

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Hybrid governance and intersectional discrimination: An examination of women's experiences in South Africa

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Abstract

This research investigates the lived experiences of women in South Africa, focusing on the concept of hybrid governance and intersectional discrimination. Hybrid governance denotes a blend of modern and traditional governance structures that coexist in many post-colonial societies, including South Africa. Intersectional discrimination recognises that individuals face layers of discrimination simultaneously influenced by intersecting identities like race, gender, class, and ethnicity. This study utilised quantitative analysis and desktop research methods. The researchers employed theoretical and operational parameters to conduct a logistic regression analysis using data from the 2018/2019 Governance, Public Safety and Justice Survey (GPSJS) conducted by Statistics South Africa. The analysis aims to investigate how hybrid governance structures impact women's lives and the interconnectedness among forms of discrimination they encounter. The results shed light on the power dynamics, representation challenges, and discriminatory practices within the realm of hybrid governance. Women's experiences showcase how patriarchal norms,

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racial disparities, and socio-economic factors intersect to heighten discrimination levels and constrain women's autonomy. Additionally, the study emphasises the significance of recognising and addressing intersectionality as a framework for comprehending and responding to the multi-faceted challenges faced by women in South Africa.

KEYWORDS

hybrid governance, intersectional discrimination, perception, South Africa, women experience

Points for practitioners

- Practitioners should appreciate the cultural diversity in South Africa and respect the varying customs and practices that come with hybrid governance. They should understand that traditional governance structures can coexist with modern ones, but also ensure that these structures do not perpetuate discriminatory practices.
- Practitioners should understand that individuals may face multiple, intersecting forms of discrimination. They should therefore approach work with an intersectional lens, taking into account the ways in which factors like race, gender, and tribal affiliation can compound discrimination.
- Practitioners should encourage dialogue about discrimination within the communities in which they work. They should raise awareness about what constitutes discrimination and how individuals can report it.
- Practitioners should utilise available data to inform their work. They should regularly review and analyse data on discrimination to identify trends and patterns, and to inform strategies and interventions.

1 | INTRODUCTION

South Africa, a country with a deep history of institutionalised discrimination, has in recent decades embarked on a journey towards inclusivity, equality, and social justice (Van der Walddt et al., 2021; Van Dijk & Nkwana, 2021). However, despite significant progress, multiple layers of

intersectional discrimination continue to persist, particularly impacting women who are located at the crossroads of gender, race, class, and other identities (United Nations, 2015; Van Dijk & Nkwana, 2021).

There remains a significant gap in the level of economic, social, and political empowerment between all genders, but specifically between citizens identifying as female and male. Intersectionality adds a layer of complexity to this matter by taking into account how various aspects such as gender, race, class, and sexuality intersect to shape women's experiences. For example, Black women encounter intersecting forms of discrimination and marginalisation simultaneously which complicates efforts to address their unique needs and circumstances (Nkwana & Van Dijk, 2012; Van Dijk, 2015; Van Dijk & Moeng, 2011; Van Dijk & Nkwana, 2021).

Hybrid governance, which involves collaboration, among states, international organisations, businesses, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and other global entities, is suggested as a solution to address shortcomings commonly observed in traditional global governance systems. At the core of this approach are Hybrid Leadership Assemblies (HLAs) and Hybrid Leadership Councils (HLCs) designed to tackle pressing issues such as conservation, security measures, poverty alleviation, population growth management, and promoting gender equality. Supporters of this model contend that it promotes engagement and inclusivity by recognising and incorporating an array of actors and stakeholders in decision-making processes (Skelcher & Smith, 2015). While our analysis does not specifically focus on HLAs or HLCs, the emphasis on their influence and inherent qualities in addressing disparities holds relevance within our argument.

Although we recognise the potential of hybrid governance to promote gender equality and empower women, its influence on the diverse challenges faced by women in South Africa has not been thoroughly investigated. This study aims to address this gap by exploring how the principles and practices of hybrid governance intersect with the multi-faceted forms of discrimination faced by women in South Africa.

In particular, we ask how does hybrid governance influence the lived experiences of women in South Africa who navigate the interlocking systems of gender, race, and class discrimination? How do the principles of inclusivity and diverse stakeholder participation espoused by hybrid governance manifest in the South African context? And ultimately, can hybrid governance contribute to dismantling intersectional discrimination, or does it risk reproducing or exacerbating existing inequalities?

This study will contribute to the growing body of literature on hybrid governance and intersectionality, offering insights not only for academics, but also for policymakers, NGOs, and other stakeholders committed to advancing gender equality and social justice in South Africa and beyond.

The paper starts by discussing the problem of discrimination in South Africa and the concept of hybrid governance. Next, we will explore the theoretical framework that underpins hybrid governance, as well as the theory of intersectionality, and how it applies to the South African context. This will set the stage for the document analysis which would be triangulated with an empirical analysis, featuring original research to explore the lived experiences of South African women, specifically examining intersectional effects on women. The findings from the literature review and empirical study will then be discussed and interpreted, considering their implications for intersectional discrimination and gender equality in South Africa. Based on these insights, we will propose recommendations for how hybrid governance structures could be modified or implemented to better address intersectional discrimination and empower women. The paper will conclude with a summary of the key findings and reflections on the potential of hybrid governance to confront intersectional discrimination and enhance gender equality in South Africa. The references section will provide a list of all sources cited throughout the paper.

TABLE 1 Contrasting hybridity theories in public services.

	Theory 1: Governance theory	Theory 2: Institutional theory	Theory 3: Actor network theory	Theory 4: Identity perspectives
Focus	Understanding hybrid governance	Institutional dynamics of hybridity	Agency and processes in hybrid networks	Hybrid roles and identity
Manifestations	Governance modes and their shifts	Strategic organisation change and continuity	Hybridisation of risk management regime	Identity change within hybrid forms
Level of analysis	Social systems	Organisational fields, that is law	Practices, processes, and knowledge	Groups and individuals
Drivers of hybridity	Growth of post-NPM political values; 'wicked' social problems	Institutional contradictions and external pressures	Networks and actor networks: mobile ideas	Structural changes and managerial ideologies
Coherence or fragility	Debate about radical transition in governance modes or hybrid forms; how stable and effective	More empirical evidence of enduring hybrids and sedimented change than originally predicted	Fragile and ever shifting	Diversity of hybrids in terms of identity. More or less stable hybrid identities, depending on context

Abbreviation: NPM, New Public Management.

