



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Theology

LOBOLA IN ZIMBABWE: A PASTORAL CHALLENGE.

By

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF THEOLOGY

In the subject

PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

At

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR MAAKE J. MASANGO

OCTOBER 2018



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DECLARATION

I, John Tendai Chisi declare that I personally produced this dissertation, "Lobola in Zimbabwe: A Pastoral Challenge" with the guidance of my co-researchers. I have never submitted this dissertation or any part thereof to any other educational institution for any other qualification. I have, to the best of my ability, acknowledged all the sources I used herein.

Signed: ...  Date ...30-10-2018.....

Student: John Tendai Chisi

Signed: ...  Date...10-11-2018.....

Supervisor: Professor Maake J. Masango



DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to all individuals who co- researched with me regarding this topic on Lobola in Zimbabwe: A Pastoral Challenge and in particular my mothers who endured lobola struggle by my father.

I also dedicate this dissertation to all individuals who are reeling under the effects of lobola struggle in Zimbabwe. May God be gracious to you and grant you healing and wholeness. .

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I give glory to God for the grace to complete this dissertation. My gratitude goes to the following:

Dr Chery, the Vice Chancellor and Principal of University of Pretoria and his staff for affording me the opportunity to pursue this study. May God richly bless you all.

Professor Maake Masango for the patient supervision of this work, Thank you for the encouragement;

Professor Masango's postgraduate students past and present for their immense contributions to this work during contact weeks;

Professor Yolanda Dreyer for the invaluable Pastoral Care and Counselling lectures;

Christine Neil and all the University of Pretoria Library staff for your dedicated service. Thank you for your assistance.

My profound gratitude goes to Father Benedict Makhata for providing me with, accommodation, food and transport when I attended lectures and workshops.

Mr Simba Nyatsine and his wife Fadzai, thank you for your unmatched hospitality during my visits to South Africa for lectures and workshops.

I am grateful to Rev. Enesto Muzerengwa and family who helped me with books, information, time, suggestions and encouragement.

To my family; my wife Clara, my children, Malcom, Tendai, Tawanda, Anotida, Joyline, Tariro and Chiedza, thank you for all the support.

My brothers in Christ Rev. Archford Muteranduwa, Mr Tito Goredema and Mr Meke thank you for the encouragement and support.



ABSTRACT

Lobola in Zimbabwe: A Pastoral Challenge

On one hand African traditionalists regard lobola as part of Africanness and strongly seek its perpetuation. On the other hand reformists consider it primitive and oppressive and seek its abolition. Both acknowledge the lobola struggle that is prevalent in Zimbabwe. Stories abound in the Pentecostal church and Zimbabwean media about lobola abuse.

The Lobola struggle exposes the suffering inflicted on the poor among the Shona people of Zimbabwe by their in-laws. This is bound to prompt the Pentecostal Church to confront the injustice and provide healing and wholeness to the victims of the struggle. This research seeks ways to assist the Pentecostal church in Zimbabwe to pastorally care for the victims.

The study unpacked the beliefs, ideas, implications and experiences of lobola struggle by co-researchers, using qualitative approaches, to better understand the conceptions and misconceptions that society has, and produce literature to guide the Pentecostal Church on lobola issues.

The study empowers pastoral care givers to enter the space of the people affected by the lobola struggle and journey with them towards healing and wholeness.



KEY WORDS

Dare (*Shona* word for group conversation):

In *Shona* culture this was done by men gathered around a fire to discuss family and community issues.

Matare is the plural of *dare*.

Deconstruction: Deconstruction is the shredding or setting apart of meanings from various texts of discourses. The specific texts could be in the form of speech, written literature and gestures.

Narrative: Story that consists of events, linked in sequence, across time and according to a plot.

Co-researcher: A participant in a research who furnishes the person conducting the research with his/her insider knowledge and skills concerning problems and ways of addressing them, to enable the knowledge to be distributed to others.

Social construction

Formation by groups of people or individuals, over time, in their interactions and contexts, of ideas, thoughts, beliefs, discourses, values, qualities, attitudes and practices which constitute their lives.

Unpacking

It is a way of dissecting with participants the dominant religious ideas and practices through which they “see, talk and interpret” abusive stories.

Practical theology: It is theological scrutiny of the interaction between church and world practices to ensure sustained observance of God’s redemptive practices.



ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

HIV: Human Immune Deficiency Virus

LAMA: Legal Age of Majority Act

PCZ: Pentecostal Church in Zimbabwe

NAC: National Aids Council

MC: Magistrate Court

CHAPTER ONE

1.1. Background of study

This study was motivated by challenges emanating from the practice of lobola which were observed by the researcher in his personal ministry in Zimbabwe. Young men struggle to pay lobola. The researcher's father married several wives, which made the researcher wonder how he paid for them. *Lobola* is payment made to the bride's parents by the prospective son-in-law for their daughter's hand in marriage. It is known as *lobola* among the Ndebele people and *roora* among the Shona people in Zimbabwe. Hence, the words *roora* or *lobola* will be used interchangeably in this research proposal. The Ndebele and the Shona are the two major tribes in Zimbabwe.

The issue of *lobola* appears to have become complicated among the Africans in Zimbabwe. The complications of *roora/ lobola* take different forms among the Shona and the Ndebele. It has become a scourge which has not spared the church. Pastors are making divergent proclamations in different assemblies of the same church regarding the issue. The researcher has struggled to care pastorally for victims of their lobola struggle. In his capacity as minister, the researcher listens to issues of *roora* in his church. Young men consult him as their minister. He thus witnesses first-hand the pain that lobola inflicts on men. He also reads *roora* related stories in the Zimbabwean media.

