Women, Political Places and Participation

An educational perspective at the political participation of lower-educated Muslim and Hindu women in Urban and Rural Karnataka, India

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"As long as women of India do not take part in public life, there can be no salvation for the country." (Mahatma Gandhi)

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Jozien Elgershuizen

Abstract

Democratic India is improving the political rights of women by introducing different legal empowering regulations and arrangements. However, the situation of lower educated women is still poor. Societies' gender roles and identity aspects play a role in the process towards political participation. Karnataka knows good practices regarding empowering methods as Self Help Groups but methods seem to differentiate between urban and rural women. Consequently the research question of this study is: *'How do lower-educated women from urban and rural Karnataka perceive their political participation?'*

Political participation has been conceptualized as actions that are solely direct and active related to politics. However, to approach female political participation a fuller conceptualization is appropriate. The educational theory of Situated Learning is introduced to approach different empowering methods as Self Help Groups as participation, and vice versa.

The methodology of this study is based upon an ethnographic approach. Various methods has been combined explore the wide range of women's participation, to complement each other and to ensure the quality of the study. In-depth interviews were conducted with the assistance of two translators at two different locations to include urban and rural research participants. Further, (participant) observations have been made and a field diary was kept.

The results show that the political participation of the women varied in many ways; more direct or more indirect, more active or more passive, more public and more private, more formal or more informal. In the process towards women's participation foremost the social context, the family and community actors seem to be important. Moreover, the concept of places and spaces was recognized in the physical environment but also in the importance of the social and physical places and spaces of women.

The conceptualization of women's political participation provided the opportunity to explore participation fully. However, with the categorizations of 'family' and 'physical surrounding' at different levels of interference and the related concept of women's places and spaces the inductive model is distinctive to the earlier developed conceptual model. Further, female political participation is closely related to other forms of participation.

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1 Introduction

"During the second half of the twentieth century, civil society organizations and international bodies took renewed interest in promoting equity and harmony in society by protecting the basic civil, political, economic, social, and environmental rights of all people. For them, human progress can only be attained if the civil and political rights of individuals and groups are established and protected. Development will undoubtedly falter if people are not liberated from poverty, provided with basic education, health, safety, a clean and protected environment, and empowered to represent and speak for themselves - all alienable rights" (Rahman & Zafarullah, 2002, p. 1011-1012). Clearly, political rights - and political power structures - play an important role in enhancing people's equality and development in India's region.

Half a century later the emancipatory discussion for participation would have been dissolved. Where the request for participation was once disputing and pushed aside, it is argued that nowadays participation has become self-evident and main stream (see for example Berner, 2010 and Cornwall & Brock, 2005). In the definition of empowerment the importance of political acts still appears to be important; empowerment is "the ability to negotiate better in relations of power as well as an enhancement of entitlements, capabilities and choices" (Kalpagam, 2008, p. 25). However, the situation of especially lower-educated and lower class women is still poor as the next chapter will show. More, as the above indicates, improvement of political rights is important for human development in various domains. For that, this thesis is focused at lower-educated women and a political right namely political participation.

More specifically, political participation is important to progress of women and women's empowerment as women have to be able to put their issues forward in order to enhance their well-being. Political participation provides the possibility to put neglected issues on the agenda. Coherently, this study will show that political participation can be instrumental to improve life in various respects. The focus is on Indian women as India tries to improve the well-being of this vulnerable group by introducing various regulations. The state of Karnataka knows several good practices in this regard. The cooperation of the Department of Demography at the Faculty of Spatial Sciences of the University of Groningen with Karnatak University in Dharwad, Karnataka in the International Diploma course in Reproductive Health Management provided the possibility and supervision to conduct this study within the framework of the Research Master Regional Studies at the Faculty of Spatial Sciences. Their concern with health, well-being and spatial transformations is related to female political participation in Karnataka as women's participation contributes to the improvement of women's well-being in many aspects directly as it informs women about health issues and can support them financially. Also, indirectly women's political participation is important to well-being as it provides the opportunity for women to put their women's issues as reproductive health on the agenda. This will be explained and explored in the course of this report. For this, the following chapter will firstly describe the political participation of women in India and more specifically in the state Karnataka.

2 Women's Political Participation in India

2.1 Sustainable Future

2.1.1 Sustainable Development and Democracy

For a sustainable future (enhancement of the) democracy is important to realize, as well as (improving) human rights. According to the Human Rights Education Associates (HREA), "social development (as a part of sustainable development) implies that the basic needs of the human being are met through the implementation and realization of human rights. [..] Social development promotes democracy to bring about the participation of the public in determining policy, as well as creating an environment for accountable governance. [...] Special attention is paid to ensure equitable treatment of women, children, people of indigenous cultures, people with disabilities, and all members of populations considered most vulnerable to the conditions of poverty." (HREA, 2008). Joshi (2003) shows that development is necessary as gender equality is not reached yet. She states that "if India has to take its due place in the comity of nations in the 21st century, one half of its population can no longer be relegated to the margins of power and governance" (Joshi, 2003, pp. 85). So, a call is made to improve women's political participation.

2.1.2 International Cooperation and Treaties

The government of India works towards a sustainable future by accomplishing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These goals are designed to – among others - reduce poverty, enhance gender equality and (primary) education (Timimi, 2012; United Nations, 2000). India is making large improvements as it has developed larger goals for itself to reach the MDGs on time. Several acts and campaigns have been designed to accomplish the goals (Timimi, 2010).

More specifically, regarding rights and politics the MDGs work towards a democratic future in which (among others) the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is respected and promoted. Thereby, it is stated that also political rights are promoted and that violence against women should be reduced. Further, related to poverty eradication one of the central issues is to accomplish gender equality (United Nations, 2000). Thus, it can be concluded that attention to political rights and gender equality is important and fundamental to reach a sustainable democratic society. This is also the topic of this research as in India political rights and gender equality are not reached yet. For that reason, the political participation of women, specifically lower-educated as those are most vulnerable, in India will be explored.

2.1.3 Constitutional Amendments and Quota's

Besides on international level, India also shows commitment nationally. She tries to improve human rights of various groups by enhance the position of women, minorities and people without caste (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2006). However, as Nanivadekar (2005, p. 2) states: "India is the largest democracy in the world with 1040 million citizens entitled to universal adult suffrage. Women have remained equal partners in India's struggle for freedom. This led to the constitutional guarantee of equal civil and political rights for men and women" (see also Joshi, 2003 & Kasturi, 1998). However, a formal guarantee by a democratic rule does not guarantee change in itself (Kasturi, 1998). This is also the situation in India. Women are not equal to man in daily practice, although the government is trying to enhance the situation of women (Kasturi, 1998; Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2006). This also regards political participation: although the government of India set quotas for the participation of women in politics, and democratisation and political

participation have developed quickly, discrimination of women is still the order of the day (Joshi, 2003; Nanivadekar, 2005; Shurmer-Smith, 2000). Reservations for women (but also for Scheduled and Backward Castes, and Scheduled Tribes) have been introduced by means of different acts as the 64th, 73rd and the 74th Amendments, other Panchayati Raj Acts and the Women's Reservation Bill. These acts and bills tend to guarantee quota's for women's presence in the political sphere at different political levels, both local and national (Joshi, 2003; Kalpagam, 2008; Kasturi, 1998). However, as poor women have a lower participation than women from higher castes and classes it can be concluded that the introduction of quotas has not resolved an unbalance between different groups of women (Haritas, 2008). Also, in some states the question of quotas is easier solved as in other states. Karnataka is here a positive example as presence of women is (far) higher as in some other states and as the acts require (Haritas, 2008). But also earlier Karnataka has shown to be positively concerned with women's participation as it was one of the first states in the 1980s that increased the participation at the local level (Kasturi, 1998). However, this does not mean that women's issues are being better addressed as it has been noted that women in political seats have to deal with discrimination and violence (Joshi, 2003).

As few women are present in the political domain specific women issues are hardly dealt with (Joshi, 2003). However, the positive actions regarding women's presence in politics can be considered as significant improvement knowing that "both the practice and the study of politics have long been notoriously masculine endeavours. So much so that many commentators have argued that politics has historically been the most explicitly masculine human activity of all. It has been more exclusively limited to men and more self-consciously masculine than any other social practice" (Brown, 1988, p. 4 in Squires, 1999, p. 1).

2.2 Political Participation of Indian Women

Some women in India fulfill important political positions, for example Mrs. Sonia Gandhi is the Chairperson of the Indian National Congress Party - one of the largest political parties and Mrs. Meira Kumar is the (first women) Speaker of the Lok Sabha. Though these women are not really representative for the current situation of women in politics in the democracy. Joshi (2003) argues that (these) elite women do not represent women from lower classes. Vianello *et al*. (1990, p. 60) state: "leadership positions, especially the top ones, are still held almost exclusively by men. The prevalent opinion is that this is because women are not interested in such positions, inasmuch as they focus their attention on family affairs which are *naturally* connected with their roles in society". Bryson (2007) shows that women indeed are most occupied with domestic activities - activities within the home such as cooking and rearing children: "this work is disproportionately undertaken by women and [...] it is usually unpaid [...]" (Bryson, 2007, p. 68). Consequently, "women's greater domestic responsibilities are likely to leave them less time than men for political activity" (Bryson, 2007, p. 74). Moreover, because women are focused at private matters women "often lack economic independence and/or live in poverty" (Bryson, 2007, p. 69).

As the time left for possible political actions is splintered, especially political actions at the regional level - or higher - are difficult (Bryson, 2007). It should not be surprising that "many women are involved in voluntary organizations and in providing informal help to others in their community" (Bryson, 2007, p. 75). As will be shown in the next chapter, this can also be a way of participating politically - and with that be a possibility for women to be politically active although in a less direct or less public way.

However, participation in a democracy is valuable, because it is important for a group to have representatives in the political sphere to ensure the ability to influence policy - making (see also below - Asia Pacific Online Network of Women in Politics, Governance and Transformative Leadership, 2008; HREA, 2008; Phillips, 1995). Regarding India this means that also (poor) women have to be presented in the political domain as the "continued inaccessibility of women top structures of power […] is the biggest impediment in their empowerment and development" (Phillips, 1995). Also, participation would lead to social integration as Phillips (1995, p. 1) shows: "Problems of political exclusion are perceived either in terms of the electoral system (which can over-represent certain views and under-represent others), or in terms of people's access to political participation (which has proved particularly skewed according to social class)."

Political participation of women in India is important for the reason that women in developing countries are marginalized. In this situation women have no voice with allocation of resources, for example (Thakur, 1995). Coherently, Phillips (1997) states that regarding the problems of exclusion a fairer way for representation than the "politics of ideas" (representation by the party who represents our "opinions" and beliefs - Phillips, 1995, p. 1 & 2) is the "politics of presence" (representation by the person that shares our "experience and interests" – Phillips, 1995, p. 5 & 2)[1]. As "in relation to those experiences and identities that may constitute different kinds of groups, it is far harder to meet demands for political inclusion without also including the members of such groups" (Phillips, 1995, p. 6). In India these different approaches were for example of interest during the process of the introduction of the Women's Reservation Bill by the government as the opposition argued (among others) for "quotas within the quota" (Kasturi, 1998, p. 28).

Although the "politics of presence" could be a fairer way of representation for women as Phillips (1995) shows, Voet (1998 in Hoffman, 2004, p. 66) argues that "the representation of women is complex and it does not follow that female representatives automatically and necessarily represent the interests of women in general". But Phillips (1995) goes even further by arguing that besides a fair system for representation that "to be recognized as a serious candidate for power-sharing, a group must not only have a strong sense of itself and its interests; it must form its own political party as well" (Phillips, 1995, p. 15). Also, as Kasturi (1998) argues, it is important to have representatives, if only a few. "But numerical strength is vital in the long run" (Kasturi, 1998, p. 10).

The idea of 'politics of presence' is valuable in these modern times in which self-government is becoming more and more essential and with that the concept of autonomy. The idea is especially important because "trust in conventional authority figures […] is declining" and at the other hand "it [trust] is increasing in terms of 'sub-political' groups" (Hoffman, 2004, p. 43). Beck (1998) and Giddens (1998) both see an important role for these kinds of associations, such as "the politics of families, voluntary organizations, single-issue groups etcetera." (Hoffman, 2004, p. 43).

However, women's political participation is not only problematic because of women's occupation with domestic activities, but also since – in general – "women have by and large been excluded from traditional political activity and discouraged from defining their activities as political" (Squires, 1999, p. 1). More, the Indian political system seems to be insensitive to equality of men and women (Thakur, 1995). Though women have equal rights (to men) and would have equal possibilities for participation since the establishment of the Indian constitution (Kasturi, 1998;

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[1] Srinivas (1994, p. 13) notices a similar kind of development in relation to castes - "the poor and lower castes are more and more inclined to vote in their own interests".

Thakur, 1995). For that, one cannot speak about actual equality of political participation. To obtain gender equality in the public domain it is essential to acquire and there should be equality within the home (see for example Bryson, 2007; Okin, 1990 and Vianello *et al.*, 1990). Family relationships would be representable for wider social relationships (Bryson, 2007). Similarly, Pandey & Vidyavihar (1992) argue that politics is a domain just for women; in the election of the tenth Lok Sabha all political parties seemed to be in favor of political empowerment of women. However, the results of the elections showed that politics is still a domain for men. They argue that low participation of women in politics would not be a single phenomenon, but it would be related to 'the poor status of women in society' (Pandey & Vidyavihar, 1992).

According to Pandey & Vidyavihar (1992) overall empowerment would be necessary and helpful to increase the political participation of the women. With the establishment of women groups the personal sphere is linked to the political sphere; forming opinions about personal matters political issues can be addressed and personal problems are put on the public agenda. Difficulties are present enough: with the opposition from family, community and male political leaders it is hard for women to participate in the political domain. Also criminalization, corruption and compromises make entering politics difficult and unfavorable for women. The situation is changing: women become more active and more aware and women groups are a great help in this matter with organizing meetings and giving information. However, contrarily to men willing to participate in the political domain, women have one obstacle more: before women can enter the political domain they have first to overcome the private domain, at home (Pandey & Vidyavihar, 1992). Interesting to remark is that Ciotti (2006, in Haritas, 2008) has shown that Dalit women who are (already) politically active in formal institutions still had to take of their responsibilities in the home and had to take care of the children and the house. Combining work in the private domain and in the public sphere without a decrease of working hours concerning the responsibilities inside the house as the job outside the house requires more hours, as a result of traditional gender roles, is called the "dual burden" (Yeandle, 1996, p. 10), or later by Chen *et al.* (2007, p. 2) "double burden". This "double burden" has also been found in a study regarding to jobs at the labor market. That concluded that especially women who are working outside the home and have little "renegotiation possibilities" experience this "double burden"; in these situations an increase of working hours outside the home, does not mean less working hours inside the home - through negotiation, but the same amount of working hours spent at household chores and (moreover) less "leisure time" (Chen *et al.*, 2007, p. 21)

Although Bryson (2007) agrees with Pandey & Vidyavihar (1992) that women should be more active in politics, she argues that the private domain should not be seen so separate anymore from the public domain. The relation between the two domains is much more interdependent as may have appeared earlier (Bryson, 2007). Private matters "are not simply private but are central to the survival and well-being of any society" (Bryson, 2007, p. 68) and "gender differences in public citizenship have private foundations and [...] activities in the private sphere may be both a source of the qualities and values that good citizens need and a form of civic engagement" (Bryson, 2007, p. 74). And it is citizenship of which political participation is a part (Bryson, 2007).

2.3 Identity

During colonial times the British introduced modernity into Indian politics. This meant that society was seen as something that was flexible and could be changed in

the way people (politicians) want it to be. Also, the people were approached in a so called "statistical way" (Kaviraj, 1997, p. 326). So, India experienced a process of "statistical counting" and "spatial mapping" (Kaviraj, 1997 p. 327). As a consequence of enumeration, the very heterogeneous - caste and religious diverse - society was seen by the British as one single population (Kaviraj, 1997). However, this had its consequences: "under conditions of modernity it becomes possible to conceive, and argue in terms of, a world which does not have caste divisions at all; and it is startlingly recognized that since social relations are so often constituted by belief, once people start behaving as if caste does not exist, caste actually ceases to exist in reality" (Kaviraj, 1997, p. 326). As people now became more aware of different groups, the size and geographical spreading of groups, (political) mobilization of groups was easier. This had become important as modernity also brought the idea that the consequences of actions should be dealt with in this life (and not in another life). For that, it became important to do good now. "To secure such advantage […] often means organizing collective action on massive scale, because the structures of power and distribution in modern societies can be altered effectively by political acts" (Kaviraj, 1997, p. 327). Here, caste, but foremost religion, played a key role in constructing communities and so Hindus and Muslims formed strong communities, for political action but also political violence[2]. What is more, communities had become more important than individuals in Indian society and politics (Kaviraj, 1997).

Because of the importance of caste and religion for the Indian society, and moreover Indian politics, below these two aspects of identity will be discussed more in-depth.

2.3.1 Caste

The caste system in India has established since thousands of years (Thakur, 1995). Mostly it is seen as central to society, although it is also argued to be one of the key features of Indian society (Sharma, 1999). For a good understanding of Indian society, and so for Indian politics, a discussion of the system is (thus) important (Shurmer-Smith, 2000).

The caste system represents "a person's hereditary rights and duties with unmatched comprehensiveness, rigidity and thoroughness" (Thakur, 1995, p. 7). Hereby, the well-known distinction between *varna* and *jati* is made (Mitra, 1994; Sharma, 1999; Shurmer-Smith, 2000). *Varna* is related to "categories of characteristics" (Shurmer-Smith, 2000, p. 7). Regarding *varna* the basic division that can be made is between: Brahmin (scholar - priest), Kshatriya (warrior), Vaishya (merchant) and Shudra (peasants and laborers) (Thakur, 1995; Shurmer-Smith, 2000). Shumer-Smith (2000) notes that based on the Law of Manu in Hinduism a fifth category cannot be distinguished. However, thereby actually another category is distinguished. These are the "outsiders" or "untouchables" (Shurmer-Smith, 2000, p. 7). *Jati* refers to "groups of people who regard each other as more or less equal in status" (Shurmer-Smith, 2000, p. 8 - see also Searle-Chatterjee & Sharma, 1994).

Traditionally, *jati* was related to certain occupations, but nowadays one "is not obliged to follow the occupation associated with it" (Shurmer-Smith, 2000, p. 8). As Mitra (1994) also argues the caste system is more flexible in its divisions and habits than is often posed, especially before (Mitra, 1994). The way the caste system and castes are viewed also depends of one's position within (or outside) the system. This means that castes can also see themselves as not being part or outside the system

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[2] Here, it should be remarked that besides caste and religion after independence also region and language became important in the political domain. Though regional and linguistic differences are not as important in regard to political mobilization and violence as caste and religion (Kaviraj, 1997).

and only consider the higher castes as being part of the system (Searle-Chatterjee, 1994). Moreover, "castes are now perceived not as rigid but flexible by their members who treat them more as vehicles of self-promotion rather than a structure of domination by the powerful and self-censorship by the powerless" (Mitra, 1994, p. 67).Shurmer-Smith (2000, p. 8) argues that today "*jati* is of far more significance than *varna* […] as the political aspects of caste take precedence over the religious".

As traditionally the higher castes or elites were the power-holders in the political sphere, various acts have been discussed to change that picture (Haritas, 2008; Joshi, 2003). Foremost, Ambedkar ("leader of the untouchables" - Shurmer-Smith, 2000, p. 9) has tried to enhance the situation of the untouchables by helping to chance the Indian constitution. Many constitutional arrangements have been developed to decrease inequalities (Mitra, 1994). Among others, acts have been enforced that should avoid violence against Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC). To improve the presence of SC/ST and OBC in politics quotas has been reserved at each level (Haritas, 2008; Shurmer-Smith, 2000).

"Although caste is a Hindu concept, it permeates non-Hindu sections of society" (Shurmer-Smith, 2000, p. 8). Earlier, people tried to escape the system by changing religion, but soon the Hindu caste system overpowered other religions (Shurmer-Smith, 2000). With the development of a democratic system - and with greater social justice - the predictions were that the caste system would disappear though it has not (Kaviraj, 1997; Mitra, 1994; Thakur, 1995; Shurmer-Smith, 2000). For this, an important reason is that the social structure of society, including relation, has incorporated the caste division as can be seen clearly for example in the sector of agriculture. As the lower castes work at the field, the elites manage their own land. Here, the societal division in castes is closely related to the division of society by class (Kalpagam, 2008; Kaviraj, 1997).

However, the caste system does change and it modernizes for example by developing into "caste associations" (Mitra, 1994, p. 49). Also, the different levels of the caste system have grown into the political system (Thakur, 1995). As caste is such an important feature in Indian society, it can be and is used to mobilize communities for political ends (Kaviraj, 1997; Shurmer-Smith, 2000; Srinivas, 1994). Especially at the lower levels in politics caste is used largely to mobilize votes (Srinivas, 1994). Also, more personally, "caste is a resource that political actors use in order to negotiate their status, wealth and power" (Mitra, 1994, p. 50).

Finally, it can be concluded that the actions of the government seem to be contradictionary. On the one hand caste is one of the most important features in society and with that it is responsible for major differences and inequalities, also in politics - although, nowadays, the caste system is more flexible and can be used more to a person's own advantage. On the other hand, it is exactly the caste system that is used by the government to overcome inequalities, also in other aspects of society than politics. Consequently, the unequal situation reproduces itself and prevents (major) improvements unless designed and implemented by the government (Mitra, 1994).

Here, the foremost problem is that caste societies produce conflicts as a result of inequality. For that force is necessary. Politics is than especially of importance to streamline force (Mitra, 1994). This supports once again the argument that it is important for women to be politically participative to ensure and improve their status and power and not to be subversive actors of the political actions of men.

2.3.2 Religion

Next to caste, religion is an important way by which groups can be distinguished (Searle-Chatterjee, 1994). As shown, religion is closely related to caste and as the caste system is derived from Hindu Laws it is evident that Hinduism is the largest religion. More 80 percent of the population is Hindu (Shurmer-Smith, 2000). Although this is a large percentage it should be remarked that Hinduism, as many religions, is divided in several subgroups with different beliefs, traditions, etcetera (Searle-Chatterjee, 1994; Shurmer-Smith, 2000).

With respect to personal identities religion is becoming more important than caste, especially in the urban areas (Searle-Chatterjee, 1994). Also, religion often matches with caste and class identities, especially for the lower castes, as a result of trying to escape the caste system. As a consequence a large group of lower caste people converted to Islam (Searle-Chatterjee, 1994). But often religion also matches with regional identities (Searle-Chatterjee, 1994).

As caste can mobilize people for political ends and religion is also a fundamental feature of Indian society, so religion is an important mean for mobilizing communities (Searle-Chatterjee, 1994; Shurmer-Smith, 2000). Searle-Chatterjee (1994, p. 153) states that "religious identities may be mobilized where a change occurs in the material position of a caste of a lower class which happens to be of a different religion". Here, the actual difference is related to caste or class but religion is more instrumental in the mobilization of groups.

2.3.3 Political Participation of Indian Muslim Women

An example of a religious group of women that face difficulties in being politically active are Muslim women. The Muslim community is the largest religious minority in India (Engineer, 1995). "Muslims are greatly over-represented among the poor, particularly the urban poor" (Searle-Chatterjee, 1994, p. 151). As Srinivas (1994, pp. 8) argues "the dominant castes are prominent in politics [...] they have left their mark on every institution, and on the culture of each state". Thus, the situation of the Muslim community is precarious.

The situation of specifically Muslim women is worrisome because they are subordinated in more than one way. Their situation is fairly challenging because of their sex and religion (Engineer, 1995). Though it can be argued that religion is not the defining subordinator but instead it is the patriarchal - male dominated - society that gives women an inferior position compared to men. Islam itself would not discriminate women compared with men. The Quran itself stresses gender justice regarding lots of issues such as work, domestic duties and raising children, but the traditional patriarchal society dedicates tasks regarding children and the home – among others - to women (Engineer, 1995). However, as Engineer (1995) shows the background of people influences the interpretation people give to religion, such as the social-economic status and education. Engineer (1995) gives the example of female education. This is not opposed by the Quran but the poor and working classes would be and justify the prevention of female education using religion.

Besides the Quran, the Sharia (Islamic law) is of great importance. The Sharia knows, as many other religious texts, different versions and has been developed and changed over time. Living in another era Islamic jurists than gave women certain tasks and duties by which women were put in an inferior position. For that reason, the Sharia should be seen in the spirit of the times and in modern times another interpretation should be given to the different texts than has been done in earlier time (Engineer, 1995; Hasan & Menon, 2004). Moreover, re-interpretations should be discussed because society has changed. "Women today are not the same as they were in the past. They are no longer prepared to accept their subordinate role. They

are being radicalized and demand a status equal to that of men. It would be difficult to try and impede this progressive tide of events" (Engineer, 1995, p. 2). So, it is important to change (the interpretations of) the Sharia and strive for equality. Hasan & Menon (2004) remark rightly that "legal equality is one of the fundamental rights of women, but this alone is inadequate and cannot ensure them a fair stake in economic and social development, nor can it lead to a major improvement in the lives of the majority unless the structures that generate disadvantage and discrimination are dismantled" (Hasan & Menon, 2004). So, especially for Muslim women it is important not just to be seen as a (religious) group that can be mobilized by for example political parties, but moreover to organize themselves and to put their pressing issues at the agenda.

2.4 Globalization and Communities

2.4.1 Global Communities and Women's Groups

As the previous paragraphs show, aspects of identity can be used by the government and parties to shape global communities as a means for political mobilization. Foremost religion is eminent for political violence. However, global communities can also be instrumental to female citizens. Women can and do organize themselves in India in larger of smaller communities - already since colonial India (Kasturi, 1998). Examples of these communities are women's groups, organizations and social movements. These communities can give women the possibility to strive for gender equality in regard to political representation and political rights, and to put pressing women's issues at the political agenda (Kasturi, 1998).

Additionally, Subramaniam (2011) shows, it is broadly understood that women's participation in various groups can empower women as groups develop more awareness and help to make personal and social changes. Moreover, in regard to politics it can enhance women's participation. So the organization of women's groups and movements can help women develop their skills and knowledge but at the same time it can be a means to influence political actors to make social changes in regard to women's lives (Subramaniam, 2011).

So the forming of (global) communities is important for a fuller realization of democracy in India as it comes to gender equality. Moreover, the development of (larger) communities is coherent with the movement of globalization in which, foremost by information technology, people are more and more linked to each other (Castells, 2000). But also others notice the trend of a society in which people are more and more connected to each other as Ulrich Beck. Hoffman (2004, p. 32) shows that Beck's idea of a self-critical reflexive modernity follows a new logic: "one that links things rather than rigidly separates them".

New technology can give people new opportunities as it provides all people (rich and poor) easier and easier with information as for example is shown by Weeda (2011). Technology is not only important in relation to acquiring information. Also in politics and being participative in politics technology is more and more important, for example regarding electronic voting (Hoffman, 2004). But information technology can also be used for mobilizing (other) women, for example. As De Jong states, social media have been instrumental in recent revolutions (2011).

Education can play an important here by teaching people how to use technology. However, the possibility of using information technology also causes more inequality, namely by age: younger women get possibilities older women do not have (Walby, 2000; Elgershuizen, 2012). Though older women might not have the chance to learn how to use information technology through formal education anymore as of their old age, ways of 'situated learning' - learning through

participation in a social context (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Hansman, 2001) - can give (older) women more chances. As discussed in the beginning of this paragraph, women's groups can help women to develop (further) knowledge and skills, and thus could play an important role here. Also, in acquiring basic reading (and writing) skills as these are important to be able to use information technology (Elgershuizen, 2012).

An example of smaller organizations to help women empower themselves are women's groups (also mentioned in the beginning of this paragraph). A particular kind of women's groups is self-help groups. These groups are a well-known method in the state of Karnataka as will be shown below, but first the method itself will be discussed.

2.4.2 Self Help Groups

Self Help Groups are a regular method of among others for decreasing poverty and enhancing empowerment. The concept of Self Help Groups has been developed about two decades ago in India, but it was predominantly applied in its rural areas. General objectives of the Self Help Groups relate to social and economic empowerment and capacity building. For example initiatives by nongovernmental organizations, policy decisions of the government and attention from donor agencies helped the Self Help Group movement take off (Tesoriero, 2006; Sitaram, 2007).

An example of financial Self Help Groups is the groups that promote (rural) micro-enterprises. In combination with the micro-credit strategy they offer women the possibility to start (in groups) a small business. Moreover, "the focus is to promote self-employment by encouraging groups of women to form small thrift societies and encouraging them to save regularly and matching up their savings through a loan, with arrangement for group lending from one of the numerous banks which in turn would be provided the necessary loan capital" (Kalpagam, 2008, p. 12). SHG's can be supported by the government, but also by NGOs (Kalpagam, 2008).

Participating in a micro-credit Self Help Group gives women the possibility to take in decision-making process, for example, concerning their assets and income. This is an important result as "empowering women require, as a first step, their involvement and participation in decision-making on matters that affect them in their household and in their local communities" (Kalpagam, 2008, p. 17). However, not all members of Self Help Groups gain more decision-making power. Often women turn over their resources to their male counterpart (Kalpagam, 2008)

Though a complete Self Help Group revolution has overswept (rural) India it seems, it should be remarked that Self Help Groups have not only positive consequences. For example in regard to the startup of a small business first women have to show they have a good savings behavior before they can get a loan. Further, often no skills' training is offered in order to learn how to run a viable business. Consequently, businesses lack good business plans and marketing strategies. Moreover, as is the case also for many other development programmes, Self Help Groups often do not take into account women's multiple roles in terms of production and reproduction, and thus are gender insensitive (Kalpagam, 2008).

Self Help Groups can be seen as an example of Communities of Practice (see also chapter three). Because Self Help Groups are groups of women with quite similar backgrounds who can help and learn from each other (to learn) as they are all in a similar situation. For that, Self Help Groups can help women to enhance their capabilities and skills and with that (indirectly) help women to become (more) politically participative.

Moreover, "in feminist movement, a strong tendency has emerged which contends that it is necessary for women to organize themselves as women" (Vianello *et al.*, 1990, p. 235). For that, Women Self Help Groups could help women to overcome obstructs of power that women face in becoming and being political active. Thus, it is not only an indirect way but also a direct way of being active in the public (political) domain.

