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Confronting stereotypes in the fishing industry in post-apartheid South Africa: A case study of women on the West Coast in the Western Cape, South Africa

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Drawing on research conducted in fish processing and allied industries, the women in this study engage in shoreline activities collecting mussels, red bait, shellfish, seaweed; catching crayfish and fish or cleaning fish and mending nets. Women's role in fishing is a source of sustainable livelihood for the inhabitants of the fishing villages of Paternoster and Saldanha Bay on the West Coast, one hundred and forty kilometres from Cape Town. Like many coastal communities in South Africa, these villages have a long history of harvesting marine resources such as fish, shellfish, rock lobster or crayfish for their livelihood. The paper focuses on how women confront gender stereotyping in fishing and how social policies like affirmative action and employment equity impact on women in a democratising South Africa. The paper also highlights ways that women in fish processing innovate and develop strategies to cope with gender-related workplace problems in the industry.

Keywords: intersectionality, gender, inequality, race, class, informal labour, fishing

JEL classification: D60, D63, O17, O55

Introduction

The paper draws on interviews with women¹ who are employed in the male-dominated fishing industry. Women have a crucial role in sustaining the livelihoods of small-scale fisher households in South Africa. While the gender division of labour in the fishing industry excludes women from many aspects of the work processes, their role is indispensable in the pre and post-harvest tasks in fishing. Women play an important part in several activities but are less represented in national or regional fishers' organisations than in community or local level organisations (Reethinam 2013, 4). Consequently, the lack of public recognition of women's contribution to the industry reinforces stereotypes of fishing as a male-dominated industry where women's roles continue to be invisible and under-valued. This societal perception of women's role in fishing has a direct consequence in the context of changing fisheries policies in the post-apartheid era where many traditional small-scale fishers, especially women, continue to be excluded from the fishing rights allocation process. This labour market discrimination reinforces the structural constraints confronting women in fishing. This oversight by policy makers and implementers condones the role of women in the pursuit of democracy in South Africa. This is in spite of women's participation in community affairs and social movements being imprinted in the historiography of South Africa.

At the dawn of democracy, all race-based legislation was struck from the statute books. Consequently, the South African Constitution (Act No. 108 of 1996) Chapter

2 Article 9 of the Bill of Rights forbids all forms of direct or indirect discrimination.² The introduction of gender-sensitive legislation and policy development shaped important legislative reforms for the majority of women. These include the right to social security for children under the age of eighteen years old, addressing violence against women and free health care for pregnant women and children under the age of five years (Meer 2005, 9). The Constitution is based on the notion of substantive rather than formal equality, i.e. on equality of outcome rather than equality of opportunity. The Constitutional guidelines concede that equality might require that different groups be treated differently while prohibiting all forms of discrimination (Budlender 2011, 9). A good example is the Employment Equity Act (Act No 55 of 1998) that promotes proportionate representation of all groups at all levels of the workplace in both the private and public sectors.³

The governance framework for fisheries is the South African Constitution (1996) and the Marine Living Resources Act (Act No. 18 of 1998) as well as a range of international, regional and national law and policies pertaining to the management of fisheries resources (Sowman et al. 2011, 12). With the advent of democracy, South Africa entered a period of rapid policy transformation across every sector. During this period every sector was interrogated with the tendency to change policies completely and as quickly as possible. The shift towards the development of a more egalitarian society has not automatically translated into substantive gains

for women. This is particularly evident in the areas of economic policy and land reform where male privilege is more overtly threatened by the incorporation of women. An important aspect of structural change was the adoption of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) macro-economic policy which promoted the introduction of active labour policies especially the promotion of small, medium and micro enterprise (SMME) ownership as a vehicle for job creation. This encouraged men and especially women to establish SMMEs in all industries, particularly in fishing. More recently, the 2011 National Development Plan (NDP) explicitly focuses on small-scale farmers and fishers who historically had been ignored. While development policy continues to encourage privatisation, subsidy removal and downsizing of the public sector while encouraging black entrepreneurs to stimulate economic growth and jobs through the creation of small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs), it favours large-scale industrial fisheries, which could result in fewer fishing licence-holders of substantial value. This national policy is supported by the Marine Living Resources Amendment Bill (2013) which allows for the allocation of fishing rights to identified small-scale fishing communities, which have previously been excluded from the commercial fishing rights allocation process (SANewsgov). The Bill intends to bring into force the National Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries small-scale fishing policy, which supports the setting up of community-based legal entities in the form of co-operatives by small-scale fishers to allow fishing communities access to fishing rights. Under the policy, the department proposes that certain areas along the coast be demarcated and prioritised for small-scale fishers. The small-scale fisheries policy was gazetted in May 2012 and is expected to be implemented within the next year. The new policy will return to a system of community rights, rather than individual property rights, and will devolve

the responsibility for managing the resource to the fishers themselves, as part of the co-management arrangements, principles that are actively supported by government (Cox 2012, 8).

Like most developing countries, the South African labour market provides jobs for a fraction of the entire working population with the majority of workers employed in casual, temporary, flexible and contract employment without job security and work-related benefits. Therefore, the policy on co-operatives is also a poverty alleviation strategy to address economic vulnerability of coastal communities.

Research methods

Because short-term employment is becoming the dominant form of employment in South Africa, the explanatory approach to case studies is considered the most appropriate method to capture the different experiences of women engaged in these forms of employment contracts. As Baxter and Jack (2008, 547) indicate, explanatory case studies elucidate the presumed causal links in real-life interventions that are too complex for the survey or experimental strategies. In the context of this study, explanatory case studies also provide insights into women's access to independent sources of income which may enhance women's decision-making power in all spheres of their lives.