This information has made the researcher to have several curiosities that married men and married women will help him to understand. He subscribes to Anderson et. al.'s assertion that the married men and women who cause complications in, and the victims of roora complications, are the experts of their own experiences, (1999:22). Co-researching with them will furnish the researcher with vital information. Thus the researcher will draw from married men and women from the Pentecostal Church and other organizations like Padare, (a men's gender forum) and Legal Resources Centre, (LRC), (legal resource centre for the economically disadvantaged people). The following story aroused the researcher's interest in this study.



In this story, Sam and Shorai, (not their real names), are both Shona. They were devote members of two Pentecostal Churches in Zimbabwe, (PCZ). These two churches are arguably, the two biggest PCZs in Zimbabwe. Their parents are also bona fide members of these two churches. Sam and Shorai met at a local university where they graduated with a Bachelor of Administration, (B.Ad) and Bachelor of Arts General, (B.A.Gen) degrees, respectively. Sam was unemployed, four years after graduation, due to the economic meltdown in Zimbabwe. However, Shorai was employed, part time, at a nursery school. Sam made a living by selling cell phone recharge cards, on the streets of Harare.

Sam quickly engaged Shorai's parents in *roora* negotiations, when she accepted his proposal for marriage, despite his unemployed status. He had saved R17, 700 from his card sales, which he hoped would significantly cover *roora*. He sent a *munyai* (a person appointed to negotiate *lobola* with the girl's parents on behalf of the prospective son-in-law), to Shorai's parents for *lobola* negotiations. Shorai's parents proposed R325 000 as *lobola*, which they reduced to R260 000, after intense haggling with the *munyai*. They declared it their final figure. They boasted that their daughter had a university degree. They retorted that they had invested a lot of money in her education. They declared their unwillingness to allow all that to go to waste. They considered Shorai's marriage a loss as it was going to deprive them of support from her. Hence, they wanted to be adequately compensated. Sam and Shorai were devastated. Shorai's pleas for leniency fell on deaf ears. They really wanted to exploit the traditional custom of *lobola*. The church seems to encourage it by seeking consent from the father of the bride before the wedding. Obviously, this consent is only given when *roora* has been satisfactorily paid. In Sam's case, it was clear that the *lobola* demanded was way out of his league.

After weighing all the options, Sam decided to exercise the Shona concept of *kutizisa* (a Shona custom where a man takes a girl as his wife, without paying *lobola* and without the consent of the girl's father). They moved to Cranborne, a residential suburb in Harare, and got a marriage license from the Magistrate Court (MC), without the parental consent or knowledge. They joined the PCZ assembly as an already converted couple,

new in town and needing an assembly to fellowship at. They used the R17, 700 Sam had saved, to buy household goods. Shorai fell pregnant. When the baby was due, she was admitted to a maternity clinic for delivery. Complications developed during child birth which resulted in Shorai's untimely death. Her baby boy survived. This marked the beginning of Sam's troubles. It was at this stage that he came to the researcher's office to advise him of the untimely death of his wife. With a very heavy sigh he said, "Man of God, I am in deep trouble". He narrated how he met his wife Shorai, his aborted attempts to engage his in-laws in *lobola* negotiations, his consequent decision to abandon the traditional route and obtain a marriage license from the Magistrate Court.

Sam's relatives went to Shorai's parents for purposes of *kuridza mhere* (officially informing the in-laws about their daughter's death). Her parents declared, *mwana wedu mupenyu* (our daughter is alive). They refused to accept the emissaries' message. They were only interested in the payment, in full, of the *roora* they had asked for, two years earlier, before they could entertain any other discussion. The emissaries were rudely dismissed and ordered never to return without the *lobola*.

The researcher endorses Mbiti's claim that "*lobola* is a token of gratitude on the part of the bridegroom's people to those of the bride for their care over her and for allowing her to become their wife", (1969:37). However, the researcher wonders whether *lobola*, among the Shona people in Zimbabwe, still fits Mbiti's description of being a token. How does one care pastorally for demand for exorbitant *lobola*? How does one care pastorally, for demand of *lobola* for a dead woman?

The above story and the researcher's failure to render any help, when called upon to do so, motivated him to embark on this study, in order to acquire skills to handle such issues. The researcher will concentrate on the Shona custom and people.

It is prudent at this stage to advise the reader that the terms researcher and I will be used interchangeably in this study.



1.2. Problem statement

The above story shared in the introduction raises several questions that will enable meaningful research to investigate the problems faced by young African men in their quest to make the ultimate achievement in their lives, that of getting married, (Khanyi in Frahm-Arp, 2010:79) and when the wife has passed on.

1. What causes fathers to abuse the custom of *lobola* in Zimbabwe?
2. Is *lobola* still being observed as a custom that builds relationship and family structure in the African families?
3. What are the deep pains that couples experience as a result of *lobola*?
4. What role can the church play in *lobola*?
5. In terms of the Zimbabwean law is *lobola* mandatory?
6. In view of the above, should *roora* continue to be practiced?

These above questions and others that will emerge as the investigation progresses, will guide the research.

