



Exploring the Political Contribution of Madie Hall Xuma in South Africa: A Decolonial Feminist Theoretical Examination

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A MASTERS RESEARCH REPORT BY:

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Abstract

This study examines the political contribution of Madie Hall Xuma in South Africa, highlighting her initiatives to confront gender disparity and colonial subjugation during apartheid. As an African American advocate who integrated into South African life, Xuma significantly contributed to global Black feminist movements, especially through her leadership in the ANC Women's League and various grassroots efforts. This research examines the overlaps of race, gender, and colonial authority, illustrating how her activism resisted Eurocentric and patriarchal systems, aiding the wider fight for women's rights and national independence. Using literature study and Thematic analysis, the study aims to revive Xuma's political contribution and reevaluate her importance in the political history of South Africa. Rooted in a decolonial feminist viewpoint, this research contests dominant historical accounts that have frequently ignored her contributions, acknowledging her as a key figure in the struggle for gender justice and political liberty during apartheid.

Keywords: *Madie Hall Xuma, decolonial feminism, gender equality, South African struggle, African American movements, transnational feminism, apartheid, ANC Women's League, historical remembrance, colonial authority.*

1. Table of Contents

<i>Exploring the Political Contribution of Madie Hall Xuma in South Africa: A Decolonial Feminist Theoretical Examination.....</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>Plagiarism Declaration</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>Acknowledgement</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Abstract</i>	<i>iv</i>
Chapter One	1
Background And Context Of The Study	1
1. Introduction	1
5.11 1.1 Problem statement	3
5.12 1.2 Rationale of the Research.....	3
5.13 1.3 Research Questions and Objectives	4
5.14.....	5
5.15 1.4 Chapter Overview	5
Chapter Two.....	7
Literature Review	7
2. Introduction	7
2.1 Definition of Key Terms	8
2.1.1 Political contributions.....	8
2.1.2 Decolonial Feminism.....	8
2.1.3 Apartheid South Africa.....	8
2.2 Women in the struggle against apartheid.....	9
2.2.1 The Role of Women in the ANC and the Struggle for Gender Equality	9
2.2.2 Legal Structure and Gender Parity in South Africa.....	9
2.2.3 Women’s Activism and the Women’s March of 1956	9
2.2.4 African Feminism and the Process of Decolonization	11

2.2.5 African Women and the Renaissance in Africa.....	12
2.2.6 Constitutional and Legal Changes: Successes and Difficulties.....	13
2.2.7 The Gendered Exclusions of the African Renaissance: A Feminist Critique of Postcolonial Nation-Building	13
2.3 Madie Hall Xuma: A Pioneer for Gender Equity	13
2.3.1 Madie Hall Xuma’s Political Contribution.....	14
2.3.2 Madie Hall Xuma: A Pioneer in Worldwide Feminist Unity and Decolonial Leadership	14
5.16 2.4 Female Leadership, Advocacy, and Defiance in Worldwide and National Settings 15	
2.4.1 Leadership of Women and Black Internationalism	15
2.4.2 Gender, National Identity, and Change in South Africa.....	15
2.4.3 Females in the National Liberation Movement	15
2.4.4 Negotiation Strength in the Global South.....	17
2.4.5 Gender Oppression and Rebellion.....	17
2.4.6 The Emancipation of Women in African Politics	17
2.4.7 Gender Justice as a Pillar of National Liberation and Social Transformation	19
2.5 Conclusion	20
Chapter Three	21
Theoretical Framework.....	21
3. Introduction.....	21
3.1 Understanding Coloniality	22
3.2 Coloniality and the Political Contribution of Madie Hall Xuma	22
3.3 Influence of Colonial Legacy on Gender, Politics, and Leadership	23
3.4 Understanding Decoloniality.....	24
3.5 Key Concepts of Decoloniality	24
3.6 Understanding of Decolonial Studies	25
3.7 Rationale of Decoloniality	26
3.7.1 Theoretical Framework: Decolonial Feminism	27

3.7.2 Decolonial Feminism as a Conceptual Approach.....	27
3.7.3 The Basis of Decolonial Feminism	28
3.7.4 Decolonial Feminism vs. Conventional Feminist Theories.....	28
3.7.5 Including Indigenous Knowledge.....	29
3.7.6 Power, Geography, and History	29
3.7.7 Building an Inclusive Feminist Praxis.....	29
3.7.8 Madie Hall Xuma's Role in Feminist Activism.....	30
3.8 Critical Diversity Literacy	30
3.9 Conclusion	32
Chapter Four.....	33
Methodology	33
4. Introduction.....	33
4.1 Methodology	33
4.1.1 Qualitative Research Approach	34
4.1.2 Research design	34
4.1.3 Data.....	35
4.1.4 Data Collection	35
4.1.5 Data sources.....	36
4.2 Data Analysis Tools: Thematic Analysis.....	36
4.3 Ethical considerations.....	38
4.4 Conclusion	39
Chapter Five.....	40
Discussion And Analysis.....	40
5. Introduction.....	40
5.1 Madie Hall Xuma: A Pioneer for Gender Equity	41
5.1.1 Madie Hall Xuma's Political Contribution.....	43
5.1.2 Madie Hall Xuma: A Pioneer in Worldwide Feminist Unity and Decolonial Leadership	44
5.2 Coloniality and the Political Contribution of Madie Hall Xuma	53

5.3 Madie Hall Xuma's Role in Feminist Activism	54
5.3 Madie Hall Xuma and the Global Struggle for Black Women’s Liberation: Bridging Movements, Diplomacy, and Institutional Change.....	54
5.3.1 Constructing Connections: Unity Among Black Women Across Nations	54
5.3.2 Bringing Together the African Diaspora for Political Transformation	55
5.3.3 Advocating for Women's Rights in South Africa	55
5.3.4 Involving Institutions for Transformative Change	55
5.3.5 Diplomacy and Confronting Colonial Authority	56
5.3.6 Guidance and Enduring Impact	56
5.4 Madie Hall Xuma and the Enduring Legacy of Black Feminist Leadership in South Africa.....	56
5.4.1 Sustainable Leadership and Organizational Resilience.....	57
5.4.2 The Strength of Shared Leadership and Unity	57
5.4.3 Dedication to Social Advancement and Empowerment	57
5.4.4 Worldwide Links and Feminist Legacy.....	57
5.4.5 Preserving Legacy Through Institutional Memory	58
5.5 Conclusion	58
Chapter Six	59
Conclusion	59
References	61

Chapter One

Background And Context Of The Study

Hall strongly supported women's rights and believed that American views on gender were more progressive than those in South Africa. By the 1950s, the idea of racial uplift had become obsolete, and women's political activism was mainly acknowledged for its ties to the wider struggle against apartheid. Yet, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, as a fresh women's movement took shape in South Africa and defined its objectives, Hall's dedication to living autonomously and authentically would have resonated as a familiar and motivational force from history.

Berger (2001)

1. Introduction

This study explores the contributions of Madie Hall Xuma and her role in promoting gender equality in political leadership in South Africa's Anti-Apartheid Struggle. Madie Hall Xuma is a remarkable but often overlooked figure in history. This study suggests that Madie Hall Xuma's political position offers a key perspective on how she contributed to the fight against gender inequality. Using Decolonial Feminism by Lugones (2010), this research will reveal how gender, race, and the entirety of the colonial legacy are still intertwined and shaping women's social, political, and economic marginalization. Lugones'(2010) theory not only critiques existing power structures but also offers a radical method for comprehending and confronting the institutional obstacles that impede the recognition and empowerment of marginalized women in South Africa.

According to Nkenkana (2015), Africa's future hinges on the complete liberation of women, within the framework of decolonial feminism. She criticizes mainstream development stories for ignoring women's perspectives, stating that genuine freedom and progress in Africa require addressing the mistreatment of women. Nkenkana (2015) portrays women's liberation as a crucial aspect of the

larger struggle against colonialism and imperialism, underscoring that gender parity alone is not enough. She emphasizes that it is crucial to dismantle the remaining colonial power structures to achieve women's liberation. This research examines Madie Hall Xuma's political contribution towards gender equality using a qualitative methodological approach. This research employs a thematic analysis of the speeches, and academic literature by Madie Hall Xuma to pinpoint patterns of marginalization and resistance. This methodological approach aims to build a robust and comprehensive grasp of the complex interactions involved. It examines, from a decolonial feminist viewpoint, ways to confront the marginalization of women in South Africa.

Apartheid in South Africa was characterized by intense racial segregation and systematic discrimination that affected all walks of life, including politics. Women, especially black women, experienced double oppression due to both race and gender. Bond (2010) argued that black women were central to the freedom struggle, challenging not only racial discrimination but also gender bias. Despite these difficulties, many women became influential political figures who fought for both racial equality and gender justice. Hassim (2006), posits that women's groups have been instrumental in challenging and transforming political and social systems.

Madie Hall Xuma, an American-born activist who became an important figure in South African politics, married Dr. A.B. Xuma, the former leader of the African National Congress (ANC), who played a crucial role during this period. Her involvement in the ANC Women's League (ANCWL) and other organizations highlighted the intersecting challenges facing women and laid the groundwork for future progress. Women's roles in the liberation struggle are often overlooked in South African history, particularly when examining figures such as Dr. A.B. Xuma, a notable male leader in the era of apartheid. Although men are frequently commended for their leadership, the crucial contributions made by their wives or female partners in opposing oppression are often overlooked.

This research is structured into key sections to comprehensively examine Madie Hall Xuma's political contribution from a decolonial feminist viewpoint. It begins with an opening that provides context by emphasizing the research subject, background, and the significance of Xuma's contributions. This is succeeded by the problem statement, which pinpoints gaps in knowledge of her political and historical importance. The inquiry directs the study, while the aim focuses on

examining Xuma's influence in the larger context of South African political history and gender movements.

1.1 Problem statement

In spite of the Constitution of South Africa pronouncing the equality of men and women in politics and the economy, women are still marginalised and their liberation war stories are erased and silenced. It appears to be only men that are remembered and given heroism for their role in the struggle against apartheid and colonialism in South Africa. Scholars and journalists have also, it seems, not done enough to document the stories and contributions of women to the struggle against apartheid and colonialism in South Africa. The political, economic, and epistemic marginalisation of women in the history of South Africa is a problem that this proposed study aims to contribute to a solution for by deploying decolonial feminist theory to examine the political contribution of Madie Hall Xuma to the struggle against apartheid and colonialism in South Africa. As such, this proposed study stands to contribute to literature and scholarship on the importance of the political, economic and epistemic inclusion of women in the mainstream life of post-apartheid South Africa. While some previous studies have contributed to the documentation of the contribution of women to the South African liberation struggle, they have done so from other theories, and not decolonial feminist theory that provides a refreshing and decolonial look at women political affairs in South Africa, Africa, and the Global South.

1.2 Rationale of the Research

Considering the economic, political, and epistemic marginalization of women in post-apartheid South Africa outlined above, this proposed study aims to address this issue by examining the contributions of Madie Hall Xuma and her role in advancing gender equality in political leadership during South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle. Madie Hall Xuma, an African-American activist, played a vital part in South African liberation politics, especially with her guidance in the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL). This research seeks to offer a decolonial feminist examination of Xuma's political impact, emphasizing the roles of Black women in fighting apartheid and questioning prevailing patriarchal and Eurocentric accounts in South African

history. Nkenkana (2021) believes that colonial legacies, particularly regarding gender roles, remain ingrained in society.

This research is significant as it tackles the persistent gender disparities and the marginalization of African women in South Africa, stemming from the nation's apartheid history. Despite the Constitution advocating for equality, African women remain underrepresented in positions of leadership and are often omitted from historical accounts. Nkenkana (2021) stresses that the continuous suppression of Black women and other marginalized genders is due to the overlapping factors of race, class, and gender disparities.

This research aims to spotlight Madie Hall Xuma's political contribution, illustrating how apartheid merged racial and gender oppression systems, thereby addressing a frequently overlooked aspect of South African history. The scant acknowledgment of African women's historical roles renders this research even more essential. Additionally, South Africa's continuous endeavors to come to terms with its apartheid history and achieve its constitutional goal of equality enhance the significance of this work. Based on my background as a young South African woman of colour from a politically engaged family, I offer a distinct perspective to this research. Rooted in decolonial feminism, this study highlights the voices of African women, contests prevailing Eurocentric views, and deepens our comprehension of Madie Hall Xuma's impact on gender and racial equality during her era and in society.

1.3 Research Questions and Objectives

This research aims to investigate the political contribution of Madie Hall Xuma through the lens of Decolonial Feminism, especially about South Africa's fight against apartheid. The study is directed by these questions:

1. From a decolonial feminism perspective, what was the political contribution of Madie Hall Xuma in the struggle against apartheid?
2. How did Madie Hall Xuma's activism and speeches reveal Decolonial Feminism towards the apartheid struggle?

3. From a decolonial feminism perspective, what may be the theoretical and policy suggestions for the political inclusion of women in South Africa?

The objectives of this study correspond with these research inquiries:

1. To examine how Decolonial Feminism provides a lens through which to analyze Madie Hall Xuma's political impact during apartheid.
2. To explore how her activism and speeches exemplify the principles of Decolonial Feminism and contribute to the broader struggle against apartheid.
3. To generate theoretical insights and policy recommendations that could inform contemporary efforts to enhance women's political inclusion in South Africa.