Various data gathering methods were used – focus group discussions, one-on-one interviews with women, an entrepreneur and workers on short-term contracts in fish processing and key informant interviews with the staff of the local non-government organisation. Interviews were conducted as follows:

For the fishing industry case study, I interviewed three key informants, and held eleven respondent interviews, of which there were eight individual and three group interviews. Two women were nineteen years old and the other women ranged between the ages of thirty and sixty

Table 1: Key informants and interview details

Initials	Sex, race, occupation	Date of interview
IJ	Male, Coloured, Government representative – Western Cape Provincial Office	23 April 2003
KL	Female, Coloured, Businesswoman in local area	25 April 2003
PX	Female, Coloured, Organiser for local NGO	25 April 2003
Individual Interviews		
FK	Female, Coloured, Chairperson Fishing Association	24 April 2003
AB	Female, Coloured, Organiser local fishers' organisation: worker	23 April 2003
CD	Female, Coloured, Worker fishing company (wife of fisherman), seasonal worker	24 April 2003
EF	Female, Coloured, Domestic worker trained in line fishing	23 April 2003
GH	Female, Coloured, Trainer, NGO-linked local development	24 April 2003
MN	Male, Coloured, Trainer, Human Resources Department, local fishing company	24 April 2003
NH	Female, Coloured, Local entrepreneur and trainer of women entrepreneurs	25 September 2003
J	Male, White, Owner of SMME, trainer of women machinists	27 September 2003
Group interviews		
OP, QR, ST,UV,WX	Male, Coloured, Fishermen	25 April 2003
IL, VW, XO	Female, Coloured, Women workers sewing overalls for fisherman	27 September 2003
B and C	Female, Coloured, Young engineering students working on trawlers	28 September 2003

years. With the exception of the young engineering cadets, all the women had children and some were married. A group interview was conducted with male fishers in the local association's office. An in-depth interview was conducted with the HR manager of the local fish processing factory and the male trainer at the local NGO. The men were between forty and sixty years of age. As in the first case study, the biological ages of interviewees are imprecise because I thought it would provide more privacy and confidentiality. In total, I conducted interviews with twenty-four women (twelve individual and five group interviews) and twenty males (thirteen individual interviews and two group interviews).

Using Yin's (2009, 11) case study method to address contemporary issues of affirmative action and the promotion of equality for women, this paper analyses how race intersects with gender relations in a male-dominated workplace. This approach supports Jacklyn Cock's (1980) case study on the intersection of race, gender and class through the specific relation of the White 'madam' and Black 'maid' in apartheid South Africa. Thus, the value of a case study method is its capacity to explore the phenomena of women working in casualised employment within the context of a democratising South Africa as part of the globalising world.

Describing the case study

Fishing has long been a source of sustainable livelihood for the inhabitants of the fishing villages of Paternoster and Saldanha Bay on the West Coast, 140 km from Cape Town. The case study is located within the spatial development initiative (SDI) on the West Coast. The SDIs are development corridors that have been established as vehicles to kick-start economic development in particular geographical areas. Traditionally, industries in the SDIs are similar to those of the former Bantustans where labour legislation was not necessarily adhered to.⁴ Fishers living in Paternoster are members of the Langebaan Lagoon, which forms part of the local stakeholders' forum. Paternoster, like many coastal communities in South Africa has a long history of harvesting marine resources such as fish, shellfish and rock lobster or crayfish for their livelihoods (Sunde 2008). Sunde estimates that thirty thousand subsistence or artisanal fisher persons depend on these resources to survive and an additional thirty thousand are employed seasonally in the fishing industry. Historically, artisanal fishers were excluded from fishing legislation. Women like their male counterparts, had access to and were engaged in both the pre- and post-harvest fishing industry. The Marine Living Resources Act 18 of 1998 classified and legalised artisanal and small-scale fishers in South Africa as subsistence fishers with access to marine resources only for consumption which is in direct conflict with the livelihoods needs of small scale fishers (Isaacs 2011a). Policymakers believe that artisanal fishers with fishing rights through

the individual transferable quota (ITQ) system is a means of job creation and security, sound working conditions and improving the health and safety of workers. Poverty and social inequality is evident amongst small-scale fishers in the coastal settlements. While social dimensions characterising different fishing communities are diverse, it is clear that they experience significant marginalisation socially, politically and economically (Sowman et al. 2011). Sowman further observes that this has implications for the organisational capacity of fishers, the nature of cohesion and conflict amongst them, their beliefs, values and attitudes and ultimately their patterns of resource use. Furthermore, there has been limited research regarding the impact of the different social policies on the lives of working women and their organisations.

The women and men interviewed have lived in Paternoster and Saldanha Bay for most of their lives. The fishing industry has been shaped by discriminatory legislation and practices during the apartheid period. During the interviews many fishers described life under apartheid and the manner in which it had changed with the new democratic dispensation. The women interviewed were employed primarily as seasonal workers at the local fish processing company or as small entrepreneurs. Women also perform unpaid work in shore-based activities, making and repairing nets, preparing bait and processing and selling fish. In addition, the women's role includes collecting mussels and other shellfish off the rocks. The interviewees live in the geographical area known as the West Coast Spatial Initiative which is a spatial development initiative. The SDIs as development corridors have been established as vehicles to kick-start economic development in particular geographical areas. Traditionally, industries in the SDIs are similar to those of the former Bantustans where labour legislation was not necessarily adhered to. Thus, the focus of the interviews was an attempt to establish the manner in which social policies of preferential treatment for women benefited or disadvantaged them.