1.3. Methodology

The study will use Gerkin's model of shepherding to enter into the space of people affected by *lobola* and journey with them. Gerkin talks of four roles which are important to him, namely, priest, prophet, wise man and shepherd. These, he traces from the Old Testament times where the care of Yahweh's people was entrusted to three classes of leaders namely, priests, who had particular responsibility for worship and ceremonial life; prophets who spoke for Yahweh in relation to moral issues and wise men and women who offered counsel of all sorts concerning issues of good life and personal conduct, (1997:23). The three distinct roles for the care of God's people, which constituted three separate offices, priest, prophet and wise men and women, were consolidated in what Gerkin calls the shepherding model. The researcher will use this model, in order to give attention to on-going care for the Christian tradition that grounds the faith and the life of the people, (Ibid, 1997:26). He will also use it to attend to the life of the community of faith with care and discernment and to give careful attention to the

needs and problems” of lobola in the Pentecostal Church in the Zimbabwe, (Ibid: 1997:26). The study will draw from Jesus’ ministry, which typified Gerkin’s shepherding model. The above model will help the researcher to journey with young men who are faced with paying exorbitant *lobola* or lobola for a dead woman.

However, although Gerkin is able to journey with the men he does not help them to reconstruct and renew their lives. Thus, Gerkin does not help the researcher to delve deeper into the problem.

The researcher will then use Pollard’s positive deconstruction to help him interrogate the problem further. Positive deconstruction is a methodology Pollard uses in his evangelism work to engage with the worldviews of non-Christians. Deconstruction is achieved by dismantling a worldview in order to isolate contradictions with Christianity. Error is identified and substituted with biblical truth. Consolidation of areas of concurrence is envisaged, (1997:44). This renders the methodology positive. The researcher will unpack the beliefs, values and attitudes which are communicated in lobola, affirm the truth and discover the errors and replace them with biblical truth.

Pollard identifies the following four key aspects which the researcher will use:-

- a) identifying the belief system, (beliefs, values and attitudes inherent in *roora*)
- b) analyzing the belief system regarding correspondence, coherence and pragmatic theories.
- c) affirming any adherences to the Christian belief system.
- d) discovering contradictions of the belief system with the Christian system (Ibid: 48-56).

In addition, the researcher will embark on a qualitative approach utilizing semi-structured interview as the qualitative research method; (Rubin et. al., 1993:358). This methodology will help the researcher to extract further information from co-researchers.

Qualitative research is defined by Munthali (drawing on McCleod et al.) as “a process of careful, rigorous inquiry into the aspects of the social world. It provides formal

statements or conceptual frameworks that provide new ways of understanding the world, and therefore it comprises knowledge that is practically useful to those who work with issues around learning and adjustment to pressure and demands of the social world”, (2014:31).

This approach possesses the ability to demystify lobola struggle in the Zimbabwean context. The researcher will use qualitative approach to answer questions about the complete nature of *lobola* in the Pentecostal church, (Leedy et al., 2005:94). He is of the view that the qualitative approach will enable him to collect data in its natural environment, guaranteeing sensitivity to the people and places under study. Also, it enables inductive and deductive data analysis. The qualitative approach helps the researcher to establish patterns or themes, in his/her, investigation, (Creswell, 2013:44). As his tool, the researcher will employ semi-structured interviews. The researcher, being the interviewer, has no more than 10 questions in mind. He is free not to follow a predetermined order (Grix, 2012:128). These questions will tease out discussion from the co-researchers and result in other spontaneous questions. This will enable the researcher to focus on the area of study allowing the interface to change course if need be. The advantages of this method are that it is relatively informal, flexible and user friendly, (Mason, 2002:63). The researcher will, through the interviews, concentrate on relevant contexts to facilitate generation of knowledge. Interaction between the researcher and the interviewees will create meanings and understandings, (Manson, 2004:62). The researcher will rigorously interrogate *lobola* in the Zimbabwean context paying particular attention to the Shona Pentecostal church members. He will use questionnaires and carry out interviews among Padare (a men’s forum on gender based in Harare), Pentecostal Church in Zimbabwe (not their real name) and Legal Resources Centre (an organization that offers legal assistance to the disadvantaged members of the Zimbabwean society).

The researcher will also use narrative as a method which focuses on lived and told experiences, (Walshaw, 2011:67). This method enables the researcher to focus on

personal experiences of the participants and himself. He will record these experiences systematically using recording gadgets and interviews (Ibid, 2012:67).

The researcher will also use Muzerengwa's concept of "*dare*". This is a traditional Shona concept of men gathering under a tree to make a forum to discuss important issues affecting the family or community. Here, elderly men gather at a designated place, away from women and children, and deliberate on an important matter before them. The most senior elder presides over the *dare*. He directs the proceedings, maintaining order, to ensure collective resolution of the matter under discussion. Every participant is afforded an opportunity to make their contribution.

Although this is done by men only, the concept of *dare* will be used to engage women as well. The *dare* will become the broader context for married men and women to tell their experiences. For the *dare*, the researcher will utilize three departments that exist in the Pentecostal Church in Zimbabwe, namely, Youth, Ladies and the Men's Fellowship. The Youth department is a department established in each assembly consisting of all young church members aged between eighteen and thirty five years. The Ladies department is a department in each assembly, made up of married women and single mothers. Men's fellowship is a department, in each assembly consisting of married men. The researcher will use purposive sampling to select participants. Purposive sampling is the selection of participants on the basis of some defining characteristics that make them the holders of the data needed for the study, (Maree, 2013:79). Participants in this research will be drawn from married males and females aged between 18 and 65 who have stories to tell about lobola. Eight members from each department will be used for each *dare*. The researcher will be able engage small groups of participants in conversations whose aim is to produce data that is relevant to this research. The researcher will audiotape and transcribe the interviews, (Creswell, 2007:160)

1.4. Epistemology

The study will engage other sciences like anthropology, sociology and narratives from those who have experienced *lobola* struggles and men who are faced with *lobola*

demands for dead woman, to attempt to solicit the truth about *lobola* struggles. Anthropology, according to Harris, is the study of human societies and culture and their development. Haralambos et al., (2013) defined sociology as the development, structure and functioning of human society.