2.4.3 Karnataka

As discussed earlier in this chapter good practices to enhance women's participation can be found in the state of Karnataka. For that it is interesting to show here some examples of women's communities in Karnataka. Here several projects have been developed to decrease (among others) the poverty in the area (Sitaram, 2007; The Hindu, 2006). The Karnataka Urban Infrastructure Development Project (Sitaram, 2007) combined infrastructural and poverty alleviation components while promoting socioeconomic development, for example. In order to reach this Self Help Groups were established. As was proven by the Karnataka Urban Infrastructure Development Project, 'membership of the Self Help Groups has contributed to significant changes in the lives of women […]' (Tesoriero, 2006; Sitaram, 2007).

Another example is the Mahila Samakhya Karnataka program. Within the framework of this program different women's groups were organized for poor women (mostly Dalits) in villages. The program was not only targeted at diminishing illiteracy but moreover to enhance gender equality and awareness, in other words to empower poor illiterate women (Subramaniam, 2011).

2.5 Urban and Rural Differences

As already discussed above, a few decades ago the Indian government has introduced quota's to get more women politically active in the parliament (Nanivadekar, 2005; Shurmer-Smith, 2000). Foremost this relates to the political participation of women at a high level (elites) in Indian society. For the lower level (lower castes) in society the government also initiated quota's for more gender equality in the regional administration. Quota's has been inserted for the Panchayati Raj and also for municipal bodies (Hindustan Times, 2009). Just a few years ago, new proposals have been discussed to increase the existed quotas and to introduce quota's also for the urban local bodies (Hindustan Times, 2009)[3].

Although quotas has been introduced and can be expected to be increased there is a difference between women's political participation in urban and rural areas. Quotas for governmental administrations solely do not guarantee gender equality in the political field as politics does not solely include government bodies but also for example Planning Commissions, Human Rights Commissions, Pressure Groups and Women Movements (Laxmikanth, 2007; Srinivasan, 2005). Besides to quotas other initiatives such as Self Help Groups seem to be targeted at rural (political) development as well. Also, as argued before, not only the public field covers political actions but actions occur also in the private domain. For that reason, it is interesting to investigate what holds the political participation of lower-educated women in Karnataka and what geographical differences are there. Moreover, for future references, it is interesting to explore how female political participation can be enhanced.

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[3] It should be remarked that the introduction of quotas have not had only positive effects. Because of the positive discrimination of women and lower castes other groups react in defense of their position against the arrangements. Often with violence (Mitra, 1994; Shurmer-Smith, 2000).

2.6 Research question and objective

The *objective* of this research is to explore how the political participation of lower-educated women can be improved. This in order to help India to get a representational political system, with representatives of all layers of the society in order to improve the overall situation/ position of the women from all layers. With this the democracy society in India can enhance.

The research question to explore is: *'How do lower-educated women from urban and rural Karnataka perceive their political participation?'*

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to answer the following sub questions:
- How do lower-educated women participate politically?
- Why do women participate politically in that way?
- How do lower-educated women perceive that their political participation can be improved?

3 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Democracy

India is one of the largest democracies, according to Nanivadekar (2005). As democracy concerns "self-government" everyone should be able to regulate their own lives (Hoffman, 2004, p. 7). Further, according to Giddens (1998; 1999 in Hoffman, 2004) democracy regards "inclusive, participatory and comprehensive politics" (Hoffman, 2004, p. 43). Accordingly, this inclusive and participatory approach means that democracy is not related to one (major) group in society, but that women are inherently part of democracy (Goertz & Mazur, 2008). As democracy among others "permits the largest possible part of the population to influence […] decisions", it also implies that "virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote" and includes "universal and equal suffrage" (Goertz & Mazur, 2008, p. 49/50).

In chapter two the tight relation between the public and the private has been discussed in relation to political participation (see also below). This is supported with regard to democracy by Giddens (1998; 2002 in Hoffman, 2004) as he argues that democracy is not linked to either one of the spheres but to both. There should be no strict distinction but a "fluid" connection between both the sectors (Hoffman, 2004, p. 44). Also in that regard democracy is not more related to men than to women.

In these times of 'reflexive modernity' things are more related to each other than before (Beck, 1998 in Hoffman, 2004). For that democracy should also not been seen exclusively related to states. Moreover, democracy should be seen as a wider global phenomenon (Hoffman, 2004).

The ideals of democracy include ideals as autonomy, equality, inclusion and political participation (Chatterjee, 2008; Goertz & Mazur, 2008). Moreover, participation is important in regard to democracy as it is fundamental to its character (Goertz & Mazur, 2008). Thereby, political participation is a human right (Chatterjee, 2008).

3.2 Citizenship

In relation to democracy, citizenship is an important notion (Hoffman, 2004). Although citizenship was a very broad notion concerning civil, political and social rights, the concept has become more political through the last century. The concept has become more related to relations to the state among others. Because of the importance of rights and state relations in the development of the concept accordingly citizenship could be conceptualized as the rights a person has in relation to state institutions. However, this would be a narrow definition as it is especially concerned to the state and would exclude other forms of membership for example (Squires, 1999). Also, citizenship can be understood more widely as "membership in the community in which one lives one's life" (Squires, 1999, p. 167). This wider definition suggests more possibilities for participation, as in a neighbourhood for example but also at a larger (global) scale (Squires, 1999). An even wider understanding of citizenship is provided by Hoffman (2004, p. 2): "a person who is not free is not a citizen". As the second definition Hoffman (2004) argued for a more globalized or cosmopolite understanding of citizenship. The (patriarchal) state would not allow women to constitute full citizenship (Hoffman, 2004).

For a long time, citizenship has been essentially related to actions in the public domain, neglecting the accomplishments associated with the private domain (Bryson, 2007; Squires, 1999). As men were related to the public sphere and women to the private sphere full membership for women was impossible (Squires, 1999). However, both the private and the public are both essential for good citizenship as in the private people are reared and cared for which is fundamentally for the way they

(politically) act and "be good citizens" in the public domain (Bryson, 2007, p. 74). This is also in line with the democratic development of citizenship: during the last 2 centuries citizenship became a notion for all, independent of gender, religion, ethnicity, etcetera (Phillips, 1995).

Defining acts of citizenship Bryson (2007) shows that a distinction can be made between political and social citizenship. As women spent much time in the private domain fulfilling their tasks and duties there, they should not be neglected discussing politics and political participation. However, boundaries should be drawn in regard to women's tasks as there are limits to political participation. For that, political citizenship is distinguished from social citizenship. The division is related to whether the actions of women are directed at solely family issues as rearing her own children, or whether they are directed at a (larger) community concern as the education of other (neighbouring) children (Bryson, 2007). Additionally, Squires (1999) distinguishes besides social and political citizenship, civic citizenship related to juridical acts and acts concerning rights.

Discussing citizenship often actions or active citizenship is mentioned. "[Thus] the notion of active citizenship [implies] an assumption about time: that people have time to be active citizens, be it as good neighbours or volunteers or as active participants in the political life of the community" (Lister, 1990, p. 456, in Bryson, 2007, p. 74). However, the issue of time is highly contestable as chapter one has shown (see Bryson, 2007). For that, it should be argued that citizenship should not be related to a certain amount of time of participation in society. Instead of highly active participation also more passive participation should be acknowledged. Milbrath & Goel (1982) already consider a range of different amounts of activity (see also below).

For women a fair system of political representation is important to get their interests better acknowledged as is discussed in chapter two. Now the share of women in politics is still too low and for (full) citizenship participation in political decision-making is important (Hoffman, 2004).

3.3 Political and Social Participation

Since about 20 years the concept of 'participation' - next to the concepts of 'empowerment' and 'poverty reduction' - has become important when it comes to development institutions and development policies. Also in treaties the concept is central such as in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – see also chapter one. The positive sound of the concept gives the feeling that there is a bright future waiting and reachable (Cornwall & Brock, 2005). The concept of participation is (consequently) a very normative notion, but then development - to which it is always connected - is in itself a "normative project" (Cornwall & Brock, 2005, p. 1044). Accordingly, also the MDGs–in which 'participation', 'empowerment' and 'poverty reduction' are central concepts–"are a normative framework backed with a moral imperative" (Cornwall & Brock, 2005, p. 1049).

As with citizenship also regarding participation two sorts can be distinguished: political and social (civic) participation. As Van Deth & Leijenaar (1994) discuss, these two kinds of participation are closely connected to each other as social participation comprises also the execution of activities within political organizations. However, according to Milbrath & Goel (1982) that would be a form of political participation. Contrarily, Van Deth & Leijenaar (1994) divide participation into political and social by the form of activities. This means that "actual activities" are considered as political participation, but the "administrative and organizational activities" as social participation (Van Deth & Leijenaar, 1994, p. 10 – translation by author). The understanding between the concepts gets even more complicated when

Van Deth & Leijenaar (1994) also make a distinction between civic and social participation, and this they also admit. They argue that it is also difficult to distinguish the concepts of among others social and civic participation by stating that "after all the society does not exist out of tight compartments or spheres" (Van Deth & Leijenaar, 1994, p. 10 – translation by author). Although will certainly be supported by among others Bryson (2007). It does not help to clear the debate about political, civic and social participation.

Following the distinction of Bryson (2007) regarding citizenship, the difference between political and social participation can also be related to the focus of the participation. When the (passive) actions are directed at the family these actions can be addressed with social participation. However, are the actions concerned with a wider issue as regarding to the community or state, than the term of political participation is appropriate. This clears the debate around political participation more than Van Deth & Leijenaar (1994) and can be combined – as it is also in line to a large extend - with the more traditional perspective of Milbrath & Goel (1982) that political participation should be actions directed to influence or to support government and politics.

Finally, it should be remarked that by the act of social participation citizens can get into contact with the government (Van Deth & Leijenaar, 1994). For that, "social participation is then in addition to or an alternative for political participation" (Van Deth & Leijenaar, 1994, p. 10 – translation by author). Thus, political participation can also be expanded by or can encompass social (civic) participation, and with that social participation is a part of political participation.

3.4 Women's Political Participation

In the early days studies conducted on political participation became more and more cumulative in that one finds the same relationship, even in different cultures. Around 1980 literature about political participation became more cross-nationally oriented, and also India and Japan received scholarly attention. Not only the area of research changed, also the conceptualization did. Conceptualizations have been elaborated and are not just about voting anymore, but also campaign activity, attending political meetings, etcetera. In other words: "political participation may be defined as those actions of private citizens by which they seek to influence or to support government and politics" (Milbrath & Goel, 1982).

Here, it has to be remarked also – as with citizenship – that it is often active participation that is taken into consideration discussing political participation. This assumes again that women have the time to be politically active (in the public domain) although issues of time are disputable. For that, as with citizenship, also political participation should be taken into consideration unrelated to the amount of time a person spents. Milbrath & Goel (1982) do take this into consideration by defining political participation alongside a scale of quantity.

Few people are politically active according to conventional measures, state Van Deth & Leijenaar (1994). And as shown in chapter two women have a very low level of political participation. Causes for "non-participation" are related to poverty, low self-esteem and low levels of education (Hoffman, 2004). However, Vianello *et al*. (1990) show that women, although not fairly represented in leadership positions as stated in chapter two, women do not think of themselves being less capable of fulfilling these positions. Moreover, according to Vianello *et al*. (1990) women do not feel that politics would be a domain more suitable for men than women. Also, women would not "care" less about politics than men do, though, men would have a higher "interest" in politics (Vianello *et al*., 1990, p. 211). According to Vianello *et al*.

(1990) - as Hoffman (2004) states as well - the problem for low/non-participation seems to be in the low level of education of women.

Their research in Canada, Italy, Romania and Poland, show further that the family is no reason for non-participation (Vianello *et al*., 1990). This seems to be contradictory to Bryson (2007) who states that women's commitments to the private sphere do obstruct political participation.

As Hoffman (2004, p. 4) shows, participation has always been only for the elite as "the state is an elite institution". Discussing active political participation among others Rai (2002) states that women (in India) are not sufficiently visible in the political system. With exception to just a small group which is visible, but these women are mostly elite. Also women who have subverted the boundaries of gender are mostly elite women. So the class of which most women come from seems to be an important factor in their successful inclusion into the political system. Pandey & Vidyavihar (1992) support the fact that women from elite families are an exception to other women in having a good political position. Additionally, Srinivas (1994) notes that when a caste has acquired wealth, political power is within reach.

Milbrath & Goel (1982) argue that it is exactly the group of elites that are much more likely to understand and adhere to specific applications of general democratic principles than average citizens. One can conclude from this that elite women have more access to politics and are able to develop democracy, because they are more able to understand democratic values.

As Milbrath & Goel (1982) state ' "a general activist syndrome" in political participation does exist. A certain proportion of the people (usually from 10 to 30 percent) are clearly more active than the rest in community and political affairs.' This has the logical consequence that the participation of non-elite women is even less than stated before. Nanivadekar (2005) addresses this problem in some other way: in 1975 and around 2000 reports were addressing the issue of women's quotas in local bodies but no mass mobilization of women for pressing the demand was present; 'Women activists in the feminist movement as well as in political parties admit that it is very difficult to mobilize Indian women for their political rights as compared to the mobilization for survival issues.'

According the Constitution of India discrimination on grounds of religion, sex, caste and place of birth are prohibited (Mitra, 1994; Nanivadekar, 2005 Thakur, 1995). Looking at different groups in society, Hasan & Menon (2004) discovered differences between different religious groups and social economic status. For example, Muslims were found to be in lower and lower middle levels of society, in contrast to Hindus in upper levels. This difference would also been found regarding education, illiteracy and domestic violence. The Foundation for Sustainable Development recognizes the same kind of problems: "Gender discrimination continues to be an enormous problem within Indian society. Traditional patriarchal norms have relegated women to secondary status within the household and workplace. This drastically affects women's health, financial status, education, and political involvement." (FSD, n.d.)

Another distinction that can be made instead of between castes is geographical differences. Between north and south India there are differences as well; in the north discrimination of women is very open and with that girls are going to school and become economically dependent. The inferior position of women is noticeable when one looks at malnutrition, health problems, maternal mortality, and access to education (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2006)

3.5 Characteristics of Female Political Participation

3.5.1 Public and the Private

As shown in the previous chapter and the beginning of this chapter, women are very much engaged with domestic (private) activities. This is preventing them from being political active in the public domain. Hoffman (2004) states that the problem to this is the male dominated society. In that kind of society "women are the targets of violence" and "women are not really suited to 'public' activity and should confine their activities to the 'private' or domestic sphere" (Hoffman, 2004, p. 3). This calls for change, and in this case for a more egalitarian society at large. Hoffman (2004) even argues that the state should be abandoned to be able to accomplish this.

Above it is argued that the concept of citizenship should not be seen as solely related to the public domain separated from actions in the private sphere (see the beginning of this chapter). Accordingly, the concept of political participation should not be seen as solely public participation divided from private participation as studies increasingly argue and show. The public domain is much more interdependently connected with the private domain as both influence each other (see for example Bryson, 2007; Giddens, 1998 in Hoffman, 2004 and Vianello *et al.*, 1990). For example Bryson (2007, p. 68) shows that the two domains are closely linked to each other: "a well-organized private sphere is a precondition for a well-organized public life" (see also chapter two). But also Vianello *et al.* (1990, p. 75) argue for a flexible understanding of the private-public divide: "the family is a crucial institution in any society, which depends on it for survival and progress, and it represents a unique existential experience for men and women alike". For that, the rigid division between the public and the private should be seen as more flexible (Bryson, 2007; Hoffman, 2004; Vianello *et al.*, 1990). Moreover, as the two spheres are closely interconnected, gender equality in the public domain is not reachable without gender equality within the private sphere (see also chapter two - Phillips, 1995 and Vianello *et al.*, 1990).

3.5.2 Formal and the Informal

Secondly, as a (flexible) distinction can be made between public and private political participation also two different ways of participation can be separated, namely formal and informal political participation (Bryson, 2007; Joshi, 2003). Whereas a person can formally participate in politics by voting and by participating in the municipal board or another formal power structure, one can also informally participate by "everyday talk" (Bryson, 2007, p. 76). Another form of non-formal participation is by the involvement in grassroots' organization. Thus, the difference between these two kinds of participation is characterized by the degree of formality or political organization of the activity. Meaning, power structures as the parliament, councils and parties are formally politically organized. On the other hand power structures as local movements are informally organized (Joshi, 2003).

In this regard, Joshi (2003) notices that enhancing women's political presence especially applies for formal power structures: "recent experiences suggests that while their level of participation in informal domains of politics has not been insignificant, it is in more formal corridors of power that the level of their participation needs to be bolstered up".

3.5.3 Direct and indirect

A third way of characterizing political participation is by the way how people participate, namely direct or indirect. Women do most of the chores in and around the home and because of that most men have the time to be politically active.

Thereby, they are " 'free riding' on the work of women" (Bryson, 2007, p. 77). So, the work women do is–although often unpaid, neglected and ignored–fundamental for the participation of others, their family members. Hence, women are politically active, but indirect. For that reason it is useful to distinct direct and indirect political participation.

3.5.4 Active and passive

A fourth characterization of political participation is the degree in which women actively contribute to bring around certain changes (Joshi, 2003). Joshi (2003) argues that women can act actively or passively. Here, an act of demonstrating for women's rights could be seen as more active participation and an act of putting a vote in times of elections can be seen as more passive.

3.5.5 The Levels of Participation

The political system of the democratic republic of India mainly consists out of three levels: the two-tiered union government (*Lok Sabha* and *Rajya Sabha)* in New Delhi, the state government (V*idhan Sabha*) and the local government. The last one can be divided in several administrative levels, to be known as the district, block and village (Shurmer-Smith, 2000). Governmental levels connected to the district, block and village are respectively *Zilla Parishad, Panchayat Samiti* and *Village Panchayat* (Patil, 2005; Thakur, 1995). Also internationally India is involved in politics (see chapter one). With that, the levels of political participation can be identified considering the situation of women in India taking both the rural and urban areas into account. After Laxmikanth (2007) and Van Heerikhuizen & Wilterdink (2001) the levels that can be distinguished are: above nations or international, central or national, state, district, intermediate, city/village and neighbourhood level [4] . That the first levels of participation seem to be related more to the public domain and the 'lower' levels more to the private domain does not imply a hierarchy between the private and the public domain. It is intended to name the different political levels only. The characteristics of female political participation named above can be taken into consideration for each level of political participation just distinguished.

From the discussion of the various characterizations of political participation, it may be clear that all the characterizations can be viewed along a scale of the degree of a characterization. In other words, the (non-)activities related to politics can be viewed alongside four dimensions. This is in line with other conceptualizations in gender theory in order to escape dichotomies (see for example Goertz & Mazur, 2008). Moreover, this is according to the ideas of Beck (1998), discussed in the beginning of this chapter, regarding a new modernity and a new logic. This logic is not about boundaries and exclusions anymore but about being "flexible" and about "individualization" (Hoffman, 2004, p. 24). There are no strict divisions and identities (Hoffman, 2004). Consequently, actions of individuals and the spheres in which they act are not so clear-cut anymore as they seem to be as well (see also figure 3.1 Visual representation of female political participation at different political levels).

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[4] The last few levels are part of the local urban and rural government. For rural areas the local government knows the district, intermediate and village level. For urban areas known are bodies - related to different levels and sizes of cities - as the municipal corporation (or municipal council or Nagar Panchayat, dependent of the size of the urban area), municipality, notified area committee, town area committee, cantonment board, township, port trust and special purpose agency (for example water supply, housing and city transport boards) (Laxmikanth, 2007; Patil, 2005).
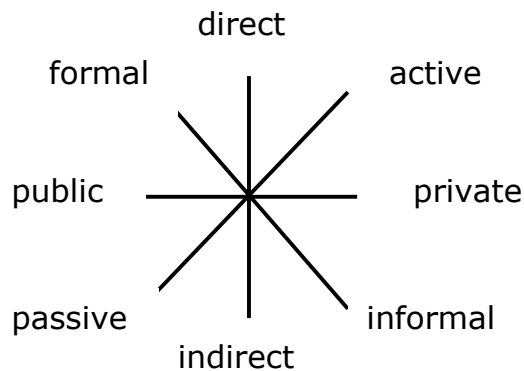
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                direct
      formal              active


    public  ————————————  private


      passive            informal
                indirect
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Figure 3.1 Visual representation of female political participation at different political levels

3.6 Geographical Differences in Female Political Participation

Haritas (2008) shows that poor women in urban areas more indirectly participate politically and less directly. "The political engagement of poor people in urban areas is, invariably, still limited in form to negotiations with political parties and agents, and local political representatives who depend heavily on their votes […] while poor women support political candidates by distributing leaflets and putting up posters, sometimes in exchange for pay, they do not campaign to be elected themselves" (Haritas, 2008, pp. 462).

In relation to political participation much research has been done in regard to women working as a counselor, foremost in Panchayat Raj's but also in urban bodies (Haritas, 2008). "Most of the accounts which do exist focus on the ways in which women councilors have functioned, and the constraints they face, both within the family and the political bodies to which they have been elected" (Haritas, 2008, pp. 458). Thus, exploring the situation of women who are formally active in a political body. However, the full scope of female political participation in regard to the urban and rural poor women has received little attention[5].

In order to explore the full scope of female political participation of the urban and rural lower-educated women in Karnataka, one other facet should be discussed here besides the concept of political participation and the geographical influences in that regard, namely the aspect of education. Also, Haritas (2008) states that education is important for women in order to enhance their political participation.
As will be discussed below, education is important - besides the development of knowledge and skills - as a means of enlarging social capital as education offers an opportunity to expand social networks. Further, as poor women have ample means for formal schooling informal education can play an important role in the personal development of this group. Exploring the possibilities for informal learning the concept of 'situated learning' is discussed. This offers not only a theoretical

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[5] Mentioned here are 'poor' women. Though the group of interest in the research question here is defined as 'lower-educated' women. In this research these groups are regarded as the same group. In relation to this definition Haritas (2008, p. 460) rightly states that "while education may not always indicate lower socio-economic status, lower education most often coincides with lower socio-economic status".

understanding to Self Help Groups as Communities of Practice. Moreover, it offers a new perspective to participation that will propose a fuller understanding of the concept of participation as learning can be better understood as 'legitimate peripheral participation'.

3.7 Women's Learning

Poor women are often low-educated and illiterate levels are still too high; as Kalpagam (2008) shows for example, about half of Indians rural women cannot read or write. However, in order to enhance empowerment and participation education is important: "literacy is most important for empowerment, especially when we envisage empowerment as greater autonomy, decision-making capacities and roles, participatory development and women's roles in governance" (Kalpagam, 2008, p. 23).

Traditionally women have been viewed differently from men, also in respect to learning abilities and preferences for learning situations. As Hayes (2001) shows women's characteristics have resulted in a women's view of learning with emphasis on social learning methods with room for empathy and affection.

However, social learning claimed to be distinctive for women, researchers now argue that all learning is context dependable. Also, research has shown that gendered behavior should be seen as a result of "socially and culturally determined belief systems, rather than rooted in purely psychological or biological sex differences" (Crawford, 1995 in Hayes, 2001, p. 38-39). Consequently, suggested characteristics of women's learning are not "innate" or "fixed" but are a result of context dependable variables (Hayes, 2001).

But, this is not to equalize or fade out differences completely as gender relations do result in different perspectives, also among one or the other gender. Here, personal characteristics such as culture, ethnicity and region may cause different learning preferences (Hayes, 2001).

3.8 Women's Social Capital and Networks

It should not be concluded from the previous section that social learning should be undervalued as an approach to women's learning as social learning can help in women's development. This means that women's groups are useful in regard to women's learning. More specifically, women's groups can help to empower Indian women. Although there are no special women's groups for political empowerment, with the organization of different meetings about for women relevant topics and political events the groups enhance political participation (Pandey & Vidyavihar, 1992).

More direct, social capital is important in relation to political participation as a stimulus as for example shown in a large study of Latin America (Klesner, 2007). "In Latin-America, interpersonal trust and organizational involvement outside the political sphere that involves voluntary contributions of time do push individuals to be more politically active" (Klesner, 2007, p. 29).

According to Crowell (2004) social networks, as which women groups can be seen, give access to information, resources and opportunities. As gender roles restrain the development of women's networks and social capital involvement in various groups and movements is important. "Network members can provide direct aid, help the central person expand social contacts and can help overcome deficits due to family background, ability, and cultural capital. [...] For women, social networks are especially important to consider because the social roles of women in general tend to limit their network composition. Women appear to reap fewer

network benefits than men because of these limited social roles" (Crowell, 2004, p. 16).

A social network can exist out of strong and weak ties. Strong ties are close relatives and friends, weak ties are persons with who is little contact. Crowell argues that especially weak ties are important for women to expand their network and with that increase their capital. As weak ties have other weak and strong ties they can form a link to other groups and thus resources. Also, it is showed that it is important to have different contacts, although it is more easily to have equal ties (homophilious ties). However these similar ties tend to have a lot of features similar and thus also ties and information (Crowell, 2004). "Homophilious ties can limit network capacity and the formation of capital" (Crowell, 2004, p. 20). Thus, women should look for very different contacts in order to increase their social capital. Participating in different groups could enhance this.

Various actors can be instrumental in the enhancement of social capital and networks of women. Mondal (2000, pp. 459) states that "social capital can be produces by the government, nongovernmental organizations, local societal actors, and external actors in the civil society, both in combination and in isolation".

Enhancing social capital not only increases political participation but also strengthens civil society (Klesner, 2007). Women's groups and movements are part of civil society and thus will be strengthened when individual women enhance their social capital. As concluded above that involvement in groups and movements will enlarge women's social capital the relation between social capital and networks, and civil society can be seen as reciprocal. As Klesner (2007) show this is not only a positive but can also be a negative reciprocal relation as a decrease in social capital also will undermine the strength of civil society.

In addition to the reciprocal relation between social capital and civil society - or women's groups that offer an opportunity for social learning - a clear link between social capital and human capital[6] is there. By means of it, foremost, weak ties, social capital can be instrumental in the development and mobilization of human capital. But also other forms of capital are related to social capital, such as cultural capital[7]. In order to be able to gain of their social networks, women have to have a cultural capital to be able to communicate rightly with their ties. As Crowell (2004) argues for poor women in urban neighborhoods this kind of capital is, though crucial, often lacking as "more knowledgeable, skilled and affluent people, especially professionals have moved out" (Crowell, 2004, p. 22). As NGOs can be instrumental in social networks and social capital, NGOs could (consequently) also be instrumental for cultural capital. Mondal (2000) shows for example how NGOs in Bangladesh get involved in areas where they organize rural development programmes. Moreover, by means of social capital political capital[8] can be enhanced. "Using individual human, cultural and social capital, voluntary associations, and formal organizations can engage in collective action, advocacy, political participation and thus develop powerful coalitions" (Crowell, 2004, p. 22). Crowell (2004) mentions the woman movement here, but smaller units as women's groups - Self Help Groups - could take up equal aspirations. Enhancing these kinds of capital will finally result in economic

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[6] "Human capital is based on the characteristics and skills that one brings to a situation such as education, training and work experience" (Crowell, 2004, p. 20).

[7] "Cultural capital helps persons to "make sense" of messages and symbols which shape one's experiences (Sassen, 1995 in Crowell, 2004, p. 21). More broadly: "cultural capital connotes the ability to act and respond appropriately in a given situation and is an important aspect especially in making transitions which promote interacting with diverse persons or to engage one's cultural repertoire based on the situation. Cultural capital includes skills, habits, styles, and attitudes" (Wilson, 1996 in Crowell, 2004, p. 22).

[8] Political Capital refers to "political participation and influence" (Crowell, 2004, p. 24) and "involves development of relationships, trust, and social ties" (Kasinitiz & Rosenberg, 1996 in Crowell, 2004).

capital, argues Crowell (2004) (for a visual representation see also figure 3.2 Different kinds of capital interrelated).

In addition, the aspirations of women in India are mostly related to their family and community, "and so there is a close relationship between women's empowerment and strengthening communities" (Tesoriero, 2006, p. 322). For that, when social networks of women are increased not only have they more resources and opportunities, but their family and community have more resources and opportunities as well. Moreover, increasing the political participation is not solely an improvement for one individual, but for a group of people and does not just concern the political domain, but other domains as well (see also the previous paragraph Political Participation).
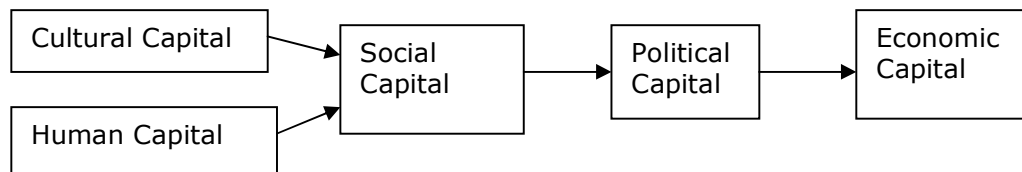
Figure 3.2 Different kinds of capital interrelated (after Crowell, 2004)

3.9 Situated Learning

Learning is participation and so participation is also learning

As shown above (in the previous paragraphs and in the previous chapter) women's groups as Self Help Groups are a well-known method in Karnataka in order to alleviate poor women from poverty and to enhance their empowerment. This method (women's groups such as Self Help Groups and Grassroots groups) can be approached as a way of learning as different groups have been developed as an educational program by the government (Subramaniam, 2011). Here women's groups and movements are understood as a specific way of learning, namely Situated Learning. Situated Learning emphasizes that learning is social or contextual by character (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Hansman, 2001). Hansman (2001, p. 45) argues: "the nature of the interactions among learners, the tools they use within these interactions, the activity itself, and the social context in which the activity takes place shape learning." Thereby, it is stated by Lave (1988, in Hansman, 2001, p. 45) that "learning is a reoccurring process in which adults act and interact within their social situations." So Situated Learning is not just about giving context to women's learning, but about women's learning in women's own context/situation (Hansman, 2001). Thus, by acting and interacting in the social world women learn in their own environment. With that they develop themselves. Moreover, the more women act and interact - in other words: participate - the more communities develop.

3.10 Communities of Practice

"The power in communities of practice is that they organize themselves, set their own agendas, and establish their own leadership" (Hansman, 2001, p. 48).