This chapter will address these research questions and goals, laying the groundwork for a conversation on how Madie Hall Xuma's activism continues to influence feminist and political discussions in contemporary South Africa.

1.4 Limitations of the study

The limitation of utilizing a qualitative research approach with secondary data to examine Madie Hall Xuma's political contribution from a decolonial feminist perspective is the risk of bias and constraints in the available sources. Secondary data sourced from historical records, archives, and previous research may predominantly showcase the narratives of the time and may not fully encompass the marginalized perspectives that decolonial feminism aims to emphasize. Furthermore, the lack of sources can restrict the thorough examination of Xuma's impact. Relying on secondary data hinders the researcher's opportunity to directly engage with the subject matter, restricting the level of contextual comprehension.

1.4 Chapter Overview

Chapter One: This chapter outlines how the research thoughtfully examines Madie Hall Xuma's underestimated role in promoting gender equality during South Africa's anti-apartheid movement

by employing a decolonial feminist perspective, reviewing her political activism, leadership within the ANC Women's League, and opposition to racial and gender injustice.

Chapter Two: This chapter examines a literature review that positions the political impact of Madie Hall Xuma within the contexts of decolonial feminism, apartheid history, and African feminist activism, emphasizing women's contributions to the ANC, legal and constitutional issues, and the persistent fight for gender equality in post-apartheid South Africa.

Chapter Three: This chapter defines decoloniality as the theoretical framework for examining Madie Hall Xuma's political activism, highlighting her opposition to colonial power systems, Eurocentric gender standards, and the marginalization of African women's leadership.

Chapter Four: This chapter outlines the qualitative research methodology, highlighting a decolonial feminist perspective in examining Madie Hall Xuma's political contribution through thematic analysis of both primary and secondary data.

Chapter Five: This chapter analyzes Madie Hall Xuma's neglected political contribution through a decolonial feminist perspective, emphasizing her global activism, roles in Black women's liberation, and lasting legacy within South Africa's anti-apartheid and gender equality movements.

Chapter Six: This chapter summarizes the theoretical and historical framework for examining Madie Hall Xuma's activism through a decolonial feminist perspective, emphasizing her struggle against gender inequality during apartheid, her global advocacy efforts, and her enduring influence on South Africa's political and gender environments.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2. Introduction

This chapter offers a literature review that supports the theoretical and historical framework that offers an understanding of the political contributions of Madie Hall Xuma. The study will investigate essential ideas like political donations, decolonial feminism, and the historical context of Apartheid South Africa. These definitions are crucial for grasping the wider arguments put forth in this research. Based on these core ideas, the review will explore the diverse roles of women in the fight against apartheid, emphasizing not only their contributions to the liberation effort but also the ongoing challenges they continue to confront despite legal and constitutional progress. This chapter will focus on examining the roles of women in the African National Congress (ANC), evaluating their essential contributions alongside the persistent challenges posed by internal patriarchal systems. Moreover, the review will consider the legal framework after apartheid, analyzing constitutional elements for gender equality in conjunction with the actual challenges of implementation and the persistent struggle for true equality. This study will also include the wider themes of African feminism and its significance in the decolonization process, thereby providing context for the obstacles and successes of women's activism within the South African context. Ultimately, this chapter will examine the intricate relationships of women's participation in the African Renaissance and the ongoing challenges of transforming legal advancements into real equality. By utilizing this layered strategy, the literature review seeks to establish a solid basis for a deep comprehension of the ongoing interactions between gender, power, and social transformation in South Africa.

2.1 Definition of Key Terms

2.1.1 Political contributions

A political contribution means providing financial assistance or other resources to back candidates, political parties, or organizations in their election campaigns or activities. Clarno and Vally (2024: p. 23-45) contend that South Africa's racial capitalism is fundamentally rooted in historical and systemic disparities that persistently influence the country's socio-economic and political conditions. They argue that racial capitalism, as a concept, sheds light on the interaction among race, class, and power during colonialism, apartheid, and the current neoliberal era.

2.1.2 Decolonial Feminism

Decolonial feminism examines the intersections of colonialism, patriarchy, and capitalism to understand their ongoing impacts on gender roles and inequalities, particularly in regions that were previously colonized. This method seeks to dismantle colonial and patriarchal systems, giving importance to Indigenous viewpoints, intersectionality, and the experiences of women of colour to confront global power structures. Mendez (2015) argues that a decolonial perspective is necessary to reevaluate traditional feminist methodologies that tend to favour Western viewpoints.

2.1.3 Apartheid South Africa

Apartheid South Africa was a system of institutionalized racial segregation and discrimination. The period from 1948 to 1994 in South Africa was characterized by Apartheid, a system of racial segregation and discrimination enforced by the government. In this period, the black majority encountered strict limitations and were compelled to reside apart from the white minority, who wielded the majority of the control. This system resulted in significant social, economic, and political disparities. Maylam (2017) suggests that South Africa's racial past is built on the systematic foundations of racism, segregation, and apartheid, which were ingrained in society both legally and culturally.

These explanations provide a basic comprehension of key terms for this academic study.

2.2 Women in the struggle against apartheid

This section emphasizes the role of women in the liberation fight, illustrating how their activism influenced South Africa's political environment. Women played an essential yet frequently underestimated part in the struggle against apartheid. Although the historical narrative primarily focuses on male leaders, women played a crucial role in resistance, orchestrating protests, rallying communities, and confronting both racial and gender discrimination.

2.2.1 The Role of Women in the ANC and the Struggle for Gender Equality

Women have consistently been vital to the ANC's liberation activities, both before and following the establishment of the party. Ginwala (1990) highlights the crucial roles women played in the ANC, stressing their participation from the beginning. Mlotshwa (2018) critiques the ongoing patriarchal frameworks within the ANC, especially concerning the ANC Women's League (ANCWL). Mlotshwa's (2018) work emphasizes the continuous battle faced by women in the party to attain freedom, not solely from colonialism but also gender oppression. She suggests a combination of theoretical and practical approaches to tackle these problems within the movement.

2.2.2 Legal Structure and Gender Parity in South Africa

South Africa's legal system presents considerable opportunities for promoting gender equality. The South African Constitution of 1996, seen as one of the most advanced globally, forbids gender discrimination and mandates the government to implement measures to guarantee equality (Albertyn, 1994). Nevertheless, the actual enforcement of these rights has encountered difficulties. The Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill, brought forth by the Portfolio Committee on Women, Children, and Individuals with Disabilities, seeks to tackle the historical marginalization of women in South Africa. This legislation corresponds with global standards, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), strengthening South Africa's dedication to gender equality (Minister of Women, 2013).

2.2.3 Women's Activism and the Women's March of 1956

The 1956 Women's March to the Union Buildings stands as a significant event in the timeline of women's activism in South Africa. Meer (2005) highlights the necessity of incorporating gender

viewpoints into political action, whereas Hassim's (2014) analysis of the Women's Charter emphasizes the ongoing fight for gender equality, illustrating how the ideals of the 1956 march still shape activism in the present. Meintjes (1996) highlights that the ideals driving the 1956 Women's March to the Union Buildings are still significant today, as women's activism was vital in influencing South Africa's shift toward democracy. The march serves as evidence of the strength and solidarity of South African women, showcasing the linked battles against racial and gender injustice. Kuumba (2002) also contends that the involvement of women in social movements is intertwined with larger liberation efforts. In both South Africa and the United States, women's activism tackled not only racial injustice but also the patriarchal obstacles that frequently downplayed their contributions.

The struggle for equality in South Africa was not a one-dimensional movement but a multifaceted fight that connected matters of race, gender, and class. Newton (2013) examines how Black women during apartheid participated in daily acts of resistance outside formal political arenas, striving for dignity and equal rights in every facet of life. This corresponds with Bower's (2010) view that women's issues were frequently marginalized in national liberation movements, necessitating a more detailed historical analysis that recognizes their agency and influence. Acknowledging individuals such as Madie Hall Xuma enables a richer comprehension of how women's activism influenced the wider anti-apartheid struggle and helped create a more comprehensive historical narrative.

The expression "*Basus'iimbokodo, bawel'imilambo*" (they lift rocks and cross rivers) vividly embodies the challenges South African women encountered in their quest for justice. This metaphor illustrates their strength in confronting oppressive systems and maneuvering through tough social and political environments. Magubane (2010) explores how women in the ANC from 1950 to 1990 dealt with the conflicts between nationalist movements and feminist perspectives, illustrating how these interactions influenced the larger fight for liberation. Despite these obstacles, the united efforts and resolve of women persisted in advancing the pursuit of justice.

The legacy of the 1956 Women's March highlights the significance of intersectionality and unity in the pursuit of justice. Kuumba (2002) emphasizes that the fight for women does not conclude with national liberation; instead, it necessitates ongoing actions to eliminate both racial and

patriarchal injustices. Reaching genuine equality requires continuous dedication, united efforts, and an acknowledgment of the sacrifices of those who prepared the path for future generations.

2.2.4 African Feminism and the Process of Decolonisation

The African feminist movement is crucial in challenging the legacies of colonialism and patriarchy. Irakoze (2018) evaluates how social justice movements can occasionally favour intellectual debates rather than tangible actions. She supports activism that is based on actual experiences instead of theoretical concepts. Kagumire (2018) emphasizes that young Muslim women in East Africa, frequently marginalized in both economic and social aspects, are at risk of being recruited by extremist organisations.

The connection between gender, commemoration, and African feminism offers an essential perspective for comprehending current decolonization initiatives in post-apartheid South Africa and elsewhere. Different academics provide critical viewpoints on the ways in which gendered stories are integrated into public memory, the principles of African feminism, and their function in breaking down colonial impacts. Marschall (2010) explores how memorialization in post-apartheid South Africa continues to be heavily gendered, frequently overlooking the contributions of women in the anti-apartheid movement. She highlights that public monuments and memorials often honour male individuals, reinforcing prevailing patriarchal narratives. Even when women are celebrated, they are often depicted in terms of their roles as mothers or wives instead of being seen as autonomous political figures. Marschall's (2010) research emphasizes the persistent gender bias in collective memory and the necessity for feminist actions to confront and reform historical portrayals. Coetzee (2017) expands on this critique by exploring the role of Oyeronke Oyewumi in African feminist theory. Oyewumi critiques the application of Western gender classifications in African cultures and contests the supremacy of Eurocentric feminist theories. Coetzee (2017) claims that African feminism serves as a means of decolonization by challenging colonial gender norms and fostering contextually relevant interpretations of African womanhood.

Building on these concepts, Du Toit and Coetzee (2017) explore the philosophical aspects of African feminism. They contend that gender examination in African perspectives should be based on native knowledge systems instead of Western philosophies. Their work highlights the significance of restoring African knowledge systems within the larger decolonial initiative.

Akoleowo (2024) places African feminism in the context of historical activism, highlighting the case of Alimotu Pelewura. Through an analysis of Pelewura's opposition to colonial economic policies and her promotion of women's rights, Akoleowo (2024) demonstrates that African feminist activism has consistently been linked with anti-colonial movements. This case study emphasizes that African feminism is not merely a theory but also a practical experience of resistance and decolonization. Pelewura's narrative emphasizes the role of African women in influencing political environments and challenges the historical neglect of female activists. Mekgwe (2008) provides a wider theoretical viewpoint on African feminisms, highlighting their variety and flexibility. She examines the inclination to regard African feminism as one unified, homogeneous movement and advocates for a more inclusive perspective that recognizes different cultural and historical contexts. Her work acts as a fundamental reference for grasping the dynamic and developing aspects of African feminist ideology, especially concerning gender justice and decolonization. This vulnerability is contextualized within the larger problem of exclusion and discrimination based on gender.

2.2.5 African Women and the Renaissance in Africa

Sesanti (2019) argues that African women must play a key role in the African Renaissance. He emphasizes the significance of acknowledging and rebuilding the contributions of women that colonial and patriarchal narratives have traditionally obscured. Sesanti (2019) calls for a rethinking of Africa that prioritizes women's perspectives and experiences, especially in the pursuit of decolonizing education and leadership frameworks.

The conversation about African women's leadership in the context of the African Renaissance is enhanced by academics who investigate the connections between African philosophy, feminism, and conventional gender roles. Sesanti (2016) supports the re-examination of African philosophy as a basis for women's leadership, challenging Eurocentric frameworks and highlighting indigenous knowledge systems that acknowledge women's historical roles. Mihindou (2006) builds on this by asserting that the African Renaissance needs to include a feminist perspective to prevent reproducing patriarchal frameworks disguised as cultural revival. She emphasizes the lack of women's perspectives and urges African feminism to incorporate both traditional knowledge and modern gender issues. Omotoyinbo (2018) critiques Sesanti's method, warning against idealizing pre-colonial gender relations and stressing the necessity for African philosophy to adapt

to contemporary socio-political contexts. Collectively, these viewpoints highlight the importance of combining African philosophy with feminist ideas to guarantee that the African Renaissance promotes gender equity and empowering leadership for women throughout the continent.

2.2.6 Constitutional and Legal Changes: Successes and Difficulties

Albertyn (1994) examines the legal changes in South Africa after apartheid, highlighting the 1996 Constitution's importance in promoting gender equality. The Constitution's forward-thinking position has aided women's engagement in politics, education, and the economy. Nonetheless, obstacles persist, especially in the private sector, where the gender pay disparity and various types of discrimination still hinder complete equality.