1.5. Aims

The study aims to:-

- a) sensitize society on the impact *lobola* is having on families.
- b) empower pastoral care givers with tools to enter the space of the affected people and journey with them towards healing and wholeness.
- c) engage the custom of *lobola* from African Traditional Religion in relation to marriage and link it to marriage in the Christian faith.
- d) provide the Pentecostal Church with written material to guide it on the issue of *lobola*.

1.6. Objectives

The main objectives of this study are to:-

- a) find causes of abuse of *lobola* by Shona men.
- b) create an approach which can alleviate the phenomenon's impact on its victims.
- c) explore reflections on the phenomenon from the African Traditional Religion, Western Worldview and the Christian faith.

1.7. Significance of study

The study will expose the oppression of women, and the exploitation and stigmatization of young men who want to marry in church societies that practise *lobola*. The study will also afford the church an opportunity to interrogate the custom of *lobola* in order to

come up with a documented position and methodology for dealing with it pastorally. The study falls within the field of practical theology.

1.8. Limitations

The research will be confined to Shona Pentecostal men and women in Harare, Zimbabwe, the researcher's home town. The researcher hastens to note that Shona is the major tribe in Zimbabwe occupying approximately three quarters of the country. It is made up of many dialects with some variations in their culture. Resources may not allow him to study the whole of Zimbabwe. Such coverage will take several years to complete the study. However, Harare, being the capital, draws people from all over the country.

1.9. Research gap

In reviewing literature the researcher discovered that some studies have been conducted on *lobola* in Zimbabwe by scholars like Bourdillon, (1976 & 1998), and Chigwedere, (1982) whose main focus was on how the practice is conducted and its cultural significance. Also Mvududu, (2002), Kambarami, (2006) and Chireshe and Chireshe, (2010) concentrated on the effects of *lobola* in general ignoring its contemporary struggles. However, despite this conglomeration of studies no documented material exists in the Pentecostal Church in Zimbabwe on the issue of *lobola* to guide its clergy and congregants on the matter to afford uniformity in the church. This study will hopefully, afford the Pentecostal Church a common stance regarding *lobola*. Thus, this dissertation endeavors to contribute by furnishing evidence through the narratives of the victims of the *lobola* struggle and also expose the trauma the struggles inflict on their victims. The modalities will be discussed in chapter three.

However, despite this conglomeration of studies on *lobola*, no documented material exists in the Pentecostal Church in Zimbabwe on the issue of *lobola* to guide its clergy and congregants on the matter to afford uniformity in the church. This dissertation endeavors to furnish evidence through the narratives of the victims of the *lobola*

struggle and expose the trauma they inflict on their victims. The modalities as to the attainment of this objective will be subject for discussion in chapter three.

1.10. Motivation

The researcher's experience with Sam and Shorai's *roora* case and his curiosity about his own father's marriages to several wives motivated him to undertake this study. He was wondering and curious how his father raised *roora* for so many wives while some young men are struggling to pay for a single wife.

1.11. Assumptions

According to Creswell, assumptions are abstract ideas and beliefs that researchers bring into a research, (2013:16). Wargo (2015:104) contended that assumptions are an integral part of any research study. This study will include the following assumptions espoused by him:-

- a) despite the prevailing lobola struggle in Zimbabwe and the pain it is inflicting on poor Africans, the Africans want the lobola practice to be perpetuated.
- b) The participants will be honest and candid in their responses to the interview questions.
- c) The inclusion criteria of the sample is appropriate and assures participants' common experience of the phenomenon, (Ibid, 2015:104).

1.12. Ethical considerations

The researcher approached the Pentecostal Church in Zimbabwe, Padare, and Musasa Project and sought permission to hold group discussions. The researcher explained the research topic, the objectives and the questions to the participants and answered any questions they might have had about the research process. To gain support from the participants, the researcher explained to them that they are participating in a study. The researcher articulated the purpose of the study, and was ethical regarding the nature of the study, (Creswell, 2012:174) He gave the participants consent forms which have the research topic, and objectives and requested for entry into the research and their

contributions. The participants were aged between 18 to 65 years. The researcher protected the anonymity of participants by assigning pseudo names to each one of them. The researcher assured co-researchers of confidentiality of data collected and cleared any grey areas. The participants were satisfied, they completed the forms and appended their signatures. Permission was sought to record and take notes during the discussions. The researcher transcribed the audio stories into written stories. He gave the participants written stories from their discussions and requested them to read and improve some parts, where necessary. These stories belong to the participants which make them valid.

1.13. Outline of chapters

The findings in this study are presented in seven chapters:

Chapter one deals with the background of the study, the problem statement, methodology, epistemology, aims, objectives, significance of study, limitations, research gap, motivation, assumptions, definition of terms, outline of chapters and preliminary conclusion.

Chapter two deals with literature review. Literature will be drawn from two sources, the Western and the African sources. The Western world deals with lobola as an abuse whilst the African world deals with it as a means of building relations between families.

Chapter three deals with the research methodology, which will embrace Gerkin's Shepherding Model, Pollard's positive deconstruction and qualitative approach, focus group conversations, church stories and stories from Padare and Legal Resources Centre.

Chapter four deals with *lobola* and will discuss in detail the practice and the scope of the processes and procedures employed in lobola negotiations among the Shona people. The chapter also compares the custom of *lobola* in the yester years and the modern practice.