Residents of Paternoster work in the nearby fish processing factory in Saldanha Bay as seasonal workers or in a local SMMEs making clothing or food catering for the fisher folk. This fishing village is marked by numerous little white RDP and Sea Harvest-owned houses. The Sea Harvest factory was established in 1964 and is located in Saldanha Bay, one hundred and forty kilometres outside Cape Town. All sea frozen production is exported, with the key markets being the USA, Canada, Australia, and the UK (Seaharvest). These are the homes of people who either work as fishers or in fishing production at the local fish factory, owned by Sea Harvest. A short distance away is the residential area accommodating the wealthy homeowners who live in huge houses. The class divide is stark with the huge houses facing the seashore and within walking distance of the sea and the working class homes built up on the hillside. A fish market is being developed

in Paternoster as an employment creation project. The market has a café selling fried fish and chips, sweets and cool drinks.

Women are employed primarily as seasonal workers at the local fish processing company or as small entrepreneurs on the West Coast. Strong patriarchal relations shape and limit women's direct access to the sea. Cardosa's study (2005, 24) indicates that fishing is the primary source of income for 60% of fishers. In this study fishers were asked to quantify the contribution of fishing activities towards the household income. Cardosa's (2005, 24) notes that 57% of fishers in Paternoster indicated that fishing amounted to 76–100% of total income while 10% indicated it contributed between 51–75%. Fishers engage in the repairs of their boats or nets but do not derive an income from this. In this context of poverty and unemployment amongst coastal communities, there is a high level of reliance upon social grants. On the West Coast, 'all pay day' as it is known amongst locals has become a much anticipated monthly ritual upon which hundreds of small-scale fishers depend (Schultz (2010) cited in Sowman 2011, 28).

Developing a framework on intersectionality

According to Symington (2004), intersectionality as a feminist theory is a methodological springboard for social justice action based on the premise that people live multiple, layered identities derived from social relations, history and the operation of structures of power. Intersectional analysis aims to reveal multiple identities, exposing the different types of discrimination and disadvantage that occur as a consequence of the combination of identities. It also aims to address the manner in which racism, patriarchy, class oppression and other systems of discrimination create structural inequalities for women. This approach takes account of historical, social and political contexts but also recognises unique individual experiences resulting from the coming together of different types of identity. Because people are members of more than one community at the same time, and can simultaneously experience oppression and privilege; intersectionality as a feminist theory analyses how identities are constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed. For example, a woman may be a respected medical professional yet suffer domestic violence in her home (Symington 2004). Another example is the qualitatively different experience of a Black woman in Cape Town compared to that of a White woman in the same geographical location. Similarly, the experience of being lesbian, old, disabled, poor, Northern Hemisphere based, and/or any number of other identities, is unique and attaches distinct identities and experiences to that particular individual. Symington (2004: 1) notes:

The Canadian experience shows that in the market for rental housing, single, black women may have a particularly difficult time in finding apartments, especially

if they are recipients of social assistance and/or single parents. Many landlords buy into various stereotypes and believe them to be less dependable tenants. On the basis of sex alone, this discrimination would not be apparent. Similarly, if considering race alone, this discrimination would not be evident. Using standard discrimination analysis, courts would fail to see that there is discrimination against those who are single, black and female. It is the singular identity of single-black-woman which is the subject of discrimination in the housing market. This is intersectional discrimination.

McCann and Kim (2003, 149) concur that gender theories on intersectionality view differences as relational rather than discrete entities and that the meanings of this difference are produced through relations that are not necessarily an inherent quality of each category. McCann and Kim (2003) note how the conflicting and complex aspects of identity in women's lives shift with each experience creating an opportunity for negotiation between each of the categories of identity. These negotiations carry the same risks and privileges because the interlocking systems of domination often impinge on the rights of poor and unemployed women who have very few alternatives (McCann and Kim 2003, 150). Crenshaw (1991), writing on Black women's experiences in dominant American cultural ideology, states that locating Black women in dominant social relations is unique and in some senses inassimilable in the discursive paradigms of gender and race domination.

The study on the post-apartheid workplace by Webster and von Holdt (2005) unpacks the notion of workplace equality, in certain industries, as it intersects and is shaped and reshaped in different contexts by different actors. The study examines the relationship between multiple markers of identity in the workplace. According to Webster and von Holdt (2005), the restructuring of the post-apartheid labour market has created three different categories of workers. First, there is the core which consists of formal sector workers in more or less stable employment relations. They have wages, benefits and access to democratic worker and trade union rights. Second, there is the zone of casualised and externalised work, where non-core workers are compelled into less stable employment relations. Sometimes workers have temporary or part-time contracts with the core enterprise and at other times more precarious contracts with intermediaries such as labour brokers, informal factors or sub-contractors. The third zone consists of the periphery where people are 'make a living' through informal-sector activities ranging from those that permit a degree of petty accumulation from subsistence activities to full unemployment.