Source: Denis et al. (2015, p. 282).

2 | THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR HYBRID GOVERNANCE AND INTERSECTIONALITY

Hybridity in the government context has been used since the 1980s, and the various forms of governmental structuring, or rather organisational structuring, have been attributed to various interpretations of hybridity. Denis et al. (2015) argue that with New Public Management, various forms of civil society or the third sector involvement in specifically social service delivery have been institutionalised. Moreover, public policies have blurred the lines between public and private, which has led to the increase in public–private partnership—another form of hybridity (Broadbent et al., 2003). While Denis et al. (2015) contend that much of the hybridity scholarship focused on the macro organisational level, authors such as Frenkel and Shenav (2006) resist hybridisation specifically in multi-cultural settings as it reinforces systems, norms, and codes of conduct brought about by coercive power—as new colonisation of organisational systems.

In framing hybrid governance for this paper, recognition is given to the post-colonial context within which South Africa finds itself. Recognising the different interpretations of hybridity is important in order to determine its relevance and influence on intersectional gender relationships between women and the state. Denis et al. (2015) propose a typology through which the different approach to hybridity could be framed which is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 above illustrates that depending on the level of analysis (for instance), the theoretical position for arguing hybridity needs to consider its focus and manifestations. For the purpose of this paper, we position gender identity as influenced by specific structural factors which shape how gender inequality manifests. The theoretical framework for hybrid governance encompasses the understanding and analysis of governance systems that combine individual and structural elements. It acknowledges the coexistence of different forms of authority, decision-making processes, and institutional arrangements within a given society or state (Skelcher & Smith, 2015; Vakkuri et al., 2021).

Post-colonial nations often grapple with merging traditional governance structures rooted in indigenous practices, with modern systems shaped by colonial histories and global standards. This perspective acknowledges the mix of governance models, underlining the importance of understanding and navigating the dynamics between these systems. Legal pluralism, an approach in studying hybrid governance, highlights the presence of multiple legal and normative frameworks in a society. It recognises that formal state law and traditional laws can operate concurrently sometimes overlapping in their reach and impact (Bell, 2020; Berman, 2020). Emphasising the need to respect both state systems is crucial for ensuring justice and efficient governance. Recognising the coexistence of systems is particularly significant for women's experiences, within hybrid governance frameworks influenced by cultural dimensions (Brandsen & Karré, 2011; Skelcher & Smith, 2015).

In exploring hybrid governance, a crucial aspect to consider is the dynamics of power and authority negotiation. This framework acknowledges that various actors and institutions wield levels of influence, within governance realms. It underscores the significance of examining how power is allocated, contested, and utilised among stakeholders such as government entities, traditional leaders, NGOs, and local communities. The research also delves into how women's intersectional experiences of hybrid governance is influenced by power.

Moreover, the theoretical framework stresses the value of context assessments in understanding hybrid governance. It highlights that the structures and interactions of hybrid governance systems differ across nations, regions, and communities. Local histories, contexts, and political climates shape the formation and functioning of hybrid governance models while impacting their effectiveness and legitimacy (Vakkuri & Johnson, 2020).

The theoretical framework for hybrid governance provides a lens to understand the complex and multi-faceted nature of governance systems. It recognises the coexistence of traditional and modern elements, the interplay of different legal and normative systems, power relations, and the importance of context-specific analysis. This framework contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of governance and offers insights for policy and practice in post-colonial and post-conflict contexts (Bell, 2020). These considerations closely reflect how intersectionality is equally influenced by tensions between the contemporary and the customary, as explained below.

The intersectionality framework recognises that women's experiences are shaped by multiple social identities, such as race, gender, sexuality, class, and religion that intersect to shape experiences and opportunities. Before venturing into an understanding of intersectionality, the paper is aligned with the binary definition of gender, namely that gender manifests as male and female. While we acknowledge that the gender continuum expresses more genders than the binary interpretation, the data used in the analysis and discussion section do not differentiate gender along the continuum. This is a gap in the measurement of gender, as experienced and manifested in society today.

Intersectionality recognises that individuals experience privilege and oppression in complex and overlapping ways, and that these experiences are not easily captured by single categories or identities (Al-Faham et al., 2019). Intersectionality acknowledges that the barriers that limit the active participation of women in the economy are multi-dimensional and interlinked (Van der Waldt et al., 2021; Van Dijk & Nkwana, 2021). The key gender-specific obstacles, as related to the focus and research questions for this article, include the following:

1. Perception: Women are viewed as submissive, illiterate, and ignorant (Loubser, 2020, p. 12). Moreover, they are trapped by cultural, patriarchal, and traditional values that inform gender roles. Entrenched gender roles in low-income or transition countries prevent women from