2.2.7 The Gendered Exclusions of the African Renaissance: A Feminist Critique of Postcolonial Nation-Building

Msimang (2000) explores the concept of the African Renaissance, which anticipates Africa's revitalization in cultural, political, and economic aspects. She highlights that although it emphasizes freedom and advancement, the African Renaissance mostly overlooks women and their roles. From a feminist viewpoint, she underscores how patriarchy still marginalizes women, restricting the transformative possibilities of these initiatives. Her research highlights the necessity of incorporating women's perspectives and experiences in these initiatives to genuinely bring about significant transformation. Msimang's (2000) perspectives align with wider feminist discussions regarding representation and exclusion, enhancing analyses such as the examination of Xuma's political contribution, which similarly addresses the marginalization of women. Collectively, they add to an increasing demand for reevaluating African political initiatives via a decolonial feminist perspective.

2.3 Madie Hall Xuma: A Pioneer for Gender Equity

Madie Hall Xuma, an African American teacher and activist, had a crucial but frequently underappreciated role in South Africa's struggle for gender and racial equality. Born in 1894 in North Carolina, she surmounted obstacles in education and activism, obtaining degrees from Winston-Salem Teachers College and Columbia University. Upon marrying Dr. A.B. Xuma, she

relocated to South Africa, where she served as the inaugural president of the ANC Women's League (1943–1949), championing women's complete involvement in the ANC and establishing the Zenzele movement to uplift women. Berger (2001) emphasizes Xuma's cross-border activism, connecting the fight for justice of African Americans and South Africans. Her leadership within the ANCWL emphasized grassroots mobilization in education, health, and social welfare, even in the face of opposition from patriarchal and apartheid systems. Hendricks (2022) elaborates on her efforts, highlighting her battle against systemic racism in the United States and South Africa. Both researchers acknowledge Xuma's influence on international activist networks and the significance of recognizing women's contributions to liberation movements.

2.3.1 Madie Hall Xuma's Political Contribution

Madie Hall Xuma became the first president of the ANC Women's League (ANCWL) in 1943, turning it into a platform for tackling issues unique to women, including wage inequality, healthcare, and education. An African-American teacher and activist, she significantly backed A.B. Xuma and promoted the ANC's wider objectives (Hughes, 2013). Her leadership focused on community organizing, and rallying women against apartheid-era legislation, especially those limiting Black women's movement. Xuma's experiences across the Atlantic, influenced by Jim Crow laws in America and apartheid in South Africa, enabled her to compare racial oppression in both situations. She utilized these insights to promote gender equity and establish global feminist partnerships (Cooke & Stevenson, 2018). As a worldwide representative of South African women, she interacted with groups such as the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) (Hendricks, 2022). Xuma's activism established the foundation for the ANCWL's involvement in the liberation struggle and marked her as a pioneer of decolonial feminism. By contesting patriarchal standards within the ANC and promoting gender-inclusive freedom, she impacted subsequent movements, such as the 1956 Women's March opposing pass laws (Hendricks, 2022).

2.3.2 Madie Hall Xuma: A Pioneer in Worldwide Feminist Unity and Decolonial Leadership

In 1943, Madie Hall Xuma became the inaugural president of the ANC Women's League (ANCWL) and turned it into a forum for tackling women's concerns such as pay inequality, health

services, and education. An African-American teacher and activist, she backed A.B. Xuma and promoted the broader objectives of the ANC. Her experiences across the Atlantic under Jim Crow and apartheid shaped her activism, enabling her to connect racial oppression and promote gender equality. She additionally established international feminist coalitions, advocating for South African women in worldwide entities such as the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF).

2.4 Female Leadership, Advocacy, and Defiance in Worldwide and National Settings

2.4.1 Leadership of Women and Black Internationalism

Cyna (2023) explores Sonya Y. Ramsey's study of Bertha Maxwell-Roddey: A Modern-Day Race Woman and the Influence of Black Leadership, placing Maxwell-Roddey in the wider context of Black women's leadership in America. The book illustrates how Maxwell-Roddey strategically addressed racial and gender disparities through her leadership positions. This aligns with the experiences of Black women in South Africa, who also dealt with intersecting oppressions in their activism. Similarly, Grant (2016) examines the function of the National Council of Negro Women throughout the Cold War, highlighting how Black internationalism and motherhood cultivated global unity among women activists.

2.4.2 Gender, National Identity, and Change in South Africa

Meintjes (1998) examines the relationship between gender and nationalism in South African history, highlighting the significance of women's involvement during and after apartheid in nationalist movements. Lenser (2019) adds to this by detailing the South African women's movement, emphasizing the significance of feminist principles and multiracial collaboration in promoting women's rights. These pieces collectively demonstrate how women's activism was both shaped by and played a crucial role in advancing wider political and social changes.

2.4.3 Females in the National Liberation Movement

Frates (1993) offers a summary of women's involvement in South Africa's national liberation struggle from 1948 to 1960, emphasizing their resistance to overlapping racial and gender

injustices. Meer (1985) additionally records the personal experiences of women during apartheid, highlighting their resilience and the tactics they used to oppose an oppressive system. Collectively, these studies offer a detailed insight into the roles of women in the liberation struggles of South Africa. The involvement of women in armed conflicts and liberation movements has been extensively researched, questioning the traditional view of women as mere victims of war. Conversely, recent research emphasizes their involvement as combatants, planners, and political figures. Wood (2019) analyzes the reasons behind rebel groups recruiting female fighters, asserting that their involvement is frequently deliberate and aligns with strategic and ideological objectives. Involving women can boost a group's credibility, improve internal unity, and offer operational benefits.

Centering on Africa, Oluwaniyi (2021) broadens this conversation by exploring the various roles women assume in warfare beyond mere combat. She underscores their roles as spies, logisticians, recruiters, and community mobilizers, illustrating how they maneuver through patriarchal limitations while fulfilling crucial functions in wartime initiatives. Her examination contests conventional war stories that ignore women's involvement, showing that their role in conflicts has been a steady historical trend throughout African wars. Crook (2018) examines the ideological roots of women's participation in liberation movements, concentrating on the Women's Liberation Movement from 1968 to 1985. She explores the convergence of activism and personal growth, illustrating how feminist awareness developed from both shared efforts and personal self-exploration. Her work highlights that the struggle for gender equality goes beyond political realms, influencing personal and psychological identities.

From a historical viewpoint, Giardina (2010) outlines the beginnings of the Women's Liberation Movement from 1953 to 1970, connecting it to civil rights movements and labour conflicts. She contends that the struggle for women's freedom was closely linked to wider social justice movements, highlighting the interconnections among gender, race, and class conflicts. This historical examination offers essential context for grasping modern feminist activism and its links to previous liberation movements. Evans (2015) expands on these views by reevaluating the Women's Liberation Movement as a unified revolutionary force instead of a disjointed array of struggles. She contends that its transformative objectives surpassed mere legal and policy changes, intending to confront deeply rooted societal frameworks. By focusing on women's agency, Evans

(2015) underscores the transformative impact of liberation movements in reshaping gender roles and power relationships.

2.4.4 Negotiation Strength in the Global South

Mohanan (2023) explores how women in India, South Africa, and Brazil expressed their agency amid patriarchal and colonial structures. Through the examination of three political case studies, this comparative method underscores common challenges and strategies faced by women in the Global South as they endeavored to navigate power across various contexts.

2.4.5 Gender Oppression and Rebellion

Healy-Clancy (2017) explores the establishment and defiance of gender-based oppression during apartheid, whereas Hutson (2007) examines the persistent discrimination encountered by women in post-apartheid South Africa. Both writers highlight the ingenuity and strength of women in confronting systemic injustices and aiding larger movements for justice and equality.

2.4.6 The Emancipation of Women in African Politics

In 1983, Thomas Sankara spearheaded a revolution in Upper Volta, changing the nation's name to Burkina Faso and launching significant reforms in land redistribution, anti-corruption, reforestation, education, and healthcare. His administration rallied workers, farmers, women, and youth while backing worldwide liberation movements, such as those opposing apartheid in Cuba, Nicaragua, and Palestine. Although his groundbreaking leadership was abruptly ended by his assassination during a 1987 coup, his concepts and aspirations lived on.

A key aspect of Sankara's revolutionary initiative was the liberation of women, which he expressed in his speech on International Women's Day on March 8, 1987. Highlighting the fundamental causes of women's oppression, he stressed that genuine revolution cannot occur without the complete involvement of women (Sankara, 1990). His message resonated worldwide, as Nicaraguan leader Dorotea Wilson subsequently lauded his profound comprehension of gender issues and support for women's rights movements. This viewpoint agrees with wider feminist and decolonial analyses, with researchers like McFadden (2005) arguing that gender justice is not a

secondary issue but fundamental to the larger fight for social equality and national independence. Likewise, Harsch (2014) emphasises that global leaders such as Nicaraguan figure Dorotea Wilson recognized Sankara's deep insight into gender matters and his steadfast dedication to women's rights.

In his address, Sankara recognized the longstanding marginalization of women from the advantages of revolutionary progress, claiming that "*the revolution cannot succeed without the liberation of women*"(Sankara,1990). He encouraged both males and females to confront established gender hierarchies, contending that true social change necessitated a cultural change in the view of gender roles. He stated:

Starting now, the men and women of Burkina Faso should profoundly change their image of themselves. For they are part of a society that is not only establishing new social relations but is also provoking a cultural transformation, upsetting the relations of authority between men and women and forcing each to rethink the nature of both. (Sankara, 1990: p 8)

Sankara's appeal for gender equality was based on the larger fight for human dignity and national freedom. He understood that the revolution's promise would remain unfulfilled as long as women were still marginalized, pushed to the "*shadows of anonymity*" (Sankara, 1990 : p 8). His focus on women's liberation as essential to revolutionary success set him apart from many of his peers and highlighted his dedication to decolonial feminist ideals. By connecting women's liberation to the wider revolutionary movement, Sankara regarded gender justice as a crucial requirement for social change rather than a secondary issue. His outlook persists in motivating feminist and decolonial movements globally, emphasizing the lasting significance of his concepts in current battles for social justice. According to Harsch (2014), Sankara's leadership continues to serve as a reference point for revolutionary movements aiming to incorporate gender justice into wider contexts of political and economic freedom.

2.4.7 Gender Justice as a Pillar of National Liberation and Social Transformation

On August 9, 2007, Thabo Mbeki, the former President of South Africa, gave a speech during the National Women's Day festivities in Galeshewe, Kimberley. His speech not only honoured the historical hardships faced by South African women but also highlighted the persistent necessity for gender equality, economic empowerment, and the elimination of gender-based violence. This address acts as a noteworthy illustration of how political discourse can be employed to strengthen national identity, encourage social change, and tackle systemic disparities (Chaka & Adanlawo, 2023). Mbeki began his speech by honouring the heroines of South Africa's liberation movement, emphasizing the roles of individuals like Charlotte Maxeke, Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, and Frances Baard. He claimed that these women represented the values of resistance to racism and sexism, showcasing a steadfast dedication to justice and equality. Mbeki's reference to historical figures aligns with his larger political approach of connecting modern governance to the legacies of anti-apartheid efforts (Williams, 2009). By emphasizing the significance of women in the fight, he strengthened the belief that women's rights are essential to the larger South African democratic initiative.

A central theme of the address was the necessity for ongoing advancement in realizing gender equality. Mbeki emphasized that National Women's Day ought to be a chance to assess the country's progress and obstacles in promoting a non-sexist society. He raised an important statement: *"We need to consider what additional actions we can take to make the empowerment and liberation of women a daily reality."* This rhetorical approach aligns with the Pan-Africanist discourse that Mbeki frequently used, where he highlighted shared responsibility and the ethical obligation to rectify historical wrongs (Hibbert, 2016).

Moreover, Mbeki recognized the economic exclusion of women and the importance of involving them in the formal economy. He highlighted the progress achieved in enhancing women's representation in government, mentioning that women made up 40% of national ministers and deputy ministers. Nonetheless, he also emphasized the ongoing challenges faced by female workers, especially those in rural regions and the agriculture industry. In tackling these inequalities, Mbeki advocated for increased access to economic resources and skills training initiatives, emphasizing that gender equality is essential for national economic advancement.

A primary focus of Mbeki's speech was gender-based violence, which he characterized as a relentless plague that hampers democratic advancement. He stated, "*We cannot declare ourselves free from oppression while we read every day in the news distressing stories about the mistreatment of women and children.*" This remark highlights the conflict between constitutional gender equality and the actual experiences of numerous South African women. His call for enhanced collaborations among government, civil society, and traditional organizations to address violence demonstrates a practical governance strategy that prioritizes collective efforts.

Mbeki recognized men's contributions to the fight for gender justice, highlighting the South African Men's Forum and Mbuyiselo Botha's activism as instances of positive male involvement. He acknowledged the necessity for a change in patriarchal views, asserting that men must engage proactively in dismantling systemic gender inequality. This corresponds with wider feminist discussions that support the involvement of male allies in the quest for gender equality.

2.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter lays a strong theoretical and historical groundwork for comprehending the complex interconnections of gender, politics, and social frameworks in South Africa. By delving into important ideas like political contributions, decolonial feminism, and the historical impact of apartheid, it establishes a foundation for analyzing the diverse roles of women in the liberation movement and their ongoing contributions after apartheid. It emphasizes the ongoing gap between constitutional pledges to gender equality and the actual experiences of women in South Africa, placing these issues within wider debates on African feminism and decolonization. In conclusion, this chapter presents a detailed perspective for examining the complex interaction among gender, power, and social change, while also providing actionable suggestions to address policy deficiencies, elevate marginalized voices, and promote enduring cultural and societal transformation.