More specifically, Self Help Groups can be viewed as a kind of Community of Practice (CoP), a way of collective as individual learning (Bood & Coenders, 2003). This concept, a core concept within the theory of Situated Learning, has been developed by most importantly Wenger (e.g. Wenger, 1998) and Lave (e.g. Lave & Wenger, 1991). They state that what is the point of focus of a certain learning is a certain

practice, and this practice can be formulated as the "potential curriculum". In the case of a Self Help Group the goals of the group can comprise this potential curriculum. Moreover, the acting of the participants in such a group shape the space in which the practice takes place. This practice shapes the space for learning which is an "improvised practice" in itself (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 93). Importantly, the power relations of the practice frame the spaces for learning (legitimate peripheral participation) (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Every practice has a certain locality as every knowledge is related to a certain place. Within the theory of Situated Learning this place is called a *community*. But Lave & Wenger (1991) argue that this "community" should not be understood in a strict way. Also, the involvement in a group can include "multiple levels" of participation. As Lave & Wenger (1991, p. 98) state: "Nor does the term community imply necessarily co-presence, a well-defined, identifiable group, or socially visible boundaries. It does imply participation in an activity system about which participants share understandings concerning what they are doing and what that means in their lives and for their communities".

Dutch researchers that have been developing the concept of Communities of Practice - mostly related to the field of organizational knowledge management - are foremostly Bood and Coenders (e.g. Bood & Coenders, 2003; Bood & Coenders, 2004). To define CoPs they make another clarifying distinction: firstly, the "*domain*", which is the theme of the CoPs. Secondly, the "*community*" is the group of people that is interested to develop the domain. What is developed by the community in terms of knowledge, instruments and methods, among others, defines the "*practice*" (De Laat & Poell, 2003, p. 16).

In addition to Wenger and Lave, Bood & Coenders (2003) show that CoPs are people that participate in a group in which they can share a "*passion*" which is part of their identity (De Laat & Poell, 2003, p. 16). Consequently, "the involvement of the participants is voluntarily and learning is a conscious, unsophisticated and often fairly unstructured" (De Laat & Poell, 2003, p.19 - translation by author).

In regard to participation it has to be remarked that, as may apply for all kinds of participation, "as people participate in a community because they are interested in the domain, their involvement is often long-term as they become emotionally involved" (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2003, p. 43 - translation by author). Importantly, their long-term involvement has a positive effect at their human resources/capital as their network of strong and weak ties enlarges. Another positive effect of the participation in CoPs - and so Self Help Groups - besides the personal development as the development of knowledge and skills, and the enlargement of human (social) capital, is the development of self-esteem and self-confidence. As Wenger, McDermott & Snyder (2003, p. 43) state: "communities are also a place where people can make a contribution of which they know that it will be sincerely appreciated".

3.11 Conceptual Model and Operationalization

In the course of the previous paragraphs a theoretical framework have been developed which will be concluded in this paragraph with the conceptual model, and a definition and operationalization of the various aspects of the model.

3.11.1 Conceptual model

Based upon the theoretical framework presented in the previous paragraphs of this chapter a conceptual model can be designed for Women's Political Participation. See figure 3.3 Conceptual model of women's political participation.
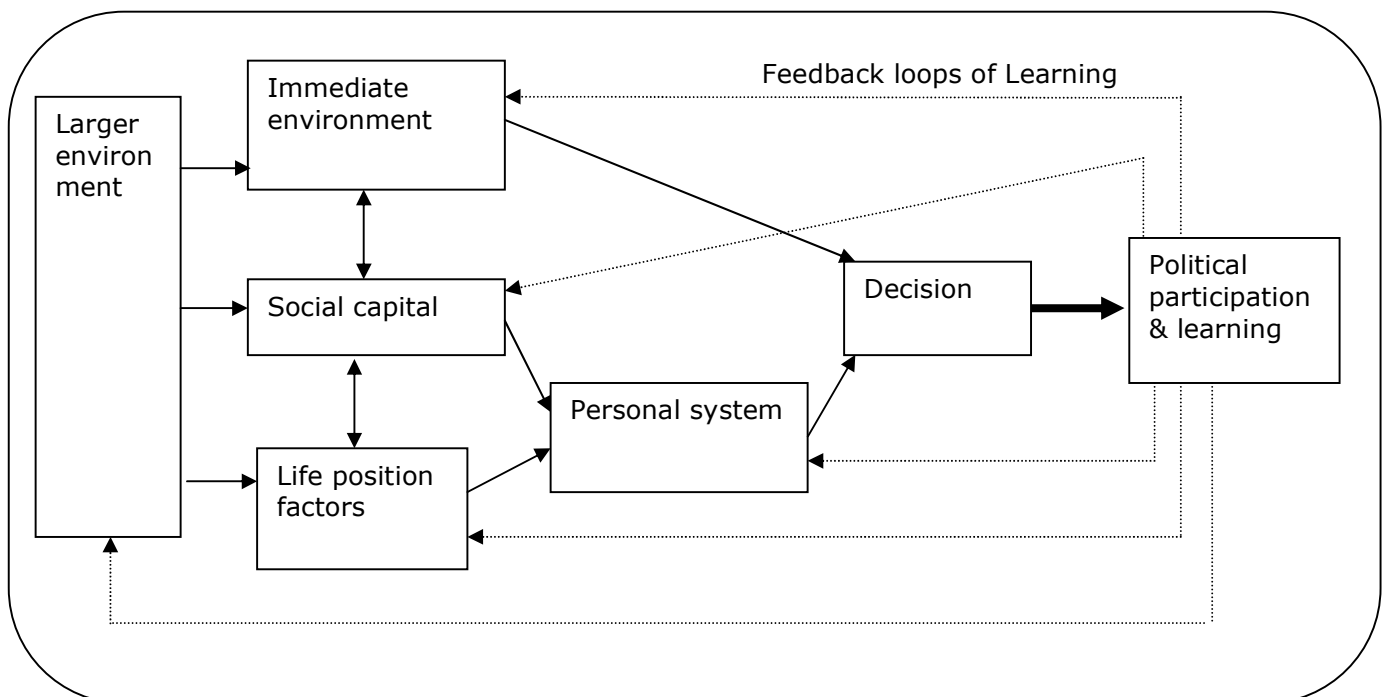
Figure 3.3 Conceptual model of women's political participation (after Crowell, 2004; Hansman, 2001; Klesner, 2007; Milbrath & Goel, 1982; Mondal, 2000 and Lave & Wenger, 1991)

3.11.2 Definitions

Larger environment: this shapes the human behavior independent of personal traits of an individual. It embraces "the non-human biological and physical aspects of the surrounding world, the cultural milieu, the social cultural character of the community and the political setting." (Milbrath & Goel, 1982, p. 123). The cultural milieu regards to the norms and values of people in a certain community. This is connected with the social cultural character of the community, which refers to the way how people interact with each other: what are people allowed to do, what are the roles of the members of the family or community?

Immediate environment: relevant stimuli from the environment before political action can occur (Milbrath & Goel, 1982, p. 35).

Social Capital: strong ties are family members from the same household and close friends, and weak ties are other family members, friends and acquaintances (after Crowell, 2004).

Life position factors: aspects social position, demographic factors (Milbrath & Goel, 1982, p. 88). As chapter one has shown, caste and religion are largely defining a women's identity and social position in Indian society. For that caste and religion should be related to as social position variables.

Personal system: relating to political behavior existing out of attitudes, beliefs and personality traits (Milbrath & Goel, 1982, p. 43).

Political participation: those actions of private citizens by which they seek to influence or to support government and politics (Milbrath & Goel, 1982). Milbrath & Goel make a distinction between different modes knowing protestors, community activists, party and campaign workers, communicators, contact specialists, voters and patriots and inactive. This is a list from active till apathetic political participation. Looking at the situation in India of the large amount and trend of establishing self-help groups, an emphasis is on community activists, or community workers. This regards the activity in the community regarding community organizations and or community problems. However, as discussed above besides direct and active political participation in formal and public 'institutions', political participation also regards activities in informal and private 'institutions' that indirectly and passively lead towards (the enhancement of) political participation (Bryson, 2007; Hoffman, 2004; Joshi, 2003 & Vianello *et al.*, 1990).

3.11.3 Operationalization

Larger environment: physical aspects: distance, place, weather; cultural milieu; social system: place of the woman in the family, decision maker of most issues; political system: amount of different parties, kind of different parties (Milbrath & Goel, 1982).

Immediate environment: amount of stimuli: amount (overload?), class; educational level, age; kind of stimuli: person, education; own attractiveness towards politics; source of stimuli: mass-media, campaign literature, meetings, personal conversations; family: political discussions, intake level; preferences: strong/weak (Milbrath & Goel, 1982).

Social Capital: sort of relation (friends, close friends, family members, family members from the same household, neighbors, and other acquaintances), amount of meetings, help given or support received, reason for help or support, caste and religion of the ties (Crowell, 2004).

Life position factors: social position: class, income, occupation, length of time at current residence, amount of group activity, race, ethnicity, community identification/ integration into the community, level of education, age, sex and religion (Milbrath & Goel, 1982).

Personal system: psychological involvement (interest in and concern about politics and public affairs): preference for a party or candidate, status, level of education, sex; sense of civic obligation: duty, status; party identification: identification, age (Milbrath & Goel, 1982).

Political participation: sort and frequency of political activities undertaken - whether public or private, formal or informal, direct or indirect (Bryson, 2007; Hoffman, 2004; Joshi, 2003; Milbrath & Goel, 1982 and Vianello *et al.*, 1990).

After developing the theoretical framework for this study's research question in this chapter, the next chapter will discuss the research methodology.

4 An Ethnographic Approach and Methodology

4.1 Researching women ethnographically

In the previous chapters the situation and place of women in India was discussed. As Indian women may lead an oppressed and busy life because of their status and household responsibilities it may be difficult to study this group (Scheyvens, Scheyvens & Murray, 2003). More broadly, Scheyvens, Scheyvens & Murray (2003) state that 'Third World women' are difficult to approach as they often do not fulfil official positions and women's freedom is often limited to the private domain. And "even means are found of talking to women, many may be reluctant to express themselves in front of an outsider due to low self-esteem" (Scheyvens, Scheyvens & Murray, 2003, pp. 169). Further, the researcher should be aware of the sensitivity of research topics related to women's subordinate position as studies could question the current situation and by that gender differences. People who have an advantage in this situation may be disturbed (Scheyvens, Scheyvens & Murray, 2003). 'Gender inequities in household decision-making' is indicated as such a topic (Scheyvens, Scheyvens & Murray, 2003, pp. 170). Consequently, this research might have been difficult to conduct as it explores women's perceptions and as it is sensitive to power relations.

This research is descriptive and explorative in nature. It tries to understand in what way women are political participative and moreover why the women are participative in that way. So, it concerns women's perceptions and experiences in regard to their political participation (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011; Yeandle, 1996). Here, also social (power) structures are important as they influence participation (Brockington & Sullivan, 2003) (see also the previous chapters). For that, a qualitative approach has been chosen (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011; Brockington & Sullivan, 2003; Yeandle, 1996). Moreover, qualitative (ethnographic) methods are suitable here as this research contributes to enlarge the multi-disciplined field of research of "knowledge about women's lives" (Yeandle, 1996, p. 10). Within this field of (feminist) research the researcher "takes note of the relationship between the researcher and those being researched, and seeks to be aware of and to minimise power relations and the potential for exploitation. Thus, quite contrary to the teachings of positivist quantitative researchers, the keeping of 'distance' between interviewer and interviewee, and the use of standardised questions and techniques is to be avoided" (Yeandle, 1996, p. 11).

Qualitative research - ethnographic - methods that are used to explore the research topic are conducting interviews and observations, and keeping a field diary. These will be discussed below in that order.

Further, the research concerns an exploration of the political participation of lower-educated women in Karnataka. For that, by means of ethnographic methods data was collected at various sites in the city of Dharwad, Karnataka. The exact places will be discussed below in relation to the various methods that have been used. Besides the research methods and research location, the method of analysis and the positionality of the researcher are discussed. The last subject of this chapter is specifically of importance as it shows the political side of this study. As already stated: everything is political - so is this study.

4.2 Preparing Data Collection

In preparation for the data collection during the field work expert meetings are organized with (assistant) professors from different related Departments of the Karnatak University as Anthropology, Sociology, and Political Science. As Hennink, Hutter & Bailey (2011) argue are the various tasks of the design cycle of the

research process interlinked and has a researcher again and again to reflect on the other tasks when one tasks is being conducted. For that, the expert meetings - though the framework of the research and the methodology ware being developed - were useful to reflect upon the previous tasks of the research (design) cycle. The expert meetings were largely instrumental in a number of smaller and larger conceptual and methodological issues as exploring the research topic more in-depth, focussing the research group, developing further the conceptual approach to the topic, developing further the field work approach, focussing on and finding a specific research location, finding a research assistant (translator), reviewing the Interview Guide to make it more case and cultural sensitive, and more general to gain more in-depth knowledge about the Indian culture.

It should be remarked that these meetings are not directly part of the data collection as the research concerns lower-educated women (and not higher-educated men and women). So the data collection involved urban and rural lower-educated women from Karnataka (see also the following paragraphs) to represent the studied group (Berner, 2010).

After the expert meetings the actual field work started. This will be discussed in the upcoming paragraphs of this chapter.

4.3 Combining Ethnographic Methods

4.3.1 Interviews

To obtain data for answering the various research questions interviews have been conducted. Foremost, the interviews were explorative-natured in order to explore the perceptions of lower-educated women in Karnataka, India. By interviewing this group of women not only their perceptions in regard to their own participation would be revealed, but also in regard to the decision-making process prior to their participation. This includes also data about family structures and social relations. Moreover, data has been gathered about women's self-perceptions in regard to the political sphere and women's perceptions about the political participation of elite women ('role models') (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011).

From the conceptual model a semi-structured interview guide has been developed. This interview guide was discussed with the research assistants. The guide was adapted accordingly by changing the structure of the guide and changing questions. Also some phrases were modified. After that, the interview guide has been tested by means of a pilot with women from the neighbourhood Jamia[9] (see also further in this chapter). After the pilot, the guide has been revised by foremost changing phrases and changing the order of the questions resulting in a third version of the interview guide (see Appendix 1 for the final Interview Guide). The research participants were asked in the beginning of the interview whether the interviews could be recorded on tape. Most of the interviewees agreed upon this method. During the interview key words and repeated phrases were noted on a copy of the interview guide. Herewith, an impression of the interview was acquired, but also probes for further interviews were obtained. After the interview, impressions of the interview and the interview situation (and if applicable also of the surroundings) were written down in the field diary (see also the paragraph below 'Field Diary') (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011).

Though, the nature of the interviews was not just explorative, but also (as a 'side effect') reflective for the women who were interviewed: the women were asked about their situation (current situation). After that, looking at their

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[9] For ethical reasons as anonymity of the research participants this name is a pseudonym for a Muslim neighbourhood in the city of Dharwad.

situation, the women were questioned what they would like to change (improvements) and how they thought these changes could be realized to get a better situation (desirable future situation). In this way women were asked to think about their own situation and could become more aware of their situation, whether felt or viewed as positive or negative. This is not completely non-desirable since this will serve the goals of the Dutch policy and moreover will help to obtain the objective of this research. First the state of art has to be known and for that women have to become aware of their situation. Then, the current situation can be - if desirable - changed and improved.

The subjects of this research are individuals of the group of lower-educated women in Karnataka, India. This means that since the researcher (and interviewer) is from the Netherlands the interviews were cross-cultural. "In a foreign culture an interviewer needs time to establish a familiarity with the new culture and learn some of the many verbal and non-verbal factors where interviewers in a foreign culture may go amiss" (Kvale, 2007, p. 68). For that, a few weeks had been taken by the researcher to adjust to the new culture. Further, the researcher tried to get acquainted with the Indian culture by talking to and discussing with various people with different backgrounds in various places and settings about cultural differences and regarding the research topic.

Because the country and place of investigation was much unknown to the researcher different contacts (e.g. students, roommates, professors) in India have been contacted in finding respondents. With the help of the contacts from the collaboration between the University of Groningen and the University of Karnataka participants were found. This method of using (different) contacts and contacts of contacts is also called 'snowball sampling'.

In order to be able to answer the research questions regarding (political) participation also problematic aspects of the concept of participation are being dealt with. This is especially the case in regard to the participants in the research. Kvale (2007) states that interviews can be conducted with elite persons as they can have a good amount of knowledge or have leading power positions in a community. Also, interviewing elite persons could provide information about power relations and marginalization processes (Scheyvens, Scheyvens & Murray, 2003). However, this can cause problems in obtaining the right data as elites are practised in telling (promoting) their perspective. Also, the elite status could cause an unbalanced interview situation by which the interviewee could be less willing to share information (Kvale, 2007)[10].

As Berner (2010) argues, too often communities are represented by "self-styled leaders", such as key informants and community leaders (elites). Representing the community, the definition of the concept of participation should get close observation. As in this case, the disadvantaged people themselves should be actively and directly be included (participate) in the project. So, the women themselves were actively invited and interviewed regarding their participation and not, for example, key informants or community leaders of the neighborhood Jamia. Moreover, involving the women themselves does not only make the methodology participative (and so coherent to its research topic), also the participation of the researched group makes the project inherent ethnographic. Brockington & Sullivan (2003, pp. 67) state that "it is conceivable that an appropriate role for ethnography

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[10] In the initial stage of the field work elite interviews were conducted in order to narrow down the research topic. So, the interviews were instrumental in providing an expert view at the field of research. Further, the experts that were interviewed had different perspectives as they are professors in different fields of research, for example regarding the caste system. So, a range of views were presented by the experts.

today might be the attempt to provide public space for views that otherwise are likely to go unheard".

4.3.2 Observations

Besides interviewing also observations have taken place to obtain more and different data about the environment (context) of women. Data was collected by observing Election Time in Karnataka and also of the situation at Election Day itself at a poll booth. Also, observations have been made during a health consultation. Further, observations have been made to obtain (more) data about Self Help Groups. For that meetings of a Self Help Group itself have been observed and analysed.

Election Time has been observed foremost by observing the Election Time and the elections itself in Dharwad and specifically at the university campus in Dharwad there also a poll booth was located. The poll booth has been described in the field notes of the observations to obtain more contextual data regarding women's political participation and complement the data from the interviews and the field diary.

To get a better understanding of women's lives also a health consultation has been observed. A nurse visited the neighbourhood Jamia, together with her health assistants. The place of the visitation was the Urdu Nursery School in the neighbourhood. However, not only women from the neighbourhood itself, but also women from the neighbouring areas visited the consultation. Here, the physical space (the organization outside and inside the school) had been observed, as well as the planning of the meeting and the people visiting the consultation.

The Stree Shakti Group that has been observed was a Micro Credit Project of a local NGO that organized the initial group and further supervised the project. The group was located in the Muslim neighbourhood Jamia. The meetings were held mostly in a school building in the neighbourhood, but also in a local shop in the same area a group of women held meetings. Participating in the meetings gave the opportunity to get more data concerning the program of the Self Help Group (what happens?), but also the effect of participation in the group (what do women learn and more general gain from participation?), and the interactions and power structures in the group (how do the participants relate to each other and what roles can be recognized?). So, also the field notes from these observations complement the interviews and the field diary.

In order to keep focus on the research topic and the different situational aspects a general observation guide (Appendix 2) had been developed.

4.3.3 Field Diary

As Brockington & Sullivan (2003, pp. 72) it is important to note down "details of body language and other impressions significant for the interview". So, during the whole period of fieldwork a diary has been kept to note the various impressions of the interviews, but also the impressions from the observations and the expert meetings. Further, impressions of conversations and observations outside the sites of data collection were noted, such as the women's hostel (the temporarily residence of the researcher), the university campus in Dharwad and the market (see also Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011).

Because the place of research is only known to the researcher as a place of research and not as a place of living as the home country is the Netherlands, the area of fieldwork was not as familiar to the researcher as the home country. This means that many impressions during the fieldwork arose from experiencing cultural differences, but also as a result of the critical attitude of the researcher to the surroundings with the purpose of exploring critically the field. Here, not being a local resident had the disadvantage of the likelihood that not all cultural aspects would

have been understood (as a local resident would). On the other hand it had the advantage that the "distance" the researcher had to the new culture made the situation more reflexive for the researcher. Also, because of the opportunity to be able to make comparisons with her own cultural meaning system, the researcher could have been more mindful for aspects of life that would have been natural to a local researcher (but for the foreign researcher could have created cultural shocks at the largest).

After data collection data can be analysed by using the grounded theory method. By crossing the multiple methods the various aspects of the conceptual model can be analysed and the results of that will be shown in the next chapter. Before that, first the research location will be discussed.

4.4 Research Places and Spaces

This paragraph provides information about the research location to situate the research and more the research sites. Further, it describes the research sites and provides information about the group of research participants.

4.4.1 Research Location

<u>The state Karnataka</u>

This study concerns urban and rural women from the northern part of the state of Karnataka. This state in southern India is surrounded by the states of Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala (see also figure 4.1). From the population of about 61 million almost 40 per cent is living in the cities and more than 60 per cent in the rural areas. The male and female populations are almost 50-50 per cent. Urban and rural differences are very small. Though gender differences show larger gaps as for example literacy - respectively 76 per cent (men) and 58 per cent (women). Looking at the urban-rural differences the literacy in urban areas (86 per cent) is somehow higher than the rural literacy rate (69 percent) (Indian Census 2011, n.d.).
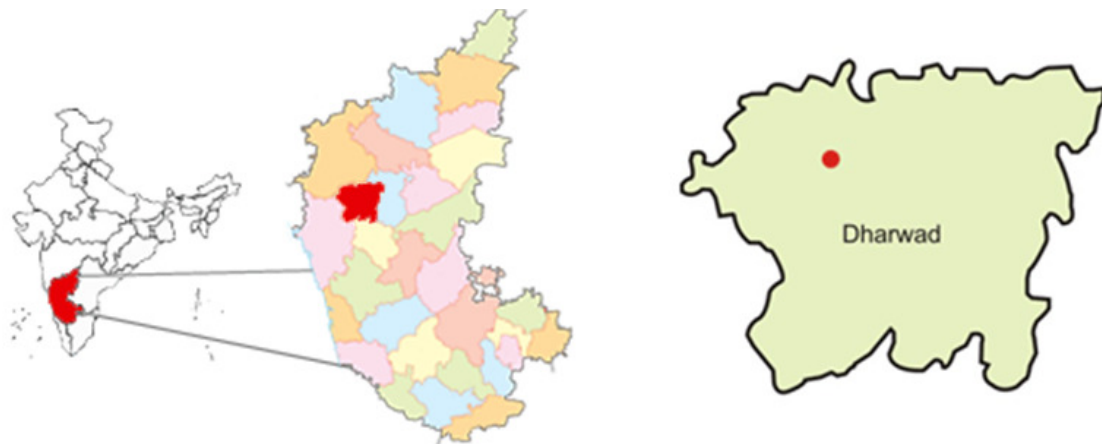

Figure 4.1 Location Map of Dharwad, Karnataka, India (District Dharwad, n.d.)

<u>The city of Dharwad</u>

Specifically, the fieldwork was conducted in Dharwad. In one of the neighborhoods, the urban women were interviewed and in a hospital nearby rural women were interviewed. This city is part of the twin city Hubli-Dharwad. Consequently, the municipality is also a joint cooperation of the twin cities. Together, Hubli and Dharwad are the third largest 'city' of Karnataka regarding its population. In size, they are the second city of the state with a population of 917,349 in 2008 with almost 50 per cent female citizens (Paul *et al.*, 2012).

Regarding the research focus of lower-educated women, social demographics show that the literacy rate for the city (71 per cent) was below the urban literacy rate for India. The amount of schools is also low in contrast to other cities. Additionally, Paul *et al.* (2012) state that there is no data available on 'newspaper readership'. This could provide additional information about "public awareness and literacy" (Paul *et al.*, 2012, pp. 98).

As the research participants in this study are not only lower-educated but also poor, information about urban poverty in Dharwad would be interesting to situate the lives of the research participants. However, this is not available which is problematic in improving the situation of urban poor (Paul *et al.*, 2012).

Further, basic services as water supply and sanitation are below national average, but the electricity network seems to be better than in some other cities. Public services seem to be low as it regards the number of hospitals and police stations. Last, the road infrastructure seems to be poor as well (Paul *et al.*, 2012).

4.4.2 Research Place

The experiences of my supervisor at Karnatak University and because of the contacts of NGOs in Dharwad and surroundings, it was decided that the researcher would visit Jamia, a Muslim community and neighborhood in Dharwad. Besides this opportunity an Indian PHD student was contacted who is doing her PhD in Dharwad, but whom the researcher knew by the courses we followed together at the University of Groningen for which she is conducting her PhD research. Working in a family planning hospital the PhD student gave me the opportunity to meet the Director of the hospital and to arrange interviews in the hospital. Thus, by visiting Jamia the researcher had the opportunity to conduct interviews with Muslim women living in an urban area, and by visiting the hospital the author had the opportunity to interview women from the rural areas. So, it was possible to compare perceptions of urban women with the perceptions of rural women.

To overcome language difficulties a translator was present during each and every interview. In Jamia one of the women living in the area and capable of speaking English helped as a research assistant in this research. In the hospital a female PhD student helped with the translations.

The PhD student had already begun her research in the hospital. So, the people - at least the personnel – were at ease with a researcher asking questions in the hospital. This made it easier to ask clients of the hospital to participate in this research. Regarding the Muslim neighborhood, soon it became clear that the people in that area had some experience with researchers too. Other projects had already been conducted there. So, the people were not completely unfamiliar with a stranger coming in the neighborhood, looking around and asking questions. However, perhaps as a consequence, the women participating in the research were asking about the goal, results and consequences of this research for their situation. The same kind of questions was asked from time to time in the hospital.

4.4.3 Research Space

The interviews with the Jamia women were mostly conducted in their homes, in the living room, in the morning or afternoon. The houses the Jamia women live in are rather small and not really containing separate rooms but rather separate spaces in one space. Also, most of the women were living in joint families. Consequently, the 'individual' interviews were often experienced by the researcher as group interviews. Often the mother in law was present, as well as sisters in law and - foremost in case of nuclear families - sometimes the husband was present. When the interview was conducted in the afternoon, sometimes also sons and daughters were present. Moreover, in few situations not only close relatives were present but also other relatives - auntie's, nieces - and neighbours (both often considered as friends). Though this situation interfered with the anonymity of the interviewee, the interview space was familiar to the interviewees and that was likely to make the situation more at ease for the interviewees (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011). Other possible interview spaces would make time and finances an issue of the interview situation. Now, these aspects were dealt with in the best way possible as the women could indicate whether they had time for an interview when the translator and the researcher passed by their houses. To conduct the interviews in their own houses would also avoid financial expenses as an interview space at a different place would for example bring travelling expenses.

   The interview spaces in the hospital were more varied. Some interviews were conducted in a separate room where no other people were present than the interviewer, the interviewee and the translator. This can be viewed as a more ideal situation as the anonymity was better preserved. At the other hand, these women were also lived in joint families, so presence of close relatives could have made the situation more familiar to the interviewee and bring her more at ease.

   The other interview space at the hospital - in case no separate rooms were available - was a place in the hallway of the hospital. This hallway was used as a waiting room for the patients and their family. Sometimes the hallway was more crowded than other times, but mostly there was not much noise. So, this space was - though sometimes crowded - mostly calm, but interfered much with anonymity highly valued in research ethics. Still this situation was preferred to choosing and using another space outside the hospital as the hospital was most convenient in regard to time and financial issues and regarding the health of the interviewees which made it hard to travel to another place.

Because of this interview situation and especially the frequent presence of family members (and acquaintances) during the interview the results of this research may represent not solely the views of the interviewees (women) but also of their family members (including their male members).

Importantly, it should be noted in regard to both interview situations - in the neighborhood and in the hospital - that the presence of other people ('a third person' - husband, in-laws, and neighbors) can influence the interviewee that tries to give a certain impression during the interview and so changes her answers (Boeije, 2004). Boeije (2004) argues that any change in the answers is a "response effect" or a "response shift" and that this influences the validity of the data. So, if other people are present during the interview this could have had an effect on the validity.

   Boeije (2004) presents a range of possible behaviors from the interviewee, from a presentation of the self by trying to give a positive image to a presentation of the self by trying to avoid a negative image by trying to change what is bad, with corresponding behavioral strategies (see also Boeije, 2004, p. 4). It is noted that

"individuals may try to convey a certain impression of themselves, but they may also try to manipulate what other people […] say about them" (Boeije, 2004, p. 4).

Though for reasons of validity, but also of anonymity, interviews ideally should be conducted without a third person (see for example Boeije, 2004), not all literature has been this exclusive about the interview situation. Foremost, it should depend on the (sensitivity of the) research subject and the methodological approach (Boeije, 2004).

Moreover, the influence of the presence of others may also have a positive effect on the interviews. This may regard for example remembering events and functions, but also in helping translating or explaining cultural specificities (for example Elgershuizen, 2009). Especially, this could be a positive effect of the presence of male family members as they have a more public life than women (see also chapter one and two of this report).

Here, it is important to note that most women that were interviewed were living (or had lived) in a joint family, also in a rather small space. For that, the sensitivity towards the presence of family members or neighbors (also considered as friends) could be estimated as relatively low and not to have deep impact at the answers of the interviewees.

4.4.4 Research Participants

Finally, the preparations of the field work, the research location and the research possibilities as described above, led to a group of Hindu and Muslim women from urban and rural areas in Karnataka, India. The research participants were interviewed during Election Time of the State Assembly Elections in Karnataka in the summer of 2008. This made the topic of political participation extra applicable for the research participants as they just voted or would go to the poll booth. In total, 32 women were interviewed - apart from the pilot interviews. From these interviews, nine interviews were conducted in the hospital with rural Hindu women, and 23 interviews were conducted in the urban Muslim neighbourhood Jamia. Interviews took from about 30 minutes to an in-depth interview that took about 2 hours.

4.5 Data Coding and Analysis

In this paragraph the process of data analysis will be described. First, the coding and analysis process of the interview transcriptions will be discussed and thereon, the analyses of the other research notes.