- leaving their homes without permission and going to the market to partake in agricultural activities. The inability to actively participate in the market or make decisions results in women substantially lagging behind men as it relates to economic yields and earnings (Duckett, 2022).
2. Cultural limitation: The inability to own or control land limits women's capability to make decisions about the land which they tend. Moreover, it makes it challenging for women to enter into farming agreements that would result in higher earnings and a reliable source of income (Duckett, 2022). Yadav et al. (2021, p. 202) argue that women may own or control more land; however, without access to capital, technology, the market, training, and education, women may not have the capacity to manage and maintain the land. Velmurugan et al. (2020, p. 17) state that land is possibly the most important factor in agriculture because, without land, farming cannot take place. Velmurugan et al. (2020) argue that before factors such as finances and training can be addressed, the issue of land ought to take first precedence, as without it, women cannot participate in economic activities.
 3. Gender bias in the economic system: Women have limited access to credit, and Ganle et al. (2015, p. 335) point out that women do not own major assets, which is often the result of their lack of collateral which prevents them from borrowing money. The financial constraints entail that women are not able to afford the required productive resources. Often, they lack the required equipment and appropriate technology. The limited finances mean that women are less likely to purchase technology to adapt to climate and other environmental changes (George & Jacob, 2015, p. 226). The bias in the economic system limits women's borrowing capacity, thus limiting access to necessary tools. As a result, women continue with traditional farming techniques which are time-consuming and labour intensive (Amayo et al., 2021, p. 87). The afore-mentioned variables contribute to women generating income that is less than their male counterparts.
 4. Access to education and training: Women with a higher level of education tend to make more money and can better navigate other challenges such as land ownership, decision-making, and financial constraints. Furthermore, women who have access to training and have greater work experience are able to acquire more wealth, as they can identify risks and implement mitigation strategies well in advance. Women without education and training tend to have limited knowledge regarding the changes in the world of work. They are not able to effectively participate in decision-making processes, as they do not have knowledge about technological advancements (Thabethe & Uzodike, 2013).

Consideration needs to be given to the evolution of intersectionality since its introduction. While original intersections focused on race, gender, and class, the concept has been applied in both qualitative and quantitative studies. The key tenets of contemporary research on intersectionality are that (a) there is a recognition of people being shaped through simultaneous membership of multiple social categories (including gender, age, culture, geography, status, history), (b) this interaction occurs within a connected system where power is distributed among the structures, processes, and behaviours reinforcing inequality, and (c) these structural inequalities are the outcomes of the 'interconnected social categories, power relations, and contexts' (Scottish Government, 2022).

The study's incorporation of intersectionality offers an approach to enhancing the role of women in governance within South Africa. This method acknowledges the significance of grasping the nature of women's experiences and identities as well as the importance of creating tailored policies and initiatives to cater to diverse groups of women. Furthermore, it advocates for an inclusive approach to policy development that involves civil society organisations and community

members, drawing on their expertise to enhance policy outcomes. By integrating these principles into the study's framework, the research aims to cultivate a robust and enduring understanding of how intersectional women's experiences impact hybrid governance in South Africa.

2.1 | Existing research on hybrid governance and intersectionality in South Africa

One study carried out by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in South Africa revealed that governance plays a role in empowering women. This is especially evident through the adoption of gender policies and initiatives tailored to address the needs and obstacles faced by women across different communities. The study also emphasised the importance of involving women in decision-making processes and enhancing their ability to engage in governance as it can lead to gender equality and empowerment. The report advocated for a governance model that reflects a network of stakeholders and their diverse experiences (UNDP, 2020).

Additionally, research conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) highlighted the role that governments in South Africa play in advancing gender equality and empowering women. The study recommended that governments prioritise integrating gender perspectives into all policies and programs to encourage women's involvement in decision-making processes and establish mechanisms to address gender-based violence (HSRC, 2021).

Furthermore, a study conducted by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) focused on assessing the implementation of policies aimed at mainstreaming gender within government structures in South Africa. While progress has been made towards incorporating gender considerations into government policies, there remain gaps and challenges that require attention. There are challenges identified, such as resources and monitoring, as well as minimal involvement with the local community and civil society (SALGA, 2019). Drawing from the evidence presented in the studies, this article advocates for a blended form of governance that recognises the complex realities faced by women in South Africa.

In conclusion, traditional governance models (SALGA, 2019) that often prioritise customary laws and patriarchal traditions may not adequately address the specific needs and obstacles encountered by diverse women. On the other hand, contemporary governance frameworks that focus on gender mainstreaming and rights-based approaches (Van Dijk & Nkwana, 2021) may fall short in addressing the societal and cultural barriers faced by women. This research proposes that hybridity, the blending of different governance models and practices, can enhance the effectiveness of these responses by combining the strengths of different approaches (Boyle & Harris, 2009; Brandsen & Honingh, 2016; Brandsen & Karré, 2011; Brandsen et al., 2018; Mangai & De Vries, 2018, 2019a, 2019b; Osborne & Strokosch, 2013; Ostrom, 1996).

3 | METHODOLOGY

Our research approach in this study takes a look at hybrid governance and the different forms of discrimination experienced by women in South Africa. We combine document analysis with empirical investigation, using a method that blends qualitative and quantitative data to gain diverse insights. This enables us to develop an understanding of the subject matter. By employing this methodology, we uncovered the relationships between hybrid governance and various discriminatory practices offering a well-rounded view of women's experiences in South Africa.

The combination of these methodologies not only enhances the depth of our analysis, but also contributes significantly to the broader discourse on intersectionality and hybrid governance.

For our analysis, we utilised data from the 2018/2019 Governance, Public Safety, and Justice Survey (GPSJS) conducted by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) between April 2018 and March 2019. According to Stats SA (2019, p. 1), 'the GPSJS is a survey that gathers information through household interviews to address gaps in governance statistics, for effective planning and monitoring purposes. The GPSJS was conducted as an updated version of the long-running Victims of Crime Survey (VOCS) to include themes on governance. The engineering of the GPSJS retained many items from the Victims of Crime Survey (VOCS), and new content on governance was added'.

The questionnaire was structured in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals' international reporting standards for governance, public safety, and justice and is segmented into two main parts. Sections 1–3 focus on household crimes, with responses provided by a proxy, ideally the head or acting head of the household. Sections 4–9, on the other hand, concentrate on individual experiences of crime. For these sections, a household member aged 16 or older is chosen based on the proximity of their birthday to the survey date, a process known as the birthday section method.

The 2018/2019 GPSJS utilises the Master Sample of 2013 (MS 2013), a framework specifically created to serve as a general-purpose household survey template for all Stats SA household surveys. The design of MS 2013 incorporates a stratified two-stage process. In the first stage, primary sampling units (PSUs) are selected based on probability proportional to size (PPS) sampling. The second stage involves systematic sampling of dwelling units. Overall, the Master Sample contains 3324 PSUs, which are equally distributed among four rotation groups, with each group comprising 831 PSUs.

