gender oppression by referring to the West on one hand and Islam on the other … what is the point of comparing Western practice with the prophetic society except to delude us into a false sense of moral superiority? We know that the Prophet Muhammed washed and stitched his own clothes and that he shared cooking chores with his

[7] It is important to consider violence in this context not only in a physical sense, but also ideological, particularly in terms of the way that it links to wielding of power.

> wife … how much of prophetic practice do our males adopt – how many of us can even fry an egg?

This makes the case for how Muslim men within the South African Indian Muslim community as well as ideological bodies such as the Jamiatul Ulama need to revisit the example of the Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) when it comes to enacting masculinity. The Jamiatul Ulama needs to account for the ways that it constructs ideal gender roles and disseminates them via channels such as Radio Islam; besides the findings in this research, Mukaddam (2016: 37) also finds that "it is clear from their own discourse, that the men [aged] 35+ and the representative from the Jamiat support a patriarchal system." Radio Islam's dissemination of this type of masculinity has a continued negative effect on South African Indian Muslim women, and Radio Islam has a responsibility to account for this.

Going forward however, there are means to remedy this. Using the data this study has provided can provide a starting point. There needs to be a revisiting of the texts upon which some oppressive gender 'laws' are based, and their intentions should be subject to greater questioning. This could be a means of unreading patriarchal interpretations (Barlas 2002). In turn, this could influence the way that texts on Radio Islam are both produced and disseminated, due to their ideological reliance on the Jamiatul Ulama (Murkens 2009). In the long-term, an ideological transformation of the Jamiatul Ulama, which takes into consideration not only the changes that accompany modern living but also the timelessness of Islamic texts such as the Quran, *hadith,* and *sunnah*, will yield greater prospects for gender equity and respect within the South African Indian Muslim community.

In 2005, Vahed and Jeppie (2005: 272) write that "though clearly elements among Muslims are willing to challenge the authority of traditional Ulama, the birth of the 'new' Muslim woman and the end of patriarchal ideology are not in immediate sight." Over ten years later, some parts of this statement remain true. It also, however, provides a starting point for changes to take place; there is much room for this to occur, and now is as opportune a time as ever. In the context of current global conversations around patriarchy and harassment, particularly mobilised by the #MeToo movement in late 2017, discourse around patriarchy and masculinity remains more pertinent than ever. Women's oppression can only actively be challenged once women can identify the issues that they need to stand up against, and the role that men play in upholding a status quo that oppresses women. As Moosa (1998: 205)

reminds us, “Muslim women, as an integral part of Muslim society, should not underestimate the importance of their role in the achievement of gender equality.”

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APPENDIX

Hijab

Concept Of Hijab By Ml Ravat – Episode 2

http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/67-special-feature/hijaab-focus/4304-concept-of-hijab-by-ml-ravat-discussion-02.html

Concept Of Hijab By Ml Ravat – Episode 2

http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/67-special-feature/hijaab-focus/4304-concept-of-hijab-by-ml-ravat-discussion-02.html

Concept Of Hijab By Ml Ravat – Episode 3

http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/67-special-feature/hijaab-focus/4305-concept-of-hijab-by-ml-ravat-discussion-03.html

Concept Of Hijab By Ml Ravat – Episode 4

http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/67-special-feature/hijaab-focus/4306-concept-of-hijab-by-ml-ravat-discussion-04.html

Concept Of Hijab By Ml Ravat – Episode 5

http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/67-special-feature/hijaab-focus/4309-concept-of-hijab-by-ml-ravat-discussion-05.html

Concept Of Hijab By Ml Ravat – Episode 6

http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/67-special-feature/hijaab-focus/4311-concept-of-hijab-by-ml-ravat-discussion-06.html

Concept Of Hijab By Ml Ravat – Episode 7

http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/67-special-feature/hijaab-focus/4316-concept-of-hijab-by-ml-ravat-discussion-07.html

Concept Of Hijab By Ml Ravat – Episode 8
http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/67-special-feature/hijaab-focus/4317-concept-of-hijab-by-ml-ravat-discussion-08.html

Concept Of Hijab By Ml Ravat – Episode 9
http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/67-special-feature/hijaab-focus/4321-concept-of-hijab-by-ml-ravat-discussion-09.html

Concept Of Hijab By Ml Ravat – Episode 10
http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/67-special-feature/hijaab-focus/4313-concept-of-hijab-by-ml-ravat-discussion-10-17-reasons-to-don-hijab.html

Concept Of Hijab By Ml Ravat – Episode 11
http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/67-special-feature/hijaab-focus/4323-concept-of-hijab-by-ml-ravat-discussion-11.html

Concept Of Hijab By Ml Ravat – Episode 12
http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/67-special-feature/hijaab-focus/4297-concept-of-hijab-by-ml-ravat-discussion-12.html

Concept Of Hijab By Ml Ravat – Episode 13
http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/67-special-feature/hijaab-focus/4296-concept-of-hijab-by-ml-ravat-discussion-13.html

Concept of Hijab By Ml Ravat – Episode 14
http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/67-special-feature/hijaab-focus/4325-concept-of-hijab-by-ml-ravat-discussion-14.html