Chapter five presents responses and results of the interviews conducted and *matare* stories.

Chapter six deals with data analysis and healing methodology.

Chapter seven deals with the research findings, recommendations and conclusions.

1.14. Preliminary conclusion

In this chapter the researcher provided his motivation for the research topic and provided delimitations for the study subsequent chapters. In addition the chapter sets parameters for the researcher to guard against digression to irrelevant themes that can derail the research. Further, the researcher will use interchangeably the terms *lobola* and *roora* throughout the study. Both these terms refer to property paid by the family of the bridegroom to the family of the bride for her in marriage.

In the following chapter the researcher will embark on a literature review, to discover what other scholars have written about the topic and unearth a possible gap for investigation in this study.

CHAPTER TWO : LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Definition

Literature review “is a critical analysis” (Hart 1998), “a systematic”, (Booth et. al., 2012:2), and “comprehensive study that relates to a particular topic”, (Aveyard 2010:5), “body of works previously published by other scholars”, (Hofstee, 2006:91). To Boote et. al., (2005), a literature review represents the critical step of the research process in qualitative, quantitative and mixed research studies. Similarly, Fraenkel et.al. (2006), asserted that the literature review is helpful in two ways; helping researchers to glean the ideas of others with similar interest in a particular research question and letting them read the results of similar or related studies. This chapter will do both by focusing on review of literature surrounding the concept of *lobola* or a related subject, like marriage, that should give a theoretical basis for my research. It is important for me to start by discussing the conceptualization of marriage.

2.2. Conceptualization of marriage

Marriage is conceptualized as a legal legitimate unification of a man and a woman, which is expected to endure for the rest of their lives, for the purpose of performing basic family functions, (Radcliffe-Brown et.al. (1960:67). Like other African traditional cultures, Shona culture has numerous customary marriage practices, as correctly observed by Mawere et.al. Each practice has its own sequence of rituals, negotiations and transactions that differ from group to group but, similarly conceive marriage as a binding union and commitment of co-existence between two people of the opposite sex. They further noted that the marriage relationship is underpinned by procreation, love and companionship, with sexual conduct as the important aspect, (2010: 226). As a black Shona male, I side with Mawere et.al. regarding their conceptualization of marriage. Their concept of marriage connects with my parents teaching as I grew up. I was taught that I should work hard in school to ensure that I get a good paying job to reduce the hassles of raising lobola for the woman I would marry. This taught me that I should marry a woman for whom I should pay lobola.

According to Meekers (1993), Shona people consider lobola as a noble custom that functioned as a safeguard against marital dissolution because it generally needed to be refunded upon divorce.

This is understandable because it is common knowledge that a Shona man resents the burden of refund, especially if he is on the giving end. Usually whatever would have been paid earlier would now have been consumed. Thus finding resources to make a refund would be an odious feat. This causes a Shona man to force his married daughter to stay in an abusive relationship.

Most importantly, payment of lobola gave the Shona man custody of the children from the union-rights and accorded genetical inheritance, (Goody, 1973). As a Shona man myself I understand and totally agree with this position. I object to one acquiring such an immense benefit at no cost to the beneficiary. I believe in the something for something adage, especially if the acquisition is priceless. Custody of children is something that many people pay astronomical legal fees to win in court. I consider lobola payment to be in order as long as it meets the original intent of being a token of appreciation. Therefore paying lobola in order to get custody of one's children is not a bad idea at all.

To avoid complications later, a woman's father would not allow her to move in with her partner until lobola payments had started (Bourdillon, 1998: 315). Though this may seem cruel, it helps to avoid situations similar to the one encountered by Sam in chapter one, where *lobola* was demanded for a dead woman.

Meekers, 1993) asserted that a system based on bride wealth payment implies that the family groups have a vested interest in the marriage and that their influence over the married couple is considerable. Much as this may be undesirable at times, it cannot be avoided as lobola is supposed to unite families, (Chigwedere, 1982). Hence, African marriage requires the consent of both families and is a process that involves a series of procedures lasting months, if not years.

The foregoing facts do not apply to same sex marriages. These are illegal in the Zimbabwean context. They are considered taboo among the Shona and they are

regarded as defiance to God's law among African Christians. At this stage, a brief background of the aspect of marriage in Zimbabwe shades more light on this subject.

2.3. Background to the aspect of marriage in Zimbabwe

According to Bourdillon "marriage is an institution which now has a variety of forms in Shona society, with respect both to the rites and customs by which the union is achieved and to the nature of the union itself", (1976:36). In concurrence, Kwaramba contended that this multiplicity of forms helps to account for the diversity in the manner the marriage rituals are done but the elements or the ideal of marriage remaining the same. As a minister of religion and a marriage counselor for several years, I have been apprised of many forms of marriages by my Shona congregants, especially those who got married before they converted to Christianity. However, I share Gelfand's view that "marriage is probably the most important single event in the life of the Shona man - that great day when he becomes a full member of the group, a full participant of the society" (1973:167). I am very clear on the fact that all Shona young men look forward to their day of marriage with joyful anticipation. I also had first-hand experience. I anticipated my day of marriage from boyhood. I looked forward to it as it would mark my transition into manhood and relieve me of *kufuza mbudzi* (being sent on errands when traditional Shona men convene a meeting to deliberate on important family or societal matters). Hence spoiling this day by demanding high *lobola* may be very traumatic for a poor young Shona man.