Many of the new jobs that have been created since 1995 have been in the second and third zones. Of these, women constitute the vast majority of new employees in a rapidly restructured labour market however, spiraling levels of unemployment in the formal sector force many women entering the labour market to do so as part-time

workers. In the South African context, women's subordination and the dominance of Black women in the secondary labour market is worsened by the chipping away of established labour standards which is inherent in the flexibilisation of the labour market. Women as new entrants to the labour market do so as components of a global supply chain. Local employers form international networks with global partners and it is the latter who determine the employment relationship based on profit margins. Consequently, new labour policies have eliminated racial discrimination. Webster and von Holdt (2005) indicate that the labour market can be non-discriminatory but simultaneously socially inequitable as the past labour market policies privileging White workers continue to impact negatively on labour market access for Black workers.

Moser (1993) develops the theory of intersectionality as a 'triple shift', noting that many women are mothers, wives and daughters in their homes, preparing food and doing reproductive work, in addition to the roles they play in the artisanal, small-scale sector, assisting their husbands prepare bait, mend nets and liaise with marketers, and themselves working in the industrial sector in the processing plants providing 'productive' labour. Women realise that their position is unique in that they straddle several different economies: at household and family level, at the level of their community and local fishery, and often at the level of large-scale production and the market (Sunde 2010, 12). Sunde's familiarity with the fishing industry encouraged the use of Moser's framework on gender role identification to develop a typology of formal/informal production, home/reproduction and community, which is illustrated in Table 2.

Therefore, the intersectionality of race, class, gender and ethnicity as categories of analysis locates Black women

as doubly burdened, subject to the dominating practices of both a sexual hierarchy and a racial one (Crenshaw 1992, cited in Gasca 2007, 426). Furthermore, the concept of intersectional analysis provides a framework for feminist writers to use the dominant discourses of resistance thus reclaiming 'victims' by recognising social agency to theorise the experiences of black women as central to feminist theory. Therefore, this case study on women in the fishing sector will be analysed through the lens of intersectional theory. The intersection of race, class and gender as categories of identity appear more evident than ever before because twenty years of formal democracy have not enhanced the substantive rights of the majority of Black South African women.

The continuities and discontinuities of stereotyping in the fishing industry

Working life during apartheid

The social engineering of apartheid legislation created stereotypes of productive/unproductive or adult/child and perhaps even male/female and whom the state system considered significant or insignificant within the social relations of production and reproduction in a rapidly industrialising South Africa. The intersectionality of race, class and gender agency links dichotomies in relation to the stereotypes constructed by apartheid legislation. The worst example of apartheid social engineering was the migrant labour system which disrupted family and community life by forbidding male mineworkers to live with their families in the urban areas. It also calcified patriarchal traditional practices by extending the authorities of the traditional chiefs and their control over women living in the Bantustans, thus marginalising women's voices from the public discourse and keeping hidden

Table 2: Women's paid and unpaid labour

On the shore and in the near shore zone	In factories	At home: (all unpaid labour)	In the community: (unpaid)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting mussels, red bait, shellfish (unpaid labour) • Collecting seaweed (may be paid) • Grinding seaweed (may be paid) • Collecting bait (usually unpaid) • Mending nets (unpaid) • Assisting with baiting (unpaid) • Catching crayfish (paid and unpaid) • Catching fish (a few women do this paid and unpaid) • Rehabilitating mussels (unpaid) • Cleaning fish (paid and unpaid) • Selling and marketing fish (paid and unpaid) • Liaison with fisheries inspectors, dealing with creditors and loans, applying for permits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As workers in fish processing plants (paid, but poorly); may be permanent or seasonal, but often casual, on a piece rate basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing food for the fisherman and the family • Washing dishes • Washing clothes • Nurturing the children • Caring for grandparents and extended family members • Liaising with schools and clinics • Working with family income and savings • Paying accounts • Funeral preparations • Wedding preparations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy and organising • Church groups • Savings groups ('stokvels') • School fundraising activities • Maintaining other social networks

Source: Sunde 2010, 12

from the public purview women's ability to challenge traditional patriarchal authority or control.

The Blacks (Abolition of Passes and Coordination of Documents) Act no. 67 of 1952 prohibited African women from entering urban areas without a residential permit, thus confining women to female-headed households in the Bantustans where they cared for children and their aged relatives. African women with the requisite work permits were employed as housemaids, housekeepers or nannies in the homes of urban and rural White families. Women employed as domestic workers were vulnerable to sexual exploitation and other discriminatory practices by male employers with little or no recourse to the justice system which was based on apartheid legislation. Consequently, women as well as men who worked as 'house boys' or gardeners, were vulnerable to exploitation because domestic work fell outside the ambit of labour legislation during the apartheid period. Job reservation based on racial classification constituted racial structuring of social relations which intersected with the formal workplace in a unique fashion. Because the labour market was rooted in the legacy of apartheid and took on a particular formation, the multiple burdens of gender, race and class discrimination consigned women, especially Black women to the lowest rungs of the socio-economic ladder.

Because the majority of Black women continued to live in the Bantustans⁵ eking out a living from home brewing or petty trading as forms of economic activity, this encouraged traditional Bantustan authorities to regulate the mobility of women. The restriction on residential rights for blacks gave rise to personal subjectivities experienced as racial and gender discrimination. Nololo who is a mother of four children recalled:

My father who was born in Lesotho had walked to the goldmines in Johannesburg. He had a work permit and would send money [home] once in a while. My mother would visit him in Saldanha Bay [on the West Coast]. After two or three years, our [lifestyle] things didn't change and my mother decided to travel to Saldanha Bay because she had children to feed (Interview with Nololo, female entrepreneur, September 2003).