4.5.1 Interviews

After the fieldwork the recordings of the interviews have been transcribed. Then the transcriptions of the interviews have been analyzed by using the computer program for analyzing qualitative data MAXQDA. As coding is a 'key aspect' of grounded theory, this was an important step in the data analysis (Kvale, 2007).

During the process of coding already a shifting was made to what text segments are relevant to the research and what segments are not. By doing so, the focus of the research was kept in order as various topics that are beyond the scope of this research were discussed and came up during the interviews. So, coded are the segments concerning the knowledge and the experience of the interviewee and possible family members that are present in regard to political participation. Besides these coded segments text segments concerning the interviewee's research experiences are coded as the research experiences have been likely of influence at the general attitude of the interviewees'/ peoples of Jamia toward this research (see also the remarks earlier in this chapter concerning the research location). Because of their experiences the open, interrogative attitude of the interviewees may have

developed and displayed during the researchers period of research in Jamia. Coded are also segments that show the relation and/or communication between the interviewer (researcher) and the translator for the purpose of getting clearer the researchers' positionality and communication issues that could bias the translation of answers of the interviewee.

Not coded were the text segments in which the translator and the participant were asking/discussing questions concerning the purpose or goal of the research project. Not coded are also segments concerning the status of the interviewee (e.g. a patient - the interviewee - was not feeling well and that was noted at the end of an interview - not meaning that for that reason the interview was ended but more in the meaning of forming "small talk" at the end of the interview process). Thirdly, text segments concerning the background of the researcher where not coded as personal information of the researcher is known to the researcher and is not subject to this research.

The interview texts have been coded as open as possible. Though the interview questions suggest the coding as they are noted in the interview transcription, the grouping and categorization of the codes has not been led by the questions per se but has been done as grounded (inductive) as possible, following the method of grounded theory. According to this method data should be approached inductively and coded openly. However, this is nearly impossible (Cook & Crang, 2007). "In practice, […] because of the ways in which you will have constructed your materials, and particularly because they will have been inspired at various stages by specific ideas about what was important at the time, no researcher can confront such a text quite so 'innocently' " (Cook & Crang, 2007, pp. 137).

4.5.2 Other Research Notes

Continuing with the categorizations of the interview analysis the research notes of the field diary and the observations have been analyzed. Hence, categorizations and codes have been merged and/or altered if necessary. Moreover, the code book has been extended to include all data (codes and groupings) from the other research notes on top of the data from the interviews. So, a "cross-referencing system" has been developed (Cook & Crang, 2007, pp. 141). In that way the data from the various research methods could be sorted and compared (Cook & Crang, 2007). So, during the process of coding the process of analysis has been set in motion.

At the end of the process of analysis, the categorizations emerged from the analysis of the research data were compared to the various aspects of the conceptual model. So, it could be analyzed whether the categorizations emerged of the analysis are equal to the various aspects of the conceptual model, or additional categories are important regarding the political participation of lower-educated women in Karnataka. Here, the "theoretical notes" that had been made during the whole process were instrumental (Cook & Crang, 2007, pp. 140).

4.6 Positionality and Subjectivity

As every research project has to deal with power relations between the researcher and the participants, and with issues of knowledge belonging, every project is political in itself (Cook & Crang, 2007). For that, it is important to discuss ethical issues as the positionality of the researcher and the subjectivity of the research. Especially for this kind of research these issues are interesting as the distance between the researcher and the participants is small (and thus a close relation between both), as also already stated in the introduction of this chapter (Yeandle, 1996).

As a European research student, coming from thousand miles away and never been outside of Europe before, the researcher wanted to get to know the country as best as possible. For that, to get close to the people she tried to adjust to the country and culture to be able to behave appropriately. Leslie & Storey (2003) state that 'appropriate behavior' during (development) fieldwork is very important as behavior of the researcher can be interpreted very differently in regard to what is appropriate and what is not. Especially, in relation to cross-cultural research differences in cultural meanings systems can cause pesky or offensive situations when people are not aware of them. For that, the researcher tried to connect to her research participants in an open and friendly manner. It was explained to the participants that being European student (with a supervisor at Karnatak University - of which many women had heard of and were familiar with) information about India and women's life (especially the participation in regard to the political system) was very welcome. Trying to understand and explain how things exactly work in India (how does life of Indian women look like?) curiosity from both the researcher (in regard to the participants) and the participants (in regard to the researcher) helped in overcoming cultural differences and in taking their time for meeting and explaining one another. Foremost, patience was important in the interviews in order to understand one another. Though, it was curiosity that made women to offer to come inside, and drink a cup of tea and chat, for example as was the case in Jamia often. This shows the importance of an open attitude during fieldwork (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011; Leslie & Storey, 2003). Also, it shows that people are very much willing to talk and that little has to be done to let them share their stories (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011).

As the researcher had help from interpreters (see also above) cultural sensitivity did not only concern an understanding of behavior but also an understanding of time which is also cultural dependent. So, decisions regarding time were left largely to the translators. Doing so, their daily schedule was not influenced much and also their work schedule during the day was changed as little as possible and only to what was possible for them. Only the time rounding up was sometimes decided by the researcher in order to avoid very long days of fieldwork and to plan some 'quiet' moments for the researcher (for reflection) as well as the translators (for personal or family time).

In the following chapter, the results of the fieldwork will be described broadly per category of the conceptual model (also see the last paragraph of Chapter 3 for the conceptual model). Moreover, the categorizations emerged from the data analysis will form the themes of the next chapter.

5 Women's Political Participation in Northern Karnataka

This chapter will display the results of the fieldwork. These results are the outcome of the qualitative data analysis (see also chapter four). In appendix 3 the Code System can be found which has been developed during the analysis.

First, the results will describe the perceptions of the women in Northern Karnataka regarding their political participation. Then, the categories of the process leading to political participation will be handled. For that, it will be described how women perceive the decision making that leads to their participation. Thereafter, it will be described what different personal emotions and knowledge are playing a role in the decision making or in other words, on what grounds women perceive the decision for participation is made. Consequently, the categories that seem to influence the personal system are described: the direct surrounding, social networks and capital, and women's socioeconomic characteristics. Additionally, it will be described how women perceive their family is influencing them, but also how family would interfere in the decision making and in their participation. Last, the social context of Indian women will be described. This frames the process towards women's political participation.

5.1 Political Participation

This paragraph will describe how the political participation of lower-educated Hindu and Muslim women in Northern Karnataka is perceived. The range of participation will be shown by a description of the different political acts as emerged from the data. Grossly, each act of participation is described by the extent of how participation is performed.

5.1.1 Political Discussions

A largely described form of participation was taking part in political talks. Looking at the results some women did not participate in indirect acts of participation as a reason of disinterest (see also section 5.3.3 Personal Interests). But women also did not engage in political talks as they felt it is not theirs to discuss. Politics seemed to be a domain for men (see sections 5.3.2 Personal Beliefs and 5.8 Social Context). However, the other way around also occurred; some women did not chat about politics - but appear to be interested in political topics (see also section 5.3.3 Personal Interests). Further, some women did have discussions regarding politics, with family members but also with (close) friends and neighbours (see also paragraph 5.6 Family and section 5.7.1 Community Actors). Content wise, it seems that during conversations broad topics of politics were described as elections, the government and voting.

5.1.2 Party Work, Canvassing and Party Meetings

In addition to the previous section, women explained that they were not just talking with their friends about political issues but (also) asked them to vote for a certain party:

"Yeah I speak with friends, sometimes. I speak with friends, also about parties. Like, do you want to vote on that party, like canvassing" (laughing) (Rural woman, Hindu, 25 years).

"I have asked people to vote for the congress. I have asked the neighbours. But further I have do not talk outside the house" (Urban woman, Muslim, 60 years).

By asking their friends to vote for their party women informally tried to convince women to vote for their party. However, other women did not try to win votes for the party of their preference as there was no time or no interest in party work:

"I haven't tried to convince other people. I have no time for that" (Rural woman, Hindu, 25 years)

"I haven't done anything political. Not seeking support or so. I am, I am not interested" (Urban woman, Muslim, 35 years).

As a reason for doing no party work it was mentioned that there was no necessity for that (see also section 5.3.2 Personal Beliefs). However, regarding more formal canvassing, meetings seemed to be possibly instrumental for other political activities as voting as interviewees explained that party candidates informed the women about the party or topics as health (see also section 5.3.4 Personal Knowledge). Candidates could come to the women's home or women went to the candidate's meeting. Also, some women were not participating but mentioned that they would like to participate:

"When I have voting power, than I would like to go. To attend the gathering of the election. So, I can listen to the speech of the leaders" (Urban woman, Muslim, 22 years).

Few women (could) go to party meetings outside the home. They could get restrictions from family members as the mother in law (see also paragraph 5.2 Decision Making and paragraph 5.6 Family). As party meetings could inform women political participation is not only an end in itself but also instrumental for other domains. On the other hand, a woman noted that she did not go to party meetings, but she could have gotten knowledge about it as her mother did go to them (see also paragraph 5.6 Family).

5.1.3 Officials and Politicians

From the data it appeared that most women had never spoken to any politician. For example because of sex differences, because they try to solve the problems by themselves and because of social and educational distance (see also sections 5.3.2 Personal Beliefs and paragraph 5.8 Social Context). Further, interviewees explained that sometimes there was contact with an official about community problems:

"Sometimes politicians come and we tell the problems we are facing. To the politicians. For example, at this moment we have several problems. Problems with drainages, the cutters. They are not clean and they are blocking. Secondly, we have a water problem. The periodical supply. If they come we tell them through Panchayats" (Rural woman, Hindu, 29 years).

Thus, the social context seemed to play a role in contacting officials (see also paragraph 5.8). Women prefer to contact their neighbours instead of (strange) men because of gender roles and norms. They have found a strategy to handle community problems without consulting officials. For that, it can be stated that the avoidance of active formal participation (contacting officials for problems) has resulted in active informal participation (solving problems on their own).

5.1.4 Community Work

The previous section mentioned that women preferably try to solve problems themselves. Doing so, they helped to develop their community. During the interviews many women stated that they had helped:

"Yeah, I have helped my neighbour, when there is a problem. I have helped with, we have helped with money, giving money to our neighbours when there is a problem. Eh and when the neighbour is not well, I am offering, I am, I can cook in their house. For the neighbours, and close friends" (Urban woman, Muslim, 35 years).

"Yeah, I have helped neighbourhood women, if they are not well, we, I take them to the hospital, and all that, but not other activities. There are some poor houses, with whom I am very much acquainted. So I mainly help those women" (Rural woman, Hindu, 24 years).

It appears that the research participants mostly helped by giving money to their neighbours, but also by giving food, caring for children and taking care of transportation. Further, the interviewees helped in different times of need: in poor economic times, for functions, during illness, in case of fights or bad relationships, and even when building a house. Women also suggested that women work with others to solve (community) issues:

"Yeah, if anything, any problems happen, I solve the problem. I can help with money, or anything. I want to do that, I help them. Also with others" (Urban woman, Muslim, 35 years).

Regarding working together with others to solve a problem, it appeared that women helped when there was a problem or when accidents happen. On the other hand, the interviewees explained that they did not help people together with someone else from the community:

"I have given only money for building a house. Only that. I helped also for cooking, but I have only helped alone" (Urban woman, Muslim, 38 years).

Further, the data showed that some women did not help their neighbours because they never helped neighbours or because they were not going outside (see also section 5.3.2 Personal beliefs and paragraph 5.8 Social Context).

"I have never worked with others to solve a problem. I cannot do that, I am not going outside the house. I am not going outside" (Urban woman, Muslim, 25 years).

Further, regarding issues in the community it was remarked that there is no help for issues concerning the neighbourhood:

"We have not worked on anything for the village. We have not worked on any issue" (Rural woman, Hindu, 27 years).

Women would like to help the neighbours or friends. Here, giving money is mentioned again. Last, some women mentioned that they would want to help their neighbours:

"I am not helping, I am newly married, one year has passed. Also at my parents place. I could have helped with money, if someone wanted money, I could have

given that […] here, now only three months passed, I did not help here yet. In this city, I don't know anybody here, no friends […] I don't know the neighbours. In general, I do not help; I only helped my auntie one time, with money, with giving money. But further I have helped nobody" (Urban woman, Muslim, 22 years).

Clear differences related to age, religion or area, were not revealed by the data. Though, the data showed women wanted to help seemed to be related to the younger women of the group of research participants.

5.1.5 Demonstrations

Women expressed not to be very active and direct participative in political actions such as demonstrations. Here, the distinction between the female private and the male public sphere as a consequence of the gender roles seem to be of importance. Besides that, life course events - changing the socioeconomic characteristics - do not seem to play a role (see also the related paragraphs 5.4 and 5.8). However, the data showed also that some women wanted to participate which suggests that participation in demonstrations could be enlarged:

"No, I have never attended a demonstration. But if there would be a demonstration I would like to participate in it" (Urban woman, Muslim, 18 years).

5.1.6 Elections

Besides the previous categories, voting and Election Time were interview topics which revealed that women do not chat about politics with their family but can be more active politically participative otherwise as going to the poll booth to vote (see also paragraphs 5.2 Decision Making and 5.6 Family). Further, it appeared that almost all women voted if they were old enough for the law and had a voting card, and so were fulfilling the requirements of the related legal regulations (see also paragraph 5.8). However, it appeared that the decision to vote for a certain party is not always their decision to make (see paragraph 5.2). The reason for voting was explained by some women. Women did go to the poll booth because of their interest, their citizen rights or because of formal legislation (see section 5.3.3 Personal Interests and paragraph 5.8 Social Context). Women who did not vote narrated their circumstances, as their young age or their recent delivery (change in socioeconomic characteristics), or because they were not on their voting list (not reaching legal requirements - see respectively paragraph 5.4 and 5.8).

Regarding Election Time and voting, women told about their individual participation - and decision making. However, occasionally political participation is considered a joint undertaking with the family or another group actor. Also in relation to voting, this possibility was put forward. So, though most women narrated about voting as an individual act, some women perceived voting as a joint act which appears to mean that the decision is made to vote for a certain party or a particular candidate is made together and/or the trip to the poll booth is made together (see also paragraph 5.6 Family and section 5.7.1 Community Actors).

5.1.7 Women's Groups

Besides participation in more active and direct (national level) activities as voting, demonstrating and in party meetings, more local level activities were touched upon as well during the interviews. An example is participation in women's group.

Though about half of the participants had not heard of any women's groups, many interviewees had heard of women's groups. These interviewees had heard of Stree Shakti groups or Mahila Sanghas. During the field work it appeared that this

did not mean that women had much knowledge about these groups or more, wanted to be a member.

Field Note Women's Groups
During the last interviews I noticed more and more that though a lot of women seem to have heard of women's groups. So, the Stree Shakti groups and Mahila Sanghas seem to be well-known. Especially in the case of the Muslim neighbourhood where two groups hold their meetings. However, this does not mean a lot of women know exactly what it is all about. If women have knowledge about these groups then they explain that they know that it is about collecting money and about loans. However, detailed knowledge for example about the number of meetings and the various goals loans can be used for seems to be missing. This lack of knowledge seems to foster the disinterest in becoming a member of such a group as the women are poor and probably could use the loan for repairing the (broken) house or to set up a small business (as several women told me that they wanted to get a job) (Field Diary, 26 June 2008).

During the field work it appeared that only few women who had heard of the women's groups did not become a member. Reasons named by the interviewees varied but either concerned formal regulations for the group, or because of a lack of time:

"*I have only heard about Stree Shakti groups. I would like to become a member of a Stree Shakti group, but I do not have an identity card, the voting identity card. And they said I need an identity card to become a member*" (Urban woman, Muslim, 22 years).

"*I have heard about the group. But I am not a member. I do not have time at all, I have only time for stitching the clothes, so I have not attended the group*" (Urban woman, Muslim, 38 years).

At the other hand, some women were a member of a group:

"*I am a member of a Stree Shakti Group. My friends, most friends, are Stree Shakti Members*" (Rural woman, Hindu, 25 years).

"*Yes, I am a member of a Stree Shakti Group. We collect money and we put that on the bank. And when someone wants, they can get a loan*" (Rural woman, Hindu, 32 years).

The results show that participation in a women's group can foster the social capital of women (see also paragraph 5.5). Besides that, women's groups also appeared to be a financial resource. Further, one woman narrated that she wanted to be a member but the costs of participation were too high. For that, she had found a creative way to be able to be a member, namely with the support of a family member (see also paragraph 5.6 Family). But also in regard to a woman's knowledge about women's groups family members can play an informative role (see section 5.3.4 Personal Knowledge and paragraph 5.6 Family). Last, some interviewees noted that they wanted to participate in women's groups. This suggests that women's participation could be enlarged:

"I would like to become a member of a Stree Shakti Group. I would like to collect money, and whoever wants help, I can help with the money" (Urban woman, Muslim 18 years).

Most women who showed an interest in politics and participated politically (or wanted to), felt the influence of their family members or their social context in either a supportive or obstructive way. The next paragraph will follow up on the different interferences by the family and the social actors, and the description of the different kinds of participation, by showing how the decision for the various ways of participation is made.

5.2 Decision Making

Political participation is a result of a decision making process. How women come to their participation is described in the upcoming paragraphs. This paragraph shows how the decision making to women's participation is made. Here, the same situation seems to be in order as related to women's participation where the family and the community can interfere in women's own participation; the decision making is the decision of women but also of their social surrounding[11]. This means that sometimes women can make their own decisions and sometimes women make decisions together with members of their social surrounding. It should be noted that women cannot always make their own decisions. Family members, as the husband and the mother in law, make also decisions for them (see also especially paragraph 5.6 Family). These three ways of decision making will also be described in this paragraph.

Regarding general decision making within the family the head of the household is often taking the decisions inside and outside the house. As this is mostly an elder male member of the family, there was not a lot of room for the female interviewees to make decisions (see also paragraph 5.8 Social Context). However, in some cases women were permitted by their husband, father in law but also her mother in law, to make some small decisions or decisions related to their health, cooking and purchasing clothes (see paragraph 5.8 Social Context). It appears also that if women are older they could become the head of the family, and/or the main decision maker (occasionally). So, women can get more decision making capacity when they are getting older and their position within the family changes (see also paragraph 5.6 Family and 5.8 Social Context).

More specifically related to political acts it appeared that women could make decisions but that occasionally family members played a (decisive) role in the decision making. For example the whole family can help or tell women what party to choose during Election Time. Besides that, it seems that sometimes women could also make another choice if they wanted to (see paragraph 5.6 Family and 5.8 Social Context). However, this is not the case for all acts. In attending party meetings the mother in law, for example, can keep a woman from going outside (see also the previous paragraph and the paragraph 5.6 Family). Further, the role of the husband was mentioned by the interviewees. Some women asked him for advice and other women explained that their decision was made independently from the choice of her husband (see also paragraph 5.6 Family and 5.1 Political Participation). Also, some rural research participants noted the role of a larger or higher social entity in the decision-making process, namely the village and the village leaders (see also section 5.7.1 Community Actors). So, it appears that the community influences women in

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[11] The social surrounding refers to all social actors that have part in a woman's decision making.

different ways, from more direct by telling who to vote for to more indirect by talking about the work parties have conducted in the area.
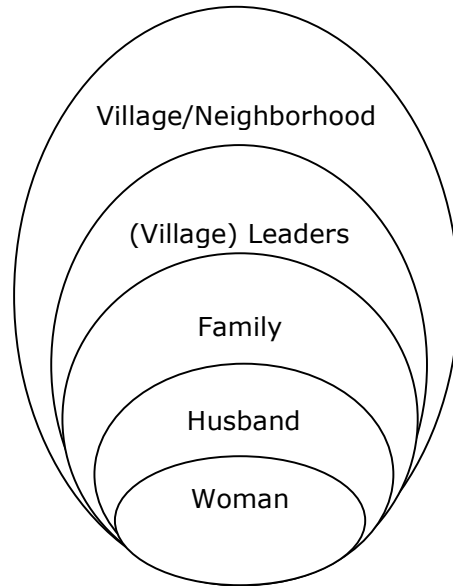
Figure 5.1 Social actors that can play a role in the decision making process of choosing a party

So, many women were influenced by actors from their social surrounding (see also figure 5.1). Though most women suggested (also) during the interviews that they were not supported by others and (would) made their own decision - at times against the choice of their family members (see also paragraph 5.6 Family).

All three ways of decision making are summarized in figure 5.2 which presents decision making by the interviewee herself, supported by the members from her social surrounding and decision making by family members.
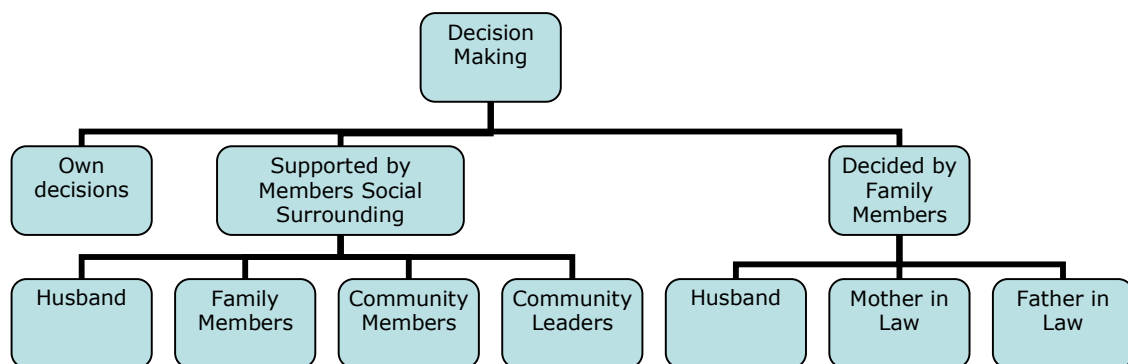
Figure 5.2 Three ways of decision making leading to women's participation

5.3 Personal System

This paragraph shows the results regarding the personal system in a different way than defined earlier in chapter three. Here, the personal refers to feelings, beliefs, interests and knowledge of women. As will appear, especially feelings and beliefs are closely related. So, the personal system entails some more and different categories as was described in chapter three. This paragraph will show how women come to their decision making.

5.3.1 Personal Feelings

The decision making of women is based upon, firstly, their feelings. As described in the first paragraph some women teach their children about the political domain during making homework and sometimes women talk about politics with their family or friends. These more indirect and more passive forms of participation seem to be in line with feelings of not feeling fit or capable for the political-public-domain. These feelings would be based in that some women are having fear and perceive to be inferior to political actors because of their lower level of education. Besides that, women feel to be bound to the private domain which is grounded in the cultural context (see also paragraph 5.8 Social Context). These feelings became especially apparent when the interviewees were asked to compare themselves with a high official as Sonia Gandhi:

"Sonia is a good person. We see that she is doing good work, so we feel very good about her. She is great, she has a great personality, she is a great person, so we cannot compare ourselves with her. They [the women who are in politics] are great persons, because they are in politics" (Rural woman, Hindu, 27 years).

"I like Sonia. And if I were in Sonia's place, in her position, I would help the poor people, like give them more education. But I do not want to compare myself with Sonia. I have not studied, so how can I compare myself with her?" (Urban woman, Muslim, 55 years).

As shown will be shown in paragraph four, some women do already work outside their house, either in a shop or at the field. However, some women who expressed the feeling of wanting to be more active in the public domain and feel capable to have a job outside the house (see paragraph 5.4) appear to be hindered by their family members (see also paragraph 5.6 Family). More at large, interviewees expressed the feeling of being under pressure and not feeling free as a woman:

"I have not been to school, I had to get married. And now I live here, since my marriage. Only inside the house" (Urban woman, Muslim, 55 years).

"I like women in politics. They can do things for women, as providing jobs or to improve women's freedom. Women are not in freedom. For example, I want to study further, but my mother would not allow it" (Urban woman, Muslim, 18 years).

But another interviewee did have the feeling of being free as she can do whatever she wants to do inside the house as she has no children. In other words, socioeconomic characteristics can play a role in a woman's feelings (see also the following paragraph).

So, it seems that the interviewees, who did feel restricted, felt hindrance from their family members but also because of their gender roles.

More specific in relation to the political domain, interviewees feel also that they are hindered by their household chores as they believe the home is their domain (see also the following section). For that, not only is the household a woman's responsibility but because of that responsibility women feel no time is left to address issues in other domains (see also table 5.1).

Domain	Feelings	Hindrance
Private	Free	
	Not Free Pressured	Family Members and Gender Roles
Public	Want job outside	Family Members
Political	Inferiority Fear Not fit for politics No time for participation	Social Distance and Lack of Education Household Chores

Table 5.1 Overview women's feelings

5.3.2 Personal Beliefs

In regard to women's behavior, not only their feelings, also the beliefs women have influence their participation. As may become clear in this section, beliefs are closely interlinked with their feelings. The feelings women experience can lead to certain beliefs, negatively; for example: a woman can think '(I feel that) I am inferior to officials and that makes me belief that I am not fit for politics' - see the previous section. But positive feelings can also lead to positive beliefs; for example: a woman can think '(I feel that) I have more potential and that makes me belief that I can do more than only work inside the house' - see the previous section. But beliefs can also lead to certain feelings as this section will show the beliefs women have that stem from the previous described categories.

The data shows that women have different beliefs in regard to their children and their own position within the family, but also in relation to children's and women's positions more general. So, on the one hand women displayed beliefs in regard to their personal position, and on the other hand perceptions at the social and cultural system.

As shown before (see paragraph 5.1 and 5.4 and the previous section), not having children is not felt per se negatively (see also the case study below). Though it is believed that women ought to be living inside the house and taking care for the children:

"I am a housewife, I do not go anywhere, or out, or doing anything outside. I am only a housewife" (Rural woman, Hindu, 27 years).

"Only I am protecting the house, and taking care for the children. I am a household wife, a housewife" (Urban woman, Muslim, 35 years).

So, women are a housewife who is living inside the house only. This means that women should take responsibility of all duties inside the house as cooking and cleaning, and by that taking care of all family members (see also paragraph 5.8). Apparently, women belief that only the house is their domain and that being a housewife is restricted to that domain only.

Some women belief they are capable for working outside the house as well and they take into account their educational level as well. In some cases the

interviewees expressed the restrictions they felt by their husband (see also paragraph 5.6 Family). Though women believed they have the capability, they could not realize that because of the acts of their family member. From this, the idea rises that women would want to be directly active in the public domain if they would not be hindered by their direct surroundings or their social context as they explicitly express the wish to be able to do so.

In relation to the political domain, interviewees experienced hindrance by their household chores as they believed that the private domain is their responsibility:

"I do not have any interest in politics. We do not have time to think about all those issues. How can we? We are very busy with our housework. We do not have time to think about elections, but we know that we have to choose a person, one who looks after our country. We know that. But still we do not have much time to think about that, and think, like, who is the correct person for that?" (Rural woman, Hindu, 27 years).

Though it seems that women are hindered by their responsibilities, little suggests that women would be more active and directly participative in politics if the restrictions would be removed. The women do not express any desire to do so and it is even expressed that there is no interest in politics. Further, some other women seemed to belief that politics is a domain for men (see paragraph 5.8 Social Context). Here, the different gender roles seem to hinder women from participating in political discussions which seems to make the question of political interest irrelevant.

As mentioned several times throughout this chapter of results, the divide between the spaces inside and outside the house are not clearly as is suggested sometimes. Though women state that they are housewives and (only) live 'inside the house', this private space entails more than the home itself. It also entails its close surroundings and so the boundaries between the spaces become vaguer as the spaces cross and overlap each other[12]. The results here seem to support that; as one of the woman noted that she talks outside, the other interviewee states that the outside is the space for men.

In addition, it was remarked during the interviews that it is not a necessity for women to be active in the political domain. Also, some interviewees believed that men are better capable to be directly politically active than women. These perceptions endorse the gender roles and the (strict) boundaries between the public and political, and the private domain (shown above and foremost in paragraph one). Moreover, interviewees expressed the belief that politics is bad (for the children) and that working in politics is not a real job. Though, it was also suggested by an interviewee that her female family members could participate - although she did not want her own children to participate. So, the image of the political domain seems to be bad and for that women will not allow children to participate.

On the other hand, there were research participants who believed that it is good to have women active in politics to improve the situation of women in general or to improve the situation of family members. More practically, women should be active in politics as women can only ask women as social (religious) norms prescribe. Moreover, the belief was expressed that women are equal to men, and so they can

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[12] Not the least because some women - urban and rural - are working outside in the public domain as it is outside the house (the private). However, these spaces - the shop and the fields - are "property" (owned or borrowed as is the family home) of the family by which it could be considered as private space.

participate in politics (see also figure 5.3 for a complete overview of women's beliefs).
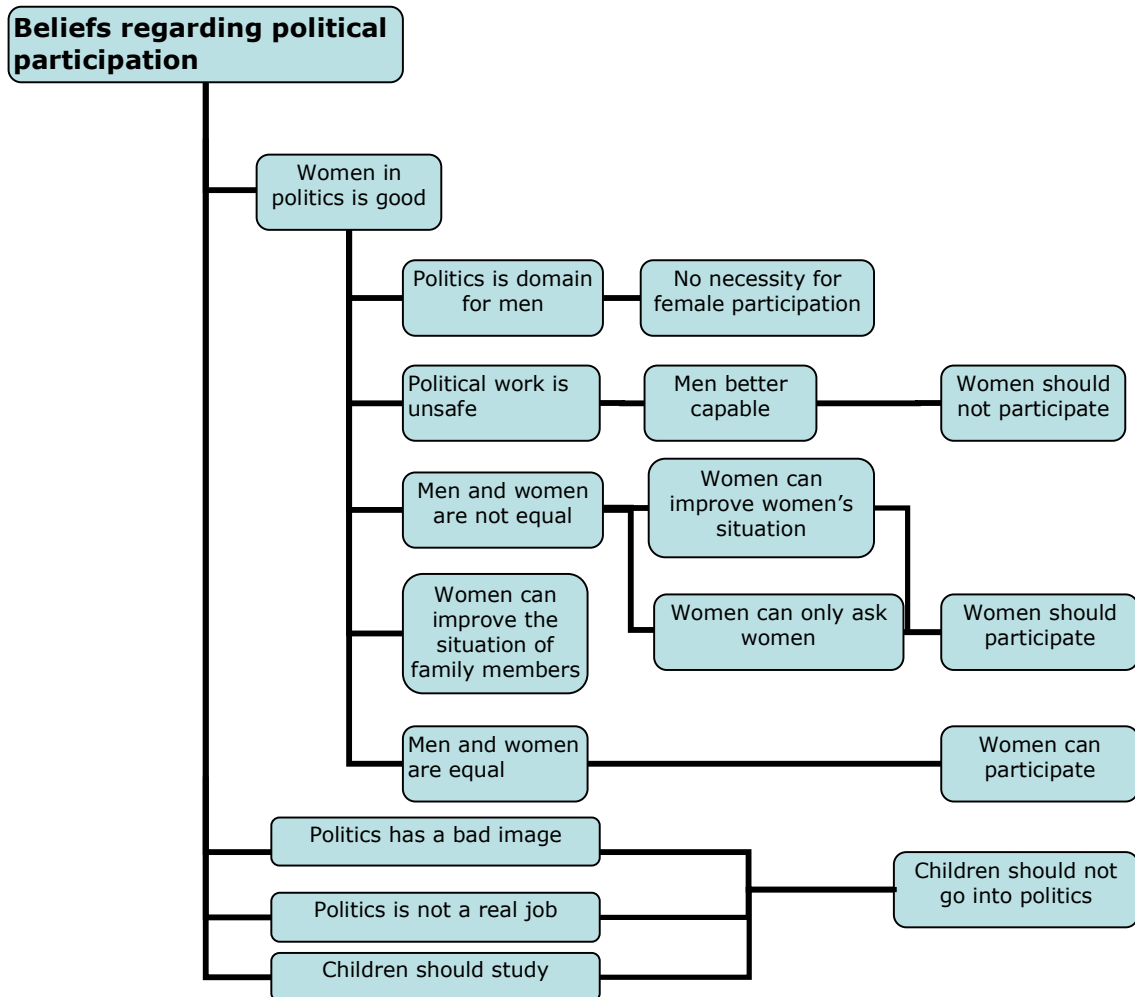
Figure 5.3 Beliefs of women regarding political participation of women and their family

Here, there seems no differentiating factor - as age or religion - that could distinguish the two groups.

