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Mashele, Rixongile

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University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

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PASS LAWS AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION: A READING OF THE 1956 WOMEN'S MARCH AND ITS AFTERMATH

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By

Rixongile Mashele

2201525

Supervised by Dr Ujithra Ponniah

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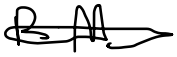
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Acknowledgments

Never ever accept 'Because you are a woman' as a reason for doing or not doing something- Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi

To my mother and father, I would like to thank you for your unconditional love and support throughout this journey. You have always shown support in every-thing I do, and I am so grateful. You have instilled in my siblings and I the importance of education and that is the best gift you could have ever given us. You are truly Godsent, I love you both so dearly.

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I AM MY OWN WILDEST DREAM!!!

Abstract

This thesis historically locates the experiences of 'ordinary' women in the context of restricted urban mobility, poor labour conditions, the disruption of family life and the pass system. Using archives and social reproduction as a conceptual lens, this research establishes that 'ordinary' black women knew what they were protesting for in 1956, that they understood the state's efforts of consciously manipulating the costs of social reproduction, and its direct impact on their daily lives. They also understood that the experiences of men and women under apartheid were not the same. Importantly, these women utilised womanhood to fight against the apartheid state in their attempts of ensuring that African children receive access to resources and privileges equivalent to those of white children.

Introduction

Quite often when it pertains to the political participation of women in South-Africa, it is the lives of prominent black women such as Winnie Mandela that get fore fronted. What about the political participation of 'ordinary' black women in politics who are not as idolised as Winnie Mandela? This thesis is interested in the political participation of marginalised women who were present in the 1956 women's march. It locates women's political participation in the context of the apartheid state squeezing women's social reproduction costs. This thesis will show a historical understanding of how pass laws affected urban mobility, access to housing and labour conditions and including family life. Importantly, it will reveal insights to 'ordinary' black women's political participation.

If one is to look closely and access the lives or roles of these invisible women, a lot can be gathered and learnt about political imagination, and possibilities. This then begs the question, what can be understood about political participation from ordinary black women who participated in the 1956 march? What could the feminist political agenda look like if political experiences of 'ordinary' black women were placed centre stage? This research project will address these questions through focusing on black women's political participation during the 1956 women's march to the union buildings.

On Thursday, the 9th of August 1956, approximately 20 000 South African women of all ages, ethnicities, economic and social class, marched to the union building in opposition to the apartheid

government's amendment of the Urban Areas Act (Miller, 2011). The amendment of the Urban Areas Act meant that African women would be expected to carry passes, have limited movement around urban areas and compulsory medical examinations for all African women residing in towns (Miller, 2011). During the march, women were chanting these words, "Strijdom, *uthinta abafazi, uthinti imbokodo*" which loosely translates to Strijdom, you struck a woman, you struck a rock (FEDSAW, 1956).

This chant, was directed at the then prime minister Johannes Gerhardus Strijdom and his cabinet members, letting them know that oppressing women meant oppressing the entire family unit and that that was unacceptable. What was interesting about this march was not only the large number of participants but also how different types of women were present. We know this because the preamble of the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) charter adopted in 1954 mentions "We, the women of South Africa, wives and mothers, working women and housewives, African, Indians, European and Colored …" (SAHO, 1954). A closer examination of the political agency of each type of women especially the disenfranchised in terms of social and economic class can reveal inequalities within women and what we mean by political participation.

This research project will focus on the political participation of black women during the 1956 women's march in South Africa by addressing the following questions:

- How did the gendered anti-apartheid politics influence the political participation of black women?
- How did pass laws affect the every-day lives of black women?
- How did pass laws ensure the burden of social reproduction on black women?

Relevance of research

The 1950s were characterized by high political tensions (Bernstein, 1975; Healy-Clancy, 2017; Frates, 1993), and women, especially black women were vocal about their struggles within the apartheid regime and being politically active was a way of standing up for their womanhood (Bernstein, 1975). This decade was important because it was a time which saw a lot of women enter the formal political space in resistance to the apartheid government (Frates, 1993). This period started with the defiance campaign of 1951, whereby the African National Congress (ANC) as a liberation movement called all people to undertake a non-violate protest or campaign which opposed

apartheid laws and oppression, in which 8500 people were arrested and a fair number were women (Bernstein, 1975). Throughout the years of resistance until the late 1980s and early 1990s, women were active in politics alongside men, in fact, women were organized in their approach as compared to men given their wider responsibilities as mothers, wives, and caretakers (Bernstein, 1975).

Wells (1983) extensively documents women's anti-pass marches and commends them for their strategic and militant ways of protesting. Women's anti-pass marches throughout the fifties differed in intensity, magnitude, including periodically and geographically (Wells, 1983). But what was interesting was how certain types of women were more politically active than others, and this invites curiosity around what was at stake for different types of women (Wells, 1983). Black women's campaigns of resistance in the 1950s were consequently the biggest resistance campaigns the country had even seen and experienced at the time (Walker, 1978). Black women in the fifties fought boldly and employed militant and strategic ways to remove restrictions that government had installed against them (Walker, 1978). Even with societal subordination that black women faced during apartheid, their resistance could not be halted, even in the midst of tremendously difficult hurdles, women mobilized and successfully carried out the most militant and powerful anti-pass campaign the country had ever since in 1956.

The 1956 women's march was indeed historic and is a relevant field of study because more can be gleaned out of it. Revisiting this historic day will echo the efforts of black women and ensure that their pursuits are never forgotten. Dlakavu (2018) supports this by mentioning that as we document the efforts and successes of black women, we hallow their deeds onto the pages of history. As this year marks 68 years since the historic march, revisiting it as a case study and locating ordinary black women and understanding their participation will be a way of firmly etching them onto the records of history.

Rationale

In South Africa, the 9th of August every year marks the commemoration of National Women's Day. Ever since 1994, South Africans celebrate National Women's Day annually as a way of honouring the 1956 women's march and paying tribute to the South African women's movement (South African government, 2023). As a South African woman who grew up knowing the reverence of National Women's Day, I have always wondered about what the political participation, representation, agency, and legacy of 'ordinary' who participated in the 1956 women's march is, what it means and represents. This patriotic curiosity led to the formation of this research.

Gap in the literature

Studies have looked at women's participation and resistance in the anti-apartheid struggle (Bridger, 2021; Hiralal ,2015; Sideris, 1998; Geisler, 2004). There are enormous records of the role women played in the national liberation movement (Frates, 1993; Hassim, 2006; Kimble and Unterhalter, 1982; Erlank, 2005; Ginwala, 1990). There is extensive literature that investigates black women's struggle against passes (Joseph, 1959; Joseph; 1986; Wells, 1983; Walker, 1978; Walker, 1991). Given my interest in looking at the experiences, and participation of 'ordinary' black women, the gap in literature, is one where women's anti-pass protests is read and considered through the lens of social reproduction.

Methodology

I will conduct archival research in the National and University Archives, particularly focusing on women's political participation during the 1956 women's march to the union buildings. The archives host visual and textual material classified as correspondence, meeting minutes and conference documents. I will use the women's charter as adopted by the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) and pictures from the archives. I will map out the available material and purposively select material to inform my research questions. The material will be analysed using discourse analysis.