Nololo's father was a migrant from Lesotho confined to living in a hostel on the goldmines as a single person for eleven months of the year. As the wife of a migrant worker, her mother relied on her father's remittances to feed and clothe their family. As a child, Nololo's identity was formed through experiencing the racial and gender discrimination heaped on her parents. Her parents were classified as African, migrant and non-South African and therefore illegal residents in an urban Coloured residential area. She suffered economic exploitation because the apartheid racial classification system created particular family forms. As children, Nololo and her siblings used to accompany their father who worked on a trawler boat. When the trawler sailed out to sea, they would climb into the little fishing boats and catch fish with nets. Migrant

workers did not own boats and Nololo's father was the skipper of the trawler owned by a white fisherman and her father lived on the owner's property. Nololo related that her mother required a (residential) permit to live with her father when he took up employment as a fisherman.⁶

My mother, Basotho by birth, required a pass to enter a Coloured⁷ township [on the West Coast] and without a residential permit would be arrested and jailed by the police (Interview with Nololo, female entrepreneur, September 2003).

Because of the intersection of patriarchal racial institutions with social family relations, Nololo's mother's life revolved around avoiding imprisonment. She was only at home during weekends because that was the only time she could avoid the police searches for illegal residents. Nololo believes that her

mother's subordinate inhumane lifestyle was borne with dignity by a strong woman who exposed her children to all the sides of life. I know the poverty side, I know the nice side, I know the crying side and it was only at Christmas when we were a family and after the Christmas season my mother started to sleep outside again. We didn't even know if my mother who did not have the relevant Pass Book would be jailed while we accompanied my father to sea (Interview with Nololo, female entrepreneur, September 2003).

During that period of apartheid small children accompanied their mother to prison. Nololo recounts these events:

Having my mother jailed was part of our lifestyle. Nightly the policeman would knock at the door to check if my mother was sleeping at home. My mother used to sleep outside in the nearby mountains. We were used to the lifestyle. Sometimes my mother would come back at night to visit us and the policeman would be waiting to arrest her. Our neighbourhood was mixed race and our immediate neighbour was a woman who also required a pass and had given birth to a child in jail (Interview with Nololo, female entrepreneur, September 2003).

Nololo, as an African child living in a Coloured residential area had little economic or social stability. As she notes,

The instability of my family life forced me to go to high school in Cape Town and stay with a Coloured family (Interview with Nololo, female entrepreneur, September 2003)

She completed her schooling at the age of 16. As a young woman there were no other job opportunities but to work in the fish production factory because the only resource was the sea. Before dawn, the factory horn would blow to alert women to prepare for work. Women employed in fish production packed fish into cans.

Apartheid is considered a crime against humanity because of the very negative consequences for Black families, especially young men who came to the city as migrants and for women who either lived in the Bantustans or worked in urban areas, because the only employment opportunities were in the service industries. While the multi-layered identities were overtly racialised

it affected working class men and women most severely. As a young African female and the daughter of migrant parents, Nololo was sent to a Coloured high school in the city of Cape Town. Cape Town as part of the Western Province was classified a Coloured preferential area where people of mixed racial origin worked in unskilled employment and were restricted to live in demarcated residential areas. Unlike her African mother, Nololo did not require a residential permit because the school authorities registered her as a local resident. Consequently Nololo was able to break out of the cycle of migrancy and a fate similar to that of her mother. When examining Nololo and her mother's life experiences within the conceptual paradigm and boundaries of intersectional analysis, a woman's identity cannot be collapsed into uni-dimensional categories because the category 'woman' is contradictory, contested and conflicted since identities are multi-layered, privileging certain women while disadvantaging others. Because Nololo was considered a resident in a Coloured residential area, she was not subjected to the inhumane living conditions of her migrant African parents, especially that of her mother.

Working life post- apartheid

Policy changes promoting affirmative action and employment equity increased women's participation in the formal economy, shown especially in a rapid increase in the size of the African women's workforce whose participation signaled the feminisation of the workforce (van der Westhuizen et al. 2007). Casale (2004) observes that an increase in the labour force participation rates for both men and women was expected, but that the increase was considerably higher among women. She illustrates that women accounted for six out of ten workers employed during the years 1995–2005. Of the women employed, five of six working women employed were African (Casale 2004, 47). Women benefited from the increased demand for employees and accounted for 55% of workers employed. The type of employment for the majority of women was unskilled and elementary level employment which is poorly paid (Casale 2004, 47). In spite of formal equality, racial discrimination continued with White women earning more than their African counterparts (van der Westhuizen et al. 2005). It does appear, however, that affirmative action policies encouraging women to enter employment formerly confined to men, advantages mainly White women who benefit largely from policies promoting equality because they have better educational qualifications and access to management or better professional qualifications. Interestingly, Casale's study also notes that African women with tertiary qualifications earned the highest salary amongst women (Casale 2004, 47).

The lack of sufficiently well paid jobs during this period simultaneously created the feminisation of the labour market and is explained by various reasons. According to van der Westhuizen et al. (2005), there

appears to have been a decline in female access to male income because there was an increase in unemployment amongst males. Second, another reason includes the consequences of the HIV epidemic and an increase in the number of households headed by females due to changes in household structure (van der Westhuizen et al. 2005). Moreover, the abolition of apartheid laws and introduction of more democratically inclusive legislation contributed towards increasing opportunities for women in the labour market. The bulk of the jobs for women grew in the sectors of construction wholesale and retail trade, financial and business services, which are not necessarily well paid.