The traditional Shona regards marriage essentially as a contract between families unlike the Europeans who understand it as a contract between the two tying the knot. Although the Shona couple has a right to choose between customary marriage and civil marriage, the negotiations towards the marriage normally require participation by senior representatives of each family. This then, entails that marriage is not for an individual but rather it involves the family. Evidently, marriage in the Shona culture has an important aspect of relationship between families. Among the Shona, marriage is primarily a contract between groups rather than between individuals. For there to be marriage, *lobola*, which is the provision of gifts to the parents of a bride, usually in the

form of cash or livestock, has to be paid. It is common knowledge that *lobola* is an entrenched part of marriage in the Shona culture. Customary marriage requires both fathers' agreement and payment of lobola. It is potentially polygamous and has no minimum age.

Conversely, civil marriage is primarily a contract between individuals. The negotiations towards the marriage normally do not require participation by senior representatives of each family. A relationship between families is not vital and payment of lobola is not a pre-requisite. It is potentially polygamous and has no minimum age. Civil marriage is monogamous, conducted by a minister of religion or magistrate, with a minimum age of 18 for both men and women. In practice, most Shona marriages combine the two, although usually customary marriage comes first and thus takes legal precedence.

However, Zvobgo reported that Zimbabwe's constitution prohibits discrimination, but not explicitly on grounds of sex and exempts Customary Law in matters of marriage, divorce and inheritance. She confirmed that Zimbabwe has seriously attempted to reduce discrimination against women, and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women in 1991, although several laws still breach the convention. While most Zimbabwean women are subject to Customary Law, all women over 18 are accorded certain rights under the Legal Age of Majority Act (LAMA), passed in 1982. This Act was meant to redress inequality as it aimed to nullify traditional customary law, (2009:293). Lobola is no longer a legal requirement of customary marriage, but the Customary Marriages Act assumes that, in most cases, lobola will be paid. While couples over 18 can choose to marry without lobola, this is rare. A survey in Harare in the 1980s revealed only five per cent of marriages to have been registered without lobola payments. It is unlikely that any significant changes have occurred since this survey. In an attempt to justify the status quo, Zvobgo maintained that changing laws does not lead to automatic change of cultural behavior, (1983:46).

Buttressing Zvobgo's view, Ndulo affirmed that customary law has a great impact on the lives of the majority of Africans in the area of personal law in regard to matters such as marriage, inheritance, and traditional authority. He contended that in its application,

customary law is often discriminatory in such areas as bride price, guardianship, inheritance, appointment to traditional offices, exercise of traditional authority, and age of majority. His further contention is that customary law tends to see women as adjuncts to the group to which they belong, such as a clan or tribe, rather than equals (2011:88-89).

I uphold Ndulo's assertions on the basis that, despite the existence of other laws like the Legal Age of Majority Act in Zimbabwe, the status quo is maintained. This law makes payment of lobola optional, vesting the decision on whether *lobola* should or should not be paid on the bride. I argue that, that provision is enough to influence concession to lobola payment. I acknowledge the good intentions surrounding this law but sadly, these good intentions are overridden by the brides' insistence that lobola be paid for them. This obviously is a consequence of the bride's upbringing which inculcated into her that lobola should be paid for her. Contravention of human rights now becomes apparent.

2.4. Conflict with human rights

There is a major debate between human rights activists and traditionalists centered on whether customary norms are compatible with human rights norms contained in international conventions and national bills of rights in national constitutions. While traditionalists argue that, by promoting traditional values, customary law makes a positive contribution to the promotion of human rights, activists argue that, certain customary law norms undermine the dignity of women and are used to justify treating women as inferior citizens. Many African constitutions contain provisions guaranteeing equality, human dignity, and prohibition of discrimination based on gender. However, the same constitutions recognize the application of customary law and they do this without resolving the conflict between customary law norms and human rights provisions. Marriages in Zimbabwe, particularly the African marriages, continue to be subjected to the dictates of the distorted customary practice of lobola.

2.5. Marriage

According to Radcliffe –Brown et.al (1960:45) Marriage is a legal union of a man and a woman. They perceive marriage as essentially a re-arrangement of social structure. They considered social structure as an arrangement of persons in institutionalized relations (Ibid, 1960:43). These definitions help us to understand African customs relating to marriage. They correctly observed that marriage alters existing relationships. Those of the bride to her family are changed. New social relations are created between the husband and the wife and between the husband and wife’s relatives, on one hand, the wife, and the husband’s relatives on the other hand. “Marriages are thus, re-arrangements of structures that are constantly recurring; they are moments of the continuing social process regulated by custom; these are institutionalized ways of dealing with such events,” (Ibid, 1960:43).

The above definitions afford the reader scope to compare the African idea of marriage and the Western idea of marriage. There is always a tendency to judge other people’s customs by reference to our own. I am persuaded that the Western world is the biggest culprit in this regard.

Radcliffe-Brown et.al reminded us that “the modern English idea of marriage is recent and decidedly unusual, the product of a particular social development.” Their research showed that in early England, amongst other things, the bridegroom promised to pay the bride price to the bride’s father or legal guardian. He also stated what present (morning gift) he would give his wife for permitting the physical consummation of the marriage, that was to be paid after the bridal night, (1960:43). I consider the Shona custom of lobola to be at the above English level of social development. I concur with Tagarira et.al’s assertion that the custom had to contend with a lot of foreign influence during the colonial and post-colonial eras in Zimbabwe. This might have affected the natural evolution of the custom. I regard protracted colonial attempts to manipulate the practice to be consequential to the retardation of development and current waywardness of lobola.