Chapter Three

Theoretical Framework

3. Introduction

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework for this research, focusing on decoloniality as the primary lens to investigate Madie Hall Xuma's political contribution to South Africa. It analyzes how Xuma's activism confronted the persistent effects of colonialism, encompassing power dynamics, knowledge systems, and social frameworks created during the colonial era. These systems perpetuate disparities rooted in race, gender, and knowledge, frequently favouring Western concepts while marginalizing alternative perspectives. Decoloniality provides a means to tear down these structures by appreciating non-Western knowledge and reinstating the voices and autonomy of individuals sidelined by colonial legacies. Lugones (2010) questions the belief that gender, as defined by Western feminist theory, is a universal concept. She contends that colonialism enforced a strict, hierarchical gender binary on Indigenous and African cultures, where gender roles had been more flexible and less restrictive before.

This study also relies on decolonial feminism as enunciated by Lugones (2010), placing Xuma's work in the context of the "*coloniality of gender*," as analyzed by theorists such as (Lugones,2010). This idea challenges the way colonialism enforced Eurocentric gender standards that devalued women of colour and altered traditional views of gender before colonization. The study highlights Xuma's struggle against racial and gender oppression by analyzing her leadership roles in the African National Congress Women's League. Her activism showcases a revival of African women's leadership and autonomy. The emphasis on decoloniality is crucial in this context as it facilitates an examination of the intersections between race, gender, and colonial authority. It also highlights Xuma's frequently neglected contributions, portraying her as pivotal in opposing colonial and patriarchal structures. Ultimately, this perspective underscores Xuma's lasting influence on the decolonization of South African history and ideas.

3.1 Understanding Coloniality

Coloniality denotes the persistent frameworks of power, knowledge, and social arrangements that began in the colonial era and still influence global hierarchies, identities, and individual experiences well beyond the official conclusion of colonial governance. In contrast to colonialism, which refers to a historical era of control and exploitation, coloniality is an ongoing framework of power ingrained in contemporary cultural, political, and economic structures. As Quijano (2007) clarifies, coloniality is an integral aspect of modernity, in which colonialism created a worldwide social structure founded on racial hierarchies, labour exploitation, and dominance in knowledge. This lasting colonial framework sustains inequalities, favouring Western ways of knowing and existing while sidelining others.

Lugones (2016) builds on Quijano's (2007) analysis by presenting the idea of the "*coloniality of gender*," which explores how colonial structures enforced Eurocentric, patriarchal, and binary gender standards on colonized communities. These systems eliminated Indigenous, communal, and non-binary perspectives on gender, dehumanizing women of colour and placing them in subordinate roles within racial and patriarchal structures. Boatcă and Meghji (2024) emphasize the impact of coloniality on the development of global social theories, asserting that Western intellectual traditions have consistently sidelined non-Western knowledge systems and their contributions.

3.2 Coloniality and the Political Contribution of Madie Hall Xuma

The influence of coloniality is clear in the gendered, racialized, and political frameworks that formed both apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. Decolonial theory, as discussed by Quijano (2007), explores the ways in which coloniality continues after formal colonial governance through the racialization of labor, the elevation of Western knowledge frameworks, and the sidelining of non-Western epistemologies. In this context, coloniality creates hierarchies that oppress women of color, stripping them of political influence and intellectual acknowledgment.

Lugones (2016) broadens this examination by conceptualizing the "*coloniality of gender*," highlighting how colonialism enforced strict, Eurocentric gender norms that obliterated precolonial, communal gender frameworks. In African cultures, gender dynamics were frequently

adaptable and reliant on context, but colonial governance established a patriarchal dichotomy that strengthened the subjugation of women. This framework elucidates the systemic marginalization of African women from leadership and political arenas, both in the era of colonialism and thereafter. Boatcă and Meghji (2024) additionally contend that coloniality creates epistemic injustice, favoring Western intellectual traditions while marginalizing non-Western input. This is evident in historical accounts that hide or downplay the contributions of African women in anti-colonial and political struggles. Tackling this epistemic marginalization is crucial to decolonial feminist practice, which aims to recover African women's intellectual and political contributions to challenge Eurocentric frameworks.

In this framework, African feminist practice confronts these colonial histories by emphasizing the leadership and political agency of African women. Individuals like Madie Hall Xuma, who significantly contributed to promoting women's rights and political engagement, illustrate this struggle. Her role in the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL) supports decolonial feminist initiatives aimed at reshaping narratives and theories that endorse the independence of African women. Therefore, decolonial feminism critiques both colonial and patriarchal frameworks while also striving to reinstate historically marginalized viewpoints and methods.

3.3 Influence of Colonial Legacy on Gender, Politics, and Leadership

Colonial history has deeply influenced the examination of gender, politics, and leadership in South Africa, frequently negating or minimizing the contributions of African women. Madie Hall Xuma's activism provides an essential example for comprehending how colonial power structures have been challenged and deconstructed. According to Lugones (2016), colonial systems enforced patriarchal standards that reduced the roles of African women in leadership and decision-making. Xuma's promotion of gender equality in the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL) and various organizations serves as a direct challenge to these colonial constraints. Quijano (2007) points out the colonial creation of a racialized global framework that invalidated non-Western knowledge and authority. Xuma's activism aids in the decolonization of history by restoring the intellectual and political agency of African women. Her focus on women signifies a

dismissal of colonial narratives that aimed to depict African societies as deficient in knowledge and advancement.

Boatcă and Meghji (2024) contend that coloniality sustains epistemic injustice by omitting non-Western inputs from worldwide social theory. Xuma's work embodies African feminist praxis, combining activism with theory and presenting an alternative to Eurocentric models. This research challenges the marginalization of African women's roles in political and social change by highlighting Xuma's contributions.

3.4 Understanding Decoloniality

Decoloniality is the antithesis of coloniality, as defined by Mignolo (2013), and is a conceptual framework, practice, and way of thinking focused on separating from the systems and reasoning of coloniality. It acts as an initiative of "*epistemic disobedience*" aimed at reversing the impacts of colonialism within knowledge, power, and existence systems, contesting Eurocentric perspectives while highlighting the diversity of knowledge and focusing on non-Western ways of knowing. Decoloniality actively challenges coloniality—a concept introduced by Quijano (2007) to characterize the enduring impact of colonial systems on contemporary power dynamics, knowledge creation, and societal hierarchies. Mignolo (2013) emphasizes that decoloniality transcends mere resistance; it involves rethinking human existence beyond colonial structures. Maldonado-Torres (2007) critiques the coloniality of existence as a dehumanizing mechanism pushing colonized individuals to the margins of humanity. Decoloniality challenges this by reaffirming the agency and humanity of those who are marginalized. In a similar vein, Wynter (2003) contests the coloniality of power and existence by suggesting an alternative perspective on "*the human*," separated from colonial ideas of race and modernity.

3.5 Key Concepts of Decoloniality

Three key concepts of decoloniality—the coloniality of power, knowledge, and being—are central to this framework.

- i. **Coloniality of Power:** Restrepo (2018) defines the coloniality of power as the enduring systems of control that continue after the official conclusion of colonialism, reinforcing racial, economic, and gender hierarchies. During apartheid in South Africa, these hierarchies pushed African women to the margins, and Xuma's activism aimed to break down these oppressions through her leadership in the African National Congress Women's League and various other groups.
- ii. **Coloniality of Knowledge:** The coloniality of knowledge challenges the supremacy of Western ways of knowing in establishing what constitutes "*valid*" knowledge, with Mignolo (2013) highlighting the importance of reclaiming indigenous and marginalized knowledge systems as a means of achieving epistemic justice. Xuma's political efforts embody this principle by enhancing the voices of African women and contesting Eurocentric gender norms that have deprived African women of their agency.
- iii. **Coloniality of Being:** Maldonado-Torres (2007) and Okello (2020) highlight how coloniality diminishes colonized individuals to a sub-human level. Xuma's promotion of self-love, community support, and opposition to patriarchal and racial oppression aligns with endeavors to reclaim dignity and humanity for the marginalized.

3.6 Understanding of Decolonial Studies

Decolonial studies provide important perspectives on grasping Xuma's contributions. Restrepo's (2018) framework regarding the coloniality of power aids in examining how apartheid perpetuated global hierarchies related to race, gender, and authority, while Gbogi's (2021) investigation of metapoetics and decoloniality emphasizes how cultural creation serves as a space for contesting colonial stories. Xuma's political speeches and writings function as decolonial cultural actions that affirm the intellectual and political power of African women. Okello's (2020) study on the coloniality of being highlights the significance of rediscovering humanity amidst oppressive

structures, resonating with Xuma's focus on empowerment and self-acceptance. Wynter's (2003) urge to reconsider "*the human*" is crucial to a decolonial feminist perspective, as Xuma's work questions colonial ideas of femininity and humanity. Mignolo's (2013) idea of epistemic disobedience enriches Xuma's defiance of colonial gender standards and her advocacy for African women's autonomy, whereas Maldonado-Torres's (2007) analysis of the colonality of being emphasizes Xuma's attempts to reclaim dignity and agency for African women oppressed by colonial and patriarchal structures.

3.7 Rationale of Decoloniality

Decoloniality serves as the perfect framework for the research paper titled "*Exploring the Political Contribution of Madie Hall Xuma in South Africa: A Decolonial Feminist Theoretical Examination*" as it facilitates the critique and opposition to Eurocentric viewpoints that have long neglected or minimized the influence of African women leaders. This method emphasizes combating the enduring effects of colonialism in aspects such as knowledge, power relations, and social frameworks. It corresponds with the study's aim of enlightening Madie Hall Xuma's political work, which has frequently been overlooked by prevailing colonial and patriarchal accounts in South African history.

By applying a decolonial perspective, the study emphasizes Xuma's leadership and activism as a crucial element of African women's battles against colonial oppression and gender disparity. It analyzes how colonial structures enforced Eurocentric standards that diminished the political and social contributions of African women. Decoloniality offers a method to reclaim Xuma's legacy by analyzing her contributions within her cultural and historical framework, highlighting how her endeavors challenged colonial and patriarchal systems while promoting gender equality and liberation during apartheid.

Additionally, a decolonial feminist viewpoint highlights the interrelated impacts of race, gender, and colonialism on Xuma's activism. This method not only enhances her historical relevance but also addresses the persistent disregard for African women's leadership in both historical accounts and contemporary stories. Thus, decoloniality serves as a potent means to reclaim Xuma's contributions and tackle the ongoing inequalities in South Africa and elsewhere.

3.7.1 Theoretical Framework: Decolonial Feminism

Lugones (2010) criticizes Eurocentric feminism for overlooking the actual experiences of women of colour and Indigenous women, frequently continuing colonial oppression. She presents the idea of the "*coloniality of gender*," demonstrating how gender-based oppression is closely linked to colonial structures. Lugones supports a feminist perspective that considers the connections between race, gender, and colonialism, challenging Western feminist standards. She advocates for unity among marginalized groups to promote a more inclusive and decolonized feminist approach.

3.7.2 Decolonial Feminism as a Conceptual Approach

Decolonial feminism provides a compelling framework that critiques Eurocentric and patriarchal concepts within feminist theory and practice. Grounded in the lived experiences of women from the Global South particularly women of colour, Indigenous women, and others marginalized by colonialism and capitalism this work critiques the inclination of Western feminism to universalize its views, frequently ignoring concerns related to race, colonial histories, and intersecting inequalities such as class and ethnicity. This perspective, shaped by scholars such as Lugones (2010), explores how colonialism enforced strict, hierarchical gender roles, undermining Indigenous and African gender frameworks and eliminating fluid or non-binary identities. Decolonial feminism seeks justice in knowledge creation by honouring Indigenous wisdom, oral traditions, and lived experiences in conjunction with Western epistemologies, fostering a more comprehensive view of knowledge. It also emphasizes healing from the intergenerational trauma caused by colonial violence by promoting the revival of Indigenous practices, nurturing solidarity, and establishing spaces for rejuvenation. Through endorsing grassroots activism, intersectional partnerships, and critiques of neoliberal capitalism, it seeks to dismantle global exploitative systems and advance community-driven, sustainable solutions. Within the South African framework, decolonial feminism aids in understanding how colonial histories persist in influencing race, gender, and labour after apartheid, providing methods to analyze gendered labour, amplify marginalized voices in political narratives, and confront cultural stories that perpetuate colonial stereotypes, thereby fostering a more just society.

Vélez (2019) examines the theoretical basis of decolonial feminism and its relationship with intersectionality, emphasizing a significant shortcoming in the latter's perspective. Though

intersectionality has been significant in uncovering various dimensions of oppression, she contends that it remains rooted in Western perspectives and does not completely tackle the effects of colonialism. In her opinion, decolonial feminism provides a more radical viewpoint by emphasizing the experiences of women from the Global South and actively confronting the Eurocentric prejudices inherent in dominant feminist and intersectional theories. Vélez (2019) notes that Crenshaw's initial idea of intersectionality is primarily influenced by legal and scholarly discussions, which, while beneficial, fail to thoroughly address the enduring impacts of colonial history. In contrast, decolonial feminism situates gender-based oppression within the broader context of colonial systems and systemic violence, advocating for a departure from prevailing Western feminist conventions. In addition, Vélez (2019) argues that intersectionality frequently classifies various types of oppression within current power systems instead of challenging and breaking down those systems entirely. She contends that decolonial feminism does not merely perceive coloniality as another form of oppression but proactively aims to dismantle the systems that support it. In the end, she advocates for a conversation between intersectionality and decolonial feminism, arguing that although intersectionality provides important perspectives, it needs to be enlarged through a decolonial viewpoint to completely understand the historical and structural influences that define power and oppression.