Several government and other organisations have intervened to improve the socioeconomic conditions of women in fishing communities, to enhance their role in coastal resources management and their participation in governance and policy processes. Development initiatives have focused on improving women's livelihoods in small-scale fisheries industries; generating and supporting entrepreneurship; supporting women's roles in aquaculture; forming and strengthening fisheries co-operatives; forming partnerships with other development actors such as the state; supporting women's participation in coastal zone management and conserving the environment; generating alternative livelihood options, training women in improved fish processing technologies, and so on. A critical development intervention in working with women and livelihoods has been the formation of micro-credit groups. Other development initiatives have aimed at bringing together women leaders to share experiences on coastal zone management and fisheries. A few have focused on creating a dialogue on gender between women from fishing communities and the institutions that work with them: international organisations, the state and non-governmental organisations. Some initiatives have focused on 'visibilising' the contributions and concerns of women in fishing communities for national and policy consideration and on increasing their political participation within governance. The documents under this theme highlight these initiatives. A key example provided was that of the snoek industry. Woolworths, one of the large retail outlets, is currently importing smoked snoek pate from New Zealand. Snoek has historically been the staple fish for poor people in the Cape. Snoek is one of the few line fish that is not overexploited in South Africa and is readily available. The women could not believe that government would allow the import of snoek that has been processed thousands of miles away, instead of trying to create work for women locally. The women felt that government has taken decisions and adopted a particular policy that has impacted women in particular, as only women have lost the work that they had, but they have also not been given equal access to the existing resources (Sunde 2010, 15).

Thus, the nature of work in the globalising world points to a labour market which has been shrinking

with work becoming more informal. Consequently, informality is a process taking place both within the ‘formal’ workplace and outside it.⁸ This has implications for societal patriarchal relations which continually change but do not necessarily disappear because it is women who are employed in the vulnerable and insecure jobs of the informalising workplace. These changes were compounded by the impact of trade liberalisation policies in the clothing, textile and leather sub-sectors, which led to the widespread retrenchment of women. While acknowledging government’s approach to employment equity and employment creation, the jobs are mostly created at the lower end of global supply chains, and this approach encourages employers to renege on their responsibility for meeting workers’ needs of health care, pensions, maternity, leave time, compensation for on-the-job accidents, and workforce training, effectively leaving these up to workers and their families to resolve. The removal of limits on working hours or payment of overtime compensation because public works programmes pay low wage rates has particularly burdened women, since women continue to do most of the work to raise children, care for the sick and elderly despite having entered the work force in huge numbers. This viewpoint is reiterated by Nololo when she states:

Because I lived near my home, I would go home and encourage my children to study and go to university. I spoke to my children and the eldest son went to university – I put him through university, it was very difficult for me and I said to myself I was going to do it – and he did his law degree at the University of the Western Cape (Interview with Nololo, female entrepreneur, September 2003).

Some women seasonal workers have taken advantage of job training programmes being offered by local non-government organisations (NGOs). For example EF informed me of her plans for employment as a fisherperson (Interview, EF, female, domestic worker, April 2003). EF lived in White City, a Coloured township in Saldanha Bay and had been trained to fish from a boat, learning how to prepare the bait for the sinker before hooking it to the fishing rod. Her enthusiasm for an independent income as a skilled worker spilled over into our conversation (Interview, EF, female, domestic worker, April 2003).

Notwithstanding this enthusiasm, EF has not worked as a fisher:

I take on day jobs as a domestic worker in local white suburban homes (Interview, EF, female domestic worker, April 2003).

As she stated, this income feeds her children because she is unable to find employment as a fisher because of the constraints on fishing quotas. EF’s experience resonates with many of the women who participated in the research project. Data indicate that women are enthusiastic about the post-apartheid legislation that promotes women

in male-dominated jobs, but to date are unable to find suitable employment to match their newly acquired skills.

LL, one of the two women who work on a sewing project, is a trained fisher who cannot find employment in Saldanha Bay. She trained as a line fisher because she believed that the local fish processing factory would employ her on completion.

LL informed me that she

Was denied employment because I had no experience of the trade yet men are employed without work experience (Group interview with WW and VW, September 2003)

A possible reason for the lack of jobs for women fishers is men’s opposition to women taking up positions as fisherpersons. As OR, a male fisher related:

Men have created myths about women’s role and believe you can’t send women to sea. A woman on board is considered bad luck for the fishing catch. Anyway, where will she get the necessary training – she hasn’t got a clue of how to put on a life jacket or what to do in an emergency and I think my experience is that a woman is a woman – a woman’s a person who is panicky and panicking can cause trouble (Interview, OR, male group fishers, April 2003).

This viewpoint is reinforced by MN, who explained that working on trawlers or small fishing boats is a dangerous occupation. Often, boat owners pick up fishers for casual work and these workers are rewarded or paid with a wage of R10 per day (Interview, MN, male fisher, April 2003). Loss of life at sea is considered part of the life of a fisherman. Fisher wives complained that it takes a long time to get information regarding the whereabouts of their spouses from the local company who owned the trawler. In spite of government legislation protecting fishers, boat owners do not keep records of whom they take as casual fishers and often do not have contact or personal details of their crew (Interview, MN, male fisher, April 2003). Therefore, the male perspective on women going out to catch fish on a boat may be regarded as their way of protecting women from the harsh realities of work as casual labourers or the climatic elements of storms and rough seas.