Marriage

Mutual Rights Episode 1 – Ml Habib and Ml Junaid
http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/42-marriage-is-in-the-air/13538-mutual-rights-part-1-ml-habib-ml-junaid-16-08-2014.html

Mutual Rights Episode 2 – Ml Habib and Ml Junaid
http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/42-marriage-is-in-the-air/13539-mutual-rights-part-2-ml-habib-ml-junaid-23-08-2014.html

Mutual Rights Episode 3 – Ml Habib and Ml Junaid
http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/42-marriage-is-in-the-air/13696-mutual-rights-part-3-ml-habib-ml-junaid-30-08-2014.html

Mutual Rights Episode 4 – Ml Habib and Ml Junaid
http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/42-marriage-is-in-the-air/13697-mutual-rights-part-4-ml-habib-ml-junaid-06-09-2014.html

Mutual Rights Part 5 – Ml Habib and Ml Junaid
http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/42-marriage-is-in-the-air/13808-mutual-rights-part-5-ml-habib-ml-junaid-20-09-2014.html

Ramadan

Episode 1 – This could have been us: Parking lot madness
http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/89-ejaz-khan/18492-this-could-ve-been-us-parking-lot-madness.html

Episode 2 – This could have been us: Wife plan backfires
http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/89-ejaz-khan/18518-this-could-ve-been-us-wife-plan-backfires.html

Episode 3 – This could have been us: Closeness of a man and his partner through life's journey #PlotTwist
http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/89-ejaz-khan/18538-this-couldve-been-us-closeness-of-a-man-and-his-partner-through-life-s-journey-plottwist.html

Episode 4 – This could have been us: The over chirpy talkative wife who purposely annoys her man for laughs
http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/89-ejaz-khan/18575-this-could-ve-been-us-the-over-chirpy-talkative-sehri-wife-who-purposely-annoys-her-man-for-laughs.html

Episode 5 – This could have been us: Those kebabs who send food pictures

http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/89-ejaz-khan/18632-this-could-ve-been-us-those-kebabs-who-send-food-pictures.html

Episode 6 – This could have been us: Ml Kara and Zuma do iftaar time countdown

http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/89-ejaz-khan/18633-this-could-ve-been-us-ml-kara-and-zuma-do-iftaar-time-countdown.html

Episode 7 – This could have been us: When mothers wives and sisters are deep in thought in Ramadan

http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/89-ejaz-khan/18651-this-could-ve-been-us-when-mothers-wives-sisters-are-deep-in-thought-in-ramadaan.html

Episode 8 – This could have been us: How many rakaats left?

http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/89-ejaz-khan/18685-this-could-ve-been-us-how-many-rakaats-left-scenario-submitted-by-listener-nazeer-karolia.html

Episode 9 – This could have been us: Where's your toppee?

http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/89-ejaz-khan/18686-this-could-ve-been-us-where-s-your-toppee-based-on-a-true-story-punchbhaya-family.html

Episode 10 – This could have been us: How mothers feel in the school holidays

http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/89-ejaz-khan/18718-this-could-ve-been-us-how-mothers-feel-in-the-school-holidays.html

Episode 11 – This could have been us: When people don't want to give money to the masjid

http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/89-ejaz-khan/18737-this-could-ve-been-us-when-people-don-t-want-to-give-money-to-the-masjid.html

Episode 12 – This could have been us: Ml Kara and Julius Malema talk giving charity in Ramadan

http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/89-ejaz-khan/18754-title-this-could-ve-been-us-ml-kara-and-julius-malema-talk-giving-charity-in-ramadaan.html

Episode 13 – This could have been us: When they don't want to wake up early for Sehri

http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/89-ejaz-khan/18772-this-could-ve-been-us-when-they-don-t-want-to-wake-up-early-for-sehri.html

Episode 14 – This could have been us: Masjid chairmen mafia

http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/89-ejaz-khan/18792-this-could-ve-been-us-masjid-chairmen-mafia.html

Episode 15 – This could have been us: When you use slang at the wrong time

http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/89-ejaz-khan/18820-this-could-ve-been-us-when-you-use-slang-at-the-wrong-time.html

Episode 16 – This could have been us: When kids go to their grannies' place in Ramadan/School holidays

http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/89-ejaz-khan/18837-this-could-ve-been-us-why-kids-go-to-their-grannies-place-in-ramadaan-school-holidays.html

Episode 17 – This could have been us: When some guys take the fitness aspect of Taraweeh a bit too far #TaraweehRobics

http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/89-ejaz-khan/18856-this-could-ve-been-us-when-some-guys-take-the-fitness-aspect-of-taraweeh-a-bit-too-far-taraweehrobics.html

Episode 18 – This could have been us: Mother-in-law vs modern day daughter-in-law Iftaar saga

http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/89-ejaz-khan/18871-this-could-ve-been-us-mother-in-law-vs-modern-day-daughter-in-law-iftaar-saga.html

Episode 19 – This could have been us: The uncle who forces you to take Itr

http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/89-ejaz-khan/18894-this-could-ve-been-us-the-uncle-who-forces-you-to-take-itr.html

Episode 20 – This could have been us: Eid day show-off

http://www.radioislam.org.za/a/index.php/podcast/89-ejaz-khan/18902-this-could-ve-been-us-final-episode-eid-day-show-off-cameo-appearance-by-sid-and-seemi.html