3.7.3 The Basis of Decolonial Feminism

Decolonial Feminism critiques mainstream feminist theories for overlooking the ongoing effects of colonialism and racial inequality. It emphasizes the specific experiences of women in the Global South and incorporates both feminist and decolonial theoretical perspectives. Castro (2021) notes that this framework highlights the intersections of race, gender, and colonial history, addressing the challenges marginalized women face. Vélez and Tuana (2020) explain how Decolonial Feminism, rooted in Latin American/Latinx feminist traditions, challenges Eurocentric viewpoints by centering the voices and experiences of marginalized communities in the Global South.

3.7.4 Decolonial Feminism vs. Conventional Feminist Theories

What sets Decolonial Feminism apart from conventional feminist perspectives is its focus on the lasting effects of historical and systemic oppression on women. Lugones (2010) critiques the colonial/modern gender system, which enforces rigid, hierarchical gender norms that often erase

the experiences of women of colour. This framework pushes for a deeper exploration of how colonialism and patriarchy intersect to oppress women, as shown in Rodrigues' (2022) examination of María Lugones' concept of the "*coloniality of gender*." This concept critiques how Western gender norms and patriarchal systems were used as tools of colonial domination, urging a reevaluation of feminist frameworks to better reflect the experiences of women from non-Western cultures.

3.7.5 Including Indigenous Knowledge

An essential component of Decolonial Feminism is the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge into feminist thought. Lugones (2014) highlights how colonialism and patriarchy have compounded the oppression of Indigenous women, a subject often overlooked in traditional feminist theories. By elevating Indigenous perspectives and challenging Eurocentric biases, Decolonial Feminism works to dismantle oppressive structures and embrace diverse gender identities. Bardwell-Jones and McLaren (2020) stress the importance of integrating Indigenous and decolonial viewpoints into feminist philosophy to create a more inclusive, decolonized feminist practice.

3.7.6 Power, Geography, and History

Decolonial Feminism underscores the need to examine women's lives through the lenses of power, geography, and history. Castro (2021) argues that social and geographical contexts greatly shape women's experiences, especially in post-colonial regions. This approach situates women's struggles within larger historical narratives, providing a deeper understanding of the ongoing effects of systemic oppression. Manning (2018) calls for ethnographic methods that challenge colonial and patriarchal foundations in research, urging scholars to resist perpetuating these oppressive systems.

3.7.7 Building an Inclusive Feminist Praxis

Decolonial Feminism advocates for a feminist movement that confronts both patriarchy and colonialism while promoting solidarity among women globally. It challenges stereotypes that depict colonized women as passive victims, instead focusing on their resilience and agency. Lugones (2010) calls for dismantling colonial gender norms and embracing the diversity of cultural

and gender experiences within feminist discourse. Fitzsimons (2023) highlights the importance of an inclusive feminist pedagogy that tackles multiple forms of oppression—sexism, racism, classism, and ableism—and amplifies marginalized voices to create transformative spaces.

3.7.8 Madie Hall Xuma's Role in Feminist Activism

This study explores Madie Hall Xuma's contributions within the context of Decolonial Feminism, emphasizing her crucial role in challenging racial and gender-based injustice. By analyzing her work through this framework, the study highlights both the personal and historical challenges Xuma faced, showcasing her agency and influence. Berger (2001) notes Xuma's significant impact on women's movements and ANC strategies, while Hendricks (2022) illustrates how Xuma's activism spanned both the Jim Crow era in the U.S. and apartheid South Africa. Xuma's work embodies the principles of intersectional and decolonial feminism, which continue to shape contemporary discussions. From a feminist viewpoint, Msimang (2000) underscores how patriarchy still marginalizes women, restricting the transformative possibilities of these initiatives.

This approach positions the research within a critical and inclusive feminist tradition, recognizing the complexities of colonial and patriarchal oppression while advocating for solidarity and justice on a global scale.

3.8 Critical Diversity Literacy

Decolonial feminism and Critical Diversity Literacy (CDL) offer different but complementary perspectives for examining power, identity, and representation. Decolonial feminism aims to deconstruct colonial remnants and tackle gender disparities linked to race, class, and historical circumstances. It questions the power dynamics created by colonialism. It aims to revive and elevate voices marginalized by colonial pasts. Steyn, et al (2018) contend that insufficient critical diversity literacy hinders organizations from effectively managing diversity and difference. They suggest creating a diagnostic tool to evaluate and improve organizational ability in handling diversity.

On the other hand, CDL delves into the intricacies of diversity and power, investigating the intersection of different forms of discrimination and their impact on various aspects of society. Both approaches focus on intersectionality - decolonial feminism looks at how colonization has influenced identities based on race, gender, and class. At the same time, CDL explores the various aspects of identity and their effects on society.

(Steyn, 2014) suggests that having CDL is important in comprehending how past injustices impact present-day diversity and inclusion problems, emphasizing the necessity of critical diversity literacy in the current era. Utilizing decolonial feminism and CDL to analyze Madie Hall Xuma's work offers a complete comprehension of her contributions amidst colonial and post-colonial challenges. This method will illuminate how Xuma's identity and activism intersect, question dominant historical stories, and emphasize the significance of acknowledging voices on the margins. Integrating these frameworks will enhance your examination of Xuma's political legacy, emphasizing its importance throughout history and in present-day settings.

Steyn and Vanyoro (2024) introduce Critical Diversity Literacy (CDL) as an essential method for teaching people about multicultural citizenship. They contend that CDL transcends mere recognition of diversity; it necessitates a thorough, critical examination of the power systems that uphold social inequalities. Their framework highlights the significance of historical consciousness, intersectionality, and a dedication to justice, all of which are crucial for cultivating an informed and socially accountable public. Building on this concept, Vanyoro and Steyn (2024) explore the application of CDL in academic research, especially within higher education. They propose that embracing CDL in research requires contemplating one's biases and recognizing how the creation of knowledge is influenced by current power structures. By incorporating CDL into educational institutions, they contend, universities can foster more inclusive settings that disrupt knowledge hierarchies and support equity.

Their research emphasizes CDL as a theoretical perspective and an effective means for promoting social justice. They support its application not only in education but also as a moral basis for academic inquiry and organizational change. Ultimately, CDL provides a means to create a more critically aware and socially responsible community. Critical Diversity Literacy (CDL) and Decolonial Feminism are two intellectual constructs that question prevalent power hierarchies,

especially those based on colonialism, race, gender, and class. They mutually enhance each other in diverse manners as both viewpoints focus on revealing and breaking down disparities.

3.9 Conclusion

In conclusion, this research has employed decolonial feminism to emphasize Madie Hall Xuma's significant contribution to South African history and politics, especially in her struggle against gender disparity during apartheid. Viewed through this perspective, the study highlights that her activism not only confronted the subjugation of women but also significantly contributed to the broader struggle for political and social transformation. Moreover, decolonial feminism corresponds with Critical Diversity Literacy (CDL) by offering an intersectional perspective that enhances our comprehension of the links between power, identity, and resistance. Collectively, these frameworks provide a deeper, more holistic perspective on Xuma's contribution, highlighting the importance of contesting prevailing narratives regarding gender and political activism during the apartheid period in South Africa.

Chapter Four

Methodology

4. Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology approaches selected to investigate Madie Hall Xuma's political contribution. It explains why a qualitative method is the most suitable for this research and details the particular techniques and instruments employed to assess her impact on South African political history. Qualitative research enables an in-depth and comprehensive investigation of human experiences, making it perfect for revealing intricate, context-dependent insights as indicated by Tracy (2024). This method corresponds with the research's goal of elevating the frequently disregarded voices of Black women and acknowledging their role in influencing history.

The chapter further analyzes the research, which integrates both primary and secondary sources. This encompasses archival content, including Xuma's speeches, along with supplementary materials like biographies and scholarly publications. Employing thematic analysis, the research uncovers patterns and significant themes that highlight Xuma's advocacy, defiance, and political accomplishments. Ethical aspects are considered consistently, maintaining respect for the historical and cultural importance of the materials while preserving academic integrity. This chapter establishes the foundation of the research by outlining the selected methods and how they correspond with the study's objectives.

4.1 Methodology

The Methodology section details the research design and approach, data, data collection and source, and analytical tools applied in this study. It explains the process of obtaining results. This section also discusses ethical considerations, offering a thorough understanding of the research procedure.

4.1.1 Qualitative Research Approach

Qualitative research is a methodological strategy that centers on investigating and comprehending intricate social occurrences by examining people's interpretations, encounters, and viewpoints within their social environments and lived experiences. Hennink et al. (2020) emphasize that understanding the depth and complexity of human experiences requires the use of qualitative research methods. Tracy (2024) argues that qualitative techniques are essential for understanding the depth and intricacy of human experiences. Tracy (2024) believes that by focusing on collecting specific, contextual information, researchers can develop in-depth analyses that accurately represent real-life scenarios. She emphasizes the need for transparent, reflexive, and rigorous research to guarantee trustworthy and meaningful results. Tracy (2024) aims to equip researchers with the ability to both gather and interpret data, as well as effectively communicate their results to make a meaningful impact. Fossey et al. (2002) suggest that qualitative research focuses on grasping the subjective realm, frequently employing techniques that match the research inquiry and surroundings, while also emphasizing the significance of rigor via transparency and credibility. When examining qualitative data, researchers use coding and interpretation to find patterns and themes, while also considering their assumptions through reflexivity.

4.1.2 Research design

The research uses a qualitative method to examine and comprehend the intricacies of Madie Hall Xuma's political contribution. This method is suitable as it examines social, political, and historical backgrounds. The research utilizes a decolonial feminist perspective, highlighting the interconnectedness of race, gender, and colonial oppression. This structure questions prevailing stories and highlights the experiences and roles of Black women in South African political history.

This viewpoint aids in contextualizing Xuma's contributions within the wider framework of South African history, demonstrating how entrenched colonial and patriarchal influences shaped her work. Utilizing a qualitative research approach, this study focuses on Xuma as a case study, seeking to contest prevailing historical narratives. It aims to enhance the frequently neglected experiences and contributions of Black women, showcasing their crucial roles in the political evolution of South Africa. The selected method is guided by Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey's (2020)

focus on the depth and richness that qualitative techniques provide for examining intricate social problems. It also aligns with Nassaji's (2020) principles for executing high-quality qualitative research, ensuring the research's credibility and success in meeting its objectives.

This research design is done through secondary data collection gathering, resources like Madie Hall Xuma's speeches and scholarly research. These resources offer a comprehensive and in-depth insight into Xuma's defiance against oppression, presenting a new viewpoint on her contribution.

4.1.3 Data

In this study, I have collected data using academic literature and archival research. By doing so the archival research that I have collected concentrates on analyzing primary sources, such as Madie Hall Xuma's speeches, and various documents found at the William Cullen Library Archives at Wits University. These collected data will provide direct insights into her political views, advocacy efforts, and ways of communicating. Moreover, the literature includes examining secondary sources, including biographies, scholarly articles, and historical texts, obtained from reliable online platforms, digital archives, and databases such as JSTOR. Through the integration of primary and secondary data, the study offers a thorough and detailed insight into Xuma's political contributions.

4.1.4 Data Collection

The literature study approach has been essential in collecting data for this study on Madie Hall Xuma's political activism. It allows for a detailed analysis of current scholarly research, historical records, and essential critiques. According to Karunarathna, et al.(2024), gathering data is vital in research since it enhances trustworthiness, guarantees historical precision, and offers a robust foundation for making arguments. This research has utilized a literature study to facilitate an investigation of Xuma's activism, especially her endeavors to fight against gender inequality during apartheid in South Africa. Analyzing historical and political stories through literary critique is essential for grasping Xuma's contribution. Klarer (2023) describes that literary studies utilize a structured method of text examination, enabling researchers to recognize common themes, ideological impacts, and socio-political elements in literary works. This study employs that method by interacting with primary sources like speeches, organizational documents, and newspaper

articles that document Xuma's role in the African National Congress Women's League and her promotion of women's rights.

Additionally, Lentricchia and McLaughlin (2010) highlight the importance of critical concepts in literary study, which assist in dismantling historical narratives and power dynamics. Through this perspective, the study analyzes how prevailing narratives have influenced views on Xuma's contributions and how her efforts explicitly confront colonial and patriarchal beliefs. Combining literary studies with historical research offers a more intricate view of her methods for engaging women and maneuvering through political arenas at both local and global levels.

Utilizing various academic viewpoints and historical documentation, the literature study method guarantees a thorough and critical examination of Xuma's political contribution. This approach places her activism in the context of larger socio-political movements and adds to current scholarly dialogues on decolonial feminism and leadership in South Africa. In the end, this study reveals Xuma's historical importance through a thorough examination of literature, highlighting the effectiveness of this method in exploring political and feminist histories.