Therefore, challenging patriarchy and the sexual division of labour within the family creates opportunities for male and female children that ultimately will impact on their employment opportunities and incomes when they confront the sex segregation of the labour market. Nevertheless, these different forms of oppression are deeply rooted in national and local identities bound up with traditional patriarchal culture. Nololo’s statement reveals these contradictions:

My daughter was married when she was in Standard 9 [Grade 11] and has two children. My third child – a daughter, has a Bachelor’s degree in Tourism and Hospitality and is seeking employment. I have a 16-year-old in Standard 8 [Grade 10] and I wish that God would help me to take him through to university as well. Now I live with my granddaughter who is in Standard 7 and she is a very clever girl and wants to train as a doctor (Interview with Nololo, female entrepreneur, September 2003).

While Nololo's eldest daughter became a teenage mother, her other children took advantage of opportunities to break the cycle of impoverishment and social disadvantage. However, the structure of the previous discriminatory labour market policies continues to impact negatively on labour market access for Black workers, especially women. As Nololo remarks:

After 20 years of working at the military academy, I [took advantage of affirmative action policies] by starting my own business at home. What I am doing now is helping women to empower themselves. My son who was still a university student at the time assisted me to start my own business at home. I bought myself a caravan and changed it to a mobile and sell food from it. I sold seafood over weekends to the community (Interview with Nololo, female entrepreneur, September 2003).

Nololo is able to operate as an entrepreneur on condition she is able to source contracts which are short-term. Between contracts or until the next contract is sourced, Nololo may be in the employment of another entrepreneur. This section highlights how intersectional analysis demonstrates the contradictory process of formal equality and how the life stories of women entrepreneurs confront patriarchal attitudes by conforming or breaking these stereotypes. This contradictory yet emancipatory process leads many women to seek alternatives which break the bonds of their traditional patriarchal relationships. As Nololo states:

I did not want to be married to a man because lobola⁹ was paid for me. I didn't want to be customary(ily) married because I have little education and I have four children of my own. I went to work in the military academy because I got tired of working under sea level basis in the fishing factory. I want to change my life – not like my mother's life. The challenge was there and my mother encouraged me to change my life and go to look for work where I can stay by myself (economically independent) (Interview with Nololo, female entrepreneur, September 2003).

Many of the women interviewed indicated that they had no opportunity to shift the power relations within the home because of their work as seasonal workers in the local factories. The seasonal nature of their work prevents them from influencing decisions on behalf of their family. JZ indicated that:

Because we are away from home for long periods during the day, it is difficult to get my husband to look after the children. Once the fishing quota has been reached, my husband works as a volunteer for a local NGO, and refuses to help with the care of the household (Interview, JZ, female, seasonal packer, wife of OR, April 2003).

The women seasonal packers spoke of high levels of delinquency amongst children because they were left to fend for themselves while their mothers worked long hours. This fishing community experiences high levels of alcohol and drug abuse with the concomitant levels of gender-based violence. Nololo informed me that:

Women seasonal packers and their families live in houses owned by the local fish processing factory. Women pay rentals from their meagre wages and often take home R10

per week. This is the sum total of their take-home wage after they have paid for the rental (Interview with Nololo, female entrepreneur, September 2003).

In addition to working in the factory, the women support their male spouses, assisting with pre- and post-harvest activities linked to the employment contracts of their male partners. This work remains part of the unpaid family wage. Once the fishing quota is exhausted, fishers seek other forms of work in the local retail shops or as casual, unskilled day labourers or gardeners. OR, a male fisher works as a volunteer for a local non-government organisation doing community work. During this time, his wife and other family members support him (Interview with Group OR, male, April 2003). While men are dependent on their partners, the seasonal nature of women's work in the factories does not shift the power relations because the patriarchal authority of the husband continues to reign supreme in the household. Women in fishing belong to local non-government organisations, including those that organise and defend fishing workers' rights. These are community solidarity structures that bring women together for discussions and skills training on women's rights.

Notwithstanding this fact, research findings indicate that women as mothers provide opportunities for younger women to complete their schooling enter tertiary education and access more permanent professional careers. The ability of women to insist that their children, especially their daughters, complete high school and enter professional careers is an indicator that gender equality may be attained for the younger generation of girl children. Research data shows the career opportunities for two Coloured women employed as cadet engineers on trawling boats owned by the local multinational fish processing company. While EF has trained as a fisher-person and remains unemployed in the fishing industry, B has employment as a cadet engineer on a fishing trawler.¹⁰ Of the three women cadets, two have chosen careers as engineers and the other has chosen to be a skipper. According to B:

I like adventure and being in a man's field. At school I chose subjects like mathematics, physics and motor mechanic service because I thought I was going to work shifts with sailing guards. I chose the subjects because I enjoy fixing mechanical things. I am eligible for an engineering career because I have a school leaving certificate with a university entrance and can train to be a chief engineer on the trawler (Interview, B, young female, April 2003).

Her work entails going to sea for long periods. On her last trip she was one of two females with four men. She does shift work, including going on trips of 47 days with men on the trawlers. Her tasks include mainly maintenance work, drilling holes, working with the grinder, fixing the pumps and packing and loosening the pumps. She is one of five girls in her family and her father

encourages her because it is tough being in a man's world especially working with men. She informed me that:

Some of them want to break your confidence while another male will encourage you to go for completing the task (Interview, B, young female, April 2003).

As a young engineering cadet, B is aware of male jealousy and the capacity of verbal abuse to break her self-confidence. She is also more self-assured of her rights within the workplace because she is the first generation of youth to benefit from government affirmative action policies.