5.3.3 Personal Interests

The third category distinguished here refers to the interests women have in the political[13]. Interests can influence the degree and form of participation, but not necessarily does so, as this section will show.

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[13] The political entails not only the political domain including all political actors and political places but also holds all participation related to that domain.

In general, many women noted not to be interested in politics, or any aspect of it as elections or helping out in their community. As many women are not interested in politics, many women do not participate politically as in demonstrations. Some women argued that they were not interested in politics as they were (too) busy with their household chores (see also the previous sections). Also, some women explained that they were not interested in politics, but had some knowledge about political topics. Besides that, women reacted that their children were not interested and should not participate in political acts. Further, women could not have an interest in politics but nevertheless be participative as in community development.

Also women stated to be interested in political issues and so be participative. Women appeared to be interested in improving the situation of women or they were interested in the elections. Finally, women could be interested in political issues but not be participative politically in one or the other way. So, women could be interested in politics but not chat about it with their family or friends. Topics that interested women to talk about were the work of parties, the elections and community development. Last, women could also be interested in politics but not (yet) be participative in a women's group:

"I would like to become a member of a Stree Shakti Group. I would like to collect money, and whoever wants help, I can help with the money" (Urban woman, Muslim 18 years).

The figure below visually represents the four possibilities in regard to a woman's (dis)interest and (non)participation politically which are described in this paragraph (see figure 5.4). Both categories can be viewed as dimensions, from the absence to the presence of interest and participation.

Participation

Politics   Women in Politics
Elections

Social Work

Disinterest ────────────────────────────── **Interest**

Politics   Party BJP
                                 Elections
                         Work Politicians
                                   Politics

Elections
Politics   Stree Shakti Groups
Demonstrations   Developmental Issues

**Non-
Participation**
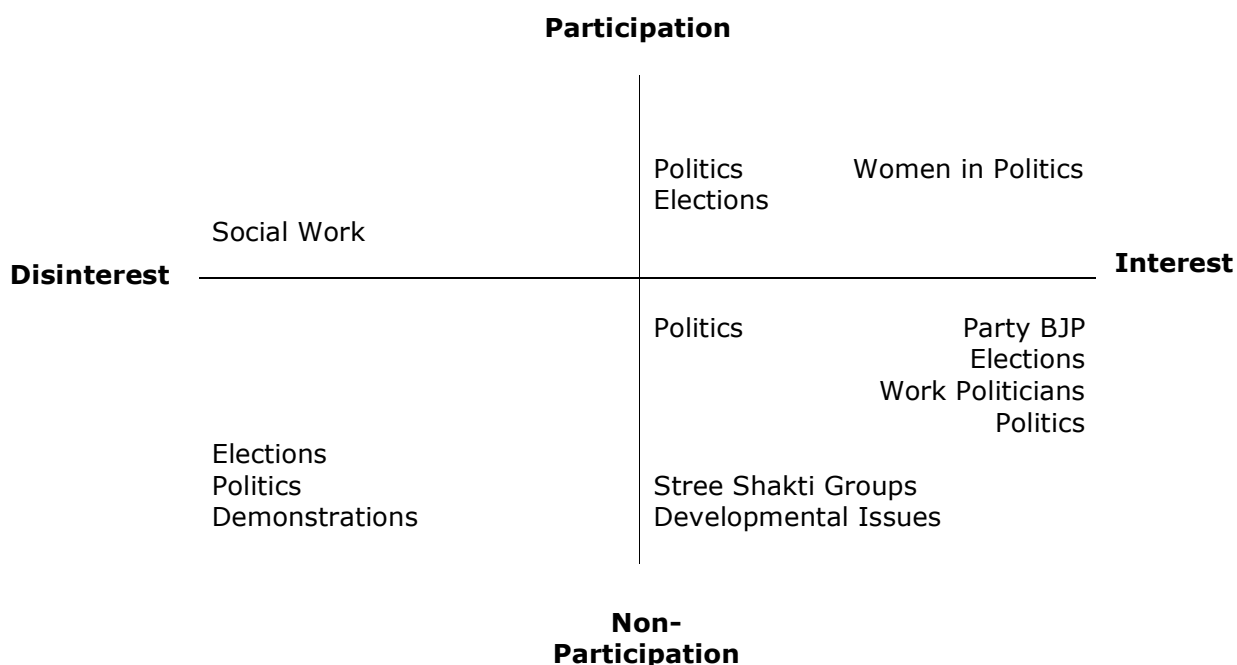
Figure 5.4 Overview of women's (dis)interest and (non) participation

5.3.4 Personal Knowledge

The last category that forms the personal system is a woman's knowledge. The data shows that women might have knowledge in regard to politics. As seen in the previous sections, personal feelings and beliefs are closely related. Knowledge also intertwines, for example as it can enhance women's self-esteem[14] (see the previous sections).

Women can have knowledge regarding political parties which can help them to make a decision, for example related to voting. In this respect women particularly named the two largest parties in the interviews: the Congress and the BJP. Other names of parties that were mentioned are BSP and Janata, or JDS party. To be able to make a decision knowledge regarding differences is important. Few women could explain the differences between these parties (see also table 5.2 for an overview).

Parties	Congress	BJP	BSP	JDS
Issues	Helps poor people Pension for widows Good Helps Muslims more	More for tribes and different castes Care for Scheduled Castes	-	-

Table 5.2 Overview party knowledge of women

Though few women had knowledge about the work of parties and what the key issues of parties were, women did make a decision - sometimes individually and sometimes collectively, together with the family or the village (see also the related paragraphs 5.2 and 5.6). So, they rely upon the knowledge of others.

Besides that women acquired knowledge by their family members or community members, knowledge was obtained from different sources as political actors but also the media (see also paragraph 5.2). Interviews showed that women might know the purpose of the elections; to choose the most capable person for representation.

Further, a woman's participation could also lead to more knowledge (and so construct a learning cycle). For example by attending party meetings which increases a woman's knowledge related to health. Thus, political participation is not only an end, more it is a means through which women can acquire more knowledge about health for example. In this way, political participation helps directly to improve the well-being of women by informing women how to take care of their health. Moreover, a cycle of learning will be developed as women acquire more and more information and so enhancing their knowledge. Consequently, women will increasingly be able to make better decisions, not only political but also related to health for example. This - again - shows how closely related the different domains - as political and social - are.

In some cases the interviewee acquired knowledge through the actions of their family members, such as the membership of a women's group. Though some women were not a member themselves they learned about the groups from the membership of their female family member. This could be either a close relative or a more distanced relative (see also paragraph 5.6 Family and section 5.1.7 Women's Groups).

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[14] As discussed before, some women were illiterate or had a very low level of education. It was remarked that that caused a low self-esteem and moreover a feeling of inferiority, for example in regard to officials or national politicians.

An overview of the kinds of knowledge women have and the source where they got the information, is provided by table 5.3 (see below).

Kind of Knowledge	Source of Knowledge
Parties	Television Canvassing
Elections	Television Canvassing
Health (HIV)	Party Meetings
Stree Shakti Groups	Family Members (Co-sister, Mother in Law)

Table 5.3 Overview of women's knowledge

During the interviews, family members also displayed knowledge of the political system (for example regarding parties) as well as of socioeconomic characteristics (for example concerning income). Occasionally, children - and sometimes the husband - helped the interviewees answering the interview questions.

> *Field Note Family's Knowledge*
> *It seems more and more that the children of the interviewees have more knowledge than the interviewees have. This became apparent during different topics. Children seem to know more about political parties as they are quicker in naming the different parties. But also husbands are quick to respond to interview questions in regard to the political parties and their differences, but also in regard to financial matters as income. In the last interview one of the children (a boy) answered the question regarding the family's income quicker than the interviewee herself. The boy claimed that this was not because he had more knowledge about financial matters as his mother, but because he had overheard a conversation between his parents. In addition, the translator explained that the educational level of the child was higher than the educational level of the mother and so the child was better in understanding English as his mother (Field Diary, 22 June 2008).*

The following paragraphs will show women's perceptions on what influences the personal system and how this has developed that system.

5.4 Socioeconomic Characteristics

The aspects of the personal system as feelings and a woman's knowledge are grounded in - first to discuss - socioeconomic characteristics of women. These characteristics describe a woman's position and situation[15]. For that, this paragraph shows the results regarding topics as employment, (family) income and assets[16], and education[17].

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[15] A woman's position and situation is framed by the social context which permits her (or not) to work outside for example (see also paragraph 5.8 Social Context).

[16] In the earlier paragraphs it has been shown that women mainly live inside the house and take care of the home in every aspect. This work inside the house is unpaid and for that most women do not have their own income. So, the income (and assets) of the family has been asked in addition.

[17] Chapter four gave already some basic description of the research participants. Also, during the previous paragraphs already some results have been shown in regard to women's tasks and responsibilities (see especially section 5.1.1).

Firstly, most women appeared to be married. This socioeconomic characteristic, or more the change in characteristics, did not seem to play that much of a role. Women perceived no change in their participation because of their marriage (see also paragraph 5.1 and 5.8):

"I have not attended any demonstrations. Also not before my marriage" (Urban woman, Muslim, 60 years).

"I have never attended anything. Also not in my mother's house" (Urban woman, Muslim, 22 years).

However, it was noted by a woman that she did not vote in the last elections because of her delivery:

"Yes, I vote. I have voting power for two years now. Only, I have not voted during the last elections. Because of the baby. Because of the delivery. It is only three months now, three months passed since the delivery" (Urban woman, Muslim, 21 years).

So, some life course events are a reason for low participation and some do not play a role in regard to political participation.

A characteristic that does play a role is the profession or job of a woman. As discussed in the previous paragraph, household chores are the reason for some women not to participate politically as they feel that the private domain is theirs (and the public domain). Also the household work would occupy them so much that they would not have time for politics (see the previous paragraph). These household activities vary but mostly entail tasks as cooking cleaning and taking care for the children:

"In the morning I will start with the household activities, cleaning the house, cleaning the floor, preparing the food for the children. Then I send the children to school, wash the clothes and the utensils. In the afternoon I prepare the evening food and in the evening I watch some television and prepare the night food" (Rural woman, Hindu, 27 years).

It appeared that the house work can be perceived more an individual or a more social activity. Also, the interviews show that taking care of the home is a very broad and diverse activity. Not only does it regard cleaning, but also cooking and taking of the children.

However, some women had other responsibilities inside or outside the house as well. Inside the house a woman was stitching clothes as a home job:

"I am looking after the house, cleaning the house. And I am cooking the food, the meal, and looking after the children […] whenever I have time I am stitching clothes, a home job. So I stitch dresses and school dresses for the children" (Urban woman, Muslim, 21 years).

Outside the house, duties related to their urban or rural living situation. Either women helped in the store of the family - mostly urban women - or women lived at the country side helped at the fields or the family - rural women:

"My tasks are to look after the children and doing the house work. Then I have to help my husband in the shop at the market" (Urban woman, Muslim, 35 years).

"Daily, I cook the food, clean the house, wash the vessels and the utensils and wash the clothes. Later I go to the field work. I do not have to take care of the children as my mother in law looks after them" (Rural woman, Hindu, 24 years).

The order of the work seems to be clear-before the women go to their job outside the house, their first priority is to finish their duties within the home. As in some cases the work inside the home is a social (joint) activity the tasks of the women can be eased. However, some women have to fulfil all the house work on their own, and have to work outside as well, which results in two jobs or double tasks. Apparently, the movement of these women was not limited to the private domain but crossed the public - and political - domain. This could provide (more) opportunities for these women to act politically. However, it appears that also these women are busy having two jobs, which leaves little time for things like political participation (see also the previous paragraph).

Discussing the daily routine of the women, it was mentioned by some interviewees that they were working solely inside the house though they had a wish to work outside the house[18] in the service business as a teacher or a servant. However, other socioeconomic characteristics were playing a role as well as their husband who could hinder going outside:

"I would like to become a nursery teacher in the future, but my husband does not allow it. He is like, why do you want a job outside the house? We are working and why do you want to work? Like that" (Rural woman, Hindu, 29 years).

Also, education could interfere with getting a certain job, as do gender roles and related tasks which are endorsed by family members as the husband who expresses his concern for the necessity of having a job outside (see paragraph 5.6 Family and 5.8 Social Context).

As women seemed to be aware of their chances for getting certain work considering their background, attending (higher) education (also to improve their lives) would be a logical wish as this would enlarge their skills and knowledge and so provide more job opportunities. Women seemed to perceive education as important; many women would want to improve education:

"I would like to have better education for my children. And also for the neighbour's children. I want to educate them. When they have completed their study, they can become a teacher" (Rural woman, Hindu, 25 years).

Also, when women were asked to compare themselves and their position, with Sonia Gandhi's - as an important and high politician, women showed the wish to improve education to improve the situation of women:

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[18] It should be remarked that this wish for a job not only shows an expression of willing to change, but also a perception at work as being a housewife was described as "living inside the house", and being occupied with "household activities", and not as 'job'. Only when it was mentioned that the task of the interviewee was the "housework" a job-like perception at their daily tasks seemed to be present. These findings could later lead to conclude that being a housewife is not perceived as a real job, but that paid-labour is. Secondly, it shows the importance for some interviewees of having a job outside the house, as this wish appeared rather in the beginning of the interview while later in the interview the question for improvements and changes was raised more explicit.

"I think Sonia is good to help us, poor people. But I would like to improve the education of women. So they can do any kind of work" (Urban woman, Muslim 35 years).

"In place of Sonia Gandhi I would like to improve the education. More education for the children, for all the people in the country that are not educated. Most women are not educated either, so I want to educate them. I can improve the women" (Urban woman, Muslim, 22 years).

So, comparing themselves with a higher politician appears to enlarge their ambitions for improvement while asking for changes in general seems to focus women more on their own lives. In other words, women appear to have large ambitions but seem to perceive these desires for improvements only realizable for high politicians and not themselves. This political and social distance is also narrated by the women themselves as they perceive themselves as inferior to politicians who are far away (see also the previous paragraph and section 5.7.2 Political Actors).

Further, women expressed foremost their wish to improve the education of women (in general) and of their children. So, also in relation to improving education, women expressed their wish to enhance their situation - the situation of women - but more to enhance the situation of their children. This means that, also regarding education, if women could realize all their wishes not only they would benefit, but first their community - here specifically their children - would benefit.

Education is not only important in itself. It is important so women and children can get a (better) job. However, women have to quit their formal education when they are getting married (see also paragraph 5.8 Social Context)[19]. Though also a woman who has never been to school (but has worked her whole life) seem to perceive education as important:

"I am happy with my life, living together like this. With my family, all together. But if my daughters in law would like to get a job in the future, I will give them permission. Also I would like to have better jobs for my sons. Than the life of their wives and their children also will be better" (Urban woman, Muslim, 55 years).

From this it appears also that some women have a different idea about the (employment) mobility of women than gender roles seem to prescribe them (again see the last paragraph).

Earlier it was shown that women work at fields and in shops. These were not women's own properties but from their husband or more their extended family. So, the income of the women is not their own but from their family and thus not theirs to spend:

"The job, I am stitching clothes for the neighbours. I earn some money with it […] But the money is used for the house, to pay the rent" (Urban woman, Muslim, 38 years).

Consequently, women have no money themselves to help other people and conduct community work for example or to take part in a women's group (see the first paragraph). So, if women would want to be participative they would have to ask the

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[19] Earlier, it was shown that women perceived no changes in their participation as a consequence of (change in) socioeconomic characteristics. However, apparently, a change in one characteristic can play a role in another characteristic. By that, a change in one characteristic can - in the end - have consequences for women's participation as shown here. Thus, different socioeconomic characteristics play a different role regarding a woman's political participation.

family member that makes decisions regarding the money to help. This means that some women are limited to more indirect forms of participation as arranging money when they would not get that money, or they can be more directly participative if they would get some money from their family member. However, it is more likely that women would not get money because women can only sometimes make some small decisions (see also paragraph 5.2 and 5.8). Hence, (no) access to money can play a more direct or more indirect role in women's participation.

Women's authority over money can be described by looking at a woman's knowledge about money. Discussing the income, women were not always certain of the income. Sometimes, they had no knowledge about the income. But nearly all women knew the share of their husband - and not the total income of the family - or the total income of the family:

"The total income is 4000. A month. Means father is doing also a job here, carpenter job, and eh, one brother is driving the rickshaw, one brother is a plumber, and another brother is studying, college. All together, the income is 4000" (Urban woman, Muslim, 18 years).

"My husband is a software engineer. So the family income is about 12000 grossly. […] My husband earns about 4, and the other brother in law about 4000, and my father in law gets a pension. About 4000, so all together, the income is 12000" (Rural woman, Hindu, 29 years).

So, some women have some knowledge about the family financials - in some cases more than in other cases. This gives some insight into the kind of knowledge women have (see also the previous paragraph). Their little financial knowledge about for example the family income suggests they have little financial decision making authority. This is in line with paragraph two and seven that describe that only some women make some small decisions and that never regards money. Moreover, decision making is mostly done by elderly men (see paragraphs 5.2 and 5.8).

On the other hand, age - a differentiating factor in many other sections - does not seem to differentiate in women's knowledge though it does differentiate in decision making authority sometimes. But it appears that the family of rural women have a slightly higher income as urban families seem to do which could provide more space for participation for rural women.

However, the fact that women do not have a personal income, or assets in other words, does not presume that the family does:

"Here, we live in a rent house. The owner is paying the taxes. Also for the water and the electricity. We only give money to them and they are paying all the taxes" (Urban woman, Muslim, 22 years).

"She is the neighbour, she does not live in their house, she lives in the backside. This is a rent house and I am giving rent to her. She lives in the same house, but backwards, at the backside" (Urban woman, Muslim, 26 years).

As shown in the previous paragraph, sometimes the personal feelings are a result of the level of education. More, personal knowledge depends upon the level of education - though also depends upon the social network. This varied much between the interviewees - from illiterate (never been to school) to college level. This seemed to be dependent upon their age. The youngest interviewees were going to college and one of the eldest women who were living inside the home ('retired') was illiterate. So, it seems that the level of education differs generation wise.

Though this positions women differently, the illiterate women should not been seen as without knowledge per se. As will be described in the following paragraph, all family members are part of the social capital and with that the family members are part of the women's resources. Consequently, women can draw from their family's knowledge as if it was their own (see also paragraph 5.3 and 5.5).

More, it seems that most women have a wish for (more) education. This is not just for a better position in life but to acquire more knowledge and to improve their own lives, their well-being (see paragraph 5.4 and section 5.3.4).

5.5 Social Networks and Capital

Besides socioeconomic characteristics, social capital plays a role in the development of the personal system. The more and different social networks women have the more and diverse resources women have - knowledge but also financial resources. It appeared that regarding social capital women have several sources of capital. Strong relations are family members (husband, children and in-laws) and close friends, such as family members and neighbours. Weak relations are (old) friends and family members from their parents place[20].

Most interviewees had children. This was dependent of the age of the interviewee and how many years ago she got married; mostly, an older woman who was married for a longer time had more children and of a higher age than a younger

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[20] This paragraph builds upon the results shown in the previous paragraph in two ways. First, this paragraph reveals further how the process towards the political participation of women develops. Second, as different social actors from the surrounding are a part of a woman's social capital this paragraph shows the actors that are influencing women in a certain way thereby building upon the results from the previous sections regarding those actors.

women who married for just a few years. Just one woman remarked that she did not have children:

"*Me and my husband, we do not have children. I like children but we do not have children at this moment, because of an infertility issue. […] So I am taking care of the household activities, taking care of the children, doing the cooking and the cleaning. I can take care of all things. Because I am free, I do not have children, so I can do all things*" (Rural woman, Hindu, 35 years).

So, though this had negative consequences and so could result in negative feelings because she could have had a larger network around her, for this woman it did not. The smaller social network and so capital - no children - lead here to the perception of feeling free as the women had one care less; she did not have to take care for her children. More often, interviewees told that not all born children were still with them. As one interviewee told:

"*So many children have died. We had 14 children in total, 7 are alive and 7 died. They were all sick. They got a fever and they died because of chicken pox. All in a young age*" (Urban woman, Muslim, 60 years).

Besides that the size of the social network seemed to be related to health and personal feelings, social capital also seemed to be related to personal socioeconomic characteristics (see the previous paragraph). An interviewee expressed that she was proud of her (grand)child as he is going to school:

"*That is my grandson. He is going to the Basel Mission School. That is an English school! And he is doing very well at school*" (Urban woman, Muslim, 55 years).

Not for all children following formal education (for a longer period) was a given. Interviewees remarked that in times when there was no money, they could not send their children to school. This had a negative influence at the level of education of the children:

"*My daughters have not gone to school, only the older children have studied. At that time we were very poor, it was difficult to get money and so to send children to school to study* (Urban woman, Muslim, 60 years).

"*Some of the children have gone to school, but some have not gone to school. It depended of our economic situation at that time. One of my sons also stayed at home because he was very weak in studying. He has no job now either*" (Urban woman, Muslim, 55 years).

Consequently, the social capital in the social network was lower than it could be. Besides the children (family), women had other social networks as well. Some women participated in self-help groups. Examples of women's self-help groups that were discussed in the interviews are Stree Shakti Groups and Mahila Sangha Groups. These groups are micro-credit groups. Women who are a member in these groups would meet the group once a week (see also the previous paragraph regarding personal knowledge), what would define them as weak ties (see paragraph 3.8 Social Capital). However, as one interviewee told:

"*I am a member of a Stree Shakti Group. So, most of my friends are Stree Shakti members as well. If any problems happen then I can help them. They are my close*

friends […] we meet once a week to collect money. And the group is running for 5 years now, I am a member for 5 years now. So I am learning for 5 years now. So I know the members for 5 years as well" (Urban woman, Muslim, 35 years).

For that, members of Stree Shakti Groups should be considered as weak ties as well as strong ties. Moreover, apparently, the amount of times a woman meets with her friends does not define the quality of the relation (strong or weak).

Moreover, the amount of times women meet there (old) friends seemed to be corresponding with (family) events and so these events play a role in the cohesion of the social network:

"So before marriage I had 8 friends but now we all got married. Four friends are still very close to me. The others have moved. But when they come back, they come sit and talk. So whenever they come back they talk with me. Means, whenever there are festivals they come back to my mother's place, or when they come for delivery. So during these times we meet each other" (Rural woman, Hindu, 24 years).

"Now I am having two close friends, after marriage. But before marriage I had four friends. I still see them but only during festivals when I go to my mother, my mother's place. When I go there I visit my old friends" (Rural woman, Hindu, 29 years).

In relation to social networks it appears that age is a differentiating factor and that life course events can change a woman's social capital, either positively or negatively. This changes women's places and spaces as well as her movement during her life[21]. More, it could provide opportunity for more active or direct political participation as the public space is occasionally crossed. Though the social networks provide direct support by their social capital women do not seem take profit of the places and spaces the network is located in or that has to be crossed in meeting with their networks.

5.6 Family

Besides that women's feelings, beliefs, interests and knowledge are influenced by their own socioeconomic characteristics and by their social networks and capital, the family plays a role in – finally - the political participation. The previous paragraphs have already touched upon the diverse roles the family members can play. This paragraph will describe these roles more into detail.

As shown above, the family of women influence the participation of women in several ways. For example in regard to decision making, as foremost (older) men are the authority within a family, (younger) women cannot make any decisions. When women are getting older, their role changes as they are consulted more by their family members. So, in other words, within the family the women become more politically active as their participation within the family changes (see also paragraph 5.1 and 5.2).

Also as a social actor in their direct surroundings, the family plays a role as the family is one of the groups of social actors that influence women's political participation - besides neighbours and other friends (see also the following sections). Family members can influence a woman in different ways. They can act in a restrictive way for example. As in regard to party meetings they can withhold the

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[21] As this paragraph builds upon the other paragraph (see also the following foot note), also in regard to social capital the boundaries of the different domains, between the different places and spaces, are not that strong and seem to overlap each other.

woman from going (outside) as this interviewee's mother in law thus making another decision for the daughter (see also paragraph 5.2 Decision Making and 5.1 Political Participation):

"When a person from a certain party comes for canvassing they stand outside and tell. But I stand inside the house. We stand inside the house. We stand inside the house and speak to each other. I speak with my mother in law. If she is there, I stay inside the house. But if she is not there, I will go and stand in front of them and listen what they have to tell, outside the house. And if my mother in law is there again I stay inside the house. My mother in law confronts me, meaning she says like this is the door" (Rural woman, Hindu, 27 years).

Less directly, the husband can also withheld his spouse from working outside the house and so withhold women from access to money - or more from getting financial independence - which could enhance a woman's participation as discussed above:

"I would like to become a nursery teacher in the future, but my husband does not allow it. He is like, why do you want a job outside the house? We are working and why do you want to work? Like that" (Rural woman, Hindu, 28 years).

"I would like to get a job outside the house, for example as a teacher. Though nobody is permitting me to go outside, my husband is like: "We bring money to the house and finance everything". Like: "I am not to look after the children, why do you want simply to go out and work outside?" […] My husband tells me not to go outside. I have to look after the little children" (Rural woman, Hindu, 29 years).

Or family members can simply withdraw themselves from interfering in a woman's participation as the husband who can withhold himself from interfering with voting:

"I never talk about the elections with my husband, or with my In Laws. Also not about politics in general. So when I go for voting also, I do not ask for whom to vote. I take my own decision. My husband also does not tell that I have to vote for this candidate, or that, nothing. He does not say anything" (Rural woman, Hindu, 27 years).

On the other hand, family members can foster and support a woman's political participation. Family members can inform a woman if she has any questions as for the right party to put a vote at, or by motivating her to choose a certain party:

"During Election Time, when I have to vote, I will ask my husband to which party I have to vote. I will ask him" (Urban woman, Muslim 26 years).

"All family members decide together to vote for the Congress. About that we are poor and that we have to vote. So we all decided together. […] And if I want to vote for a different party than my husband then I can, it is my own decision. But my husband can say do not vote for that party" (Urban woman, Muslim, 30 years).

"We made the decision together to vote for the Congress. Together we talked and we decided to put a vote for the Congress as the Congress came up. We are poor people" (Urban woman, Muslim, 60 years).

Here, political decision making seem to be sometimes a family process as the whole family helps to make the decision. But as the woman can also diverge from that

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choice and make her own decision, political decision making can also be an individual process. This is important regarding understanding the political participation of women as it shows that the process towards participation can be a joint process and/or lead towards a joint political act (see also the first paragraph).

Observation Voting as a Joint Act
"The people arrive at the poll booth foremost by foot, but also by rickshaw, and sometimes by car. Women always come to the poll booth with others. They come with (their) children, with (older) women and/or with (older) men. As the children play at the playground the women stand in line with the other adults. Waiting for their turn to vote." (Observation poll booth, May 22, 2008).

Further, family members can influence a woman's participation by discussing political issues. Though many women do not talk about politics, for the women who have conversations the family is important. Interviewees mentioned family members as their own family (the father or husband and the children), the parents in law and more distanced relatives (cousin, uncle) as well - in some cases also close friends (neighbours) are important (see also the following section):

"When the children study, when it is study time, then I speak with my children about politics. We speak about the leaders and the parties. I am teaching them about that" (Urban woman, Muslim, 30 years).

"I am little interested in politics […] Sometimes we chat about politics. When there are elections I talk a little with friends, and also I talk with my father, and with my uncle, and cousins, and neighbours" (Urban woman, Muslim, 17 years).

Here, it appears from the data that for the older women the difference between neighbours and friends can be as little as none; mostly the neighbours are the close friends (see also the following section). For the younger women - the girls - it seems that the neighbours are close but they are not directly regarded as friends as they know other people (fellow-students) who are their friends. Also, it seems that for the young women their parents' family is important whereas the family in law becomes more important when the women are married. Further, both male and female family members seem to be of importance/relevant and talkative when it comes to political issues (see also section 5.1.1 Political Discussions).

As was also noted in the first paragraph in relation to the participation of women in women's groups, family members can foster a woman's participation by supporting them, for example financial support covering (party) a woman's expenses as a sister in law did (see paragraph 5.1.7 Women's Groups):

"Yes, I am a member. I would like to collect money. But we do not have a lot money. So I am sharing my membership with my sister. Together collect money. One week I will put money in the account, and the other week she goes to the meetings. So we change every week, and all members take responsibility for the group" (Urban woman, Muslim, 27 years).