3.1 | Empirical analysis

Central to our approach is the 'between-groups design', which facilitates an interaction relationship of the outcome variable (gender: women vs. men) across at least 14 distinct groups. This design enables a detailed examination of various intersecting factors such as disability, race, and religion, comparing experiences between women and men within these categories (refer to Table 5). This interaction is crucial in understanding the multi-faceted nature of discrimination across different demographic and social lines.

This study used the logistic regression analysis and standardised estimates on the dependent variable which is the female gender to arrive at the results of the study. The logistic regression tested the relationship between the female gender variable and various intersectional variables.

The logistic regression equation is depicted as

$$Y = \frac{e^{(b_0 + b_1X)}}{1 + e^{(b_0 + b_1X)}}$$

where Y represents the response, outcome, or dependent variable that is used in this study is the female gender; X represents all of the predictors in the model, b_0 represents the intercept, and b_1 represents all of the coefficients of the input parameters in the model.

The expected outcome female gender is represented by 1, whereas the male gender was coded 0.

Odd ratio will be used to analyse the model of the study in Table 5. The odds mean for 1 unit change in the predictor, there is an exponential change in the probability of the outcome. The beta coefficients can be either positive or negative. When it is positive, the interpretation is that for

every 1 unit decrease in the predictor or explanatory variable, the outcome variable will increase by the beta coefficient value. Likewise, if the beta coefficient is negative, it means that for every 1 unit increase in the explanatory variable, the outcome or dependent variable will decrease by the beta coefficient value:

Odds ratio = 1: The probability of the female gender being involved in hybrid governance and faced intersectional discrimination is equal to the probability of the male gender involvement in hybrid governance and faced intersectional discrimination.

Odds ratio: >1 (probability of event occurring): ‘Probability of falling into the target group is greater than the probability of falling into the non-target group. The event is likely to occur’. That is, the probability of the female gender being involved in hybrid governance and faced intersectional discrimination is greater than the probability of the male gender involvement in hybrid governance and faced intersectional discrimination.

Odds ratio: <1 (probability of event occurring decreases): ‘Probability of falling into the target group is less than the probability of falling into the non-target group. The event is unlikely to occur’. That is, the probability of the female gender being involved in hybrid governance and faced intersectional discrimination is less than the probability of the male gender involvement in hybrid governance and faced intersectional discrimination.

3.2 | Limitations

The study relied on publicly available data from Stats SA, which may not fully capture the complexities and nuances of the hybrid governance variables. Subsequently, the study is specific to the South African context, and the findings may not be fully generalisable to other contexts. Studies that focus on a specific context or region may not be applicable to other contexts, and findings may not be generalisable to other populations. It is not a matter of best practice for which the study is aiming, but rather a matter of ‘wise practice’ as conversed by Brian Callion and Cythnia Wesley-Esquimaux in their paper on this topic. We, however, hope that lessons learned can be applied more broadly. The specific contextual factors that impact intersectional women experience and hybrid governance may vary from one context to another. Despite these potential critiques, multi-method studies are essential for advancing our understanding of the role of hybrid governance in women’s experience in South Africa. It is important to acknowledge the limitations of individual studies and to consider findings in the broader context of existing literature and empirical evidence.

4 | FINDINGS

The results section of the study offers a comprehensive analysis that combines document examination and empirical investigation to underscore the concept of hybrid governance and the intersectional experiences of discrimination faced by women in South Africa.

4.1 | Document analysis on intersectionality in law and the South African society

The scholarly work, by Bonthuys and Albertyn (2007), has greatly improved our comprehension of how intersectionality influences law and its effects on societal change. Their research from

2007 to Albertyn et al.'s study in 2023 has been crucial in analysing how the legal system in South Africa has progressed to acknowledge and tackle forms of discrimination such as gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, and class.

Albertyn's (2011) study particularly emphasises the role of intersectionality in shaping the country's equality approach since the 1990s. This approach is visible in South Africa's Constitution and different anti-discrimination laws that have evolved to incorporate perspectives (Bonhuys & Albertyn, 2007). A pivotal moment in this transformation was the acknowledgement and acceptance of intersectionality within the Equality Court around 2015 as highlighted by Albertyn (2011). This represented a change in the system indicating a growing awareness of intersectional discrimination.

This shift in thinking not only promotes a wider understanding of complex discrimination but also creates opportunities for transformative progress. A detailed understanding would allow for an approach to dealing with the distinct issues encountered by varied and overlapping groups. Instead of viewing black people, women, or disabled individuals as separate categories, this intersectional lens recognises the complex realities of individuals who may identify with multiple marginalised groups simultaneously. This holistic view fosters a more inclusive and equitable approach to legal and societal challenges in South Africa.

4.1.1 | A case study of undocumented women domestic workers in South Africa

Hurlbert (2020) examines the challenges of marginalised and disadvantaged domestic workers in South Africa. These women, migrating from countries in Africa without proper documentation, face significant obstacles due to their illegal status. Hurlbert's (2020) research highlights that many of these women work as live-in workers enduring working conditions, low wages, and a lack of legal protection. Being undocumented exacerbates their vulnerability, leading to a reliance on employers and a lack of support from unions or legal channels. This situation indicates a significant gap in labour laws which, as Hurlbert points out, often addresses issues in isolation, failing to consider the intersecting complexities of identity (Hurlbert, 2020).

One key focus of Hurlbert's (2020) study is on labour rights and the exploitation experienced by these women. Despite the United Nations declarations and national laws in South Africa aimed at addressing issues like low wages and exploitative labour practices, there is a notable failure to effectively protect those experiencing various forms of marginalisation. Hurlbert, along with experts such as Griffin (2011) and Bloch (2010), emphasises the intricate challenges faced by women who are undocumented migrants due to their illegal status, gender, and race. These women experience discrimination not only in their roles as workers but also in their capacities as undocumented migrants and as women, further exacerbating their exploitation and contributing to their low wages. This situation indicates a significant gap in labour laws which, as Hurlbert points out, often addresses issues in isolation, failing to consider the intersecting complexities of identity (Hurlbert, 2020).