Gill (2000:172) defines discourse analysis as "the name given to a variety of different approaches to the study of texts, which have developed from different theoretical traditions and diverse disciplinary locations. Strictly speaking, there is no single 'discourse analyses', but different styles of analysis that all lay claim to the name. What these perspectives share is a rejection of the realist notion that language is simply a neutral means of reflecting or describing the world, and a conviction in the central importance of discourse in constructing social life." The idea here is that studying texts and language can tell us a lot about reality and society. It is not merely just about reading what is written, it is about critically engaging with language to understand what is being said, how it is being said and which lens is employed in interpreting history and its permeation on future generations.

De La Rey (1997) states that when a researcher studies texts, certain dominant narratives are discovered, meanings which are taken for granted are exposed and the ways in which discourses

disrupt institutions and power relations are also exposed. Given that I will be searching through archives, acknowledging the power that language has will be very important. Looking for words that stereotype and are bias towards black women will help answer the selected research questions. This is because the idea is that black women within political spaces are being accused of not being "motherly" enough or being too "militant". Looking for texts whether in the form of old newspaper articles, letters written between comrades or any political texts that describe the actions, attitudes, behaviours, and physical appearances, will help qualify my argument.

Archives are important because they serve as proof, proof that an event did take place and that there is a story which can be weaved together and placed in a period of history (Mbembe, 2002). This means that the actual physical existence of an archive means that certain truths are not 'hearsay' but actual realities. This makes archives very powerful. Jimerson (2006:20) supports this by stating that "the archives are a place of knowledge, memory, nourishment, and power". We draw from this that archives can serve as a place of understanding and also be a source of learning regarding historical events. Schwartz, Joan and Cook (2002) emphasize the importance of archives as a nexus between the past, present and the future. Archives therefore help explain what has occurred in the past, which in turn helps make sense of the present and stimulates the pursuit of knowledge.

Archives are immensely valuable and play an important role, however they are not without fault. Mbembe (2002) asserts that archives are problematic because power plays a role in determining what can be archived versus what is not.

Peterson (2002) argues that within the South African context, the biggest problem regarding archiving, is the contest of how archives are collated and who has access to them. This can be seen in how the apartheid system erased and destroyed major African history, claiming that African people have no history, meanwhile manipulating any remaining archival remnant to fit their system of oppression (Peterson, 2002). This illustrates that in as much as archives can be a source of knowledge and memory, records themselves and what they portray, are still susceptible to being manipulated to espouse predetermined narratives.

Conceptual Framework

The 1956 pass laws protest is a landmark moment in the history of anti-pass struggles in South Africa. I look at this moment as a collection of brewing resentment against the apartheid regime that was clamping down on a long history of anti-pass protests, labour discontentment, family life,

housing, and urban mobility. The conceptual lens used and developed in this thesis is that of social reproduction. Social reproduction offers an interdisciplinary lens which shows how the economic, political, social, and cultural spheres are all interconnected (Cantillon, Mackett and Stevano, 2023). In answering the questions that this research asks which are, how did the gendered anti-apartheid politics influence the political participation of black women? Secondly, how did pass laws affect the every-day lives of black women? Finally, how did pass laws ensure the burden of social reproduction on black women? This lens will demonstrate how the gendered nature of apartheid affected the political participation of black women (economically, politically, socially, and culturally).

South Africa's feminist histography has tended to look at political processes of the local using "problematic lenses informed by the Euro-American and Occidental feminist paradigms" (Gasa, 2007: 130). These paradigms are dangerous as they are unable to fully breakdown black women's complex experiences and their multiple representations and experiences (Gasa, 2007). Leaning towards social reproduction and moving away from lenses that do not encapsulate black women, provides a nuanced understanding of women's political participation and representation. It also opens up more debates particularly around how historical processes have taken place and the intricate involvement of women in protests during the twentieth century as Gasa (2007) recognises.

In defining social reproduction, Laslett and Brenner (1989: 382) write that it "refers to the activities, behaviours and emotions, responsibilities and relationships directly involved in the maintenance of life on a daily and intergenerationally". Social reproduction encompasses all types of care work which include emotional, mental and manual which all act in concert towards sustaining life for the next generation (Laslett and Brenner, 1989). Cashbaugh (2021:2) gives a simple definition of social reproduction and refers to it as "reproduction of labour power". In combining the above definitions, Abramovitz (2023:1) defines social reproduction as the culmination of actions created by societies to "further procreation, socialization, sexuality, nurturance and family maintenance". Today, this is often referred to as "care work, it includes the biological reproduction of the next generation of workers, and ensuring health, productivity and socialization of the current workforce" (Abramovitz, 2023:1).

Social reproduction addresses the naturalisation of gendered division of labour in Marxist thinking. Marxist feminists found that while Marx gave a nuanced understanding of labour power and the value it brings, nothing was mentioned about who is responsible for producing and reproducing

the labour power that produces value for capital (Bhattacharya et al, 2022). These definitions provided above, are essential in our understanding of pass laws during apartheid South Africa. It is through these definitions that we can locate black women within the overall struggle against apartheid and against pass laws because we will now be exposed to who was reproducing, taking care of the cooking and the wellbeing of those who were persecuting African people.

There are three perspectives offered by social reproduction that are useful for unpacking the 1956 anti-pass protests. The first is that social reproduction does away with the distinction between public and private, production and reproduction. Nurturing of children, cleaning, cooking and caring for family members is considered apolitical and relegated to the private sphere of the house. When women protested the pass laws, they raised their voice against their inability to undertake their social reproductive labour. When women protested against the pass laws, they were fighting for the work they were doing at home to be recognized and seen as work**.** Silbaugh (1997) writes that an economic understanding of women's labour in the household is essential as it shows how wage labour and home labour are almost similar. When we utilize social reproduction as a conceptual lens, we are able to understand that the ordinary women at the 1956 protest had an economic understanding of how their labour was undervalued and excluded.

Women were not taking their social reproductive labour as a given, or one that could be performed without institutions enabling it. They were calling attention to the intertwined nature of productive and reproductive labour. Under capitalism, social reproduction is organised for the creation of surplus value. It is through the sale of commodities that this surplus value is created. This value is unevenly divided between wages and profits where more attention is allocated to profits than wages. The worker's labour power is a unique commodity which produces value. The paid labour time of the worker is important for taking care of the minimum costs of social reproduction for the workers. The unpaid labour time of the worker creates surplus for the capitalist because both create market value for the capitalist. Home-based work has emerged as an important capitalist strategy to address the tensions which arise from the artificial separation of production and reproduction. It helps drive down costs of production, while ensuring that women are not recognized as workers (Sudarshan and Sinha, 2011).

The relationship between wage and surplus is historically specific and the tussle between both creates class struggle (Bhattacharya, 2017). Capital restricts the consumption of the working class but simultaneously expects them to be consumers. The tussle between capital and labour is one over

surplus value, which the capitalist class accrues by extending the working day and transferring reproduction costs onto labour. Capitalists keep the wages at their lowest to maximize surplus value, while squeezing social reproduction costs. It is these strategies that are used depending on the historical specificity of a country. Women's anti-pass protests were against being invisible and relegating their labour to concealed and unrecognisable domains.