Besides the help family members can offer women in regard to her political participation, this shows that family members also help each other in difficult financial situations. Here it seems - again - that different domains (the social, the political and the economic) cross each other.

Further, the data shows that the political participation of elder family members can also be informing or directive for the woman. A woman narrated that she did not go to party meetings, but she could have gotten knowledge about it as her mother did go to the gatherings:

"I haven't been to any meeting. I have not voted, no voting power, identity card, that is why I am not attending in my place. But my mother goes to those meetings. My mother is going there, to attend the gathering of the election" (Urban woman, Muslim, 21 years).

As was shown in paragraph 5.3.4 Personal Knowledge and in 5.1.7 Women's Groups, family members play an informative role regarding women's groups. Here, family members can be either a close relative - as the family members mentioned above - or a more distanced relative:

"I heard about it. My mother is a member of a Stree Shakti Group. They collect money, and they distribute money whenever it is necessary. I would like to become a member as well" (Rural woman, Hindu, 29 years).

"I know the groups. My mother is a member of a Stree Shakti Group. They collect money for loans. So when someone needs money they can take a loan" (Urban woman, Muslim, 18 years).

Additionally, it was narrated that family members as the parents (in law) can help neighbours and with that being a role model for the women:

"I have never helped anyone. My mother helps, the neighbours, the neighbourhood. For marriage, they help the poor people, with money for marriage. She has given money for marriage […] for marriage; she has given money this one neighbour. And then kept a deposit, as a mortgage, and they brought money" (Urban woman, Muslim, 26 years).

Consequently, the family of the woman, either nuclear or extended, both her parents' family as her family in law, plays a role regarding a woman's political participation. Further, age seems to be a distinguishing factor as it appears that different family members are important in different life stages of the women.

More, it appears that the interferences of family members - either supportive or withholding women - are stronger in cases of direct and active participation and less directional when it comes to acts of participation that seem to be more indirect and passive.

5.7 Direct Surrounding

The last category that influences the personal system - besides the categories discussed in paragraph 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6 - is the direct surrounding of the woman. This entails other social actors which are part of the community in which the woman lives, the political actors that visit the community, but also the physical surrounding of the community. These categories will be described respectively.

5.7.1 Community Actors

In regard to the social environment of women, different actors affect the political participation of women. Foremost, women are influenced by their family (see the

previous section). This section will show which and how other members of the community are important to the political participation of women.

The previous section slightly touched the relevance of friends and neighbours - besides describing the importance of family members[22]. There, it appeared that friends are fostering and supporting a woman's participation. But talking with friends also gives women the opportunity to be active participative, informally, trying to convince to vote for the same party for example:

"Yeah I speak with friends, sometimes. I speak with friends, also about parties. Like, do you want to vote on that party, like canvassing" (laughing) *(Rural woman, Hindu, 25 years).*

Further, community members play an informing role as a social actor. For example, during Election Time as a woman hears her community members talking on the street about the work parties have achieved:

"When people discuss about these things [work of the parties] grossly. When anybody has done good work to their village, than people will be talking okay this particular person has done this this and this. So based on that I will decide […] the people from outside, whenever they sit and talk, I see that. Outside people and not the family members" *(Rural woman, Hindu, 29 years).*

These talks can inform women of what is going on. Though not directly directed towards women, women can hear the talks and use the information when they think it is useful, and so contribute to a woman's participation (here voting).

Further, community members - among which community and village leaders - can be more directly supportive to a woman's participation as well. For example, they assisted women in choosing a party as they told her what choice she had to make:

"The decision to vote for this lotus was taken by the entire village. The whole village decided. […] On the day itself, when I went for voting all the people gathered in front of the house, it is across the poll booth. They were told that, I was told that I had to vote for the BJP. So I was guided to vote for this particular party" *(Rural woman, Hindu, 24 years).*

This interviewee explained also more precise what the role of the village leaders was and how they told her to vote for a certain party:

"The day before, they gave me the election and identity card. They brought it to my house, and they told me, tomorrow are the elections and you have to vote for the BJP. So, my voting card was ready, but my husband's name was misprinted in my voting card. So they took the ration card, and in that my name was there, and in the identity card also. So then I could go, with the ration card. So, I took it and voted" *(Rural woman, Hindu, 24 years).*

So, community leaders are not only supportive in the decision making process, but also took care of the administrative issues for the women so that they could go and vote at Election Day. The community actors are summed up in the figure below that shows all community actors that are involved (see figure 5.5).

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[22] As the previous paragraph showed, the difference between the last two groups is negligible as most neighbours are friends (see especially the sections about caste, religion and the physical environment).
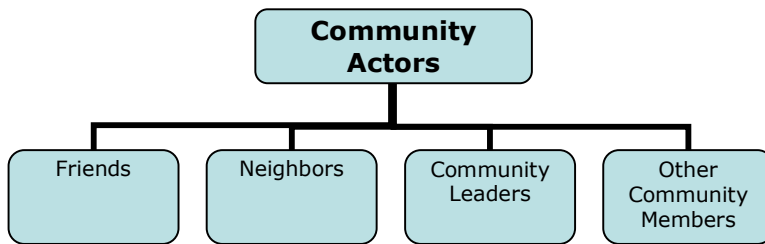
Figure 5.5 Community actors that play a role in women's political participation

5.7.2 Political Actors

In the direct surrounding also officials play a role in regard to a women's political participation. This section will show what actors from the political system are present as appeared from the interviews.

Mostly, interviewees referred to various political actors related to Election Time. At that time most officials seem to visit different areas, inform the people and try to win their vote. For example, party leaders and candidates were coming to the communities and holding party meetings or more the officials would come to the houses of the women:

"When there are elections I hear about it by the announcements of the rickshaws. So I know it is Election Time. During the elections all the leaders are coming. They will give us lists with all the members on it and ask us to vote for them" (Urban woman, Muslim, 55 years).

Further, an interviewee told about the possibility to discuss everyday problems with executive officials - here are Panchayat members mentioned:

"Sometimes politicians come and we tell the problems we are facing. To the politicians. For example, at this moment we have several problems. Problems with drainages, the cutters. They are not clean and they are blocking. Secondly, we have a water problem. The periodical supply. If they come we tell them through Panchayats" (Rural woman, Hindu, 29 years).

So, party leaders and candidates come to the areas to inform the people in different ways about their party (see also paragraph 5.1 Political Participation). This shows that various actors from the political system try to support and motivate the women - more, or less directly - in their participation. But also after Election Time officials visit areas. By that, problems can be communicated. Here, not directly but indirectly via Panchayats.

Besides that, an interviewee mentioned that a family member can also be direct active in the political domain. The brother in law of an interviewee was a Panchayat member. However, this had some social consequences:

"The elder brother is a member of the Panchayat. And the younger brother, ehm, not younger, he is also an elder brother, just before the husband, he is working as a driver [...] The one who studied up to tenth class is Panchayat member. And at the same time he helps to, agriculturing the field [... ... ...] I have some problems regarding this politics, some problems with neighborhoods. Because of politics, because of my brother in law is in politics no? He is a Panchayat member. So some

of the people, they talk with me, because of politics. They are not asking any questions regarding politics […] they are jealous, jealous, you are Panchayati member no? I have no membership in eh, in Panchayat, like that. You are superior quality. I have no? That way, I am jealous at you" (Rural woman, Hindu, 28 years).

Apparently, the status acquired with the membership of the brother has negative consequences for the family members. This might negatively influence the participation of the interviewee as the membership of the brother go hand in hand with negative experiences. To avoid these, the interviewee may withhold herself from participation in the political domain.

Also, family members can be active - be a member - in a women's group and more or less directly, and to a larger or less extent support a woman's participation (see also the previous paragraph).

This paragraph shows (again) that different domains are closely related, or more that the political and social can overlap. Not the least because political actors can be family members but also because social relations can affect a woman's political participation (see also figure 5.6 for summary of the political actors).
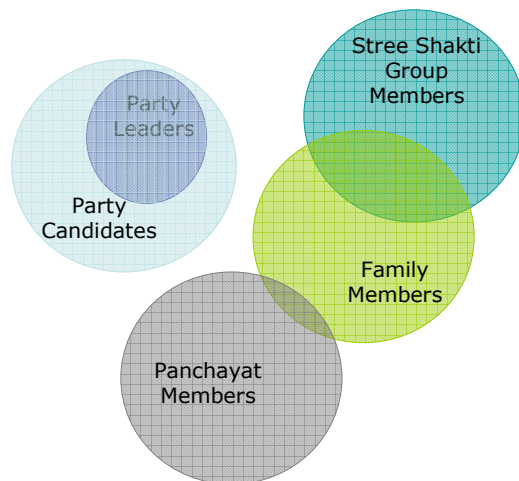
Figure 5.6 Political actors that play a role in women's political participation and the overlap with the family

5.7.3 Physical Surrounding

Besides the *social* the *physical* plays a role. Here, not related to women's places but rather defined as 'objects' (key objects) related to certain political activities. In relation to the elections almost all interviewees remarked that they get information from television, the newspaper, posters and (auto)rickshaw:

"When there are elections I hear the announcements and I watch television. But also in the newspaper I read that the elections are coming up. Further I hear the rickshaws and the party leaders speaking outside" (Urban woman, Muslim, 30 years).

Some objects as television play a role in women's daily lives and so are not consulted especially for political purposes though inform women as they use it:

"When there are elections I notice it by hearing about it at the news. Whenever I am free, I am sitting here and hear about the news, but not intentionally. In between the series I watch, if any news appears, then sometimes I put the television off and sometimes I sit and listen" (Rural woman, Hindu, 28 years).

Thus, the physical surrounding - private and public - informs women about political issues as Election Day and the parties. By that, again, the distinction between the political public and the private fades as the private also is a place where political knowledge can be developed. However, this learning is mostly not intentional as the objects in space mentioned above are not consulted for the purpose of acquiring political information. More, objects are experienced by accident - as seen from the perspective of the interviewees.

So, the physical surrounding is supporting and fostering a woman's participation as it is a space that provides a place for political information. As it enriches a woman's political knowledge, the physical surrounding teaches and so educates women about the Election Day and what parties they can choose from. With that, the private and the public space is a place of political learning and development.

Consequently, the physical surrounding in general is also important. During the interviews women noted that they have wishes to change their surroundings to provide a better place for living. When the physical surrounding would be improved it could also be an improved space for political learning. Various improvements were suggested.

Several women mentioned that they would like to improve basic necessities as food, clothing and housing but also various basic facilities as water facilities, health services, transportation facilities and an insufficient electricity system were lacking:

"I would like to change some things. I would like to develop all sorts of facilities, all things that my village needs.[…] Like there are a lot of water problems, so I would like to improve the water facilities" (Rural woman, Hindu, 27 years).

"Our health services are lacking. Only during the day there is a doctor. So if something happens in the night then we have a problem. Also because there are no busses in the night. And the electrification is bad. So we cannot reach a doctor in time if something goes wrong. So I would like to improve these facilities" (Rural woman, Hindu, 35 years).

"If I was Sonia Gandhi, I would like to help the poor people. By giving them rice and wheat. Where there is no fighting, I can help. And water has to be there. So I will make a water tank" (Urban woman, Muslim, 30 years).

"I would like to improve the country. I would like to help the poor people. With providing clothes, and with providing houses to them" (Rural woman, Hindu, 28 years).

As in paragraph 5.4, here the last two quotes show that when women are asked to compare themselves with Sonia Gandhi as a higher politician, women seem to be more ambitious or clearer about their ambitions than when women narrated about improvements related to their community.

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These results show – again - that women are concerned with the community and moreover with their economical class as they do not wish for personal improvements but changes for the sake of the community. Thus, interviewees expressed their wishes to enhance the situation of basic necessities and facilities of their community - here referring to their economical class.

5.8 Social Context

Developing an inductive model for women's political participation last the larger environment will be described. The social context frames the participation in different ways. Here, various aspects play a role - described respectively: legal regulations, social-cultural meaning system, religion and caste, and the physical environment which is strongly related to the previous concepts. As described earlier in this chapter, here it appears as well that different domains are closely related to each other.

5.8.1 Legal Regulations

This paragraph will discuss the legal regulations that are directive for the political participation. This paragraph will discuss political and economic regulations.

Political regulations

In regard to the political system, the interviewees appear to have experienced the right to vote. Almost all women voted if they were fulfilling the legal requirements of the related legal regulations which means women were old enough, had a voting card and hence were on the voting list (see also paragraph 5.1). Moreover, some rural women perceived to have to exercise that right though other urban women felt no obligation:

"As it is my right, I have voted during the elections. After our birth, we get the obligation that we have to vote for our country. It is our right" (Rural woman, Hindu, 27 years).

"I have voted during the last elections, because I have my own identity card. Not because someone asked me to go and vote. And I do not feel like it is an obligation" (Urban woman, Muslim, 30 years).

Women who did not vote narrated their circumstances as not fulfilling legal requirements or due to family affairs - recent delivery (see respectively paragraph 5.4 and 5.7):

"Yes, I vote. I have voting power for two years now. Only, I have not voted during the last elections. Because of the baby. Because of the delivery. It is only three months now, three months passed since the delivery" (Urban woman, Muslim, 21 years).

"I have no preference for a certain party. I cannot vote, because I am not on the voting list. So I do not have an identity card of voting" (Urban woman, Muslim, 22 years).

So, most women voted as they have fulfilled legal requirements (see also paragraph 5.1 Political Participation). There, registration and some kind of proof of identity are necessary before women can actually vote. As stated in the first paragraph, women are only living inside the house. Consequently, they are dependent on their male

family members for any activity outside in regard to obtaining a proof of identity or to get registered on the voting list. But also feelings of inferiority can play a role here[23] (see the following section and paragraph 5.3.1 Personal Feelings).

But also when women were asked about women who are or were in politics, women perceived themselves to be inferior to politicians and not being fit for politics (see section 5.3.1). This would suggest that also if women could go outside, women would avoid contact with officials, or more any political agent/actor, because of their feelings of inferiority. Although contact could be necessary for women to obtain certain papers or documents. Moreover, it seems that women - as they feel inferior compared to political agents - they do not see themselves as fit for politics/the political (public) domain[24]. Here, the level of education and social distance between the women and politicians can play a role. So, the reason for the distance between the women and the political domain is twofold: because of their feelings (towards political agents) and because of their self-image - about what you can think you can(not) do (self-confidence) (see also paragraph 5.3).

Further, it seemed that there were no specific laws or rules for other political activities. Only one woman remarked in an interview that a proof of identity was needed to be able to join a women's group:

"I have only heard about Stree Shakti groups. I would like to become a member of a Stree Shakti group, but I do not have an identity card, the voting identity card. And they said I need an identity card to become a member" (Urban woman, Muslim, 22 years).

So, from the interviews it seemed that the political system was giving rights to the people and only withholding them from these rights as the government demands proof of identity. Though feelings of inferiority towards political agents can hinder the entitlement of rights. Besides that, as in relation to women's (un)ability for decision making, age is a differentiating factor.

Economic Regulations

Paragraph 5.4 regarded among others the economic situation of the women. There it appeared that women were not only lower-educated but also lower-class as their income seem to be low and basic necessities and facilities were sometimes missing (see also section 5.7.3). In the interviews the 'ration card' was mentioned. This economic method indicates the political influence at the economic situation of poor people as the ration card was a political method to alleviate the situation of the poor. Looking at the aim of this study and at the group of research participants understandably, here, this method has come up in the interviews.

Women seemed to be well aware of their poor situation. Not only was it mentioned several times during the interviews that they are 'poor people', but more explicit it was mentioned that the economic situation should be improved. As in other sections, here again it appeared that women showed more ambition telling about what they would change in her situation:

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[23] Officials are also not contacted because of sex differences as social norms prohibit women from talking with men (see also later this paragraph).

[24] This presumes that politics and political agents are only present in the public domain and not in the private domain, the house. Further, it presumes that politics in general is only part of the public domain and not 'happening' in the private domain. However, for example the previous paragraph already showed that women sometimes help their children with their (political) homework. By that the political is also inside the home and women teaching their children about politics are political agents in themselves - see also chapter three for the conceptualization of political participation.

"I would like to help the poor people, as Sonia does. I want to provide money for them, or large houses, like that" (Rural woman, Hindu, 25 years).

"I would like to eradicate poverty. Through providing cards, that is, improve procedures and all. I want to improve the country, by providing land, and cards, timely. They are not provided to us, to an appropriate candidate, and on the right time. So we are suffering a lot, the poor people" (Rural woman, Hindu, 29 years).

"I would like to improve the poor people. So I want more education for the children. We have not studied, so our children should study" (Urban woman, Muslim, 40 years).

According to the women, the situation could be changed for the better by giving money to the poor, and provide housing and fields. Further, the level of education should be enhanced and regulations should be improved taking into account the situation of poor people.

5.8.2 Social-Cultural Meaning System

Society and its culture describe gender roles which prescribe women to behave in a certain way and with that describe women's possibilities for political participation. This means that women have a certain position with coherent tasks to fulfil as appeared from the interviews. These will be described in the following sections.

The domain of women

From the interviews it appeared that women are living inside the house bounded to the private sphere, leaving the public sphere to the men. Consequently, women's participation is bound to the private sphere though it has been shown in the previous paragraphs that this divide is not that strict. More, many women seem not to be interested in the public - also political - domain as it is not their domain:

"My neighbour is my close friend. She and I, we do not go outside, we are living inside the house only. Also, my child is just little, so I am not interested to go outside" (Urban woman, Muslim, 21 years).

Consequently, the responsibilities of women regarded (foremost) the chores inside the house and for the rural women working at the field is a smaller concern:

"Daily, I am cooking the food, cleaning the house, washing vessels, washing utensils, washing clothes. And later I go to the fieldwork" (Rural woman, Hindu, 24 years).

"I am a housewife. So mainly I am looking after the house, protecting the children, housework and cooking work. But most important is to take care of the children" (Urban woman, Muslim, 28 years).

So, women's tasks are related to care and with that the home is a place of care. More specifically, a woman addressed how she was taking care of her children and that this included political education. Here, besides that some women are working outside the house, the political domain already crosses the private sphere of the women (see also first paragraph).

So, women's lives are mainly set within the house, related to care, but also pedagogy and development. As rural women also have to work at the field, the domain of care is not only restricted to inside the house but also applicable to a

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lower degree outside the house. Thus, differences in women's responsibilities and related tasks seem to be related to the kind of area, places, women's lives are set in. Either urban or rural place of residence.

Decision Making and Authority

Largely, the decision making within the family has been described in the second paragraph. There the male dominated situation of the family was described. It appeared that mostly the decisions are made by an elder male family member, also being the head of the family. Though the home seemed to be the domain of the women, the male family members take besides the decisions related to life outside the house also take decisions related to the home. Consequently, the position of women is subordinated as they have almost no freedom to make their own decisions besides in some case of some small decision making (see paragraph 5.2).

This situation seemed not to be dependent of a male or a female head of the family, though it showed that women could get more decision making responsibility during her life especially in case of the expiration of the father in law (see paragraph 5.2). Additionally, also illustrating the previous results, an interviewee remarked that she and her husband were sharing the position of head of family, and also were sharing the decision making. Then, the decision making was related to their tasks inside or outside the house.

> *Sharing Decision Making*
> *Already she is married for 45 years. At her age of 60 she has experienced a lot, though not all good. She has seen dying half of all her children, and experienced better and worse financial times. As the family experienced some poor times they opened a bank account with some money for poorer times. Due to the worse financial times in the past, she was not able to send all of her children to school for a good education. This she regrets. However, now, she is taking the decisions inside the house (and her husband outside), and so she is also taking care of the grandchildren and taking the decisions related to their education. And though it is hard for her to see the grandchildren leave for school, she hopes for a better education for them (Older Muslim woman living in an urban neighbourhood in a joint family).*

This case shows that if a woman had decision making authority, she would use that to improve the educational level of her (grand)children. Though this issue will be described at the end of this section more, here it can be noted that the desire for change is related to the tasks and domains that are a women's concern; care, pedagogy and development.

So, sometimes the private domain is open for decision-making by elder women. This was the situation in joint families, but also in nuclear families an older woman got the main responsibility of decision making. Independent of living inside the same house or not.

> *Sharing Responsibilities with Family Outside the House*
> *Just a year back she married her husband and moved to a Muslim neighbourhood in Dharwad to live with her In Laws. Soon a child was born and after a couple of months the mother in law said to her son that they should move out. So the newly married couple and their baby moved to Jamia, close to the neighbourhood their family lives. Before the mother in law was the head of the household as the father in law expired. Now there was no person of the older generation living with them anymore and so the husband of the interviewee became the head of the household. However, some decisions are complex and so the newlyweds asked their aunt-also living nearby-for advice. In that way the aunt became the head of the household, but the decision making responsibility was shared between the husband and the aunt (Young Muslim woman living in an urban neighbourhood in a nuclear family).*

So, it can be noted that during their lives women seemed to get more authority and decision making responsibility. As younger women did not get to make any decisions, women with children have some decision making opportunities in some cases related to the private life (inside the house), and when they are in the position of the mother in law they can have more decision making responsibility, inside and outside[25]. This seemed to be the case for women living in urban as well as rural areas. However, as an exception to both remarks, in some cases the mother in law was the head of the household but the decision maker was her son:

"My mother in law is the head of the family. But she is not making all the decisions; my husband is taking the decisions inside and outside the house. As my mother told: "I do not have to take care of all the decisions". So she has given authority to her son" (Urban woman, Muslim, 26 years).

Or more, what seemed to be more extraordinary was the case of the family in which the mother in law was the actual head of the family, but her younger son was given the responsibility to make the most decisions.

> *A Younger Decision Maker*
> *After her marriage the interviewee moved in with family in law. At that time the father in law was the head of the household. However, he died. After his 80th birthday he fell and recovered badly from that. After that, the younger brother of her husband took the decisions outside the house. Still, he takes most of the decisions for the whole family of 13 members, though the mother in law is taking most of the decisions inside the house. All the family members accept this situation, also the eldest brother. Moreover, as the youngest brother has completed his second year of PUC the family does not only agree with him. Rather, they expect him to take this role within the family because he is so intelligent (Middle aged Hindu woman living in a rural area close to Dharwad with her joint family).*

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[25] The last can be regarded as remarkable as women's lives are largely situated within the home. For making decisions regarding the life outside the home, women have to depend upon the knowledge of her children and her male family members as their lives are situated (partly) outside the home as they are (often) going to school and going to work.

Here, intelligence seemed to cross age and gender in determining the decision maker of the family.

Opposite to women's tasks - shown above, there seems to be no difference between the areas women live in - urban or rural. More, the age of women seem to cause differences in regard to the (degree of) authority they might have.

<u>Cultural Norms and Social Struggles</u>

Though the community in which women live seems to be of importance as it is described in this and the previous paragraphs, the cultural norms of the community can cause struggles. Regarding different cultural norms, some interviewees explained that they did not agree with their situation being suppressed and not free. In regard to women living inside the house, a woman stated clearly that the level of education should be increased so women do not have to spend their time solely inside fulfilling their household duties, but also can do other things like get a job:

"In the Stree Shakti Groups we have all decided what we want to do, what we want to improve. I want to, to help the women. If everybody has studied, to the 10th grade or something. If somebody is not educated, I want to help them, the women who are living in the house, boring. Than a lot of time is there, to do anything, work, so I want to help them" (Rural woman, Hindu, 25 years).

Deriving from the gender roles it seemed that women had to get married. Few younger women stated not to agree with their families decision that they should marry soon. Especially, because they had to quit their education:

"I like my parents, but I want to study. And they do not want me to study. That is the problem. I like my parents, I am happy with them. But they want me to get married. I want some more time until marriage. But I can only life inside the house, doing the housework and stitching the clothes. Living inside the house only" (Urban woman, Muslim, 18 years).

Also, an older woman explained that marriage prevented her from going to school, or more from going outside:

"I have not been to school. I had to get married. Since then, I live inside the house only" (Urban woman, Muslim, 55 years).

So, marriage - the norm that women have to get married - seems to interfere with the wish to go to school. Moreover, it seems that women do not attain a very high level of education as they have to get married and by that the social system is reproduced.

5.8.3 Religion and Caste

Besides the previous concepts, also religion and caste play a role - both as a constraint and as a supporter for political participation. Religion hinders the political participation as it prescribes norms regarding gender relations:

"I like women in politics. If there is anything, when there are problems [...] we can ask them. Muslim women cannot go to men. If there is a woman in politics, we can go, get help. Means, the candidate can help if any problems happen [...] because I am a woman and I can speak to this woman. The problem is our religion that is the largest problem. You cannot talk to men" (Urban woman, Muslim, 30 years).

On the other hand, the positive role of religion was denoted as an interviewee remarked her faith in God regarding obtaining outside employment:

"I would like to change my work. I want to help, to give the girls more education, the children. So I would like to become a teacher. […] I am trying and God will help" (Rural woman, Hindu, 25 years).

Further, caste and religion also seemed to influence the physical space as it relates people. As caste, religion seemed to order families to a particular area. As caste and religion coincide, women have often friends that are from the same religion and caste (see also the following two sections). This in turn influences (among others) women's social capital it seemed, as most (close) friends (strong ties) are neighbours and family members. Consequently, they are (often) from the same caste (and religion). As remarked during the interviews:

"I have a lot of friends, and all are close friends. Hmmm, I have four, five good friends. And they are a living in the same street. Same caste, same religion. There are no Hindus, all are same caste" (Urban woman, Muslim, 35 years).

Though the previous is certainly the case for older women, younger women (girls) seemed to be in another situation. They are going to school and there they meet girls from all religions (and castes):

"I have a lot of friends. I meet them daily when I am going to college. I have both Hindu and Muslim friends. And if I don't have to go to school that day, we will contact each other by our mobile phones" (Urban woman, Muslim, 17 years).

Here, it is clear that for older woman relations are fairly restricted to their own religion (and caste) though for younger women relations can cross religious (and castes) boundaries as they cross social boundaries - by going to school in another area and visit a public space. Whether this is because of age or because of development in time remains an open question though reproduction seemed to be likely.

Field Note Closed Communities
Now almost at the end of my field work it becomes more obvious that closed communities-defined by their religion and caste-can exist, than it seemed in the beginning. At least, the community seems to be closed socially. Especially, in the Muslim area [in Dharwad] the whole neighbourhood seems to be one large family. All women in the neighbourhood told me that they all know each other and are friends with each other, and that together they are forming the Muslim Jamia caste. Close connections seem to be there only with another neighbouring Muslim area and not with other areas of the city Dharwad. For example, marriages are arranged between the families of these two neighbourhoods and when people move out they move to another house in one of these two areas. Social relations with other areas are not there except for some Muslim areas in Goa and Southern Maharashtra where some of the married women come from. Occasionally, these women visit their parents (and their old friends) so social relations continue to exist. But as women visit their parents' place only a few times in a year, the relations seem to be weak (Field Diary, 25 June 2008).

This indicates that people are related to each other in more than one way: socially (e.g. friends, family), culturally (e.g. norms and values), biologically (e.g. family by marriage). But also politically as people with same backgrounds often vote for the same (kind of) party (see also paragraph 5.1 and 5.2). And (largely) caste relates people economically, as all people have (largely) the same educational and vocational background. Also because as people are of the same group, people can make use of the same political rights and measures/instruments (as the ration card) (see also chapter four for a description of the group of research participants).

Moreover, the case study presented above shows that the 'Jamia caste' know all features of a social group. However, this does not necessarily distinguish them as another 'caste'. More, caste seems to be a way of categorizing society in such a way they can articulate but also distinguish their own community as a part of Indian society in which the Muslim community is a minority (see also chapter two) and so claim a certain social and physical space and place for themselves.

This sense of community is important as women express their wishes for change. Women remarked that they were happy as all people lived together and saw no difficulties in different groups living together:

"I love my country. Means, the people in India. All living together, no fighting with each other, their good relation, the culture. My country is good. Because there is no fighting, between religions, religions of Hindu and Muslim, all people are living together, in friendship" (Urban woman, Muslim, 26 years).

"India, yes, I like India. We are all together, Hindu, Muslims, castes, there is no difference between them" (Urban woman, Muslim, 35 years).

People can live happily together. But sometimes religion does cause problems:

"I love India. I like it, but I do not like it, that the religions are fighting. We watch TV and we saw a bomb exploded. I do not like that" (Urban woman, Muslim, 60 years).

In this regard it seems to be important how the members of a community feel. Interviewees described the members as feeling happy when there is no difference between religions, there is no fighting and all people are friends.

Though some women were not only feeling happy. They were concerned with the situation of the country and foremost of the women - as they were putting themselves in the place of Sonia Gandhi. If they could change something then women would provide help:

"I would like to help the poor people, like Sonia Gandhi is doing, for the country. I also want to improve the education for the children. We have not studied, but for our children, they should study. That should be improved. Education, for the poor people" (Urban woman, Muslim, 60 years).

"I would like to help people, to get better education. And for the women, I want social work for the women. To improve the country, to improve the women, women who are not educated. Get women a job, outside or a home job, inside the house, like stitching clothes, painting saris" (Urban woman, Muslim, 38 years).

To improve the country women would help the poor people and improve the education (more and better), for the children as well as for the women. Also, jobs should be provided to women. Further, it was argued that there should be more women in politics.

5.8.4 Physical environment

Besides the *social* also the *physical* plays a role in regard to women's political participation referring to the spatial possibilities for participation and the physical infrastructure that fosters or hinders participation. Consequently, 'place' is an important concept related to the physical environment of women.

<u>Caste, religion and place</u>

In relation to religion and caste it appeared that the streets where the urban interviewees live held one particular religion and caste (see also the previous section).

> *Urban communities*
> *From her marriage onwards she has been living in Jamia. Already for 20 years she has been married now, but since 5 years she and husband are living separately from her In Laws. Before she and her husband did live with his family, but after they got an argument with the mother in law they moved out. Living in the new house, the interviewee got close with her neighbours and became good friends with them. Now, she speaks to them whenever there is time and all daily issues are discussed. Whether it is about cooking the meal or about the children doing their homework. As the interviewee and her friends all live in the same street they are all from the same religion and the same caste. Moreover, the whole neighbourhood belongs to the same religion and the same caste. They all know each other and all are friends (Middle aged Muslim woman living in Jamia with her nuclear family).*

But not only urban women, also rural women knew the same kind of social ordering:

"Yeah, I talk with four or five families, women, neighbouring women. Before marriage I had eight friends, and now they got married. Among them, there were four very close to me […] I have four close friends […] and all eight women are Lingayat, Hindu, same religion, same caste. Because they are of my own street, they have the same religion and the same caste" (Rural woman, Hindu, 24 years).