In alignment with the work of Albertyn et al. (2023), Hurlbert's findings shed light on the policy deficiencies in South Africa within the context of hybrid governance where traditional and modern systems coexist. These gaps are most apparent when it comes to addressing the needs and upholding the rights of marginalised communities. The key challenge lies in formulating policies that adequately cater to the multifaceted identities of these groups ensuring their protection

and empowerment. Such policies should move beyond a focus on aspects like race or gender and instead consider how various intersecting factors collectively impact these communities.

Understanding the dynamics of gender, race, and class is crucial for comprehending discrimination patterns in South Africa. The way these elements come together significantly influences how discrimination and marginalisation are felt by women. The plight of undocumented women domestic workers exemplifies these dynamics, impacting their work conditions, compensation, and general treatment. Understanding these dynamics is essential in developing effective strategies to address discrimination and promote equality, ensuring a more inclusive and fair society.

4.2 | Quantitative evidence of hybridity governance and women experience with discrimination

The involvement of women in decision-making at the level of government and political parties is of interest when it comes to hybridity and women's experience in South Africa. Using the 2018–2019 GPSJS conducted by Stats SA, we identify key variables for highlighting intersectional women experiences and their involvement in decision-making and policy formulation (refer to the [Appendix](#)). The survey is a country-wide household survey with the objectives of determining the perceptions about citizen interaction/community cohesion, trust in government/public institutions, government's performance and effectiveness, experience of corruption, general individual perceptions, and household and individual perceptions and experience of crime (Stats SA, 2019, p. 1).

Table 2 depicts the demographic distribution of the study population. The distribution of the population by sex shows that 51.7% were female, which is slightly above the 50% of the population. The distribution of the population by age and race indicates that 79.3% of those aged 16 and older are Black African, 9% are coloured, 8.8% are White, and 2.9% are Indian/Asian. Examining the age pattern further indicates that the study population are youthful. Age 16–34 constitutes 47.1%, while middle aged (35–49) make up 20.9%, and those in the more advanced age group (50–64) are 23.4%. The senior citizens are 8.6%.

In terms of the marital status, individuals aged 16 and older are single and constitute 42.7% of the population, while 30.3% are married, and in this category, 15.4% live together as husbands and wives. The widowed among them are 9.2%, whereas 1.8% and 0.6% are divorced and separated, respectively.

Table 3 illustrates the association between gender and the level of citizen participation in shaping government actions within the democratic framework of South Africa. The scale used to measure citizen participation consists of two categories: 'Not at all' and 'A great deal'. Analysis of the data reveals that the majority of women (53.23%) feel that democracy in South Africa does not provide them with a meaningful opportunity to influence government decisions, while 46.77% believe that their ability to have a say is very limited. These findings highlight a prevailing sentiment among women that their voices are not adequately heard or represented in the government. Considering this outcome emphasises the importance of the government in the hybrid governance structure to actively demonstrate its commitment to enabling and valuing women's experiences by conveying a genuine and unequivocal message of support.

Table 4 presents analysis on various types of discrimination in South Africa from the women's perspective, with a focus on different variables and their levels. The table provides information on the mean, coefficient of variation for the mean, weighted sum coefficient, and coefficient of

TABLE 2 Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample (percent of respondents).

Demographic characteristic	N	Percentage
Sex		
Male	20,284	48.3
Female	21,692	51.7
Population		
Black African	33,301	79.3
Coloured	3763	9
Indian/Asian	1212	2.9
White	3699	8.8
Age group		
16–34 (youth)	19,764	47.1
35–49 (young adults)	8783	20.9
50–64 (adults)	9819	23.4
65+ (senior citizens)	3610	8.6
Marital status		
Married	12,705	30.3
Living together like husband and wife	6449	15.4
Divorced	746	1.8
Separated but still legally married	271	0.6
Widowed	3849	9.2
Single	17,915	42.7
Highest level of education		
No schooling	1445	3.5
Some primary	3111	7.6
Completed primary	1758	4.3
Some secondary	15,006	36.7
Completed secondary	13,289	32.5
Post school	6324	15.5

Source: Author's computation in SAS, 2023.

variation for the sum for each variable and its respective levels. Each row represents a different type of discrimination, such as race, ethnic/tribal group, language or dialect, religion, region/province of origin, nationality, poverty or wealth status, sex or gender, disability, political affiliation, sexual orientation, education status, age, and other forms of discrimination.

For each type of discrimination, there are two levels: 'Yes' and 'No'. The 'Yes' level indicates the presence of discrimination, while the 'No' level indicates the absence of discrimination. By examining this table, one can analyse the prevalence and variations of different types of discrimination in South Africa based on the provided data.

The findings highlight a point about discrimination in South Africa: It is evident that racial discrimination exists in the country. The average mean for the 'Yes' category is higher at 0.59 compared to 0.40 for the 'No' category, indicating a prevalence of discrimination when it occurs. However, both categories have relatively low coefficients, suggesting some but not significant differences in the occurrence of racial discrimination. Similarly, discrimination based on tribal or

TABLE 3 Demographics of the dependent variable (gender) used in the model who are active or not in government.

Gender	Democracy in South Africa allows people like you to have a say in what the government does?	
	No	Yes
Male	46.77%	48.55%
Female	53.23%	51.45%
Total	100.00%	100.00%

Source: Author's computation in SAS, 2023.

TABLE 4 Logistic regression analysis of maximum likelihood estimates.