The secondly perspective is that social reproduction helps us look at patriarchal roles undertaken by states to limit the everyday lives of women. The apartheid state legislated policies to extract waged labour from men by squeezing the costs of social reproduction. The survival of the apartheid state was reliant on paying Africans low wages regardless of the long hours of labour that they gave (Cousins et al., 2020). Black men who were miners were housed in compounds which consisted of tiny cells closer to the mines (Vosloo, 2020). It was a strategy for landowners to ensure labourers lived closer to work because this ensured a readily available workforce (Mezzadri, 2020). It was also a way to justify low wages (Vosloo, 2020). Given that black men earned lower wages in the mines, this meant that they had to work longer hours, and this in turn cut the costs of social reproduction.

The apartheid state had legislation which saw the prosperity of a minority of white landowners that relied on cheap African labour (Cousins et al., 2020). As I will show in the historical chapter, women fighting against pass laws understood the role the state played in squeezing the costs of social reproduction.

The third perspective of social reproduction shows how men and women were differently exploited by the apartheid state. Bujra (1986) mentions that historically, women had to turn to informal ways of getting an income to create an opportunity in order to accommodate social reproduction, whilst men were able to access designated forms of occupation. During apartheid, women were left in the reserves while men worked at gold and diamond mines (Hunter, 2011). Because of the deterioration of agricultural land, the family home went from being a place which provided surplus, to one which heavily relied on waged labour (Hunter, 2011). Women faced the difficulty of ensuring daily cooking, cleaning, and birthing future workers continued, whilst simultaneously finding ways to have access to income. Women's bodies were subjugated to reproduce the next generation of workers**.** Federici (2004) shows that the transition to industrialization required the withdrawal of women from the labour force and a domestication of women's bodies to produce the next generation of workers.

To summarize, social reproduction is used to read women's 1956 anti-pass protests. The research project wishes to answer the following questions; how did the gendered anti-apartheid politics influence the political participation of black women? How did pass laws affect the every-day lives of black women? How did pass laws ensure the burden of social reproduction on black women? The following aspects of social reproduction are developed to answer the research questions: the collapsing of binaries between the public and private, patriarchal roles undertaken by the apartheid state to limit women's daily lives and the differences in how the apartheid state exploits men and women.

History of women's labour

The history of African women's entry into the labour market in South Africa was influenced by the "gendered nature of the migrant labour system" and the legal restrictions which controlled women's access to paid work and urban mobility (Lalthapersad, 2003: 262). This then resulted in African women getting low paying jobs under exploitative and restrictive conditions (Lalthapersad, 2003).

Majority of African women were forced into domestic work (Sideris, 1998). It was by apartheid state's design to force African women into domestic work (Lalthapersad, 2003) During apartheid, African women also dominated service jobs such as waitressing, domestic work and cleaning of offices (Buddlender, 1991). Domestic work in urban areas was one of the few options available to African women. Domestic work for the African woman, was a very hard and difficult job, with many women being exploited by their white employees. Also, full time domestic work challenged gender relations as it was initially men who migrated to cities to work fulltime, but with the rise of African women transitioning to cities and earning wages, this crippled the African family structure (Ginsburg, 2000). Initially, from the beginning of the 19th century both men and women were involved in domestic work, but with need for African labour in mines, more men left domestic work for mines (Ginsburg, 2000).

Throughout apartheid, the majority of African women, worked as domestic workers and were housed in servants' quarters. These were little rooms at the back of the main employer's house. Around 90% of African women took domestic work as it was a job that did not require much educational background (Walker, 1978). With African women moving from the reserves into urban areas, domestic work was the most likely option.

African women were often employed in sectors which were labour intensive (Berger, 1992). On the other hand, white women were not employed in strenuous jobs that required physical strength (Berger, 1992). Lalthapersard (2003) accentuates this norm and states that white women did not experience the same exploitative labour conditions that African women experienced. Gwagwa (1989) reveals that women who worked in bakeries, suffered of the extreme heat which resulted in women suffering from a range of diseases, including skin diseases. Missing a day at work and complaining about low wages, was considered valid grounds for dismissal (Lalthapersad, 2003). African women had terrible working conditions, and this exploitative working environment prevailed because of their gender and poverty.

The mineral revolution which took place in South Africa around the 19th century motivated migration to cities by African men and African later women. This is notwithstanding that the migrant labour system existed way before the mineral revolution (Lyle, 1984). Moyana (1976) describes how the discovery of gold in 1886 on the Witwatersrand and diamonds near Kimberley in 1887, led to African inhabitants being disposed of their land.

Importantly, through this dispossession categorised as "land, head, hut taxes", these local inhabitants were forced into instruments of cheap labour (Moyana, 1976:36). Equally, the discovery of gold and diamonds stirred the industrialisation which cultivated infrastructure development, ultimately leading to urbanisation (Sooryamoorthy and Makhoba, 2016). Gelderblom (2004) records that these developments between 1906 and 1946, engineered a concerted migration amongst the African population that escalated from 6% to 19%.

The limited agricultural land apportioned to Africans was not enough to fulfil their economic ambitions and migration was a glaring opportunity. Because of overpopulation in the reserves, migration to cities by men was a viable option (Singh, 1980). Moyana (1976: 36) calls the overpopulation of the reserves a genesis of migration because it provided the "desired outcomes of land hunger". Inadequate land for a large population did not create enough income to sustain families. For example, the Transkei and Ciskei (apartheid 'Bantustans' which accommodated cheap labour) was reported in 1955 to have housed around 360 families but it had an occupation ability to accommodate only 103 families (Moyana, 1976). The migrant labour system design meant that men in mines, would not have the ability to raise their families properly. Women left in the reserves had huge and unbearable responsibilities, which included taking care of their children, the household and suffered financial shortages. (Sideris, 1998). This was because men in mines were far away from

home for long periods of time, which meant that men would forge new relationships with other women in the towns, thus resulting in little to no income being sent to the women left behind in the reserves (Sideris, 1998). At the same time, women were left with the heavy burden of social reproduction.

Cammack (2020) states that the creation of labour power and sustainability of family life is dependent on social reproduction. Women in the reserves, bore the weight of taking care of children, ensuring that family is well taken care of. The reserves served as a place of social reproduction. The bringing up of children by African women as single mothers while men were in the mine was social reproduction. This is because with this process, women were raising children, usually boy children who would also go and work in the mines to earn an income. This also contributed to women joining the migrant labour system as there was a need for proper and stable income, and children were usually left under the care of relatives (Sideris, 1998). Miners ranged from ages of 15 to 50 years and around 65% were between 20 to 35 years (Moyana, 1976). The apartheid system was deliberate in sourcing men at their prime who were still full of energy and strength and assigned them to hard labour under the surface of the earth. Simultaneously, apartheid also achieved the destruction of younger families as men who married younger, would not have the privilege of raising their own children (Taitt, 1980; Hanson, 1996).

Keeping men apart from their families was apartheid's intent. The term apartheid means to be apart or separated in Dutch (Healy-Clancy, 2017). It was by state design to keep families apart. In Kimberly, diamond mines and mines all over the country, the "closed compound system" was introduced, which meant that high fenced walls were built to surround the hostels that men lived in, and this was heavily guarded by security to watch over every move of the miners (Singh 1980). It was justified to ensure that there is no diamond theft and that there is maximum productivity (Hanson, 1996). Also, these men lived in bachelor matchboxes and would sometimes be away from home for around eleven months (Singh, 1980). This separation from families caused emotional hardships on men, women, and children, and promoted 'illegitimacy' of children, malnutrition, poverty and spreading of diseases (Taitt, 1980). Men were also never allowed to live with their families in these hostels, and it was also difficult because majority of their family members were based in the reserves (Taitt, 1980). Families suffered tremendously emotionally, and battled psychological distress caused by the instability that they experienced. This environment made it inconceivable to enjoy the normal experiences of a nucleus family.