4.1.5 Data sources

Primary Data Sources

- Madie Xuma's speeches

Secondary Data Sources

- Articles about Madie Xuma
- Books about Madie Xuma
- Documentaries about Madie Xuma

4.2 Data Analysis Tools: Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2012), is an adaptable approach for recognizing, analyzing, and presenting patterns (or themes) in qualitative data. This method starts with immersion, as researchers engage deeply with the data through repeated reading and noting their preliminary observations. The subsequent phase includes producing preliminary codes,

systematically recognizing characteristics pertinent to the research query, and coherently arranging these codes. These codes are subsequently organized into larger themes that illustrate important trends, with visual aids like thematic maps frequently supporting this procedure. During the reviewing phase, themes are polished to guarantee they are coherent, consistent, and distinct, with overlapping or redundant themes eliminated or merged. After themes are established, researchers identify and label them, making sure each theme effectively captures its story and subtleties. In the end, the process concludes with a report that connects themes to the research question through engaging narratives, backed by clear examples from the data, and set in context for enhanced analysis. Thematic analysis may be utilized inductively, extracting insights straight from the data, or deductively, influenced by pre-existing theories. It can differ between reflexive and structured methods, based on the research goals and methodological choices.

Thematic analysis, as described by Castleberry and Nolen (2018), Guest, MacQueen, and Namey (2011), and Dawadi (2020), consists of a structured procedure that starts with becoming acquainted with the data. Researchers deeply engage with the material, studying and reviewing it repeatedly to understand its complexities, subtleties, and background. Next, initial codes are generated by systematically identifying and categorizing significant features into descriptive or interpretive labels, which help organize the data into manageable segments. Subsequently, codes are categorized into overarching themes by recognizing patterns and connections and grouping analogous ideas to represent the main concepts of the data. These themes are subsequently examined to verify consistency and alignment with the original data, with adjustments made to enhance their relevance and precision. After refinement, themes are identified and labeled, with researchers expressing their scope, clarifying their nature, and assigning descriptive tags that encapsulate their fundamental meaning. The results are presented in a report that links the themes to the research questions, bolstered by data excerpts and analyses.

Thematic analysis is a qualitative research technique that detects, examines, and presents patterns in data, providing a versatile and approachable method for investigating intricate social phenomena (Christou, 2022; Forbes, 2022). Its organized approach encompasses data familiarization, code creation, theme recognition, enhancement, and incorporation into a cohesive narrative (Majumdar, 2022; Morgan, 2022). This approach resonates strongly with decolonial feminism, which challenges Eurocentric feminist models and focuses on the intersections of gender, race, colonial

pasts, and power dynamics (Christou, 2022). The thematic analysis serves as a methodological framework for decolonial feminist research by revealing colonial legacies in gender discourse, highlighting Indigenous and local feminist viewpoints, and bringing to light structural inequalities (Morgan, 2022; Majumdar, 2022; Forbes, 2022). Moreover, thematic analysis enhances Critical Diversity Literacy (CDL), a framework designed for examining power, privilege, and systemic discrimination, by revealing hidden biases, charting resistance stories, and guiding policy for social transformation (Majumdar, 2022; Morgan, 2022; Christou, 2022; Forbes, 2022). By merging thematic analysis with decolonial feminism and CDL, researchers can thoughtfully examine historical and modern power dynamics, contest prevailing narratives, and aid in social change, highlighting its importance as a robust and meaningful qualitative research instrument.

4.3 Ethical considerations

My study is centered on literature, I will ensure complete adherence to ethical standards by thoughtfully utilizing and analyzing existing works. I will always reference all sources, such as books, articles, and academic materials, using the specified referencing style to respect the intellectual property of original authors and prevent plagiarism. I am dedicated to honouring the cultural and historical backgrounds of the literature that I will interact with, steering clear of misrepresentation or decontextualization, especially when dealing with marginalized voices or decolonial viewpoints. I will handle critiques thoughtfully and with empathy, particularly when examining creations from marginalized groups. I will faithfully comply with copyright regulations, utilizing texts solely as allowed under fair use or with the required permissions for unpublished or proprietary works. I will clearly communicate the aim, extent, and theoretical basis of my research, and I will also reveal any biases that could affect my interpretation. To uphold research integrity, I will make sure my methodology, design, and analysis are devoid of manipulation or misrepresentation, steering clear of selectively using quotes to support particular arguments. When addressing sensitive issues like race, gender, class, or colonialism, I will approach them cautiously to prevent harm or stigma. Because I will be using knowledge in the public domain, and not interviewing living human subjects. The University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) places a strong emphasis on academic integrity in its plagiarism policy, detailing steps to avoid, identify, and handle instances of plagiarism. Plagiarism is when you use someone else's work, ideas, or words

without giving credit, which includes copying text, using another person's research, or not citing sources accurately. It is the student's responsibility to make sure their work is plagiarism-free and to cite sources correctly, asking for help if unsure about citation rules. To help with detection, Wits utilizes tools like Turnitin, and any instances of suspicion must be reported for further investigation. The consequences for plagiarism differ depending on how serious the offense is and if it is the first time or a repeated occurrence, with punishments ranging from warnings to severe academic consequences like failing assignments, courses, or even expulsion in extreme situations. Students are allowed to challenge plagiarism-related decisions within a set timeframe, by the university's review process. In general, the policy aims to maintain academic standards and equity within the Wits community (Wits).

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter emphasizes the significance and efficacy of the selected methodology in examining Madie Hall Xuma's political contribution from a decolonial feminist perspective. Through qualitative methods, the study offers a context-aware analysis of her role, emphasizing the enhancement of the frequently overlooked perspectives of Black women in history. The integration of primary and secondary sources, coupled with thematic analysis, guarantees a comprehensive grasp of Xuma's resistance to systemic oppression and her enduring influence on South Africa's political and gender spheres.

Ethical aspects were emphasized during the research, guaranteeing respect for cultural and historical importance while upholding academic integrity. This methodological strategy not only highlights Xuma's contributions but also tackles the historical neglect of African women's roles in influencing political history.

Chapter Five

Discussion And Analysis

5. Introduction

This chapter examines the frequently disregarded political impact of Madie Hall Xuma, a significant African American educator and activist who emerged as a key player in South Africa's fight against racial and gender discrimination. Analyzing her work with a decolonial feminist perspective, the chapter emphasizes Xuma's contribution to resisting both apartheid and patriarchal systems. Covering the Jim Crow period in the U.S. and apartheid South Africa, Xuma's activism highlights the links between worldwide fights for racial and gender equality. This chapter contends that her leadership, especially in the ANC Women's League and her involvement with international feminist networks, established her as a central figure in the struggle for Black women's freedom. The research seeks to investigate Xuma's political involvement in South Africa, assess her activism via a decolonial feminist theoretical lens (drawing from thinkers like Quijano (2007); Lugones (2016); Boatcă, and Meghji (2024)), examine her contributions to fostering transnational solidarity among Black women, emphasize her influence in the fight against apartheid and gender disparity, and aid in the decolonization of historical accounts by focusing on African feminist practices. Employing a qualitative literature review method, the study examines secondary resources (historical documents, archives, academic articles, speeches, organizational records, and newspaper pieces) to comprehend Xuma's contributions and their influence. Madie Hall Xuma stands as a pioneering figure in the fight for gender equity, with her political contributions deeply embedded in the broader struggle against coloniality. This chapter explores her role in feminist activism and the global movement for Black women's liberation, highlighting how she bridged activism, diplomacy, and institutional change. It also examines the challenges and constraints encountered in gathering data for this study, alongside the broader limitations of the research. Finally, the chapter reflects on the enduring impact of Madie Hall Xuma's legacy, situating her work within ongoing struggles for justice and equality and her contribution of Black Feminist Leadership in South Africa.

5.1 Madie Hall Xuma: A Pioneer for Gender Equity

Madie Hall Xuma, an educator and social activist of African descent, played a crucial yet frequently neglected part in the fight for equality in South Africa. In 1894, she was born in North Carolina and overcame obstacles to women in the medical field by acquiring degrees from Winston-Salem Teachers College and Columbia University. Following her marriage to Dr. A.B. Xuma, who would later become president of the African National Congress (ANC), she relocated to South Africa and became a trailblazing champion for women's rights. Serving as the initial president of the ANC Women's League from 1943 to 1949, Xuma advocated for women to have complete membership and voting privileges in the ANC. She established the Zenzele movement to empower women by combining domestic skills with global activism networks. Her work is situated in the wider framework of gender equality among women in South Africa and demonstrates the global aspect of activism by black women. Berger (2001) explores the remarkable life and activism of Madie Hall Xuma, an African American woman who emerged as a key figure in South Africa's sociopolitical scene from the 1940s through the early 1960s.

Through examining Xuma's dual identity as both an African American and a South African leader, Berger (2001) underscores the wider links between the struggles for justice and equality faced by Africans and African Americans. Xuma's journey commenced in the United States, where she established a solid base as a teacher, community organizer, and activist, before relocating to South Africa following her marriage to Dr. Alfred Xuma, the then-President-General of the African National Congress (ANC). This action signified a pivotal phase in her life, as her international experiences allowed her to connect cultural and ideological gaps in her activism. A key element of Berger's (2001) study is Xuma's role in the ANC Women's League (ANCWL), where she dedicated herself to fostering grassroots activism centered on education, health, and community welfare, highlighting the vital contribution of women in advancing political and social change.

Her activism was shaped by her experiences with racial segregation in the United States and influenced by a decolonial feminist viewpoint that prioritized the freedom of African women in the wider anti-apartheid movement. Xuma maneuvered through and contested patriarchal standards in the ANC while concurrently opposing the repressive frameworks of apartheid. Berger

(2001) contends that Xuma's efforts played a crucial role in promoting women's movements and influencing ANC strategies, despite her influence often being overlooked in historical accounts. This highlights Xuma's contribution to building transnational solidarities between African and African American resistance movements, demonstrating mutual goals for racial justice. Although Berger's (2001) depiction of Xuma is comprehensive and perceptive, it allows for an examination of how her American identity affected her acceptance by South African women leaders.

Hendricks (2022) delves into the multifaceted activism of Madie Hall Xuma, a renowned African American educator and activist who was instrumental in the fight against racial discrimination in both the United States and South Africa. Xuma's contribution highlights the importance of women in the liberation struggle of South Africa. Even though she was overlooked due to her husband's fame, her efforts paved the way for future generations of women activists. Understanding the global fight for justice and equality is enhanced by acknowledging individuals such as Madie Hall Xuma, highlighting the link between local and international actions against oppression. Hendricks (2022) points out how Xuma worked to combat the systemic racial injustices of Jim Crow in the U.S. and apartheid in South Africa, showing how her activism was strongly influenced by her experiences as a Black woman dealing with these oppressive systems. The book illuminates Xuma's participation in global activist networks, specifically in groups such as the African National Congress Women's League, where she pushed for women's rights and racial justice.



Source: Google Images, 2025.

Figure 1: Madie Hall Xuma

5.1.1 Madie Hall Xuma's Political Contribution

Madie Hall Xuma served as the inaugural president of the ANCWL following its formation in 1943. She changed the organization from supporting ANC men's initiatives to a platform focused on tackling women-specific concerns like wage disparity, health care, and education. She established the basis for the ANCWL's pivotal role in opposing apartheid. According to Hughes (2013) Madie Hall Xuma, an African-American educator, and activist, was instrumental in aiding A.B. Xuma's efforts and promoting the wider objectives of the African National Congress (ANC). As a prominent figure in the ANC Women's League, she advocated for women's rights and healthcare in South Africa (Hughes, 2013). Madie Hall Xuma was a supportive partner and a crucial advocate for gender equality and social justice during the apartheid period (Hughes, 2013).

Xuma's leadership focused on community-based organizing. She assisted in organizing rural and urban women to participate in initiatives opposing discriminatory regulations, like pass laws, that greatly limited the mobility of Black women. Xuma's experiences shaped her advocacy for better living for Black South Africans, especially for women and children. Cooke and Stevenson (2018) emphasize Madie Hall Xuma's important part in linking the fights for racial and gender equality in South Africa and the United States. Cooke and Stevenson (2018) portray her as a key individual who surpassed both physical and ideological barriers, demonstrating how her activism mirrored the interlinked essence of worldwide liberation efforts.

Madie Hall Xuma utilized her transatlantic ties as an African-American woman wedded to Dr. Alfred Xuma, an influential political figure in South Africa. Her time in the United States during the Jim Crow period enabled her to make comparisons between racial oppression in the U.S. and apartheid in South Africa. According to Cooke and Stevenson (2018) an African American woman wedded to South African leader Dr. A.B. Xuma, Madie Hall Xuma held a distinct position as a transnational activist. Her mixed cultural upbringing enabled her to leverage her American and South African experiences, utilizing these perspectives to advocate for gender equity and build global relationships with feminist groups (Cooke & Stevenson 2018).

Xuma represented South African women in global discussions, including her association with the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF). Hendricks (2022) highlights Xuma's

leadership within organizations, specifically her contributions to the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL) and her participation in global networks like the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF). Madie Hall Xuma's spouse advocated for and bolstered the acknowledgment of women's roles in liberation movements. Madie Hall Xuma stressed that achieving national liberation required confronting the gender-based oppression experienced by women. Thus, Dr A.B Xuma encouraged his spouse Madie Hall Xuma to lead the ANC Women's League. Hendricks (2022) posits that Madie Hall Xuma's activism signifies an essential turning point in the worldwide fight for racial and gender equality, highlighting the intersection of local and global movements.