Which of the following types of discrimination do you think exist in South Africa?					
Variable	Level	Mean	Coefficient of variation for mean	Weighted sum	Coefficient of variation for sum
Race	Yes	0.59	0.01	23,697,822	0.01
	No	0.40	0.02	16,090,339	0.02
Ethnic/tribal group	Yes	0.29	0.02	11,504,116	0.02
	No	0.71	0.01	28,284,045	0.01
Language or dialect	Yes	0.29	0.02	11,442,875	0.02
	No	0.71	0.01	28,345,286	0.01
Religion	Yes	0.25	0.02	10,111,652	0.02
	No	0.74	0.01	29,676,509	0.01
Region/province of origin	Yes	0.21	0.02	8,275,227	0.03
	No	0.79	0.01	31,512,934	0.01
Nationality	Yes	0.40	0.02	16,046,928	0.02
	No	0.60	0.01	23,741,233	0.01
Poverty or wealth status	Yes	0.32	0.02	12,884,336	0.02
	No	0.67	0.01	26,903,825	0.01
Sex or gender	Yes	0.27	0.02	10,726,095	0.02
	No	0.73	0.01	29,062,066	0.01
Disability	Yes	0.23	0.02	9,252,345	0.02
	No	0.77	0.01	30,535,816	0.01
Political affiliation	Yes	0.26	0.02	10,513,628	0.02
	No	0.73	0.01	29,274,533	0.01
Sexual orientation	Yes	0.24	0.02	9,562,836	0.02
	No	0.76	0.01	30,225,325	0.01
Education status	Yes	0.25	0.02	10,064,080	0.02
	No	0.75	0.01	29,724,081	0.01
Age	Yes	0.18	0.03	7,133,787	0.03
	No	0.82	0.01	32,654,374	0.01
Other form of discrimination	Yes	0.00	0.18	99,189	0.18
	No	1.00	0.00	39,688,972	0.01

Source: Author's computation in SAS, 2023.

ethnic groups is also present in South Africa. The mean for the 'Yes' category is lower at 0.29 compared to 0.71 for the 'No' category, indicating that discrimination based on tribal or ethnic groups is more prevalent when it is absent. The coefficients for both levels are relatively low, suggesting a moderate level of variation in the prevalence of this type of discrimination. In essence, both racial discrimination and discrimination based on ethnic or tribal groups are notable in South Africa. This implies that women from particular ethnic backgrounds are likely to experience heightened levels of discrimination due to the intersectionality of their race or ethnicity and gender.

In the realm of hybrid governance, the persistence of discrimination could stem from the lasting influence of traditional customs and norms, within specific tribal communities, coupled with systemic prejudices that may exist in society at large. For example, if certain tribal practices or traditions put women or particular ethnic groups at a disadvantage, this could contribute to a higher level of discrimination against these groups.

In summary, the results in Table 4 highlight the challenges that women, particularly those from racial or ethnic minorities, face in South Africa. The prevalence of racial and ethnic discrimination indicates the complex and overlapping nature of discrimination that these women may experience. It underscores the need for more nuanced and comprehensive measures to address these overlapping forms of discrimination in both traditional and modern systems of governance.

Table 5 provides statistics on the women's personal experience of discrimination in the past 12 months in South Africa, focusing on different variables and their levels. The variables include race, ethnicity or tribal group, language or dialect, religion, region/province of origin, nationality, poverty or wealth status, gender, disability, political affiliation, sexual orientation, education status, age, and other forms of discrimination (refer to the [Appendix](#) for questions framing).

For each variable, there are multiple levels: 'Yes' indicating the presence of discrimination, 'No' indicating the absence of discrimination, 'Not applicable' indicating the variable does not apply to the respondent, and 'Unspecified' indicating that the data is not specified. The table provides information on the mean, coefficient of variation, sum, and coefficient of variation for the sum for each variable level.

The 'Yes' level represents individuals who reported experiencing discrimination in the past 12 months. The mean values for most variables and their 'Yes' levels are quite low, ranging from 0.00 to 0.07. This suggests that overall, the prevalence of personal experiences of discrimination in South Africa is relatively low. The implication is that personal experience of different forms of discrimination is far lower than perceptions of the presence of the same discrimination.

The coefficients of variation for the mean values demonstrate the variability in reported experiences of discrimination across different variables. Some variables, such as 'Other forms of discrimination', 'Disability', and 'Age', exhibit higher coefficients, indicating a wider range of reported experiences within those categories. It is crucial to consider the limitations of self-reported data when interpreting these findings. Factors such as social desirability bias or underreporting may influence the accuracy and completeness of individuals' accounts of their experiences.

5 | DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings presented in Table 5 are interesting, suggesting that the prevalence of personally experienced discrimination across different categories within the past 12 months in South Africa appears to be relatively low based on the reported mean values. This is indeed a contrasting finding considering that perceptions of discrimination seem to be higher, as discussed earlier in Table 4.

TABLE 5 Logistic regression analysis of maximum likelihood estimates.

Personal experience of discrimination in the past twelve months					
Variable	Level	Mean	Coefficient of variation	Sum	Coefficient of variation for sum
Race	Yes	0.07	0.04	2,708,924	0.04
	No	0.53	0.01	20,984,829	0.02
	Not applicable	0.40	0.02	16,090,339	0.02
	Unspecified	0.00	0.24	92,189	0.24
Ethnicity or tribal group	Yes	0.02	0.07	622,782	0.07
	No	0.27	0.02	10,881,334	0.02
	Not applicable	0.71	0.01	28,284,045	0.01
	Unspecified	0.00	0.25	88,119	0.25
Language or dialect	Yes	0.03	0.06	998,604	0.06
	No	0.26	0.02	10,444,271	0.02
	Not applicable	0.71	0.01	28,345,286	0.01
	Unspecified	0.00	0.25	88,119	0.25
Religion	Yes	0.01	0.08	582,440	0.08
	No	0.24	0.02	9,529,212	0.02
	Not applicable	0.74	0.01	29,676,509	0.01
	Unspecified	0.00	0.25	88,119	0.25
Region/province of origin	Yes	0.01	0.10	266,955	0.10
	No	0.20	0.03	8,008,273	0.03
	Not applicable	0.79	0.01	31,512,934	0.01
	Unspecified	0.00	0.25	88,119	0.25
Nationality	Yes	0.01	0.08	594,297	0.08
	No	0.39	0.02	15,452,631	0.02
	Not applicable	0.60	0.01	23,741,233	0.01
	Unspecified	0.00	0.25	88,119	0.25
Poverty or wealth status	Yes	0.02	0.07	783,365	0.07
	No	0.30	0.02	12,100,971	0.02
	Not applicable	0.67	0.01	26,903,825	0.01
	Unspecified	0.00	0.25	88,119	0.25
Gender	Yes	0.01	0.11	349,211	0.11
	No	0.26	0.02	10,376,884	0.02
	Not applicable	0.73	0.01	29,062,066	0.01
	Unspecified	0.00	0.25	88,119	0.25
Disability	Yes	0.00	0.14	184,827	0.14
	No	0.23	0.02	9,067,518	0.03
	Not applicable	0.77	0.01	30,535,816	0.01
	Unspecified	0.00	0.25	88,119	0.25