Disruption of family life

The disruption and destruction of the African family structure was one of the fundamental goals of the apartheid system. It was not by coincidence or by chance, it was an intentional act. In the words of Taitt (1980:3), "apartheid laws have been described as one of the cruellest in terms of disrupting the family life of the African". Budlender and Lund (2011) call the "destruction of African family life" (p. 926) as one of the legacies of the apartheid system. Hall and Posel (2019) also agree with Taitt (1980) and Budlender and Lund (2011) in that the apartheid regime was focused on breaking the African household and further mention that it was a deliberate strategy. Healy-Clancy and Hickel (2014:17) agree with this submission and state that "colonialism in South Africa was colonialism of the home".

The concept of "family" in apartheid South African context manifests itself in different ways along racial lines. In its basic form, family means "the most basic of institutions of any people, it is the center and source of its civilization (Taitt, 1980 :3). The African home was far from civilization or the Euro-American definition of a family or home. The homes that African families lived in were riddled with constant surveillance, house raids and forced removals by apartheid security officers (Bridger, 2021). Hiralal (2014) for instance, found that the wives of political activists had abnormal lives as they had no freedom of mobility, which would be compounded by parenting responsibilities that were amplified when their husbands were detained or incarcerated. This is not withstanding the personal and intimate suffering that they endured that heightened their emotional and psychological distress through periodic surveillance and timed police raids.

Bernstein (1985) records how black women and children had to be moved back to the reserves by the apartheid government because they were regarded to be of no economic use. Bernstein (1985) quotes the Afrikaner Student Association on the 1973 resolution which stated that a wife, should be in the reserves and could be allowed in urban areas if she is needed in the labour market. This meant that children were separated from their parents, as spouses mostly lived in different and mostly separate environments. (Bernstein, 1985). Apartheid affected the lives of African women and their families in a big way. The separation of mothers, fathers and children created what Bernstein (1985: 13) called "social chaos". It is not easy to raise a family under such circumstances. While poor African families were going through such turmoil, white families experienced the complete opposite. The house of a white middle-class family enjoyed privacy, an opposite experience of what a

poor African home experienced (Bonnin, 2000). The private home of a white family was the public space of an African domestic worker (Bonnin, 2000).

Housing policy, urban mobility and access to land

To understand the history around housing and what it means for African women, it is important to include a brief understanding of land in South Africa. In 1913, when the Native Land Act was passed, this resulted in 13% of the less fertile land being allocated to African people who made up around 90% of the total South African population (Moyana, 1976). The land issue was central to the system of apartheid (Coles, 1993).

Under the Native Trust and Land Act of 1936, black reserve areas moved from 7 % to 13% (Coles, 1993). Under this Act, black people were not allowed to buy or stay on land other than the one reserved for African people (Coles, 1993). This dispossession took the form of a racialized order, where black people were left landless and white people accrued more land (Coles, 1993). To control the daily lives of people, dispossession of land had to take place because land was central for building a home where families could be raised, and a place to cultivate crops for food and sustenance.

The housing policy which existed in South Africa during apartheid and before apartheid was self-contradictory. The vision was to use labour power of African people but at the same time refuse the presence of these people in urban areas (Maylam, 1990). It is the same as needing people but not wanting them around. Apartheid's contradiction was that white monopoly capital needed African labour power but at the same time, there had to be protection of white people from Africans in urban areas where white people were (Maylam, 1990).

Let us consider the urban housing before 1923. There was a low level of African people in urban areas in South Africa before 1923, and in 1904 an estimated 337 000 were accounted for in urban areas and this increased to 587 000 by 1921(Maylam, 1990). The low numbers of urbanisation of Africans around this time was not due to state-control or influence, but rather, state influence of migration or housing was still underdeveloped (Maylam, 1990). Also, in the first half of the 20th century, public housing responsibilities fell onto local authorities (Parnell, 1989). It was not until the National Party took office in 1948 that introduced total state control of urban mobility and housing policy (Hindson, 1985).

Historically, urban areas and urban housing were not racially segregated as all labourers preferred living closer to their places of work (Parnell, 1989). But there were some racial segregation trends which happened loosely throughout the region. For example, in the 1880s, Kimberly mine owners created 'closed compounds' for African migrants, which seemed viable as they offered minimal diamond theft and a fixed labour supply (Maylam, 1990). Johannesburg had a similar trend for mine workers which saw municipal workers and other African workers living in compounds and housing that were attached to their place of work (Maylam,1990). Nevertheless, around 60 000 Africans in Johannesburg, lived in townships and outside of compounds (Maylam, 1990).

The passing of the Native (Urban Areas)1923 Act began the process of racially segregated housing. In 1918, an influenza pandemic hit the Union of South Africa, and this prompted the ministry of native affairs to look at the unbearable housing circumstances that natives were experiencing in urban areas (Davenport, 1971). This then, put more emphasis on the need for housing for the African population living in urban areas. The Act no 21 of 1923 states "a) define, set apart, or lay out one or more areas of land for the occupation, residence, and other reasonable requirements of natives either as extension of any areas already set apart for that purpose or as separate areas. Any land so defined is herein after called a location" (Union of South Africa, 1923). The African population was to be moved and housed in designated locations. Urban problems were regarded as African problems (Parnell, 1989). But it is important to note that throughout the 1920s and 1930s, there was what Fourie (2007) refers to as the "poor white problem". Even though locations were built for Africans based on trying to alleviate urban problems, poor white people also had a housing crisis. In fact, public housing which was facilitated by municipalities using loans throughout the late 1920s-30s was only afforded by the wealthier white people (Parnell, 1989).

As for women, it was not until the mid-1930s where hostels for single women were built in cities like Johannesburg (Maylam,1990). The apartheid government's policy from the time it came into office saw a state-controlled policy of urban life. Urbanisation of African people went higher from the late 1920s to the 1950s. The population of African people went from 587 200 in 1921 to 2 329 000 in 1951, and by 1946, 38 % of Africans were living with their families in urban areas (Maylam,1990). The Group Areas Act was meant to "provide for the establishment of group areas, for the control of the acquisition of immovable property, and the occupation of land and premises (Union of South Africa, 1950). This Act, by the apartheid government made it clear that slums and townships, were reserved for African people, whereas urban areas were reserved for white people. It created a system where entry into the city was granted along racial lines. The city and its

housing belonged to white people and Africans were only needed for their labour. Influx control was used in terms of Urban Areas Act which justified raids in servant's quarters and township for illegal dwellers or people who did not possess passes to prove their right to work in the urban area (Hindson, 1985). Women were refusing passes for decades but were working in urban areas. What pushed the apartheid government to create influx control was the fact that the African women population moved from 4,9% around 1911 to a staggering 21,57% by 1951 (De Villiers and Ngoyi, 1979).