Madie Hall Xuma serves as a forerunner to decolonial feminist ideology by promoting the inclusion of gender equality within anti-colonial movements. Her efforts confronted patriarchal standards within the ANC and the wider South African community. Madie Hall Xuma as a key figure who influenced the course of Black women's activism in South Africa. Her endeavors motivated subsequent movements, including the 1956 Women's March opposing pass laws. Xuma's activism merged matters of race, gender, and class, opening the door for a broader interpretation of freedom. Hendricks (2022) contends that Xuma's activism motivated later movements, including the 1956 Women's March opposing pass laws.

5.1.2 Madie Hall Xuma: A Pioneer in Worldwide Feminist Unity and Decolonial Leadership

Madie Hall Xuma's travel to the United States in 1947 emphasizes her position as a transnational activist connecting African and African American women's movements. In 1947 Hall Xuma left South Africa and reached New York the next day. Her visit was important, highlighting her dedication to promoting global unity among Black women. While in the U.S., she interacted with different organizations and people, exchanging knowledge from her experiences in South Africa and gaining insights into American civil rights tactics. According to Hendricks (2022 : p. 148), the gathering at the residence on West 140th Street represented a powerful example of global diasporic unity and collaboration. Key contributions from leaders like Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, the Haitian government, and other supporters played a central role in this moment. The attendance of dignitaries from Haiti, the Gold Coast, and Liberia added to the event's international importance. Notably, Madie Hall Xuma's participation as the prominent woman featured in the main program

highlights the critical role of women in promoting cross-border solidarity within the African diaspora. In her introductory comments, Hall Xuma conveyed her deep appreciation for the accomplishments of African students and academics, noting: When I think of the African students and scholars presenting themselves in the grand [manner] in which they did this event, my heart is filled with joy. I wonder if [African] Americans can go to other sections of the world and have such fine impressions. Serving as the envoy who *"brought greetings from South Africa,"*

Madie Hall Xuma spoke to the sizable audience assembled at the event, emphasizing her position as a spokesperson for South African interests internationally :

South Africa is one of the worst countries when it comes to race relations. Almost everything there is under white control. When the South Africans try to expand in any direction, he always encounters the whites. In 1940, I set about organizing women's groups. Today, more than ten such organizations exist with their programs geared toward cultural, educational, and home economic interests. When the African women refused to carry passes, they were threatened with being jailed and accepted the challenge. Today, the women who were unified in their fight are not compelled to carry passes. It is in this light that we should come to realize that in unity there is strength.

This speech is found in the book written by Dr Wanda Hendrick titled *The Life of Madie Hall Xuma : Black women's global activism during Jim Crow and apartheid.*

Hendricks (2022 : p 149) contends that Madie Hall Xuma's participation in the African Academy of Arts and Research, along with her role at the United Nations Assembly in 1947, underscores her tactical utilization of transnational platforms to confront colonial oppression and champion racial justice. Hall Xuma's respect for the African Academy's creation of Africa House demonstrates her dedication to cultural preservation and her aspiration to utilize institutional structures to promote transformation in South Africa. Through creating plans for a comparable institution in South Africa, Hall Xuma showcased her conviction in the effectiveness of cultural and intellectual frameworks to tackle systemic disparities. According to Willie and Lane (2001)

Madie Hall Xuma's life and contributions illustrate the significant influence that parental figures can exert on the successes of Black women.

Moreover, Hall Xuma's involvement in the United Nations Assembly highlights her sophisticated grasp of international diplomacy as a means to reveal and oppose South Africa's apartheid practices. Her emphasis on criticizing South African Prime Minister Jan Smuts, especially about his administration's biased treatment of the Indian minority and disregard for UN recommendations, showcases her ability to elevate marginalized voices in international discussions. Hendricks (2022) argues that Hall Xuma's initiatives demonstrate her twofold approach of establishing cultural institutions and engaging in global advocacy, marking her as a trailblazer in decolonial feminist leadership throughout apartheid. This examination positions Hall Xuma's contributions within wider academic conversations regarding the involvement of African women in organizing both local and international networks to challenge colonial and racial inequities.



Source: The Life of Madie Hall Xuma: Black women's global activism during Jim Crow and apartheid by Dr Wanda Hendricks, 2022.

Figure 2: The text in the image above talks about a picture of Madie Hall Xuma that appeared in the 1948 *T.C. Alumni Bulletin* from Winston-Salem State University. It highlights her transnational existence, acknowledging her origins in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, her living in Johannesburg, South Africa, and her position as a spokesperson for South African women at the United Nations in New York.

Madie Hall Xuma's activism and the World Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) are examined through a transnational feminist and anti-colonial perspective. Hendricks (2022 : p. 167 - 191), examines how Xuma's contributions to the YWCA reflect wider international efforts to combat racial and gender inequalities in South Africa and the United States. Hendricks (2022 : p. 167 - 191) highlights the World YWCA as an essential transnational venue through which Black women such as Xuma could actively oppose both imperialism and gender-based subjugation. Originally established with a mainly white and Christian focus, the YWCA slowly transformed to adopt a more inclusive and internationally conscious agenda. The organization emerged as an important venue for Black women to work together and plan, bringing them together in their common struggles against colonialism, racism, and patriarchy. Hendricks (2022 : p. 167 - 191) demonstrates that the YWCA's move toward inclusivity was vital for Xuma's activism, offering a platform for her to connect with international feminist and anti-colonial movements.

The YWCA aimed to broaden its focus beyond Western-oriented gender and religious principles to foster opportunities for Black women's voices in both the U.S. and South Africa. By providing a platform for cross-cultural unity, the YWCA allowed Xuma to not only sway but also be swayed by the worldwide battles for racial and gender equality. Xuma's engagement with the YWCA is emphasized as a significant element of her extensive activism. As per Hendricks (2022), Xuma's involvement with the YWCA transcended the borders of South Africa, placing her in a worldwide network of women confronting the overlaps of racial and gender oppression. By participating, Xuma highlighted the unique challenges encountered by Black South African women during apartheid, connecting her work to international discussions on women's rights. Hendricks (2022) contends that this involvement played a role in the feminist movement's decolonization. Coffie (2021 : p. 7) claims that Madie Hall Xuma was an influential leader in the fight for gender equality and social justice within South Africa. As the inaugural president of the African National Congress Women's League, she effectively championed complete membership and voting rights for women in the ANC (Coffie 2021 : p.7).

YWCA's transition to a global and decolonial focus enabled Xuma to enhance her participation, especially as the organization emphasized the needs of Black women from Africa and the U.S. This change reflected Xuma's own developing understanding of feminist solidarity, which

progressively highlighted inclusivity and a wider, anti-colonial perspective. Hendricks (2022) examines how the YWCA emerged as a vital platform for Black women to rally against gender inequality, concentrating on both local and global anti-colonial efforts. This holds significant relevance within the framework of apartheid South Africa, where systemic racial discrimination combined with intense gender oppression. Hendricks (2022) contends that Xuma's contributions to the YWCA linked her dedication to women's rights with broader anti-colonial movements in Africa and the U.S. By attending international YWCA conferences and working with global leaders, Xuma strengthened the representation of Black women in their quest for equality. The YWCA served as a platform for fostering transnational solidarity, uniting women from various areas to assist each other in the worldwide feminist movement. Hendricks (2022) illustrates how the organization was instrumental in linking these diverse battles for racial and gender equity.

The YWCA supported transnational networks of solidarity. Hendricks (2022) emphasizes that these networks allowed women from various racial, national, and socio-economic backgrounds to share ideas, resources, and strategies to fight against oppression. Xuma's involvement in these networks linked her with other Black women globally, drawing power from their collective fight against racial and gender biases.

Hendricks (2022) highlights the significance of these international links, especially in apartheid South Africa, where political activism frequently faced brutal oppression. This depicts the YWCA as an essential venue for strengthening global unity against these types of oppression, with Black women taking a significant part in this worldwide struggle. Xuma's role in the YWCA is portrayed as a vital element of her worldwide activism. Hendricks (2022) claims that Xuma was beyond merely a participant; she was a leader instrumental in shaping the organization's global discussions on race and gender. As a representative from South Africa, Xuma emphasized the unique challenges encountered by Black women during apartheid, advocating for a more revolutionary, decolonial approach within the YWCA's international structure.

Through her speeches, writings, and participation in coordinating international events focused on race, gender, and class, Xuma contributed to expanding the comprehension of the intersectionality of these oppressions. Hendricks (2022) contends that her leadership was pivotal in steering the YWCA towards a more inclusive and radical feminist agenda that confronted both patriarchy and the colonial remnants of racism and imperialism. Hendricks (2022) portrays Xuma's activism as

an initial instance of intersectional feminism, well before the term gained popularity. Xuma's method of activism directly addressed how race, gender, and class oppression overlapped in both colonial and post-colonial scenarios. Her efforts focused not only on tackling gender inequality but were also significantly influenced by the racialized and colonial framework of South African society. Hendricks (2022) connects Xuma's activism to the larger movement for the liberation of Black women, suggesting that her efforts in the YWCA greatly impacted future generations of Black feminists worldwide. Hendricks (2022) evaluates the enduring influence of Xuma's participation in the YWCA on the worldwide women's movement. Hendricks (2022) highlights that Xuma's guidance influenced the post-World War II feminist movement, especially in acknowledging the distinct challenges faced by Black women. Hendricks (2022) illustrates that Xuma's impact reached beyond South Africa, playing a role in a wider global conversation about gender, race, and colonialism, and inspiring other African women to connect with international feminist groups.



Source: The Life of Madie Hall Xuma: Black women's global activism during Jim Crow and apartheid by Dr Wanda Hendricks, 2022.

Figure 4: The picture includes a caption from a figure in a book written by Dr Hendricks. It depicts a picture of Madie Hall Xuma during the World YWCA Council Meeting held at Royal Holloway College in England in September 1955. The caption states that she is on the left, savoring tea with two other representatives. The image originates from the World Young Women's Christian Association Archives located in Geneva, Switzerland.



Source: The Life of Madie Hall Xuma: Black women's global activism during Jim Crow and apartheid by Dr Wanda Hendricks, 2022.

Figure 5: This figure emphasizes Madie Hall Xuma's global activism, especially her engagement with the World YWCA. In the book written by Dr Hendricks, it mentions that she departed from the U.S. in July 1955 and journeyed across Europe before participating in the World YWCA Council Meeting in London. The passage highlights her groundbreaking position as the first Black South African woman chosen for the World YWCA Executive Committee. She is also shown alongside with Irene Pictet, who was the new Treasurer of the Executive Committee at that period. The image originates from the World Young Women's Christian Association Archives

Xuma's work through the YWCA has significantly influenced the worldwide feminist movement, emphasizing the challenges faced by Black South African women and nurturing a legacy of transnational solidarity that still echoes today. According to Hendricks (2022: p. 181) Madie Hall Xuma continued to significantly influence South African women's organizations even after her presidency of the National Council of African Women (NCAW) concluded. In 1958, the NCAW hosted its *"Coming of Age Conference"* to commemorate 21 years of existence, and Hall Xuma was acknowledged for her trailblazing role as the Council's inaugural Black president and her leadership in the Zenzele Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). During the celebration, she received an invitation to compose a congratulatory note for a promotional poster. In her note also seen in Dr. Wanda Hendricks's book titled *The Life of Madie Hall Xuma: Black Women's Global Activism during Jim Crow and apartheid*, she wrote:

On behalf of the Zenzele Young Women's Christian Association I wish to congratulate the National Council of African Women for attaining its twenty-first birthday and for the services which it has rendered to the African community during that period. To have been able to stay together and work together through that period is an indication of wise and able leadership as well as devoted and loyal following. I wish the council long life of continued service to the upliftment and advancement of the African peoples.

Alongside her symbolic contributions, Hall Xuma played an active role in fostering leadership growth for young Black African women. Hendricks (2022) highlights her initiatives to promote global exchange and leadership programs. After her trips to Denmark, Sweden, and Switzerland in 1958, she promoted a fellowship initiative in Sweden aimed at offering structured leadership training for a YWCA member, with the anticipation of a following two-year dedication to the organization. These efforts highlight her persistent dedication to enhancing the leadership skills of African women and her goal of international cooperation in promoting gender and racial equality.



Source: The Life of Madie Hall Xuma: Black women's global activism during Jim Crow and apartheid by Dr Wanda Hendricks, 2022.

Figure 4: In this 1956 image as seen in the book written by Dr Hendricks, the National Board of the South African Council of World Affiliated YWCA is seen gathered. Madie Hall Xuma, the president, stands out in the middle of the group, donned in a hat and glasses. This photo represents an important occasion for the organization, being the initial group picture captured following their complete acceptance into the World YWCA. The image was subsequently included in the December 1956 edition of the World Y.W.C.A. Monthly magazine. This historic photo is held thanks to the World Young Women's Christian Association Archives in Geneva, Switzerland, and acts as a significant document of the YWCA's past in South Africa.



Source: The Life of Madie Hall Xuma: Black women's global activism during Jim Crow and apartheid by Dr Wanda Hendricks, 2022.