(Continues)

TABLE 5 (Continued)

Personal experience of discrimination in the past twelve months					
Variable	Level	Mean	Coefficient of variation	Sum	Coefficient of variation for sum
Political affiliation	Yes	0.01	0.09	409,714	0.09
	No	0.25	0.02	10,103,914	0.02
	Not applicable	0.73	0.01	29,274,533	0.01
	Unspecified	0.00	0.25	88,119	0.25
Sexual orientation	Yes	0.00	0.22	50,425	0.22
	No	0.24	0.02	9,512,411	0.03
	Not applicable	0.76	0.01	30,225,325	0.01
	Unspecified	0.00	0.25	88,119	0.25
Education status	Yes	0.01	0.09	527,952	0.09
	No	0.24	0.02	9,536,128	0.02
	Not applicable	0.75	0.01	29,724,081	0.01
	Unspecified	0.00	0.25	88,119	0.25
Age	Yes	0.01	0.09	345,657	0.09
	No	0.17	0.03	6,788,130	0.03
	Not applicable	0.82	0.01	32,654,374	0.01
	Unspecified	0.00	0.25	88,119	0.25
Other forms of discrimination	Yes	0.00	0.39	16,185	0.39
	No	0.00	0.21	83,004	0.21
	Not applicable	1.00	0.00	39,688,972	0.01
	Unspecified	0.00	0.25	88,119	0.25

Source: Author's computation in SAS, 2023.

In terms of hybrid governance, this result might be reflective of the nuanced effects this form of governance has on discrimination experiences in South Africa. For instance, while traditional tribal norms might perpetuate certain discriminatory practices, state governance might counteract these with protective laws and regulations. Conversely, some discriminatory practices might be subtle or normalised to the point that they may not be readily identified as discrimination by individuals, which explains the low personal experience of discrimination.

Regarding intersectional discrimination, this study's finding should be interpreted carefully. While overall reports of personal experiences of discrimination may be low, this does not necessarily mean that intersectional discrimination is less prevalent. For instance, women who belong to marginalised racial or ethnic groups might experience compounded discrimination that is more intense and harmful. However, this discrimination could be less frequently reported due to fear of retaliation, normalisation of such experiences, or lack of awareness that what they are experiencing is indeed discrimination (Bowman et al., 2015; Nkwana & Van Dijk, 2012; Van Dijk & Nkwana, 2021).

Discrimination often takes place in institutionalised or systemic forms which may not be directly felt on a personal level by individuals, but may still significantly affect their lives. For example, institutional racism or sexism might lead to fewer opportunities or resources for certain

racial or gender groups, but the people within these groups might not necessarily report this as personal experiences of discrimination (Crenshaw, 1991; Ratele, 2014).

It is crucial to note that the categories with higher variation ('Other forms of discrimination', 'Disability', and 'Age') suggest more inconsistent experiences across respondents. This could indicate unique experiences of discrimination based on age, disability, or other unspecified factors and thus requires more targeted investigation and intervention (Bowman et al., 2015). The intersectional experience is highlighted in considering the results for all forms of discrimination and understanding that although racial discrimination is low, age discrimination exists, and therefore, citizens might indicate an overall lack of trust in government. The contextual, nuanced, and intersectional results are needed to meaningfully interpret the experience.

In conclusion, although the instances of reported discrimination may seem limited, it does not dismiss the existence of systemic and intersectional discrimination as demonstrated in the document analysis section. Hybrid governance and intersectional discrimination should continue to be areas of focus in tackling inequality and discrimination in South Africa, taking into account both reported personal experiences and broader societal and institutional factors. By examining discrimination within the framework of South Africa's hybrid governance system, the study contributes to understanding how modern and traditional systems coexist and influence social dynamics. This knowledge is valuable for developing interventions that respect cultural practices while challenging discriminatory norms. Based on the research findings, a set of recommendations is proposed to tackle the issues of hybrid governance and intersectional discrimination in South Africa:

1. **Improve reporting mechanisms:** Given the nuanced presentation of interlocked systems of oppression between the perception and reported experiences of discrimination, it is essential to establish effective and accessible reporting channels and encourage individuals to report instances of discrimination while ensuring their safety, security, and confidentiality.
2. **Implement inclusive policies:** Policies that account for the interconnected nature of discrimination should be developed and enforced. It's important to consider how different factors, like race, gender, age, disability and tribal affiliation can intersect to worsen discrimination and inequality.
3. **Reviewing and updating policies;** It is crucial to assess and update policies related to hybrid governance as a means to understand post-colonial manifestations of discrimination. We need to make sure that both traditional and modern governance methods work together effectively in the fight against discrimination.
4. **Strengthening legal frameworks:** We should reinforce our legal frameworks to penalise discriminatory behaviours and ensure these laws are enforced consistently across the country, regardless of the type of governance in place. It is essential that local tribal laws do not support discriminatory practices but instead align with anti-discrimination laws.
5. **Enhancing governance structures capabilities:** Building capacity within traditional and modern governance structures is key in tackling discrimination. This involves training leaders on identifying and addressing discrimination issues, as well as ensuring representation of contextually nuanced groups experiencing intersectional discrimination within these governance structures.
6. **Promoting collaboration and involvement:** Encouraging partnerships among government entities, tribal authorities, civil society organisations, and communities is vital for addressing these challenges together. This comprehensive approach encompasses an understanding and

addressing of the complex issue of intersectional discrimination (Duckett, 2022; Ganle et al., 2015).