The problem was also that urbanisation of African women also meant permanent residence in urban areas (De Villiers and Ngoyi, 1979). Not only was the apartheid government fighting to impose passes on African women, but efforts were being directed towards restricting access and movements in the city, all of which were constantly undermined and resisted. The housing crisis severely affected African women. A woman who qualified to live in an urban area was expelled to the reserves if she married a man who did not qualify to live in an urban area (Bernstein, 1985). A man who qualified to live in an urban area faced the possibility of his wife being denied to live with him and being expelled to the reserves (Bernstein, 1985). A woman who was unmarried and was granted the right to live in an urban area through her parents, faced eviction if she decided to marry a man who lived in another urban area, notwithstanding that she will was not allowed in law to live with her husband in another urban area (Bernstein, 1985). African women were expected to not fall under the 'idle bantu' category, this category, was for women between the ages of 15 to 60, who were usually unemployed or were students (Bernstein, 1985). Single, unemployed and unmarried women were considered not useful and were refused residential rights (Bernstein, 1985). A widower, who had the right to live in an urban area with her husband, forfeited that right upon his death and her children would be moved back to the reserves (Bernstein, 1985). African women also faced the fear of divorce because this meant that their right to live in urban areas ended with their marriage (Berstein,1985) Sometimes local authorities would refuse women the right to live in residential areas without reason (Bernstein, 1985).

Pass laws

As of now, we have seen that the history of African women's labour exploitative nature, whilst white women's experienced was markedly different in the prevailing environment. The migrant labour system meant that African families were disrupted as men worked in urban areas while women remained in the reserves to perform social reproduction. The migrant labour system

fragmented the African family structure, as men returned to the reserves after a long time, sometimes without even sending money for the upkeep and wellbeing of the children of his loins. Land dispossession of Africans under apartheid exacerbated this problem, because tiny portions of infertile land that had no agricultural value, were allocated to Africans.

Women, due to dire economic circumstances had no choice but to move to the urban areas. In the urban areas, conditions were unbearable as mobility was under strict influx controls. Housing was also restrictive as pass laws predetermined where and when woman were legally permitted to live. Below is a brief assembly of pass laws which will outline the confluence of labour conditions, urban housing and mobility, and how that created a fertile environment for anti-pass protests.

Marcia Wright, the doctoral studies advisor of Wells (1982) used the metaphor "steam" to describe the uniqueness of South African women's struggle. Upon hearing this metaphor, Wells (1982: vi) reconciles it with her research findings and states that "the battle everywhere seemed to be empowered by a mysterious steam, an invisible source of intense energy, not easily contained but extremely forceful. It undergirded the women's sheer tenacity, audacity, and incredible courage in the face of overwhelming odds and gave the women's action a kind of no-nonsense, pure practicality". The metaphor "steam" helps in illustrating an invisible and visible power that underlies South African women's organization and resistance. It also confirms the mystery that reveals how women protested passes for decades and how throughout the decades' women of different socio-economic positions, in different geographic locations within South-Africa, organized (formally and informally) against laws that restricted their freedom. To support this, Hassim (2005:3) writes about women's organisations and movements as one that "takes different forms in different contexts, operating at some moments as a formalised structure and at others as a loose network". Just as steam spreads through the air in a non-uniform, non-structured and widely dispersed way- so is the genesis and historical evolution of anti- pass protests in South Africa.

While we can trace the origins of the anti-pass resistance from around the 1890s all the way to 1956 and beyond, it is difficult to summarise all the different types of protests and the different ways they happened because "passes" came in different forms and at different times. Wells (1982:12) mentions, "they were used for a variety of purposes, came in many different forms and were applied for different reasons, in different places and times…prior to the 1950s, pass requirements differed from province to province and from town to town". As Wells has illustrated, we cannot include all anti-pass resistance or marches that led up to 1956 because there are several, consider for

instance throughout the year in 1912-13 in Bloemfontein; 1955, 1956 and 1958 in Johannesburg (Wells, 1983), but 1913 stands out because a lot of scholars reference it as a starting point when discussing the strategic ways women protested passes. The earliest pass laws which were implemented during the nineteenth century were meant for poor black people who were working for white masters, given that black people who resided in traditional society were viewed as irrational and wild, passes were deemed fit to 'control' and restore 'order' (Wells, 1982). This first took place in the Cape frontier society where black people who carried passes were separated from stock thieves because passes provided proof that they were workers and not criminals (Wells, 1982). With the evolving nature of South Africa's political economy that was particularly driven by the discovery of minerals, passes were used as a medium of controlling black labour and black bodies (Wells, 1982).

Let us look at the Orange Free state and its capital city- Bloemfontein. It is essential to look at the anti-pass events that took place in Bloemfontein because the Orange Free State was the only province out of the four to prioritise passes for women, and Bloemfontein was the place where urban policies were first implemented and resisted by women (Wells, 1982). The Orange Free state can be regarded as one of the first places to attempt to implement passes on women because in 1913, local government officials decided to make it a requirement for women to purchase permits for entry into the urban area each month (Schimdt, 1983). "Platteland" is an Afrikaans word which means rural districts, plattelands as a political economy of the free state was the first to incorporate black women (Wells, 1982). Unlike many parts of country such as the Cape or Natal, platteland towns had an almost equal number of men and women, and saw the first urbanised black population (Wells, 1982). The implementation of passes on black women was inevitable because unlike most provinces in the country at that time, the Free State did not rely on black men's migrant labour (Wells, 1982). This meant that black women's labour was important as there was a shortage of black labour. In the words of Wells (1982:17), "the settlement of black women provided the opportunity to secure a reliable pool of labour, both through women's own work and through the creation of a locally socialised workforce.

The first known anti-pass protest in Bloemfontein was in 1894 where women sent out petitions to the local municipality (Gasa, 2007). Then in 1898, women under the "Association of women of the Household" wrote to President Steyn, refusing the usage of 'service books' (Gasa, 2007). This was then followed by a series of local protests at the local municipality until the end of the nineteenth century (Gasa, 2007). In the beginning of the twentieth century, Bloemfontein experienced a massive economic and political boom (Gasa, 2007).

This was because of the discovery of minerals in Kimberly and the discovery of gold in the Transvaal created a need for infrastructure development that connected Transvaal and Bloemfontein. Additionally, the rise of Boer commercial farming because the British rule from 1848-54 made Bloemfontein its administrative, legal, and economic capital and this did not change after the Anglo Boer war (Gasa, 2007). Walker (1978) acknowledges that the process of urbanisation and industrialisation contributed to the changing position of women in the twentieth century. This was the case in South Africa, with the economic boom that took place in Bloemfontein, there was a need to restrict, control and manage women's labour as this posed a threat to the established state (Walker, 1978).

The economic growth of Bloemfontein saw the employment of Africans, Indians and Coloured people as farm workers, labourers, and professionals (Gasa, 2007). As the black population increased, the city created laws which separated black people from white people. Given the growing black population in Bloemfontein, a location called Waaihoek (this was one of many), emerged just outside town (Gasa, 2007). Black people started occupying the land in this area but were obligated to pay for water and land to the municipality (Gasa, 2007). In Bloemfontein, around 50% of African women were employed as domestic workers and the rest worked in laundry services (Gasa, 2007). The process was that women would go to white residential areas, collect laundry, go back to the location to wash, and then return the clothes (Gasa, 2007). As expected, this did breed a lot of problems. The biggest was the diseases that came with doing laundry in the location as there was overcrowding, unclean water and transfer of diseases took place (Gasa, 2007). In 1906, the government decided to build public laundry houses, where women were required to pay a fee and use permits to gain access to these houses, this then is believed to have prompted and led to the famous 1913 anti-pass march (Gasa, 2007).