Thus, this section, but also the previous two sections have shown that it was common for the research participants to life in a community, defined by people with the same caste and religion, in one area, one place. Consequently, women would have homogeneous relations, could discuss with each other the possibilities for participation as they are in the same (legal) situation, but also officials can address the communities uniformly for example.

However, it was also remarked that their street held people from different castes (and religions):

"I have three close friends. They are my neighbors. But they are not from the same religion and caste […] usually the […] fishery people live in one street. But my friends, they live in the same street. We lived in a street with only these fishery people, with people only belonging to that community. But we moved to another colony […] the plots were allotted, allotting the places to build houses, and so these plots have mixed sort of people" (Rural woman, Hindu, 27 years).

Hence, social relations are more heterogeneous resulting in differences in capital and so knowledge for example.

As the previous section about religion and caste showed, younger women have friends of different religions because they are going to school - though living in a homogeneous neighborhood they crossed social spaces. Here, a woman also developed relations with women from other religions (other castes) as people had to move and came into a mixed neighborhood - so crossing social boundaries but not the private-public divide. For that, place has not only social consequences but also has consequences for the spatial possibilities for participation.

Political acts, physical distance and place

In regard to political acts place also seemed to play a role. In relation to voting meaning was attached to places. For urban women the local nursery school was also the poll booth in that area:

"The poll booth is in the school here in this area only. So it is very near. We do not have to walk far" (Urban woman, Muslim, 33 years).

So, the nursery school in their neighborhood was not only a place of education and development but also of voting, of political acts. The next section will show that at times the building also serves as a health center. Apparently, this building is used for more purposes than education only and so has multiple meanings for the community members. And as the building is in the community it is physically nearby. Consequently, regarding political acts as voting, the political is physically close to the women and in the community so here the private space of the family, of the community, seems to cross the public space of education and politics.

Urban but also rural women claimed that distance and place did not matter in regard to voting. They could overcome these possible interferences if necessary:

"I will vote also if the poll booth is far away. I can take a bike; my husband's bike is there. So we can go by bike together. […] No we vote in the school in this area, but if it was in a community building we can go also" (Urban woman, Muslim, 30 years.)

"Also if the poll booth is far away I will go and vote. They can, they will call us […] and they will all go to the poll booth together. And if I am not able to go, than we can take a rickshaw, in couples" (Urban woman, Muslim, 35 years).

"I would go voting, also if the weather would have been bad. Even it was raining; I could take an umbrella and go and vote. And if it was in another village I would travel by bus and go and vote. Also I have no problem to go to any place" (Rural woman, Hindu, 27 years).

Also, this shows that (most) women would not go alone to the poll booth, but together with a family or community member. And, it suggests that women would not visit places outside the community by themselves[26].

Health, physical distance and place

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[26] As seen in chapter three and in the beginning of this chapter, different domains are closely related to each other. That women would not go to places outside their community by themselves but together with others, could thus indicate that other places and spaces than political buildings would not be visited by women individually as well. Further, these findings appear to be in line with the social-cultural and religious norms and habits that women only work and live inside the house and that women are not supposed to talk with men. So, women only know their way around the house and can only talk to other women. As the public domain is more the domain of men, as discussed before in this chapter, women will need the company of a male family member if they move around in public space.

Distance may not matter in regard to voting but in regard to health care facilities, specifically for rural women, possible interferences as distance does matter. Especially at night times, health care facilities are far away and hard to reach:

"I want to improve the health provision system. There is no staff. Only one doctor is there, and he leaves. So there are not many service providers there. And there is no transportation after ten o'clock in the night. So it is very difficult. If anything goes wrong there are no hospital doctors available 24 hours in their primary health center. The doctor only stays on official hours, and not 24 hours" (Rural woman, Hindu, 27 years).

Here, social (community) boundaries seem to be crossed by the doctor who goes from the village to his community (his neighborhood in the city) by enlarging the physical distance between him and the health facility.

The situation of rural women can be compared with the situation of urban women who have health facilities within close distance, namely within the (neighboring) neighborhood but also there the facility is not available 24 hours a day:

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

Observation Nurse Visiting Hour
Today, a nurse visited Jamia together with two assistants. The nursery school in the neighborhood temporarily was a health center. Mothers came with children and mostly with their mother in law, and the mothers and children were checked by the nurse and her assistants. The children (and some women) were given injections and all information was noted down in two books. A larger book of the nurse herself and a smaller book of the women which they took home [...] besides women from Jamia, also women from the neighboring Muslim area visited the consultation hour of the nurse (Observation Visiting Hour Nurse in Jamia, 28 May 2008).

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Here, the school building which is used for different purposes is only used by a specific community: the Muslim community. For that, the building is not only physically near but the building is also socially spaced close to that community. So, physical and social distance can cross each other. On the other hand, here, the situation is comparable to the situation of the rural interviewees as the health services are not available 24 hours a day within close reach[27].

So, describing place, here it seems to regard the immediate environment of women - their street, their or the neighboring neighborhood and their village. So her mobility is not limited to inside the house, but it takes place within the local surroundings of the house which provides more possibilities spatially for participation.

However, this section also showed that different categories cross each other; the private and the public, the physical and the social. This makes it more difficult to define what the different categories entail and what can be exactly defined as women's place and space and hence what places and spaces are open for women's participation.

Political acts, social distance and place

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[27] However, it can be imagined that the situation of the rural women is more severe as the next health facility is probably further away for them as it is for the urban women.

In another – social - way, place played a role as well, namely in regard to being active in national politics. Most women knew women in national politics as Sonia Gandhi and thought she was doing good work:

"*Sonia is good for politics because she helps the poor, poor people. And she is doing social work also, for women*" (Urban woman, Muslim, 18 years).

"*I like Sonia Gandhi in politics. My mother told us already that Sonia Gandhi helps us, the poor. She knows what to do; she has done well in our poor country. Indira Gandhi also did well for her country, for the poor people*" (Urban woman, Muslim, 22 years).

However, the women interviewed in Dharwad did not seem to think they could become a (national) leader because of physical and social (-economic) distance:

"*I cannot compare myself with her. She is different, she is far away. We are here, she is looking for our country, we are the poor, we cannot do anything*" (Urban woman, Muslim, 60 years).

"*I like Sonia Gandhi […] She is great, she has a very great personality, she is a great person. So we cannot compare ourselves with her. They are great persons, because they are in politics*" (Rural woman, Hindu, 29 years).

"*It is good, we feel very good when I compare myself with Sonia Gandhi. But because of her situation, her situation promotes her, promoting her to be in politics. So she went in politics, and for me it is not possible. Sonia had the chance, and I do not*" (Rural woman, Hindu, 27 years).

From this, it can be concluded that 'place' is not only framed by the social context but also a construct as a result of feelings and beliefs (see also paragraph 5.3).

So, here it appeared that women's physical place is not interfering with women's participation locally as voting. Rather their physical place is closely connected to their social place, and that withheld women from participation at a higher level in the political system, as does their economic place. Partly, this seems to be in line with results shown earlier. Those showed that women could be hindered in their political participation by their feelings of inferiority - among others caused by their social place and the social (educational) distance between lower-educated women and political agents. Apparently, women's social place can hinder women's political participation but only does so for certain activities.

Moreover, it has been shown that different domains - as the social, political and economic - are closely related. Above that, different categories - as the private and the public, and the physical and the social - seem to cross each other as well. For that, it is hard to state that the domain of lower-educated women in Northern Karnataka is solely and strictly 'inside the house'.

The results regarding the process towards the political participation of Muslim and Hindu women in Northern Karnataka has been described in all its aspects. The different paragraphs have covered all categories in respect to the process, from the social context to learning and change. It appeared that the last category can lead towards improvement of the categories earlier in the process. So, the process towards political participation seems to be circular, or more the process ostensible has the form of a spiral. The continuous form that political participation of Muslim and Hindu women in Northern Karnataka appears to have will become clearer in the

next chapter. That will discuss the conclusions regarding the participation based on the results and the underlying research framework of this study. Above that, the inductive model will be presented closing that chapter.

6 Conclusions and Discussion

This study explores women's political participation in Karnataka, India, in order to answer the central research question *'How do lower-educated women from urban and rural Karnataka perceive their political participation?'* In order to answer this question several sub questions were formulated as well. To be able to answer the question *'how do lower-educated women politically participate?'* a multi-dimensional perspective has been taken to conceptualize the concept of female political participation (see also paragraph 3.1 to 3.5). Further, an educational approach addresses the full width of female participation as it provided the possibility to understand participation and learning as fairly identical (see also paragraph 3.7 to 3.10) - this study confirms that participation is a way of learning and learning is also participation in the case of the women in Karnataka. Paragraph 6.1 will answer this sub question.

Further, this chapter will discuss the educational approach and the attention for women's learning and learning contexts which provides an opportunity to explore women's places and spaces and her behavior in social groups in relation to political participation (see paragraph 6.2, 6.4 and 6.5). Together with the conclusions concerning the other categories of the process of female political participation[28], it will answer the second sub question in relation to the *reason* for the political participation of women as the process describes why women are political participative as they are (see paragraph 6.2 to 6.6).

Third, the educational approach provides a logical basis for recommendations as the approach is development (process) orientated. These recommendations, or wishes for change as formulated in the previous chapter, will answer the third sub question regarding the *improvements* of female political participation (see also paragraph 6.7).

Based upon the conclusions regarding the (process of) political participation in Karnataka, the chapter will close with some broad conclusions in relation to female political participation in other states (see paragraph 6.8). Thereafter, the inductive model will be presented in paragraph 6.9 - see figure 6.1 The inductive model for the political participation of lower-educated Hindu and Muslim women in Northern Karnataka, India.

6.1 Women's Political Participation in Karnataka

First, this paragraph will discuss the conclusions concerning that participation and so answering the first sub question regarding women's political participation.

Political Participation

In this research the issue of participation was problematized related to the situation of lower-educated urban and rural women in India as foremost lower-educated women would know difficulties in participating in politics (see also chapter one). For that purpose 'female political participation' was conceptualized. In the framework it appeared that often participation is discussed and studied in a rather narrow way, using strict categories to analyse how participative women are. However, this study used a broader and more fluid conceptualization. The concept was characterized by several dimensions to be able to explore the situation. Above that, political participation was defined by different political levels.

The conceptualization appeared to be suitable to explore the political participation of lower-educated Muslim and Hindu women in urban and rural Northern Karnataka. From the results it appeared that women participate politically

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[28] See paragraph 6.3 and 6.6 for the other categories related to the process of political participation.

in various ways; from private to public, from informal to formal, from indirect to direct and from passive to active participation. In regard to the levels of participation, it appeared that women participate in neighbourhood activities as community work but also in more national organized activities as voting. Besides that, it should be remarked that the activities of women all were located not too distanced from their home as appeared from the results in regard to a woman's place (see also below in regard to places and spaces of female participation). From the results appeared that women were mainly living inside the house, but it appeared that women were also willing to cross community boundaries for active political participation. Consequently, the characteristics as conceptualized in the framework seem to be appropriate. However, the characteristic of levels of participation seems to be better defined into two other characteristics. Looking at the results, the level of organization of a political activity can be explored, as well as the level of locality, to define by whom the activity is organized and at where the activity is taking place. So, it is concluded that female political participation can be explored by six characteristics.

However, it is recommended to conduct more qualitative and quantitative research taking this feminine approach to women's participation to be able to conclude about the usefulness of this new approach. More, as this study is focused on two areas and two religious groups in North Karnataka to explore the lower-educated female participation in Karnataka, the conceptualization has to be explored further to analyse whether the inductive model could be used to explore other female populations as other castes or religious groups in Northern Karnataka.

Geographical differences

Different arrangements and methods and projects of non-governmental organizations cause geographical differences and can make the picture of political participation in Karnataka scattered (see also paragraph 2.1 and 2.5). From the fieldwork it appeared that there are geographical differences in woman's political participation.

Though mentioned more than once in chapter two and also touched upon in the third chapter, the previous chapter only remarked little about quotas for Panchayats. As only mentioned by a rural interviewee, the consequences of the method can be questioned. More, as no urban research participant touched upon this method also, but all research participants narrated about the role of the family and the community (neighborhood or village) the question arises whether women have knowledge about Panchayats and whether they have heard about the quotas. More, the results - especially in regard to a woman's feelings and beliefs - lead to believe that women would not have wanted to participate in such a board as their feelings and beliefs would not be motivating that kind of participation (see also paragraph 5.5). So, it seems that quotas are a (socially) too distanced method to alleviate and empower poor women in Northern Karnataka.

Also in another way geographical differences could be there. In paragraph 3.6 Haritas (2008) stated specifically that the political participation of urban women was more indirect. Though that claim seems to be supported by this research, not only urban but also rural women seem to be more indirect and informal participative politically. So, the suggestion of Haritas (2008) that geographical differences may exist does not hold for this study. Rather, political participation seems to be defined by the social context in which women live and the endorsement of the related gender roles by family members.

The political and economic systems are part of the social context. Regulations that influenced the political participations are part of these systems. As India is a federal state, both the state and national level can develop these regulations. As

seen in the beginning of this report, the state of Karnataka develops policies to enhance the participation. For that it is suggested to look at geographical differences at state level, more than looking at differences between urban and rural areas.

However, it should be remarked that the divide between urban and rural areas depends upon the definition of the categories. In this research the urban areas were represented by an urban (slum) neighbourhood and the rural areas were represented by several rural villages in North Karnataka. As other researchers could have defined these areas differently, the conclusions could also be different from the conclusions drawn in this study

Life Course Events

In the beginning of this report (see chapter two and three) it was mentioned that women live mainly inside the house and women would be occupied with their household tasks (see for example Bryson, 2007 and Hoffman, 2004). This is supported by the results of this study. Women have to take care of the household, including nurturing the children and taking care of the husband and family members by cooking for example (see also paragraph 5.8).

However, a woman does not have to take care of her husband and children till she gets married and as (younger) women remarked they would like to pursuit further education. For that, marriage could bring change in a woman's participation as it changes the organization of a woman's life. Contrarily, it also appeared from the results that marriage did not bring changes in participation - though it was earlier stated that it does change the social capital of woman.

Other life course events seem to have an influence on a woman's participation; pregnancy and delivery would withhold women from participation (at that moment) and having little children would bound a woman more to house as she has to nurture them.

So, different life course events can have different influences on a woman's participation.

During the interviews in the fieldwork women were asked retrospectively about their lives and narratives of younger and older women were compared. For a broader understanding of life course events on the (process of) political participation for this, but also for other groups of women, it is suggested to conduct more qualitative studies. But also for the extent and exact relation between life course events and political participation more quantitative studies have to be carried out.

Gender differences

As Hoffman (2004) noted, due to gender roles in the male bounded society women are confined to their domestic duties and the private sphere. Additionally, women could not be political active in the public sphere. Also because of the lack of security which would make the public sphere unsafe for women. This was also suggested by this study's results.

For that, it was mentioned that women should and could only restrict themselves to their activities in the private sphere. However, this does not mean that they should keep themselves from participating politically more privately. The results showed that (some) women are politically active in a more private and informal way. Though it seems that women also participate more publicly as voting, which could be grounded in the belief that the political domain is not only for men (see also 6.4 Feelings, Beliefs and Interests).

<u>Individual or Collective Participation</u>

The framework showed an individualistic perspective at the political participation of women. Contrarily to the individualistic perspective and in addition to the social understanding of a woman's social place the results showed that the (process towards the) political participation of a woman is framed by the social context. Though the initial framework of this research discussed the subordinated position of women, the results showed that the women do not only life in an oppressed position in regard to the husband but moreover the whole family (in law). The lives of women are largely dependent on the family. Hence, the political participation of women depends largely upon the decision making of the family members. More, the results showed that various political (and non-political) activities are not conducted individually, but were a joint undertaking. As women's lives but more their political participation is influenced by and situated within the family (in law) a collectivistic perspective at the political participation of Indian women seems to be more in order than an individualistic approach.

However, it should be investigated whether a collectivistic approach would help to (give) a fuller/better understanding of the participation of women. Moreover, as this conclusion is drawn based upon the results in regard to the social context and the derived gender roles it is recommended to study the difference in approach regarding the political participation of women who are living in a very similar context. But also in regard to women who have to deal with very similar gender roles - though living in not a very similar context.

In addition, it should be noted that this collectivistic perspective is not suitable for the further analysis of male political participation per se. Men have to deal with different gender roles and their relation with the social context can (consequently) be different in contrast to the relation women have with the social context. For that, an individualistic perspective could be more suitable to approach male behavior, though living in the same social context. Further research should be conducted to give clarity in that regard.

6.2 Feelings, Beliefs and Interests

Women's political participation is influenced by a women's personal system. First this paragraph will discuss the feelings, beliefs and interests of a woman's personal attitude and the following paragraph will discuss the fourth concept related to the personal system.

Results showed that a woman's feelings and beliefs influence her participation in general. They can limit a woman's participation as women stay inside the house as she feels that only the home is a place for her. This appeared to be derived from the gender roles which are endorsed by family members, especially the husband.

On the other hand, it seemed that women have more positive beliefs and feelings concerning female political participation. Women also seem to feel that they could be active in politics as there would be no gender differences. On the other hand, women feel that there are gender differences and that women should participate in politics as women can then approach female politicians. This last feeling that women can only approach women seems to be – again - a result of the gender roles. Both of these feelings and beliefs could support women to be participative politically as not only the space inside the house is or should be a place for women.

This "duality" is consistent with earlier research though the various perspectives were not represented in one study. Hoffman (2004) stated a low participation of women would be caused by - among others - a low self-esteem. Vianello *et al.* (1990) at the other hand argued that women do not feel that politics is

exclusively a male domain. Moreover, the results in this study show more alternatives than these earlier conclusions (see the previous chapter and the beginning of this section). For that, this study adds to previous studies.

This duality in feelings and beliefs seem to be consistent with the dichotomy in the results regarding women's interests; women can be interested in more private issues and topics to discuss with their close friends, but some women are also to some extent interested in political issues.

These interests, believes and feelings, based in the social context, endorsed by the direct surrounding and fostered by the socioeconomic characteristics of the women, seem to could have its impact on the political participation of women; on the one hand women are living inside the house, do not come outside the house and nearly participate in any activity (these women do not go outside to any meeting, do not discuss politics with anyone and do not seem to make many decisions by themselves as in regard to voting). On the other hand, there are women who do life inside the house but also do (or want to) go outside to meetings, occasionally discuss (or want to discuss) political topics as elections with their friends and/or family members and seem to make their own decisions as it comes to voting for example.

However, this duality - from social context to learning - does not seem to be equal to other differences. This means, that the group difference the duality shows is not similar to another differentiation as age, religion and area. However, occasionally, throughout the results it seemed that these other differentiators cause group differences equal to differences in participation and wishes for change (learning).

6.3 Education, Knowledge and Social Networks

After discussing three concepts of the personal attitude, the concept of knowledge has to be discussed. This concept is closely related to the concept education and the category of social capital. For that, this paragraph will not only discuss knowledge but also relate this concept to the level of education[29] and to a woman's social networks.

This research concerned lower-educated women. In this study the level of education seemed to correspond with the level of income and so class. If the family experienced bad financial times it could lead to a low level of education for the children as they drop out as was shown in the previous chapter.

It appeared that there is a lack of knowledge in several regards. Women have a lack in knowledge as it comes to beneficial regulations or arrangements for women. Further, for some women basic skills as calculating were lacking - as interviewees tried to narrate about their socioeconomic characteristics it appeared to be difficult to calculate the family income and ages of family members. However, it seemed that women could rely on the help of their children as they were eager help (see also the following paragraph). As children (and other family members) are part of a woman's social capital (social network) and thus of a woman's resources woman's level of knowledge should not be judged only by her level of education but also by the level of knowledge of the members of her social network. This shows - again - the embeddedness of women in their social surrounding and for that, a collectivistic perspective of (the process of) behavior seems to be more suitable as an individualistic approach (see also paragraph 6.1).

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[29] Education - the level of education - is a concept part of the category of Socioeconomic Characteristics. Other concepts that are part of Socioeconomic Characteristics are discussed in regard to the Social Context and Social Capital.

So, there seems to be a need for education bridged by the self-help groups that are organized by non-governmental organizations. But the need and wish for education becomes clearer when the women are asked for improvements of their personal situation. Often, the women (directly) declared that they wish a better education for their children, for the future, more than improvements in their own lives as the enhancement of their own political participation. With that the research is as where it started: an importance of education in these times of globalization - although the women themselves do not always notice the impact of that.

6.4 Social Networks and Capital

Fourth, the category of social networks and capital will be discussed to provide insights into the process of political participation. In chapter three it was argued that social networks play an important role in relation to political participation. The capital (resources) the social networks could deliver could give opportunities to participation. Communities of Practice were taken as an example of social networks but also as example of places where women can learn and develop themselves to enhance their capability of participating politically.

As discussed in chapter two Karnataka knows a tradition in self-help groups. From the fieldwork it can be concluded that these groups are scattered in the Northern part of the state as research participants from different areas had heard of Stree Shakti or Mahila Sangha Groups. Participation in these groups, result in a social network and with that social capital. Also, it serves as a community of practice as all members together seemed to develop the loan system by which money is collected and loans are provided. So, a member's (woman's) knowledge and skills are being developed. The money (loans) can be used for other kinds of participation as community work. For that, these groups have an enlarging effect on the political participation of women, but also have a positive effect on other domains than the political as the social and economic.

Besides that women are part of women's groups, women are also part of other social groups. To judge the groups or the members of these groups as strong or weak relations it seemed that the number of meetings was not appropriate as was argued in the framework. In addition, the place where women would meet their strong ties is not restricted to "one place" as was suggested by Cornwall (2004), stating that strong ties were members of the same family and close friends. Younger women could meet their close friends in more places than only in their own community as in school. Older women would mostly meet with women from the same caste and religious community though they could meet also outside their own neighborhood, for example in the neighborhood of their parents. Further, it appeared that life course events could change the amount of social capital.

Although the widths of the networks have been explored more qualitative research has to be done to be able to get more insight into the mutual meaning of the social networks. Also, this may provide more information about the meaning of the social network for women in regard to their political participation, but more in respect to other kinds of participation and domains which are closely related to political participation to get a completer understanding of the meaning of social networks.

Further, as this study was qualitative in nature, this study explored the meaning of social capital and social networks. However, quantitative research including a social network analysis should be conducted to get a better picture of the political participation of women, and the exact depth and extent of the mutual relations between participation and the social networks of women.

6.5 Places and Spaces of Female Participation

This paragraph discusses women's physical and social context to give insights into the reason for political participation in addition to the previous three paragraphs.

Participation and the Physical Context

In chapter three not only political participation has been conceptualized but also an approach of situated learning was developed in this regards. As was stated there, in situated learning the social and the contextual is emphasized. Apparently, for the women in Karnataka this approach was applicable as social and contextual aspects of participation were revealed from the data. Chapter five showed that in regard to political participation besides the social also the physical plays a role. In regard to the physical context, chapter two described that women are mostly confined to their tasks inside the house. Consequently, women's lives are mainly situated inside their home. This definition of a woman's place and space appears to be narrow in contrast to the results of this study. Those showed indeed that the life of urban and rural, Muslim and Hindu women are foremost related to the home as these women have to take care for the house. However, women's (political) lives are also located in the close surroundings of the home, as the street and the house of the neighbors, outside the home but in the close area - the neighborhood or the village - and moreover the space of the lower-educated women appeared to include specific public spaces as well - as poll booths and squares in the local area.

Participation and the Social Context

In addition to this physical understanding of a woman's place and space, a woman's place and space can also be defined socially. Chapter three mentioned already that Communities of Practice are places in which women could learn as women would learn well in a social environment. Paragraph 5.2 showed the importance of different social groups regarding the political participation of women. Actors that could influence - positively and/or negatively - the women according to the results were part of the following social groups: the family, the street (neighbors, friends), the neighborhood/the village and women's groups (Stree Shakti Groups or Mahila Sangha Groups - Self Help Groups). These social groups could be retrieved in all different social political activities mentioned in paragraph 5.7.

Consequently, Karnataka women could be part of different - smaller and larger - social and physical spaces at the same time. For that, it is concluded that women are always part of a certain social group and in a certain context. Moreover, it shows that this specific educational approach is suitable for an analysis in a geographical study.

Moreover, it can be concluded that women in Karnataka are part of different social and physical places and spaces, at different levels; the larger level of the social context and the more direct level of the direct surrounding. For that, the concept of situated learning can not only be described as learning in a specific social group and context but as learning that can occur - at the same time - at different levels, in different larger or smaller spaces and places, and in regard to different domains. This means that, learning (and participation) could occur at one or more levels, in one or more spaces and places, and in regard to one or more domains (see also the previous chapter). So, participation is always bound to a certain level, to a certain place, to a certain space and to a certain domain. Though the political participation was described earlier as a multi-dimensional concept including the different domains and levels, the concepts of social and physical place and space were not included yet. For that, it can be concluded that for a full understanding of female political

participation the concepts of social and physical place and space should also be taken into consideration.

Additionally, it is recommended to explore the proposed conceptual changes to see what other dimensions or aspects of political participation have been lacking in the exploration of the political participation of women in India.

6.6 Social Context

In addition to paragraph 6.2 to 6.5 this paragraph will discuss the last category that plays a role in the process towards women's political participation. The social context has already been touched upon in the previous paragraphs and so only some last conclusions will be drawn here.

The situation of women as described in chapter two and three are mainly in line with the results. The life of women is largely situated inside the home and regards all duties in and around the home. Some women are concerned with a 'double burden' (see chapter two) and have besides their duties inside the house also a job outside the house. Here, a geographical difference could be noticed as women in urban areas are working in shops and sometimes rural women are working at the field of their family.

As was noted earlier, women's lives are importantly influenced by family members and only small decisions can be made. Largely, women have to follow the decision making of her husband or another often male family member. Over age changes seem to occur; though younger women would have no decision making capacity at all, older women could eventually become the head of the family and with that get (full) decision making capacity and a larger 'political' position. In relation to these age differences it appeared that some women who were not participating in political activities as community work, party meetings and Stree Shakti groups, seem to have a positive political role model as their mother (in law) was.

In regard to the legal regulations age seem to be important as well. Regulations give all people the opportunity to participate politically, either voting or participating in a Panchayat. Though the age of 18 and have proof of identity is required. Women who do not fulfill the requirements cannot participate in the formal political domain.

In addition, there are legal regulations applicable to the economic situation of lower-educated women. In that respect the ration card was mentioned.

In chapter two caste and religion were mentioned in regard to identity. Both were described as important features of identity, but also as important features of Indian society. Especially, in regard to the political mobilization of people both features were seen as important for grouping people. The results of this thesis show that caste and religion were also of importance for grouping. However, grouping was noted in regard to social and spatial ordering, rather than for political ordering. Caste and religion seemed to socially and spatially group and order communities. On the other hand, caste and religion seemed to play a role for mobilizing people to vote. But urban women seemed to be more attracted to class mobilizations; these women often noted that they were poor, poor people. Because of that, and because the Congress people promises to take care of the poor people, women voted for that party. Additionally, differences related to caste and religion seemed to be caused by age or development in time; as older women foremost living inside the house had social relations of the same caste and religion, younger women who were going to school also had friends with a different caste and religion.

Further, the results showed that the different domains - as the political and the social, but also different categories - as the social and the physical - were closely intertwined. This seemed to be suggested by the definition and relations of social

capital in the third chapter (see for example Bryson, 2007 and Vianello *et al*., 1990 - see also the following section The Political and Other Domains in paragraph 6.7).

To conclude, it can be stated that the context as described in the framework is largely supported by this research though there are some differences. Regarding women's tasks outside the house there seem to be difference in duties which seem to be caused by the urban/rural divide. Further, not all women live a much oppressed life. Some women can make (more) decisions. Differences in regard to decision making seem to be there related to the age of women. This is also a differentiating factor as it comes to legal political and economic regulations. Also, age seem to differentiate as it comes to caste and religion. Caste and religion both are used to order people socially and spatially. Though older women seem to live by that order, younger women seem to cross that order and have friends of all groups. More, political mobilization is not done using caste and religion hierarchy, but more to class hierarchy. Last, the results show a close intertwining of different domains which was only suggested in the framework.

Finally, some recommendations regarding the social context can be noted. Though the third chapter argued that caste and religion could be differentiating categories the results did not show differences regarding different activities. However, as it was suggested in the framework, religion and caste can be important categories for political mobilization. For that, it is recommended to explore more religious or caste based activities to explore whether women from different caste and/or religions participate in different activities related to their religion and/or caste. Moreover, it is important to investigate the participation in these kinds of activities to see whether, how and in what kind of way an aspect of identity could influence the (process of) political participation.

6.7 Political Participation, Learning and Other Changes

After discussing women's political participation and the reason for that participation or how women's participation develops, this paragraph presents an answer to the question how political participation can be improved. For that, improvements, the relation between the political domain and other domains and the approach of participation as learning will be addressed.

<u>Improving Political Participation</u>

The kind and level of participation politically can lead to desires for change. The results showed that women had wishes for change in relation to nearly all categories. As the previous chapter showed improvements regard especially the development of women's children, more than it regarded the wish for improvement of their educational level. In both regards, women are aware of the role education plays to be able to get a job. More in general, it appears that women feel happy in their situation and are more concerned with the well-being and development of their children, and other family and community members, than their own development. So, the situation of communities is important regarding women's happiness. Women mentioned the provision of basic necessities and facilities, and adjusting legal regulations to improve situation of the poor people.

The improvements for the economic situation crosses the improvements for the direct physical surrounding as most changes were addressed in both regards. This suggests that the economic situation and the physical surrounding of women are closely related to each other.

In regard to the social context an age difference was noted in the mentioned changes: especially younger women argued that their level of education was more important to them than their marital status which resulted in family struggles. Older

women addressed more the wish for a job outside the house - but also longed for more education - which also resulted in struggles of women to act according to their (foremost) husband's permission. However, both groups of women seem to be hindered by family members who endorse society's gender roles. This is also an issue for some women regarding their participation.