Figure 5: This black and white image features Madie Hall Xuma, dressed in a coat to the right, with fellow delegates at the World YWCA Council Meeting that took place in September 1955 on the grounds of Royal Holloway College in England. As a scanned image probably sourced from a book written by Dr Hendricks, it offers a significant visual account of this historical event and Xuma's involvement. The image is provided by the World Young Women's Christian Association Archives located in Geneva, Switzerland, signifying its conservation within a recorded assortment of historical documents.

5.2 Coloniality and the Political Contribution of Madie Hall Xuma

The impact of coloniality is clear in the gendered, racialized, and political structures during apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. Madie Hall Xuma's role as a political leader and champion for women's rights can be seen as a confrontation against these persistent systems. Her attempts to address gender inequality resonate with decolonial feminist theories aimed at reversing the colonial enforcement of patriarchal structures. Quijano (2007) posits that coloniality functions via the racialization of labour and the elevation of Western knowledge systems. During colonial domination, women of colour found themselves at the crossroads of racial and gender oppression, denied political agency and intellectual acknowledgment. Madie Hall Xuma's activism directly challenged these hierarchies by promoting African women's leadership and involvement in political initiatives like the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL). Her work symbolizes a restoration of African women's autonomy and leadership amid an oppressive colonial framework.

Lugones (2016) analyzes how colonial frameworks stripped women of colour of their humanity by enforcing Eurocentric gender norms that overlooked precolonial, communal gender structures. Xuma's role in organizations like the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL) and her promotion of women's rights demonstrates a dismissal of these colonial standards. By providing platforms for African women to express their political agency, Xuma confronted both gendered and racial oppression. Her activism corresponds with Lugones's (2016) appeal to deconstruct the coloniality of gender and to reclaim non-Western, inclusive gender frameworks. Boatcă and Meghji (2024) highlight the epistemic injustice caused by coloniality, prioritizing Western intellectual traditions and sidelining non-Western contributions. Xuma's political contributions are frequently ignored in dominant narratives, highlighting the wider marginalization of African women's participation in anti-colonial movements. This research contributes to the decolonization of history and theory by documenting and analyzing Xuma's activism, emphasizing African feminist praxis as a substitute for Eurocentric approaches.

5.3 Madie Hall Xuma's Role in Feminist Activism

This study explores Madie Hall Xuma's contributions within the context of Decolonial Feminism, emphasizing her crucial role in challenging racial and gender-based injustice. By analyzing her work through this framework, the study highlights both the personal and historical challenges Xuma faced, showcasing her agency and influence. Berger (2001) notes Xuma's significant impact on women's movements and ANC strategies, while Hendricks (2022) illustrates how Xuma's activism spanned both the Jim Crow era in the U.S. and apartheid South Africa. Xuma's work embodies the principles of intersectional and decolonial feminism, which continue to shape contemporary discussions. From a feminist viewpoint, Msimang (2000) underscores how patriarchy still marginalizes women, restricting the transformative possibilities of these initiatives.

This approach positions the research within a critical and inclusive feminist tradition, recognizing the complexities of colonial and patriarchal oppression while advocating for solidarity and justice on a global scale.

5.3 Madie Hall Xuma and the Global Struggle for Black Women's Liberation: Bridging Movements, Diplomacy, and Institutional Change

Madie Hall Xuma's activism transcended national limits, placing her in a global community of Black female leaders advocating for racial and gender justice. As an essential player in both South African and global movements, she utilized her diplomatic ties, organizational leadership, and community organizing to connect the challenges faced by Black women around the world. This part examines how Xuma's efforts played a role in influencing worldwide discussions on the liberation of Black women, highlighting the connections between grassroots activism, international diplomacy, and systemic reform.

5.3.1 Constructing Connections: Unity Among Black Women Across Nations

Madie Hall Xuma's trip to the United States in 1947 emphasizes her position as a transnational advocate, dedicated to enhancing connections between African and African American women's

movements (Hendricks, 2022). Her period in New York, during which she interacted with prominent civil rights figures, showcased her commitment to promoting a unified stance against racial and gender injustice. Instead of functioning independently, Hall Xuma regarded Black women's activism as a component of a broader, worldwide resistance network.

5.3.2 Bringing Together the African Diaspora for Political Transformation

An assembly on West 140th Street, highlighted by Hendricks (2022: p. 148), was a strong demonstration of solidarity among the diaspora. Graced by dignitaries from Haiti, the Gold Coast, Liberia, and even Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie, the gathering highlighted a collective dedication to anti-colonial efforts. Hall Xuma's prominence as a key woman in this area emphasized the vital contribution of women to international solidarity initiatives. Her speech recognized the linked challenges faced by Black communities globally and demonstrated her capacity to unite across continents to advocate for racial justice.

5.3.3 Advocating for Women's Rights in South Africa

Central to Hall Xuma's activism was the battle against South Africa's unjust pass laws, which had a greater impact on Black women. Hendricks (2022) highlighted Madie Hall Xuma Addressing the audience at the event, Madie Hall Xuma advocated for the significance of grassroots organizing, highlighting that united opposition was crucial to breaking down systemic oppression. Her conviction in the strength of togetherness—summed up in her phrase, “*in unity there is strength*”—echoed the rich legacy of South African women's activism against apartheid measures. Her guidance established her as an influential leader in both local and international feminist movements.

5.3.4 Involving Institutions for Transformative Change

As Hendricks (2022: p. 149) highlights Hall Xuma's engagement with the African Academy of Arts and Research and her role in the United Nations Assembly were tactical efforts to impact institutional frameworks. Through her support for the creation of cultural spaces like Africa House, she acknowledged the importance of education and intellectual involvement in breaking down

systemic inequalities. Her perspective went beyond mere activism; she aimed to establish enduring systems for transformation, both within South Africa and globally.

5.3.5 Diplomacy and Confronting Colonial Authority

Hall Xuma's attendance at the United Nations Assembly reinforced her status as a talented diplomat and a passionate supporter of racial justice. She publicly condemned South African Prime Minister Jan Smuts for his biased policies, especially targeting the Indian community (Hendricks, 2022). Her capacity to confront apartheid globally illustrates her dual strategy—merging grassroots activism with top-tier advocacy. This strategic involvement demonstrates her position as a decolonial feminist leader who recognized the significance of impacting both local and global power systems.

5.3.6 Guidance and Enduring Impact

According to Willie and Lane (2001) emphasize that Hall Xuma's contributions underscore the importance of mentorship and support in developing leadership among Black women. Her skill in maneuvering through African and American political arenas indicates that early schooling and guidance contributed to her achievements. Through the establishment of networks linking African and African American women, she built a foundation for future partnerships, guaranteeing that her influence would persist in motivating generations in the quest for racial and gender equality.

5.4 Madie Hall Xuma and the Enduring Legacy of Black Feminist Leadership in South Africa

Madie Hall Xuma played a crucial role in South African history, merging African American and South African battles in the pursuit of racial and gender equality. During her tenure as the president of the ANC Women's League in the 1940s, she advocated for women's involvement in politics, education, and social advancement. Her leadership influenced Black feminist activism in South Africa, connecting local issues to worldwide movements. The impact of her contributions remains a source of inspiration for modern feminist movements, emphasizing the strength and tactical agency of Black women in the struggle against oppression.

5.4.1 Sustainable Leadership and Organizational Resilience

A central theme in Xuma's message is the enduring strength and solidarity of the National Council of African Women (NCAW). She emphasizes their capacity to "*cohere and collaborate*" for over twenty years, underscoring the resilience and sustainability of organizations led by Black South African women. This corresponds with Hendricks' (2022) perspective that Xuma's impact reached beyond her time in office, influencing women's activism well after she left her formal leadership role.

5.4.2 The Strength of Shared Leadership and Unity

In her letter, Xuma recognizes that effective leadership and a committed community are crucial for the Council's achievements. By acknowledging both "*wise and capable leadership*" and a "*dedicated and faithful following*," she promotes a feminist leadership approach that emphasizes teamwork rather than personal accolades. This illustrates the tenets of transnational feminism, highlighting the importance of united efforts and common accountability in the battle for women's rights.

5.4.3 Dedication to Social Advancement and Empowerment

Xuma's concentration on the "*upliftment and progress of the African people*" connects to wider liberation movements in South Africa and the African diaspora. The concept of "*upliftment*" aligns with struggles for Black self-determination and empowerment, bolstering the YWCA's goal to enhance the socio-economic status of Black women in South Africa. Her statements emphasize the connection between racial justice and feminist movements, placing the NCAW in the worldwide struggle for racial and gender equality.

5.4.4 Worldwide Links and Feminist Legacy

As a prominent international leader, Xuma connects the activism of South African women to worldwide feminist movements. Her mention of a "*long life of continued service*" signifies a commitment to ongoing feminist and anti-colonial efforts, guaranteeing that the endeavors she

advocated for will outlast her existence. This coincides with her work in the YWCA, which facilitated links between African and global women's movements.

5.4.5 Preserving Legacy Through Institutional Memory

Through the creation of this message for a promotional poster, Xuma's words were integrated into the institutional history of the NCAW. Acknowledging her contributions publicly strengthens her essential position in developing South African women's activism, helping future generations grasp the historical origins of their fight. This demonstrates a wider dedication to recording and safeguarding the legacy of Black women's activism, a main issue in decolonial feminist research.

5.5 Conclusion

In conclusion Madie Hall Xuma's diverse and influential contribution as a transnational activist, especially in South Africa, exemplifies the strength of linked battles against racial and gender oppression. She actively promoted unity among Black women throughout the African diaspora, acknowledging their common experiences and working together globally, especially in the United States. Xuma took part in events that engaged the African diaspora, highlighting collective efforts against colonialism and demonstrating the essential roles women played in these movements. In South Africa, she openly opposed discriminatory regulations such as the passing of laws, advocating for grassroots organizing and resistance to dismantle systemic injustice. Xuma purposefully collaborated with organizations such as the African Academy of Arts and Research and the United Nations Assembly to promote racial justice and women's rights, recognizing the significance of confronting established systems. As a proficient diplomat, she challenged colonial powers and highlighted injustices such as apartheid on the global stage, showcasing her leadership and tactical acumen. Her leadership and organizing, particularly in the ANC Women's League, created a significant contribution, as her emphasis on intersectionality remains relevant to today's social justice movements. In the end, Xuma's activism underscores the strength of transnational solidarity, grassroots organization, and tactical institutional involvement to confront oppression and promote social justice, reinforcing her legacy as a decolonial feminist leader who remains an inspiration.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

This study explores the political impact of Madie Hall Xuma on South Africa's fight for gender and racial equality, emphasizing her activism through a decolonial feminist lens. The study offers a thorough examination of her role in political and social movements by highlighting her leadership in women's organizations, advocacy for African women's rights, and participation in transnational activism. It emphasizes how Hall Xuma's initiatives directly challenged colonial and patriarchal structures, steering clear of broad assertions regarding her influence. Rather, it focuses on particular measures she implemented that opposed these systems, providing a detailed view of her legacy. The study situates Hall Xuma's contributions within the wider frameworks of activism histories in both South Africa and globally. It also delves into the gap between South Africa's constitutional promises of gender equality and the actual experiences of women, connecting these matters to wider conversations on African feminism and decolonization. From a decolonial feminist viewpoint, the research highlights Hall Xuma's vital involvement in fighting gender inequality during apartheid, focusing on both the repression of women and the larger social and political change of the country.

By merging decolonial feminism with Critical Diversity Literacy (CDL), the research offers a nuanced examination of authority, identity, and resistance. These theoretical models enhance the comprehension of Xuma's activism, highlighting the necessity to confront the dominant narratives regarding gender and political engagement during the apartheid period in South Africa. Ethical considerations played a crucial role in the research process, ensuring that cultural and historical sensitivities were honored while upholding academic integrity. This method not only emphasizes Xuma's activism but also rectifies the historical neglect of African women's roles in political history. Hall Xuma's global activism is demonstrated to have connected struggles against racial and gender discrimination, highlighting the importance of transnational solidarity, especially in partnership with Black women throughout the African diaspora, including in the U.S. Her efforts highlighted the significance of unified resistance against colonialism and the pivotal role of women in these battles. In South Africa, Xuma's activism fiercely challenged discriminatory regulations,

like pass laws, and she supported community-driven initiatives focused on eradicating systemic inequality. Her partnerships with organizations such as the African Academy of Arts and Research and the United Nations Assembly showcased her dedication to racial equality and women's rights, establishing her as a significant force in challenging prevailing power dynamics. In her role as a diplomat, she tactically leveraged her global influence to highlight apartheid and various other oppressive systems, thereby reinforcing her position as a leader.

The research finds that Hall Xuma's activism demonstrates the strength of transnational solidarity, local mobilization, and institutional involvement in fighting oppression and promoting social justice. Her decolonial feminist influence remains a source of inspiration for current movements aimed at achieving equality and freedom. Though the study highlights Hall Xuma's important contributions, it recognizes a few limitations, like the range of primary source materials and the emphasis on specific elements of her activism. Additional research might investigate the ongoing impact of Hall Xuma's activism on contemporary feminist and political movements, both in South Africa and worldwide. A comparative examination with other African women activists who supported transnational solidarity in her time would enhance the comprehension of decolonial feminism worldwide. Furthermore, exploring how her concepts have influenced grassroots activism and policy advocacy for racial and gender justice may offer greater understanding of her lasting legacy. Incorporating oral histories and viewpoints from individuals directly affected by her efforts would enhance the understanding of the enduring importance of her contributions to contemporary battles for equality and social change.

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