It is important to note that after the Anglo-Boer war, the anti-pass protests were taken over by all male political parties and organizations (Wells, 1983). For more than ten years, the Orange Free State Native Vigilance Association and the African Political Organization (APO) based in Cape Town regularly sent out petitions to the Bloemfontein Mayor and to the King of England to gain support for the elimination of passes against women (Wells, 1983). But with the Act of Union, which was put in place in 1910, could only be removed by parliament (Wells, 1983). Then in 1912, the formation of SANNC (later called the ANC) brought in new hope for women as political leaders from all around the country met in Bloemfontein and were ready to solve this problem (Wells, 1983).

During this meeting, women were present as hostesses and caterers but the presence of a particular woman- Charlottee Maxeke was revolutionary (Wells,1983). Maxeke was the first black female university graduate in South Africa and was a teacher in the Eastern Cape at the time (Wells, 1983). It this believed that the presence of Maxeke at the meeting, an executive in the SANNC created a force for women to push their anti-pass agenda forward. An anti-pass petition was circulated throughout the Free State and signatures of more than 5000 women were received (Du Bruyn, 2020). A delegation of six women from Waaihoek went to Cape town to meet up with the minister of native affairs at the time, Minister Burton, despite his reassurances that this matter would be taken into consideration, nothing was ever done (Du Bruyn, 2020). By 1913 women had to use a total of about 13 permits and they resorted to extreme measures to demonstrate their refusal of passes (Gasa, 2007). No action or communication was extended by parliament regarding passes and this convinced woman that more serious action was needed. Whenever local authorities were questioned about the issue of passes, they insisted that it was to stop black women from going into illegal prostitution and beer brewing and that passes would encourage these women into domestic work (Wells, 1982). In May 1913, women decided to gather and formally declare that they were not going to carry passes (Wells, 1983). Earlier, women had reached an agreement with the mayor to postpone the usage of passes, but a woman was then arrested for not carrying a pass a short while after the agreement (Wells, 1983). This then led to a violent fight between the women and the police and around 34 women were imprisoned (Wells, 1983). It seemed that even after women pleaded with authorities to stop the issues of implementing passes (such as confronting the mayor and the minister of native affairs), nothing was done. De Bruyn (2020) states, more women were imprisoned and harassed after women confronted authorities.

Towards the end of May 1913, women in the Free State decided to use “passive resistance” to show white authorities that they refuse to use passes. Their usage of passive resistance is believed to have been inspired by the British Suffrage and Satyagraha movement (Du Bryun, 2020). Wearing blue ribbons, these women protested pass laws showing their willingness to go to jail for their cause (De Bruyn, 2020). Through the Orange Free State Association, women got national coverage and earned sympathy from government officials who suspended the imposing of passes by 1923 (De Bruyn, 2020). The anti-pass protests which took place in 1913 is very important because it is where the “steam” was highly concentrated amongst women in the Free State. However, when the National Party (NP), took office in 1948 and implemented a racialized system of apartheid, the resistance of pass laws became more intense.

Conclusion

This section has shown us that the 1956 women's march was not accidental but rather a culmination of demonstrations that had fermented over decades. Equally, African women's exploitative working conditions and experiences during apartheid, were placed on record. Evidence pointed that they were mainly employed in service sector jobs. The migrant labour system ensured that African family structures were unstable. This was because men were placed in compounds closer to mines and women were left in the rural areas to look after children or were also working in urban areas as domestic workers. It was difficult for African woman and her family to get housing in urban areas. The pass system ensured that urban mobility was difficult, especially for African women. The history of conditions of labour, housing, urban mobility shows us how pass laws were detested by African women.

The 9th of August 1956: An inevitable moment

The 1956 women's march was a march like no other in the history of South African women's resistance. Reflecting on the history of women's resistance and struggle against apartheid, such a momentous march was inevitable. The 1950s were an important decade when it came to women's political participation. This is because, the 1950s saw the entry of a great number of women in the resistance against apartheid (Frates, 1993). This chapter will briefly narrate the historic march by drawing on the historical material found in the archives of University of Witwatersrand, which include pictures from the Bailey's African history archive.

There is an opinion that suggests that the trigger for the historic anti-pass march, was a leak in the press in 1950 which stated that the government was planning on extending passes to women, which then spurred riots and emboldened resistance by women throughout the country (Walker ,1978 cited in Wells, 1984). Initially, mobilisation of women moved from Cape-Town to Johannesburg and to other parts of the country, inspired by the strict influx control in Cape-Town (Walker, 1978). In 1954, the city of Cape Town did not issue any permits for women to enter the city unless they were seeking jobs (Walker, 1978). In August of 1955, the Federation of South African Women gathered women across the country which resulted in the adoption of resolution to march to the union buildings (Zwane, 2000). Around one thousand women went to the local authorities in Durban and Cape Town, demanding the abolishing of passes (Wits historical papers, AD1137/ cb 2.3.4) Early in

1956, women in East London went to their local commissioner with a memorandum, clearly stating their refusal to carry passes. This continued to March of 1956, where women in Germiston went to their local authorities and chanted that "Even if the passes are printed in real gold, we do not want them" (Wits historical papers)[1]. These protests ensued in towns and cities such as Bethlehem, Brakpan, Klerksdorp, Johannesburg and Winburg (Wits historical papers)[2]. The pressure that came through these protests culminated in the second national conference of the Federation of South African women, adopting a nationwide protest on the 9th of August 1956 (Joseph, 1986).

Helen Joseph one of the leaders of the historic march records that:

> "Twenty thousand women of all races, from all parts of South Africa, were massed together in the huge stone amphitheatre of the union buildings in Pretoria, the administrative seat of the Union government, high on a hill. The brilliant colours of African headscarves, the brightness of Indian saris and the emerald green of the blouses worn by Congress women merged into an unstructured design, woven together by the very darkness of those thousands faces."
>
> "They had marched, that 20 000, pressed solidly together, not in formal ranks, from the lowest of the Union buildings terraced gardens, climbing up those many steps, terrace by terrace, behind their leaders." ((Joseph, 1986: 1)

It was a historic day indeed, the fact that a multi-racial organisation of women led a march filled with thousands of women from all parts of South Africa was a huge achievement. These women, fearless in their pursuit, refused to be stopped as they were determined to make their way to Pretoria. Sisulu (2006) recalled when her mother-in-law, Albertina Sisulu said that she started her day at 2am, so that she could distribute train tickets for women who were travelling from Soweto. Joseph (1986) recalled that women compressed the train station and hopped onto trains in Johannesburg to make it to the march. Some of these women had to sell their belongings including

[1] ibid
[2] ibid

furniture to have money to travel to Pretoria on the 9th of August (Sisulu, 2006). And some marched to the union buildings with babies strapped on their backs (Lenser, 2019). The fearless leaders of the march went and stood outside of the office of the then prime minister JG Strijdom and submitted the petitions even in his absence (SAHO, 2011).

Lilian Ngoyi another prominent leader within the women's resistance movement stirred women to raise their fists for a full half hour in silence before bursting into song, "Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika" (God save Africa) and then chanting "wathinthi umfazi, wathinti mbokodo" (You have struck a woman, you have struck a rock) (SAHO, 2011). The 9th of August 1956 and many anti-pass protests were historic, as women determined to not let pass laws dictate their daily lives. I will show in the analysis that these women, understood what representation meant, and that they understood the importance of women influencing politics. This recognition stresses how crucial and impactful it was to fight against pass laws was and elevate their focus above maternal politics.