The acquisition of skills in occupations which are considered male, like engineering, strengthened women's resolve to break stereotypes and societal tradition which confine women to certain occupations. However, NH concurred that:

Many of the young women undermine themselves by not learning the skills of work considered men's work. But a minority of young women are training as engineers today (Interview, NH, female entrepreneur, September 2003).

According to Elson (1997), male bias and gender ascriptive relations permeate all social relations. Often women buy into these forms of social relations because these relations are complex – social, economic and political.¹¹ The case study of fish processing illustrates how social relations between men and women have been permeated by patriarchal values.

Drawing together the threads to confront gender stereotyping

Small-scale fishers use low levels of technology and have a supportive community culture, where the few assets are shared with the rest of the community in times of hardship. The reality of working women in the twenty-first century is their increasing incorporation in male-dominated employment like the fishing industry on men's terms. Legislation promoting women into male-dominated employment is an opportunity for women to earn wages equal to those of their male counterparts. The feminisation of the industry has informalised this particular labour market where employees are often unable to negotiate the rate of pay. Therefore the intersectionality of gender and work is mitigated through the continued stereotyping of women in less skilled and lower paid jobs. The categorisations of jobs as male or female creates an opportunity for employees to challenge job segregation as discriminatory and perpetuating inequality. The theory of intersectionality challenges the dichotomous categories created by a patriarchal society, which emphasised certain categories of work linked to women's reproductive role.

In contemporary post-apartheid South Africa, women now have *formal equality* and are protected by progressive workplace legislation and differences and similarities of the various markers of identity bring to bear on the restructuring of social relations in the home because the workplace has become globalised. This is evident as the opportunities for

older women intersect with those of the young engineers. These opportunities ensure their children have better educational and consequently career opportunities than they had during the apartheid era. The innovative ways in which women organise themselves to address issues of discrimination and gender stereotyping are strategies to sustain themselves as a group. They have also enhanced their capacity for self-organisation. Chhachhi and Pittin (1996) demonstrate that women's formal emancipation encourages them to embrace a range of innovative and effective organisational strategies. Women's participation in the economy increases women's economic contribution (both paid and unpaid) which makes them *more visible*. The right to equality as stipulated in the South African Constitution provides a different kind of *gendered experience*, offering the possibility of alternative versions of gender roles and expectations. Therefore formal equality does provide a measure of emancipation because there are no longer restrictions on Black women or men's mobility. Furthermore, government legislation which promotes preferential treatment for women in the workplace has benefits for black and white women who have tertiary education. Reliance on rule-based equal opportunity like affirmative action not linked to asset distribution is necessary if inequality is to be addressed in South Africa. This will ensure that not only a small elite group of Black women and Whites benefit from affirmative action policies but that inequality in South Africa is addressed to improve the life conditions of the majority of poor women and children.

Notes

1. In South Africa there are no legislated quotas in terms of gender representation (SA Barometer Report 2009, 29). Instead, and in the absence of these, the ANC as the ruling party committed itself to voluntary quotas and with this undertook to apply the 50% principle across its seats in all spheres of government (*ibid*).
2. In South Africa there are no legislated quotas in terms of gender representation (SA Barometer Report 2009, 29). Instead, and in the absence of these, the ANC as the ruling party committed itself to voluntary quotas and with this undertook to apply the 50% principle across its seats in all spheres of government (*ibid*).
3. Benjamin (2007) identifies the Constitution of 1994; Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA); Labour Relations Act (LRA); Occupational Health and Safety Act; Unemployment Insurance Act and Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act as having sections that address inequalities in the workplace in some way. Legislation outlaws, as discrimination, any form of harassment based on race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, HIV status, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language and birth.
4. Thus far, evidence on the shift in responsibility from state and employers regarding issues related to social security to women and families, or of its likely outcomes for society, government, and the private sector has not been examined. This is because many of the industries planned for the SDI's, like the Saldanha Steel plant on the West Coast in the Western Province, have not materialised.

5. In 1951, the government of Daniel Francois Malan introduced the Bantu Authorities Act to establish “homelands” allocated to the country’s different black ethnic groups. These amounted to 13 per cent of the country’s land, the remainder being reserved for the white population. Local tribal leaders were co-opted to run the homelands, and uncooperative chiefs were forcibly deposed. Over time, a ruling black elite emerged with a personal and financial interest in the preservation of the homelands. While this aided the homelands’ political stability to an extent, their position was still entirely dependent on South African support.
6. Nololo’s father lived in Paternoster, a Coloured fishing village on the West Coast located in the Cape Province. Her mother was born in Lesotho.
7. The Group Areas Act of 1950 (Act No. 41 of 1950) was an act of parliament created under the apartheid government of South Africa that assigned racial groups to different residential and business sections in urban areas in a system of urban apartheid. An effect of the law was to exclude non-Whites from living in the most developed areas, which were reserved for Whites. It caused many non-Whites to have to commute long distances from their homes in order to be able to work. The law led to non-Whites being forcibly removed for living in the ‘wrong’ areas.
8. Kimani, et al. (2008) note that this process can be conveniently described as ‘informalisation from above’, as a result of the externalisation of employment (sub-contracting or outsourcing), and ‘informalisation (employment of casual, temporary workers) from below’. The latter refers to the kind of activity traditionally associated with the informal economy.
9. Bridewealth paid for women.
10. The local fish processing company awards a limited number of placements for women with a high school matriculation certificate to study as engineers. The first step is to work as an apprentice or cadet and progress through the programme to become an engineer.
11. Gender ascriptive relations are those in which gender is overtly ascribed to the agents involved through the use of terms like husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter (Elson 1997, 156).

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