So, removing boundaries in regard to the different categories of women's participation would enhance the participation of women. Moreover, it is shown that realizing the wishes for education, jobs, facilities, regulations, not only improves the well-being of women. More, realizing women's wishes for change would improve the well-being of the whole community. This supports the statement of Tesoriero (2006) who already stated that female participation and community development are closely intertwined. Above that, not only the political sphere in relation to women's well-being will be improved but also other spheres. The following section will address that conclusion more.

The Political and Other Domains

From the results it did not only appear that one kind of participation could foster another kind of participation as participation in women's groups could support community work, and participation in party meetings could support the act of voting. Also, political participation could improve the economic situation of women or enlarge women's knowledge. This shows that political participation has an effect on participation itself but also on categories earlier in the process which can be represented in a conceptual model by feedback loops.

But the results do not only support the feedback loops in relation to political participation as suggested by Milbrath and Goel (1982) and Lave and Wenger (1991) which makes political participation a process of development. The results show that political participation is related to other domains than the political as well. The examples here show that the participation is - among others - also related to domains as health and economics (see also chapter five). This means that political participation cannot only enhance participation and the process towards but also can affect other kinds of participation as economic participation - as loans for example cannot only be used to build houses as the results showed for example, but also to set up little shops as was already mentioned in chapter two. But political participation also can contribute to a woman's awareness about her own situation - as party meetings can bring information about a woman's health by which women could get more awareness about the risks in relation to her own health (see also paragraph 5.7)[30].

So, the concept and category of political participation is not only an end, but more, it is a means to other concepts and means. Consequently, it is a concept that is not only valuable to study to get a full understanding of that kind of participation or behavior but also to get a full understanding of other kinds of participation or behavior.

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[30] Working towards a revised model of political participation, it should be remarked that the conclusions of the effects of political participation on other categories in the process of political participation and on other domains than the political both will be represented by the feedback loops. Though the influence of political participation on other domains can foster other kinds of participation - as health and economic participation - which do not have to influence political participation in turn the other categories in the process of political participation can also vary from no influence to a large influence on political participation depending on the person as the results in chapter five also show by the wide in possibilities of the categories.

<u>Participation as Learning</u>

The approach of situated learning appears to be applicable as different kinds of participation - that are taking place in a certain social group and certain context - can be ways of learning. Chapter three proposed to understand women's groups (self-help groups) as Communities of Practice. Participating in a Stree Shakti group, for example, is understood as a form of political participation as women influence decision making processes (see also chapter two and three). By participating in political activities women enlarge their knowledge and increase their skills. As seen in chapter five, knowledge can be enhanced in regard to topics as politics and health. Skills can be enlarged related to accounting and leadership (see chapter two and three) but also to problem solving (see chapter five).

6.8 Karnataka and India

Overall, the political participation of woman in Northern Karnataka seems to be very diverse and not (only) to be non-participative or low as was suggested that it could be in the framework. Nevertheless, the conclusions above show that the process towards participation is hindered in different ways - by their social context, by their family members but also by a lack of education. Not only did these hindrances appear from the results, but more women addressed directly these and other issues to be improved.

In the beginning of this report it was argued that the state Karnataka knows good practices and so can be seen as a state that works constructively in regard to poverty alleviation and women's participation (see paragraphs 2.2 and 3.9). For that, the situation of female political participation in northern Karnataka can be described as a learning process with the conclusions above as guide lines for further development and exploration of female political participation. Moreover, as Karnataka was stated to be one of the 'better' states as it comes to female participation, it can only be concluded other states might have a longer road towards development.

6.9 Inductive Model

With the results and conclusions described above, an inductive model can be designed for the political participation of lower-educated Hindu and Muslim women from urban and rural areas in Northern Karnataka (see below).

[Figure 6.1 The inductive model for the process of political participation of lower-educated Hindu and Muslim women in Northern Karnataka, India]

6.10 Methodological Reflections

This research focuses on the perceptions of women concerning their political participation. Immediately, this has restricted the investigation concerning political participation as it did not take the perceptions of men, as male family members, into account and would "thereby helping to keep alive many stereotypes about gender differences" (Vianello *et al.*, 1990, p. 240). This is supported by the fundamental assumption that "men are different, even opposite to, women" and "the human world is made up of two separate sub-worlds" (Vianello *et al.*, 1990, p. 240). Although this is a commonly accepted perception (Vianello *et al.*, 1990), from the conceptualization and characterization of political participation it should be clear that this view is not supported by this research. Moreover, it was assumed that as the different spheres in life are closely interconnected so do the domains in life. As was stated in the beginning, this research is explorative in nature regarding the political participation of lower-educated women in Karnataka. For that, it is recommended to explore the case further by exploring the perceptions of men regarding female, but also in regard to their own political participation.

Further, the political participation of urban and rural women was explored in this study. To find research participants for the in-depth interviews the help of research assistants was asked. The assistants helped to search and identify possible research participants. As the research assistants worked at different places, participants could be recruited that were living either in a rural or an urban area. Though, it seemed that enough participants were recruited to reach a high level of saturation, the level of saturation could be possibly been higher if the places of recruitment were extended so a wider variety of participants could have been recruited and participated in the research.

Another limitation of this study is the level of languages spoken by the researcher as well as by the translators. Various languages were spoken by the participants, such as Kannada, (Konkani) Urdu, Marathi, Hindi and other local languages. As the researcher's level of the (local) languages was nil research assistants were asked to translate. However, as some research participants spoke a dialect almost unknown to the translators it was sometimes not that easy to understand the participant. This could have caused misinterpretations by the assistant or weaknesses in the answers of the interviewees which probably has influenced the results of this study. For that reason, it is recommended to explore the female political participation further with more translators or local researchers.

Though the cooperation with research assistants was a necessity it had some effects on the data collection. Sometimes the assistant helped interpreting the interviewees' answers as the researcher was not very acquainted with the local culture. Moreover, occasionally, the assistants helped the interviewees with answering questions by helping counting and calculating ages, incomes, and amounts of (close) friends. As the counting and calculations were sometimes done only in the local language and sometimes the calculating of the interviewee was not completely understood by the assistant, misinterpretations by the assistant or weaknesses in the answers of the interviewees could have influenced the results. For that reason, as in the previous section, it is recommended to explore the female participation further with local researchers or more translators.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Interview Guide

Hello, I am student of the University of Groningen in the Netherlands, Europe and I am 24 years old. I would like to get to know more about the participation of women in politics in India, especially Karnataka. May I ask you some questions? It will take about 50 minutes.

Oral consent
I would like to ask you to participate in the interview. Also I would like your permission for the interview and taping the interview. The whole interview is completely confidential and will only be used by me for study/research purposes. You can stop the interview at all times and it is always possible to leave a question open or unanswered. Do you agree to participate and to record the interview?

Introduction-Larger Environment/Life Position Factors/Social Capital
Can you tell me something about yourself?
- Probes: age, religion, caste, family, education, profession

Can you tell me about your family?
- Probes: marriage, age family members, education family members, profession family members

Can you tell me about your living situation?
- Probes: With whom are you living in this house? How many years are you living here? And before?

What are the different responsibilities of each family member?
- Probes: Who is the head of the family? Who is taking decisions inside the house? Who is taking decisions outside the house? What is your role within the family?

Can you tell me about the financial situation of the family?
- Probes: monthly/yearly income, taxes, house

Can you tell me about your friends?
- Probes: amount, caste, religion, close friends

Immediate Environment/Personal System
Can you describe your interest in and connection with politics for me?
- Probes: Are you interested in politics and public affairs?

What knowledge do you have about politics?
- Probes: parties, elections, party preference, candidate preference, party identification

Different kinds of Political Participation
How do you feel about elections?
- Probes: observations elections, voting power, voting last election, party last elections, reasons voting, political chat

How do you feel about people who are talking about politics?
- Probes: informing others, engagement in discussions, writing letters, support or protest messages

How do you feel about people who participate in political activities? How do you feel about women in politics ?
- Probes : Sonia Gandhi, personal participation, reasons participation

How do you feel about contacting officials?
- Probes: contact by yourself, contact by your family members, sort of problem

How do you feel about working for a party of helping with a campaign?
- Probes: party work, canvassing, attendance party meetings, financial support, membership party, candidacy party

How do you feel about demonstrations?
- Probes: personal participation, participation family members, reasons participation, kind of demonstration, reasons demonstration

How do you feel about people who work on community problems?
- Probes: personal work, kind of problem, kind of help, persons helped, participation in group activities, organization of help, personal roles

Larger Environment
How is your involvement influenced by interferences?
- Probes: distance, place, weather

Improvement Immediate Environment/ Life Position Factors
Would you like to change something about this situation?
- Probes: determinants personal situation, kind of change, reasons change

Closing-Improvement Larger Environment
Do you love your country?
- Probes: Why? Why not?

I have asked all the questions I had. Would you like to add something? Or would you like to make a comment?

Thank you for very much for your time!

Appendix 2 Observation Guide

Election day- observations of the city of Dharwad
- Description of advertisements and posters
- Description of people on the streets (situation on the streets)
- Description of the behavior of people

Election day- observations of a poll booth
- Description of advertisements and posters
- Description of people at the poll booth
- Description of the behavior of people
- Description of the polling booth itself

Visiting Hour Nurse
- Description of the place of the meeting, including the organization of the room
- Description of the people
- Description of the behavior of the people
- Description of the planning of the visitation of the nurse

Stree Shakti Shakti Group Meetings
- Description of the place of the meeting
- Description of the planning of the meeting
- Description of the behavior of the people
- Description of the leadership of the group
- Description of the social structure within the group

Overview of the observations

Subject of observation	Place	Date
Election Day	Dharwad city	22 May
Election Day at a poll booth	Kannada Medium Primary School at the Campus of the Karnatak University	22 May
Visiting Hour Nurse	Urdu Nursery School in the neighborhood Jamia	28 May
Stree Shakti Group Meeting	General shop of a member, in the neighborhood Jamia	29 May
Stree Shakti Group Meeting	Urdu Nursery School in the neighborhood Jamia	5 June

Appendix 3 Code System

Code System					
	caste				
		before street same castes			
		one street mixed castes			
		reason mixed street			
			allotted plots		
			people moving		
		usually one street same caste			
		reproductive			
	children family				
		age C			
		amount C			
		education C			
			proud edu children		
			different edu wishes		
			edu level C		
			reason low edu		
				no money	
		expiration cause			
			chicken pox		
		marriage			
			not married		
			married		
		reason amount C			
			infertility		
			consequence infertility		
				no children means free	
	children situation				
		no freedom for children			
		no higher edu			
	close friends				

		person CF			
			only husband		
			cousin		
			neighbors		
		age CF			
			same age		
		amount CF			
		caste CF			
			other caste		
			same caste		
		place CF			
			mixed street		
			same house		
			same street		
		place chat			
			mobile contact		
			college		
			outside the house		
			while purchasing		
			not in house		
		reason times meeting CF			
			not interested in going outside		
			reason delivery		
		religion CF			
			different religion		
			religion same		
		times meet CF			
			CF whenever time		
			CF weekly few times		
			CF weekly SSG		
			CF during festivals		
			CF daily		
		topics chat CF			
			personal		
				breakfast	
				cooking	
				work	

				studying	
				clothing	
				feelings	
				only my life	
				hobbies	
				movies	
				household activities	
			family		
				children	
				childrens education	
				family matters	
				family members	
				house problem	
				house	
				not much MIL	
				costs education	
			confidential matters		
			health conditions of neighbors		
			no/ don't know pol chat		
	contact politicians				
		means contact			
			through Panchayats		
		officials			
			reason no cont off		
				feels inferior	
				going directly	
			cont off		
			no cont off		
		reason no contact			
			male do female don't		
		topics asked			
			water problem		
			drainages		
	decision making				
		decision making husband			
			inside & outside H		

			outside house		
		decision making interviewee			
			ask permission MIL husb		
			financial things with H		
			taking part disc		
			not allowed by H		
			smaller decisions		
			purchasing clothes		
			in absence of mother in law		
			cooking and kitchen		
			health		
			inside house		
			not taking decisions		
		decision making MIL			
			helps FIL		
			no decisions		
			inside house		
		decision making younger brother			
			outside the house		
		feeling others			
			eldest brothers longing		
		most decisions			
			most dm mil& younger bro		
			most dm fil		
			most dm mil & husb		
			most dm I&husb		
			most dm husb		
			most dm m&f		
			most dm mil		
		reason dm younger brother			

			intelligence		
		reason HF≠DM			
			MIL old age		
			given authority to son		
	demonstration				
		no pres demon			
		not interested			
		reason no pres demon			
			living in the house		
			stitching clothes		
			doing householdwork		
		wants part demon			
	elections				
		election day			
			poll booth primary school		
				site	
					clean place
					no advertisements
					armed agents
				transportation voters	
					no vehicles at booth
					bicycle
					scooter
					motor
					riksha
					auto
					walking
				electric voting	
				voters	
					few women with burka
					few unmarried women
					married women

					women never come alone
					families come together
					children come along
					female voters
					male voters
				high turn-out	
			streets dharwad city		
				few people	
				no posters	
		how acquired know elec			
			know people canvassing		
		know elections			
			choose person		
			person looks after country		
			choose correct person		
			select candidate		
		knows process elections			
		observation elections			
			advertisement		
			announcing		
			anouncing at the riksha		
			candidates		
			announcements autorickshaw		
			canvassing people talk		
			family		
			hear other people		
			hearing		
			hears husband		
			leaders are coming		

			news		
			news paper		
			no observations		
			pamflets		
			pictures		
			postering		
			radio		
			television		
			telling husband		
			voters listers are coming		
		observation parties			
			judge the person		
				what they have done for the villagers		
		reason no observations elections			
			delivering		
	family knowledge				
		children answer parties			
		fa general children			
		parents tell son			
		son answers income			
		son hears parents			
		son knows english			
	family others				
		amount siblings			
		different house			
		marital status siblings			
			unmarried brother		
			married sister		
			all married		
		place siblings			
	friends				
		amount friends			
		caste friends			
			other caste		
			same caste		
		place friends			

			same street			
		reason amount friends				
			moving			
			deceased			
		religion friends				
			muslim religion			
			same religion			
	head fam					
		interviewee & husb				
		auntie				
		brother younger				
		brother elder				
		both in laws				
		father in law				
		mother in law				
		husband				
	health facilities					
		nurse visiting neighborhood				
			injections given			
				injections administration		
					noted administration mothers	
					noted administration nurse	
				mothers can ask questions		
				injections permission needed		
					husband	
					mother in law	
				children are injected		
				pregnant women are injected		
			visitors			

			from neighboring neighborhoods		
			from this neighborhood		
			no young children allowed		
			pregnant women		
			babies		
			mother in law		
			mothers		
		two assistents			
	help local problems				
		help neigh others			
			same		
		help others			
			willing to help others		
			not helped others		
			illness		
			money for functions		
		helped CF			
			problems CF		
		helped fam			
			does help fam		
			giving money		
		helped neigh personally			
			illness		
			helped with functions		
			fighting neighbors		
			food		
			has helped		
			helped for marriage		
			helped with money		
			houseproblems		
			money money SSG		
			money to build a house		
			neigh also help		
			not helped neigh		

			not coming outside		
			cooking not help		
			mother helps		
			stay inside the house		
			could have helped		
				money	
			just moved		
			parents help people		
		relationships			
		social work			
		take them to hospital			
		take them to the doctor			
		taking care children			
		wants to help			
		wants to help purpose			
			purpose children		
			purpose building house		
			purpose problems		
		wants to help ways			
			ways money		
		when incidents is happened			
	not helped local gen				
	worked with others				
		wants to help			
		elder members of the family go			
		not helped with others			
		money			
		cant work outside			
house					
	land				
	first rent house				
	paying taxes				

			taxes are being paid		
			who pays tax		
				paid for by owners	
				mother in law is paying	
		own house			
		rent house			
	husband				
		(sur)name H			
		age by difference			
		age H			
		edu level H			
		place work H			
			H Saudi Arabia		
			H Goa		
		profession H			
			H living in the house		
			H construction work		
			H carpenter business		
			H software engineer		
			org known H		
				Tata finance	
			H electrician		
			H agriculturarist		
			H general shop		
			H market bananashop		
			H clerk		
			H carpenter		
			H agriculture		
	importance education				
	income				
		purpose money			
			house		
			problems		
		in account			

		total income month			
			total don't know		
			husbands share		
			family		
	interest politics				
		not liking pol			
			no good name		
		reason not interested			
			no time		
				hectic household activity	
		topics interest			
			political leaders		
			work of the politicians		
			party BJP		
			developmental issues		
			elections		
		reason interest			
			not answering		
			improvement women		
		not interested			
		interested			
	job				
		job children			
			wants to give job		
				give better job son	
					better for family
				give permission daughters	
					give daughters choice
		job mother IL			
			servant job		
		job brother			
			building houses		
			Panchayat member		
			agriculture		

			college student		
			plumper		
			driving auto riksha		
		job father IL			
			builds houses		
			place job FIL		
			carpenter		
		job interviewee			
			reason no job outside		
				little children	
				fam not ready	
				look after the children	
				husband no necessity	
			homejob		
			wants job		
			wants what job		
				I nursery teacher	
				I servant	
			reason this job		
				not educated	
	living situation house				
		age housemates			
		edu housemates			
		house MIL			
		joint fam			
		nuclear fam			
		number housemates			
		pers housemates			
		place house			
		place land			
		place tenant			
			backside		
		size house			
		size land			
		years pres house			
	living situation personal				
		change situation			

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		cs husband			
			different job H		
				job nearby	
				general store business	
			improve job H		
		improve her house			
		cs facilities			
			sanatation		
			electricity system		
			health provision		
				lack evening transportation	
				primary health center	
					longer doctors available
		cs personal			
			no change personal		
				discusses problems with husband	
			higher edu		
			she wants her freedom		
			improve job		
			get job outside		
			wants to be teacher		
		cs children			
			will give permission job		
			job for children		
				daughter doctor	
				son computer engineer	
				daughter teacher	
			computer study		
			teach the girls		
			higher edu children		
			edu children		
			only the children		
			good job children		

				development children	
				children become teacher	
				improve language skills children	
			religious role		
				god will help	
			eradicate poverty		
		living situation neigh			
			relation others		
				related	
			different neighborhood		
			no change sit		
		living inside the house			
		satisfaction situation			
			reason feeling sad		
				edu grand children	
			feeling sad		
			reasons not satisfied		
				not happy fighting	
			reasons satisfied		
				neighborhood is good	
				rs family	
					brothers are nice
					family
					support one another
				rs PIL	
					loves MIL
				rs personal	
					no job outside
					happy pers edu
					all are protecting her
				rs children	
					grand children
					childrens are also happy

					childrens edu	
						pretty good school
				rs husband		
					sat husb work	
					sat husb edu	
					happy with husband	
			not satisfied			
			satisfied			
	living situation previous					
		age by difference PLS				
		age housemates				
		edu level housemates				
		head fam PLS				
			MIL			
		house PLS				
		number housemates				
		pers housemates				
		place PLS				
		same religion				
	love country					
		country knowledge				
			no know other countries			
			no country knowledge			
			reason no country knowledge			
				no tv		
			reason country knowledge			
			know state only			
		reason not love				
			people fight			
			village Kannada			
			religions fighting			
		change wanted				

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			freedom for women		
			improve the poor people		
		no change			
		reason love country			
			India		
				all the things	
				she was born here	
				she don't know any foreign country	
			Indian people		
				Indian people	
				adjusted with Indian people	
				all are friends	
				all families together	
				people fight not everywhere	
				peoples are living together	
				with all castes	
				with all religions	
			Indian culture		
				Indian culture	
				language	
				loves festival	
				our country is good culture	
				free country	
				we can talk	
				dresses	
			Local community		
				village is good	
				cleanliness neighborhood	
				can grow every crops here	
				community	

				can get all the things here	
		loves/likes country			
	marriage				
		diff persp marriage			
	parents IL				
		edu level PIL unknown			
		age PIL			
		reason death FIL			
			astma		
			fall not recovered		
			old age		
		daily life PIL			
			staying in the home only		
		existence PIL			
			mother is there father expired		
			alive PIL		
			expired PIL		
		struggles PIL			
			argument		
			delay marriage		
		relation PIL			
			living here sometimes		
			happy protective		
			personal reasons		
			living here		
			different house		
			happy		
		edu level PIL			
	parties				
		being candidate			
			no time		
				housework	
				houseproblems	
			not going outside		

			not able to be in politics			
			problems being candidate			
			feels impossibility			
			no interest			
			party PM			
			brother Panchayat member			
			party interest cand			
				BJP		
			interested			
			doesn't like			
			dont answer			
		knowledge parties				
			difference between parties gen			
				no know difference		
			how acquired know parties			
				know canvassing		
				know news		
				know television		
			difference jenta bsp others			
				jenta bsp new		
			difference Congress others			
				Congress older		
				Congress helping poor people		
				Congress perfect		
			amount parties			
				2 parties		
				3 parties		
				4 parties		
			difference Congress BJP			

				BJP SC more opportunities		
				Congress muslims more opportunities		
				congres helps poor people		
				Congress helps problems		
				Congress helps		
					BJP high prices	
					low prices	
				Congress for poor people		
			differences BJP Congress JDS			
				don't know		
			names parties			
				name BSP		
				name JDS		
				name Congress		
				name BJP		
		more parties				
			reason enough parties			
				hard to judge		
				otherwise too difficult choice		
			enough parties			
			can't answer			
		party meeting				
			pres PM			
				candidates give papers		
				candidates ask questions		
				we vote for you		
				not asking questions		
				agree with candidates		
				talking together inside		
				no pres house MIL		

					ask questions	
					listen at square	
				presence house MIL		
					confrontation MIL	
					listen from inside	
			know party meetings			
				place PM		
					square	
			no pres PM			
			topic meeting			
				HIV test		
			meeting candidate			
		party work				
			reason no party work			
				no need to campaign		
				no time		
				not interested		
			no money given			
			PW canvassing			
				asking friends		
				asking neighbors		
			no party work			
		party work H				
			no money given H			
		preference party				
			second to congres			
			BJP			
			no preference			
			Congress			
		reason pref party				
			other parties help rich			
			women's education			
			providing house plots			
			mother Indira Gandhi pension			

			gen help		
			the family members all they voting for Congress		
			help poor people		
	personal				
		education			
			kind of school		
				private training	
				Kannada Medium	
			reason edu level I		
				eco problem	
			no edu		
			edu level		
		profession daily life			
			worked in tobacco		
			selling flowers		
			working business H		
			shop selling rice		
			professional training		
				certificate	
				content training	
					Rajastan people designs
				course in JSS college	
			workschedule		
			amount time profession		
			earnings profession		
			stitching clothes		
			agriculture		
			housewife/live in the house		
		language problem english			
		marriage			
			feels under pressure		

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			years		
			unmarried		
			married		
		caste			
		religion			
		age			
		(sur)name			
	place broth				
		different place			
		living joint			
		living outside			
	place interview				
		hospital			
		neighborhood			
	political talk				
		pol talk school			
			no pol chat school		
		pol chat FIL			
			topics pol chat FIL		
				elections	
			pol talk FIL		
		pol chat MIL			
			topics pol chat MIL		
				elections	
			pol talk MIL		
		pol chat neigh			
			topics pol chat neigh		
				elections	
			pol talk neighbors		
		pol talk children			
			topics pol chat children		
				political parties	
				political leaders	
				politics	
			pol chat childrens		
		pol talk time			
			during study time		

		during election time			
	pol chat others				
		no pol chat others			
	part disc				
		wants part			
		reason no part disc			
			not voted		
			no voting power identity		
		mother part			
		no part disc			
	pol chat CF				
		topics pol chat friends			
			elections		
			parties		
			political leaders		
		pol chat friends			
		no pol chat CF			
	pol chat family				
		pol chat mainly sisters			
		topic pol chat fam			
			we have to go		
			election		
		pol chat fam			
		no pol chat fam			
	pol chat gen				
		reason no political chat			
			men discuss politics		
		could			
		no pol chat gen			
	pol chat husb				
		topics pol chat husb			
			elections		
		pol talk husband			
		no pol chat husb			
	pol chat place				
		outside house			

			inside house		
		pol chat topics			
			election talk		
	religion				
		muslim			
			women not speak with men		
	research experiences				
	Stree Shakti Groups				
		knowl MS			
			amount members		
			MS development process		
				MS running unknown	
				MS ending unknown	
				MS start group	
				MS start members ready	
				MS start with naming	
				MS no new members inbetween	
			MS not much know		
				recently became member	
			MS membership		
			MS what work		
		MS			
			not taken loans		
				no long enough membership	
			sangha member		
			not heard of		
			not a member		
			has heard of		
		SSG			
			wants improve women		
			SSG CF		
			heard of		
				has heard of	

				doesn't know		
				not heard of		
			no membership			
				SSG never visited		
				no part liked		
				not interested		
				not a member		
				reason not a member		
					no time for attending	
					no voting identity card	
					identity card is not there	
			membership			
				together with her sister		
				membership period		
				member herself		
				wants to be member		
				reason becoming member		
				reasons wants to be member		
			knowl SSG			
				SSG duration leadership		
				SSG leadership tasks		
					watching the money	
				SSG rotating leadership		
				SSG administration		
				SSG all responsible		
				SSG place meetings		
					SSG place shop	
					SSG place village	
					SSG place school	
				SSG amount members		
				SSG amount groups		
				SSG decide together goal		

			SSG members religion		
				SSG rel all same	
				SSG rel muslim	
			SSG members caste		
				SSG caste all same	
				SSG caste muslim	
			SSG purpose		
			SSG membership		
			SSG meetings		
			SSG what work		
			SSG visited		
		know members			
			auntie member		
			co-sister member		
			mother member		
tasks					
	free time				
		activities			
			watching television alone		
			stitching clothes		
			watching series		
		side effect free activities			
			watching news		
	feelings tasks				
		no time for politics			
		very busy life			
		hectic household			
	reason these tasks				
		no children so free			
	most important tasks I				
		cooking			
		washing clothes			
		taking care children			
	tasks MIL				
		taking care children			
	tasks sister				
	personal role/ tasks				

			inside the house		
				cleaning utensils	
				doing the work	
					cleaning
					housework
					cooking
				help children study	
				helping mother	
				household activities	
				in charge over daughters	
				looking for the children	
				protecting the house	
				solving problems	
				studying	
				tayloring	
				washing clothes	
			outside the house		
				fieldwork	
				help H shop	
		pers is joint housework			
	voting behaviour				
		decision voting party			
			personal decision		
				own decision	
				husb doesnt decide	
			family decision		
				all family members together	
				her husband	
				everyone in her house votes Congress	
			community decision		
				village leaders	
				guided to vote	
				the entire village together	
		going voting			
			not voting		

			voting		
		how decided voting party			
			good party poor people		
			what good work		
			judging parties		
			review past experience		
				actions government	
				type of government	
			decide symbol		
			review past politics		
		place poll booth			
			neighb school		
		reason not voting			
			no id card		
			no voting list		
			no voting power		
		reason voting			
			rights		
				right of voting	
			regulations		
				voter identity card	
				voting card	
				identity card	
				voting power	
				ration card	
			interest to put vote		
			no obligation		
			obligation		
			compulsory		
			little work		
			duty		
			one more vote is important		
			told to		
				village leaders	
		times voting			
		voting first time			

			party first time			
		voting H				
			party H			
				didn't ask		
		voting interferences				
			call us			
			distance			
				solution large distance		
					travel by bus	
					bike	
					go with a riksha	
				no distance interference		
			weather			
				solution bad weather		
					umbrella	
				no weather interference		
			place			
				no place interference		
		voting last elections				
			reason party future			
				fam votes Congress		
				Congress helps us poor		
			no voted party name			
			reason no Congress			
				no good work		
			party future			
				Congress		
			reason not voted			
				no id card		
			not voted			
			reason party choice			
				Congress gives facilities		
				Congress all family does		
				Congress good poor people		
				Congress low prices		
				BSP newly come		

				BJP working sincerely	
			party last elections		
				last elec Congress	
				last elec BJP	
		voting party			
			always same party		
			different parties		
	wom in pol				
		children in pol			
			does not like		
				have to study	
			no recognition		
			no peaceful life		
			not willing sending children		
		Indira Gandhi			
			knowing IG		
			characteristics		
				for the poor people	
				did well for her country	
		know women pol			
		like wom in pol			
		male better than women			
			decision making capacity		
			male bounded society		
			women not night secure		
			more brave		
			male can do more		
		not necessary			
		self in pol			
			no self nieces can		
			no self part		
		should be there			
		sonia gandhi			
			likes sonia		
			wants to meet her		

				language problem		
				to ask about problems		
			characteristics			
				SG good person		
					great because pol	
					great personality	
					great person	
					kind	
					good work	
					good for our country	
					good	
					best person for Congress leader	
				SG helps		
					helps the women	
					doing social work	
					helps the poor	
				SG distance		
					far away	
					cannot compare ourselves	
			knowing			
				don't know		
				know sonia		
			voting for sonia			
		sonia self comparing				
			not answering			
			comparing feeling			
				cannot compare		
					has not studied	
				not thought of		
				not able to do anything		
				household activities		
				reason no chance		
					responsibilities	
					no permission husband	
				no chance		

				we are the poor		
			comparing doing			
				educating people		
					education	
					education children	
					education of the women	
					edu for all people that are not educated	
					school education	
				jobs		
					give women jobs	
					jobs children	
				food		
					giving poor food	
				facilities		
					water facilities	
					water tank	
					providing clothes	
					providing houses	
					develop other facilities	
				general community work		
					work for the country	
					social work	
					help poor people	
					improve the country	
					improve women	
					poor women	
					providing some money	
				save country enemies		
				ambitious		
		why wom in pol				
			situation women			

				more freedom for women	
				women can ask women	
				can help women	
				improve the women	
				problems of the womens	
				improve the womens freedom	
			children		
			situation country		
				improve the country	
				better education	
				better jobs	
				religion problem	
				better knowledge	
			no help from men		
			good		
			don't know		
		why women not part			
			not able to judge		
				spare time	
		women can part			
			women equal men		
	women situation				
		working inside			
			women no time pol		
			women stay inside		
			womens living inside bored		
		working outside			
			women anything work		
			women working outside		
				good	
		women do not interfer			
		womans are not in freedom			