Women at the Union buildings – 1956 anti-pass march









Findings and analysis

Say No, Black Woman
Say no
When they give you a back seat
In the Liberation wagon
Say no.
Poem by: Gcina Mhlophe (1983)

Mhlophe (1983) summons black women to refuse to be passive and not be found in the pages of history. She calls on women to exercise agency and be deliberate in their efforts of carving their works in the canvass of history. Dlakavu (2017) accentuates this and points out that South African history adequately exposes how women were pushed to the margins of society. Additionally, Dlakavu (2017) stresses that black feminists have been consistent in their endeavours of fighting through art and media to bring black women from being invisible.

Women and the State

One of the tools that social reproduction offers, is an understanding of the patriarchal role that states play in the lives of women. The apartheid state was designed to control Africans. In part, this was done by ensuring that African women were restricted to service sector jobs such as domestic work and cleaning. These jobs paid low wages and had long strenuous hours. This contributed towards controlling social reproduction whilst catalysing profits made at the expense of African women.

This again highlights the nexus between the states' need and use of women's bodies, through creating conditions that police social reproduction that aligns with the agenda of the reigning government. As black women marched against passes in 1956, they were marching against the patriarchal role that the state played in squeezing the costs of social reproduction. Ordinary women seen on the archival pictures from the 1956 march, many of whom whose names are not known, understood the state as a site of oppression and discrimination. As we look at their self-representation as an example of courage, we must reiterate that their bravery is displayed in them confronting the state physically, through the bodies that housed their souls.

Literature has demonstrated how women have led protests to state institutions such as local commissioners, union buildings and various departments. These women, understood that the state, was an architect and ardent force of their oppression, yet they nevertheless laboured towards restoring their dignity and claiming their rightful status in society. Gouws (2004: n.p) notes the increase of feminists who argue that the state is an entity and a site for central analysis of showcasing, how effective women's political "access, presence and influence". Women who participated in the 1956 women's march possessed this understanding. Although it was not documented by many feminists at the time, every-day black women grasped the idea of the state as a site of power struggles and oppression.

There have been lengthy debates concerning the relationship between gender and statehood and Fallon and Viterna (2016:415) state the following:

> "Directly, states use the categories of "men" and "women" to dictate, amongst other things, who can vote, who can go to school, who can marry whom, who has the right to control their own sexual and reproductive behaviour and who can be drafted into military service. Indirectly, states shape gender in countless additional ways, ... the availability of affordable child care mitigates mothers' access to paid labour and economic independence".

States are institutions which have so much power (Dahlerup,1994) and institutions of the state "still provide important sites for contestation and negotiation for women (Fallon and Viterna, 2016:416). On the 9th of August 1956, women went to prime minister Strijdom's offices and submitted their petitions (Bridgeman, 2015). He was absent and when the leaders returned to the masses outside, they sang "Wathinthi' umfazi, wathinthi' mbokodo (you have struck a woman, you have struck a rock) (Bridgeman, 2015) Although this song demonstrated women's resolve it also pointed to their strength as evidenced in their boldness in confronting the state.

Fore fronting the squeezing of social reproduction costs using motherhood

Women felt the squeezing of social reproduction costs acutely as mothers. Healy-Clancy (2017) has written extensively about the relationship between motherhood and political activism for women (in FEDSAW). Public motherhood could be viewed as a political strategy which confronted state violence (Healy-Clancy, 2017). As mothers they were fighting for the rights for future generations of South Africans. It was a fight to ensure equitable social reproduction. Women did not want future generations to have to wrestle with exploitative working conditions, meagre wages, unstable housing, urban mobility and racist legislation. This is partly evidenced in the women's charter and its declared aspirations for children:

> *"*We women share with our menfolk the cares and anxieties imposed by poverty and its evils. As wives and mothers, it falls upon us to make small wages stretch a long way. It is we who feel the cries of our children when they are hungry and sick. It is our lot to keep and care for homes that are too small, broken and dirty to be kept clean. We know the burden of looking after children and land when our husbands are away in the mines, on the farms and in the towns earning our daily bread.
>
> We know what it is to keep family life going in the pondokkies, shanties or in overcrowded one-room apartments. We know the bitterness of children taking to lawless ways, of daughters becoming unmarried mothers whilst still at school, of boys and girls growing up without education, training or jobs at a living wage" (p.1-2)

This posture reveals the depths of commitment and foresight that mothers had concerning human rights, particularly those that also mattered regarding children. Social reproduction reflects examples that exposes how inequality reproduces itself under capitalism. (Weiss, 2021). The

immense efforts of African women fighting against pass laws, were conscious efforts of halting the perpetuation of inequality even within the social reproduction framework.

The African Child

a) Many African women would leave their own children as they would depart very early to their places of employment. They would return at different times of the evening, consequently missing precious moments with their own children. Importantly, these children would not always have the best care when they were left to the care of others, and the absence of adequately resourced centers of care or crèches, made the things much more difficulty for parents. Interestingly, African women who were mostly domestic workers, and lived far away from their own home and spent most of their time caring for white kids.
b) There were no adequate medical facilities to care for African children and this manifested itself with children being infirmed with preventable diseases.
c) The extreme forms of poverty and environmental dangers which African children lived in, caused them succumb to curable diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria. It is worth noting that 94% of white children went to "state funded" schools, while 94% of African children went to "state aided" schools (p. 10**).**

    - Schools for African children were not well equipped and were overcrowded above being riddled by staff shortages.
    - Technical and vocational training churned out poorly trained individuals as racially designated institutions lacked proper infrastructure for effective teaching and learning.

The White Child

a) White children generally had African nannies who cared for them. Even in poor white households, African nannies were present and would cook and clean for the entire family. White mothers would rarely care for their children as African nannies would do so on their behalf. Ideologically white children were taught from a young age that black women were their servants and that they had power to issue orders to them.

b) White pregnant mothers had access to well-resourced healthcare facilities across different cities and towns where they resided. This came with the benefit of white children being vaccinated against diseases such as smallpox.
c) Crèches were available for white working mothers, albeit these facilities were not abundant in numbers as there was enough African women to fulfil that role.
d) White children's education came in a linguistic form of Afrikaans and English. The intentionality of education and literacy extended to nutrition which was provided to each scholar. Added to this, was the removal of money as a barrier to accessing education as education was free but compulsory, even extending to children with disabilities. Importantly, technical and vocational training institutions were well resourced and widely available. With respect to universities, white students had to pay around 57 euros which was supplemented by the availability of bursaries and scholarships.
    - Information compiled from a memorandum for the Federation of South African women: Wits historical papers (AD 1137-Ai7-001).

As illustrated, the differences between a black child and a white child during apartheid South Africa, women fighting against passes was a targeted call toward social reproduction. Whilst white children had the privilege of living with a nanny, African children lacked this privilege. African woman did not have leisure time dedicated to social reproduction as compared to white mothers. A white child received good care whilst African children did not enjoy the same benefit. Given that African women were always working, the dressing up of children and ensuring they get to school was restricted, whereas the white child had a nanny to do that for them.

As ordinary women were marching against passes, they knew and understood that they must fight against the reproduction of inequality. Passes were affecting the process of social reproduction.