7. Raise awareness and promote education: Awareness about the nature of intersectional discrimination and its influence on targeted groups should be increased. This could include community workshops, educational campaigns, and school curriculums that explain what constitutes discrimination and how to report it. This education should also include intersectional discrimination to raise awareness of the compounded discrimination that contextually nuanced marginalised groups can experience. Meaningful opportunities should be created to foster hybridity governance structure's commitment to valuing the inclusion of contextually relevant women's voices.
8. Research and data collection: Further research is crucial to grasp the high variability in discrimination experiences influenced by factors like age, disability, and other unspecified variables. Consistent data collection on these experiences can guide policymaking and interventions tailored to address these challenges.

By embracing these recommendations, South Africa can progress towards a more equitable society where discrimination is actively addressed and minimised.

Finally, this study's outcomes lay a groundwork for further investigations. The wide spectrum of discrimination encountered based on age, disability, and other unspecified factors signifies areas that need more focused investigation. The results can guide researchers in probing these dimensions more deeply.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflicts of interest. Statistics South Africa, the producer of the data, was not involved in any aspect of the study, including the analysis or interpretation of data, manuscript writing, or the decision to publish the findings.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The GPSJS 2018/2019 dataset was utilised. The data is available at <https://www.statssa.gov.za/> on request. Request for specific data subsets can be made, which will be considered within the bounds of ethical and legal considerations. This approach is in accordance with ethical guidelines and data protection principles, emphasising responsible and secure handling of the collected information. The questionnaire from GPSJS 2018/19 is designed according to the international standards for governance, public safety, and justice, as defined by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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APPENDIX

The following questions are measured in the GPSJS 2018–2019 study:

TABLE A1 Name of variables used in the logistic regression model.

Questions from the GPSJS dataset 2018–2019
Sex (Male = 0; Female = 1). Ref = Male
How much would you say democracy in South Africa allows people like you to have a say in what the government does?—(No say in government)
(01 = Not at all, 02 = Very little, 03 = Some)
How much would you say democracy in South Africa allows people like you to have a say in what the government does? (Say in government)
(04 = A lot, 05 = A great deal)
Population group = Black African
Population group = Coloured
Population group = Indian/Asian
Population group = White

Source: Author's computation in SAS, 2023.

The following two questions were asked during the national household-based sample survey between 2018 and 2019. The survey was conducted by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), which is responsible for compiling nationally representative national statistics. The name of the household-based sample survey is the Governance, Public Safety and Justice Survey (GPSJS). Responses to the question on the 13 types of discriminations over the past 5 years and 12 months will be analysed using descriptive statistics, logistic regression, and principal component analysis to understand intersectionality in the context of the South African population.

In the GPSJS conducted in 2018–2019, the following set of questions were used to measure discriminations.

Which of the following types of discrimination do you think exist in South Africa?

- 01 = Race
- 02 = Ethnic/tribal group
- 03 = Language or dialect
- 04 = Religion
- 05 = Region/province of origin
- 06 = Nationality
- 07 = Poverty or wealth status
- 08 = Sex or gender
- 09 = Disability
- 10 = Political affiliation
- 11 = Sexual orientation
- 12 = Education status
- 13 = Age
- 14 = Other

Specify:

6.10.1A Have you personally experienced discrimination based on race during the past 12 months, between [...] last year and [...] this year?

6.10.1B Have you personally experienced discrimination based on ethnic/tribal group during the past 12 months, between [...] last year and [...] this year?

6.10.1C Have you personally experienced discrimination based on language or dialect during the past 12 months, between [...] last year and [...] this year?

6.10.1D Have you personally experienced discrimination based on religion during the past 12 months, between [...] last year and [...] this year?

6.10.1E Have you personally experienced discrimination based on region/province of origin during the past 12 months, between [...] last year and [...] this year?

6.10.1F Have you personally experienced discrimination based on nationality during the past 12 months, between [...] last year and [...] this year?

6.10.1G Have you personally experienced discrimination based on poverty or wealth status during the past 12 months, between [...] last year and [...] this year?

6.10.1H Have you personally experienced discrimination based on gender during the past 12 months, between [...] last year and [...] this year?

6.10.1I Have you personally experienced discrimination based on disability during the past 12 months, between [...] last year and [...] this year?

6.10.1J Have you personally experienced discrimination based on political affiliation during the past 12 months, between [...] last year and [...] this year?

6.10.1K Have you personally experienced discrimination based on sexual orientation during the past 12 months, between [...] last year and [...] this year?

6.10.1L Have you personally experienced discrimination based on education status during the past 12 months, between [...] last year and [...] this year?

6.10.1 M Have you personally experienced discrimination based on age during the past 12 months, between [...] last year and [...] this year?

6.10.1N Have you personally experienced discrimination based on other discrimination during the past 12 months, between [...] last year and [...] this year?

Types of discrimination in SA (past 5 years) PAST 5 YEARS

2.5 In South Africa, do you feel that you personally experienced any form of discrimination or harassment during the past 5 years, between to on any of these grounds?

01 = Race

02 = Ethnic/tribal group

03 = Language or dialect

04 = Religion

05 = Region/province of origin

06 = Nationality

07 = Poverty or wealth status

08 = Sex or gender

09 = Disability/Political affiliation

10 = Sexual orientation

11 = Education status

12 = Age

13 = Other

In South Africa, do you feel that you personally experienced any form of discrimination or harassment during the past 12 months, between to on any of these grounds?

01 = Race

02 = Ethnic/tribal group

03 = Language or dialect

04 = Religion

05 = Region/province of origin

06 = Nationality

07 = Poverty or wealth status

08 = Sex or gender

09 = Disability/Political affiliation

10 = Sexual orientation

11 = Education status

12 = Age

13 = Others