2.6. Marriages systems in Zimbabwe

Muzerengwa, (2016:29-30), Dube (2013:3), Mawere et. al. (2010:226), Galen (1987:1) concur that Zimbabwe has a pluralistic marriage system. On one hand, Muzerengwa identified three categories, namely, customary/traditional marriage, legal marriage and illegal marriage. On the other hand, Mawere et. al, identified at least four main types of marital unions, namely, traditional customary marriage, religious marriage, civil marriage and mutual consent union/cohabitation.

I favour Galen (1987: 1-24) who summarised marriage in Zimbabwe into the following categories namely:

1. Legal marriages- these are marriages that are sanctioned by the law and/or the customary traditional systems. The registered customary marriage (Chapter 5:07 of the Marriages Act). In this type of union polygamous. The marriage is anchored on the payment of *lobola* by the family of the bridegroom to the family of the bride.
2. Unregistered customary union. This union is also polygamous. It is not an illegal marriage though it is selectively recognized by law. Payment of *lobola* is a requirement in this type of marriage.
3. Civil marriage, also known as the registered marriage (Chapter 5:11 of the Marriages Act), is monogamous. In reference to this type of marriage, Galen and the Legal Resources Foundation postulated that the heterosexual couple marry and wed in court or before a minister of religion. Mills (2008:13-14) described the preceding marriage as a spiritual marriage. He defines spiritual marriage as a marriage ordained and ordered by God, in which the couple makes vows to each other so that God seals the marriage. Obviously, the understanding of the types of marriage informs spouses about their relations for example, the type of marriage informs men to either have legal or illegal marriage.

a) Illegal marriages

Illegal marriage is a union that is not sanctioned by the law and/or the customary traditional systems and defy Christian values. The partners live together without the approval of most relations. Illegal marriages include *kubika mapoto (co-habitation)*,

Galen (1987:18) and Legal Resources Foundation (2006:23). Co-habitation is typically an arrangement where a man and a woman agree to stay together without any customary or legal formalities. This type of union appears to be very easy to institute, but may have dire consequences for either party's future. Some of these consequences are recalling of the wife and her children from the new family by her parents, leaving the husband alone until he rationalises the marriage by paying *lobola*, and demand for payment of lobola for a dead woman before her burial, in the event of the death of the wife.

Dube rightly blamed Zimbabwe's dual legal system, for allowing customary law to exist simultaneously with general law, for these different types of marriages, (2013:3). I argue that this would have been an ideal situation if the same rights and duties accrued in every relationship. I further argue for fairness in either partner choosing the type of marriage they want to enter into, in order to enjoy equally the advantages and suffer equally the negative consequences thereof. Unfortunately, according to Dube, what is obtaining currently is that the rights and duties accruing in each relationship differ with each type of marriage, (Ibid, 2013:3) However, the prerogative to choose the type of marriage one wants to enter into predominantly lies with the male partner. Consequently, the advantages of being in one type of marriage as compared to another are enjoyed by the male, while the negative consequences mainly affect the female partner, (Ibid, 2013:3). Nevertheless, in practice the parents of the bride expect lobola to be paid despite the choice of marriage by the groom. In my view this eradicates whatever financial relief that would accrue to the new couple if the bride opted for the non-payment of lobola.

2.7. Concept of lobola

Roora or lobola is a custom practiced by many ethnic societies in Africa and involves the groom or his family giving money, goods or livestock to the parents of the bride (Burn 2005:24); (Chireshe et.al 2010:211); (Ansell 2001:1). According to Nsereko, in many indigenous African societies, it is customary, as a preliminary to marriage, for property to be given or delivered by or on behalf of a prospective bridegroom to the

relatives of the prospective bride. This property is variously referred to as "bride-price," "bride wealth," "marriage-consideration" or "marriage-payment." The Shona refer to it as *roora* or *lobola*, (1975:682). I concur with Nsereko that none of these English terms convey the true meaning of this ancient African custom. These terms are underlined by the idea of sale, which is inaccurate, (Ibid, 1975:682). The people who coined these terms were foreigners who had no understanding whatsoever about the African custom. Nsereko was spot on by strongly arguing that these terms have to be understood in the African context not in the biased Western context. When I paid lobola to my wife's parents, I never at any point thought that I was purchasing a wife. If anything, I was too happy that I was making a lifelong commitment to my wife and appreciating my in-laws for raising a wonderful marriage partner for me. I understand this to be the general African male attitude towards lobola, all other things remaining equal.

Other scholars like Chireshe et. al., (2010:218) confirmed the idea that lobola is a valuable part of African culture and that it should not be abolished. I subscribe to this view. We are Africans; we have our own distinct way of getting married. This is what distinguishes us from Europeans, Asians and other races. Lobola is part of our Africanness.

Yet again, other scholars like Bourdillon (1976, 1998), Chigwedere (1982), Mvududu (2002), Kambarami (2006) and Mapara (2007), endorsed that lobola is a noble practice which is meant to promote harmony within the society. I do not dispute the intended nobility and purpose of the practice of lobola. What bothers me is whether one can honestly regard lobola as a noble practice and whether it is promoting harmony within the families in Zimbabwe today. Lobola stories I encounter beg for something to be done to avert the pain it is inflicting on young Shona men and women who want to marry.

On the contrary, Ncube (1987) regarded the practice as antiquated, barbaric and a social nuisance that should be abolished. Chireshe et.al, (2010), advocated for the abolition of lobola because women were regarded as property when the in-laws charged exorbitant amounts of money. Nsereko blamed the introduction of a cash economy into

the African societies which otherwise thrived in barter trade, for causing the custom of lobola to suffer from abuse. Zimbabwe in general and the Shona in particular were not spared. Colonialism and its vices changed the outlook of *lobola* for good. As alleged by Nsereko, some parents began to demand exorbitant lobola for their daughters, (1975: 682). The lobola figures being charged today, that I hear in my interactions with people as a minister, can best be described as ridiculous at best and atrocious at worst.