Centralizing women's experiences in the national liberation movement

"We women do not form a single society separate from men. There is only one society, and it is made up of both women and men. As women, we share the problems and anxieties of our men and join hands with them to remove social evils and obstacles to progress … Within this common society, however, are laws and practices that discriminate against women. Whilst we struggle against the social evils that affect both men and women alike, we are determined to struggle no less purposefully against the things that work to the disadvantage of our sex." (Women's charter, 1954)

These women understood that within the national liberation movement, they had to fight for their own liberation as women, because political mobilisation took place under the umbrella of nationalism (Hassim, 2005). Nationalism is a "double edged sword" when it comes to women's inclusion in the political arena because they are subject to "gendered political roles" (Hassim,2005: 8). Indeed, resistance against apartheid was a collective struggle. But within that collective struggle, liberation for women had to be actively pursued by women themselves. Women's interests would often get lost in national interests. For example, in the ANC, Hassim (2005) writes that while women were included based on nationalism within the collective struggle, women did not have the power to fully utilise their power to advance women's interests. Basically, power struggles were present. In the first national conference of FEDSAW, Ida Mtwana said "we must make women conscious that no struggle can be successful without the active support of women … Gone are the days when the place of women was in the kitchen and looking after the children. Today women are marching side by side with men on the road to freedom (Wits historical papers :3)[3] What Ida is referring to is not that woman decided to leave their domestic duties such as taking care of children, but rather, that the time of limiting women to domestic duties only, had passed. This is where the lens of social reproduction comes in. As mentioned previously, social reproduction does away with the public-private divide.

It ensures that there is no such thing as women's work or men's work. As women represented themselves, they were doing away with the public-private divide which placed women at home and men in the public realm. In support of what Ida said, Magadla (2023) documented the lived experiences of black women in MK- the military wing of the ANC. She showcased that women in the MK were aware of the patriarchal nature of the national liberation movement and they joined the guerrilla warfare "Because they themselves felt the daily injustice of apartheid" (Magadla, 2023: 192). She further mentions that MK women did not doubt their ability to fight for liberation. Black women understood that for their liberation to come to fruition, they could no longer take the back seat. Going in numbers to the union buildings was one-way ordinary black women were visible as they focused on removing the public-private divide. Seeing women standing with fists clenched in the air, symbolised their resistance against a system that set to imprison them.

Apartheid affected white women and impacted African women very differently, yet this did not impede both races from participating in efforts of dismantling the politics that incarcerated their freedom

[3] ibid

of choice and prescribed their freedom of movement. It is no secret that each race was motivated by different reasons, but nevertheless, the need for representation and political agency was the common pursuit. That is why FEDSAW was created. FEDSAW as a multi-racial organization was focused on the most marginalized women in society, particularly African women (Walker, 1978). The inaugural conference of FEDSAW "allowed for the first time, the voices of women of South Africa to be heard" (Joseph, 1986: 5). It was the existence of inequalities within women and apartheid South Africa that a broad-based organisation such as FEDSAW was created. It mobilised women, especially ordinary African women and created measures to ensure that women in the reserves, towns and cities were reached. Joseph (1986) in her autobiography documented the ways in which FEDSAW mobilized women in villages, towns and cities. For example, each region had its own committee and held annual national meetings. This ensured that women in the reserves and urban areas had a say. Anti-pass protests as organised by FEDSAW pushed for the political participation of black women. It is the fight against pass laws for African women that made a multi-racial coalition of women exist.

In summary, women felt the squeezing of the social reproduction costs more accurately than men. However, they knew that their demands would not be prominent in the national democratic liberation without their participation, especially given the patriarchal nature of the liberation movement. The anti-pass protests, by exposing women's experience of apartheid, did away with the dichotomy of public and private.

Conclusion

Each year on the 9th of August, South Africans celebrates women's day. In commemorating this holiday, South Africa's parliament expressed that "this day holds a profound significance as we reflect on the historic women's march of 1956, when women from diverse backgrounds united against the oppressive apartheid regime's pass laws. Their unity and determination ignited a beacon of hope that still guides us today" (Republic of South Africa, 2023). Reference to women's struggle against pass laws, acknowledges the march, yet does not sink into the evolution of anti-pass protests and how passes affected women's every-day life. This research project did exactly this, it traced the anti-pass protests from the 18th century all the way to 1956. Additionally, this research acknowledged the existence of the ordinary black women who participated in the march. We see these women in pictures from the archives but not much is ever said about their existence, representation, and participation in the anti-pass protests. In locating these women, it was impossible to individually name them except for the prominent leaders of the march.

Combing through archives and using social reproduction as a conceptual framework, I got to understand that these women understood the state as a site of their oppression. That is why African women and all women who resisted passes went to police stations, local commissioners and the union buildings. They had a dominant understanding of the state being a site of their oppression and a barrier to women's full citizenship. Social reproduction helped us understand the patriarchal role that the apartheid state played in the control of women's lives using passes. Passes affected women's daily lives, starting from the way their families were functioning, the exploitative conditions of labour and the restrictions of mobility and housing in urban areas. These women had to fight for their own liberation within the broader national liberation and they understood that no one was coming to save them, and that they had to stand up and represent themselves.

Using the national liberation movement as a vehicle to advance women's rights was a "double edged sword" as Hassim (2005) wrote. This meant that women understood that they had to represent themselves and this meant coming out in numbers and fighting against apartheid. Social reproduction helped in understanding that there is no divide between the public and private sphere, thereby revealing that women can exist as wives and mothers at home, and also as political participants in public. It also exposed the amount of unwaged labour that women did, such as taking care of children. We also got to understand that every-day women who were present in 1956 were protesting as mothers, to ensure that inequality does not transfer from to the next generation. African mothers refused passes as they knew the inequalities that affected African people.

This research project also attempted to move from just looking at African women as mothers within the public sphere. This is not to say that public motherhood is not powerful or an important strategy in political participation and representation. But rather, we now must re-visit the archives as more information can be gleaned. Part of what we learn from the pages of recorded history is that women were also buoyed by the prospecting of wanting to change the world to a better place for the children that they were mothers of. This crystallised the importance and urgency of fighting for their rights, for in their rights, were the rights of their children also embedded. No more were they going to be producing children for the benefit of capitalism, but they desired and pursued a life that enabled children to have access to better opportunities than the realities of their time.

I do not believe that inequalities within women affected the political participation of black women. Importantly, inequalities that were erected by apartheid, provoked a broad-based movement of women (FEDSAW). This is not to side line the lived experiences of women and the personal

exclusion that could have taken place, that is not the scope of this project. But, as a collective, the common goal of ensuring that passes do not get extended to African women was prevalent and all women understood that. It was not up until 1963 that the apartheid state required African women carry passes (Healy-Clancy, 2017). As much as 1956 was not the end of anti- pass protests, the manner in which women resisted was remarkable.

In the words of Millward (2016: 162), "The history of black women is a long study in mourning". This project is not about loss or pain albeit a lot of pain and loss permeates when reading and writing about the struggles women faced because of apartheid pass laws.

But it is more of redemption. I am trying to reclaim African women's voices and experiences, not personally but from dominant feminist narratives that are not inclusive of black or African women. Put in another way, I am claiming the lives of women away from the apartheid state, through employing a Marxist-feminist account of social reproduction. As Gasa (2009) recommended, we must go back to the historic 1956 pass march and overall women's resistance in the twentieth century. A lot can be learnt from revisiting history and utilising archives to tell us something new about politics. Women's resistance against passes, has taught me the importance of referring back to history in order to grasp contours that were taken by South African women in their pursuit of freedom.

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