Contrary to what the Western world wants us to believe, Nsereko (1975:683) noted that this custom also existed in some non-African cultures. He cited the story in the Bible of how Jacob, Abraham's grandson, had to labour for seven years before he could be given Rachel's hand in marriage. It states that Jacob loved Rachel, and he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel. . . ." to Laban for her bride price. So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her", (Genesis 29:18)

I regard seven years, as having been exorbitant bride wealth, even by the Jewish standards. However, it was an offer that Jacob made with the intention of making it difficult for Laban to decline. The bride price was high and clearly had some negative implications.

2.8. Negative implications of high pride price

Plateau and Gaspart (2007) indicated that high bride prices (*lobola*) contribute to alienation of women and their transformation into commodities or into their husband's slaves. They associated bride price (*lobola*) with expressions that show a deep-seated frustration and suffering. They argued that behind these expressions, lay the fear that the husband and his family may resent high bride prices (*lobola*) because of the financial stress caused. They believed that resentment lingers on when the *lobola* is paid in installments and the husband or his family regret having agreed to an unbearable burden, especially if they find fault with the wife or daughter-in-law. They argued that such an environment exposes the woman to a serious risk of harassment and ill-treatment by the husband and his relatives because of the problems encountered

by them. Their study concluded that high bride-prices tend to affect the stability of marriages by alienating women, or driving husbands to harass and ill-treat their wives.

Plateau and Gaspart's perspective is not compatible with the modern Shona men who tend to negotiate whatever lobola is demanded, pay what they can and proceed with their lives. The men encounter serious challenges from the in-laws in the event of their wife's illness and eventual death. The in-laws demand the outstanding lobola before they bury their daughters, particularly if nothing had been paid before. High non-negotiable prices are demanded in these circumstances.

Hague and Thiara (2009) claimed that high lobola has serious implications on marital stability. They identified effects of exorbitant lobola on marital stability and included financial strain, which the new couples are forced to endure by being burdened with severe debt. They maintained that exorbitant lobola heaps huge pressure on young inexperienced African men without resources. Consequently, these young people begin married and adult life in financial constraints bordering on poverty. This has serious implications on stability of marriages.

Hague and Thiara have a point on the issue of poverty. The majority of the young men I have done marriage counseling with complained that the lobola demanded by their in-laws and the subsequent white wedding, (lavish ceremonies, made up of ceremony and reception where the couple is blessed by a church Pastor) had impoverished them. Some claim that they remain with huge obligations that are bound to take long to liquidate. The Pentecostal Church in Zimbabwe usually insists on these weddings.

Further, Hague and Thiara commented on scenarios where high lobola led to the separation of the co-habiting couple, causing dissolution of the unions.

This is where Hague and Thiara missed the point completely, in the Zimbabwean context. Co-habiting is considered an illegal marriage. Dissolution of such a union is actually regarded as the right thing to do. Thus bemoaning such separation is unZimbabwean. I condemn cases where parents disrupt family life by recalling their daughters as a way to extract the balance of the agreed lobola from their sons-in-law.

This tends to strain relations and defies God's command that "It is not good that man should live alone," (Gen 2:18). Strained relations in marriage often result in domestic violence.

2.9. Domestic violence

The English Oxford Living Dictionary defines violence as "behavior involving physical force intended to hurt, damage or kill someone or something". This definition justifies the concern of scholars like Alupo (2004) who cited instances where lobola is a major factor contributing to domestic violence in relationships, thereby threatening the stability of marriage. He argued that *lobola* is a commercial transaction that renders the marriage valid, only when it has been paid. It has sometimes been seen as the basis for the claim that women are exchanged for goods as if they were commodities, with bargaining occurring between the parties concerned. To him African women have suffered and had their rights violated because of lobola payment.

I classify Alupo's views as glaringly representative of the Western worldview that has labeled every African custom as backward, dehumanizing and requiring to be abolished. These views obviously are underlined by lack of in-depth knowledge of the practice of lobola. While I acknowledge some brides' parents in Zimbabwe, are abusing lobola, I am convinced that its intentions remain noble and relevant to the Shona.

Scholars like Alupo further alleged that once the man has paid lobola, "the woman is reduced to the status of property owned, not only by the husband but by the extended family as well. She not only becomes part of property but even what she works for becomes part of the husband's family property because they paid bride-price", (Alupo 2004); (Mvududu 2000).

This may be true among the uneducated and less enterprising women in Zimbabwe. Further scrutiny reveals that power dynamics are changing fast. Many married women have become major providers in their families because of superior jobs some of them work in and business ventures they are engaged in. The husbands actually look up to

them for sustenance, and may never dare to abuse them. This new found status has become their insurance against abuse.

Ansell (2001) argued that though marriage payments can take many different forms, no consensus exists on which of these forms, if any, enhances the welfare of women. Ansell (2001) alleged that theoretically, *lobola* could be interpreted as explicit recognition and valuing of women's productivity and contribution to marriage: but in practice, it often serves to limit women's control over their bodies, both sexually and in terms of their labors. Some scholars have established a link between high *lobola* and domestic violence. In concurrence Alupo (2004) postulated that "It forces a woman to live under an intolerable and hostile family environment, which subjects her to servitude and slave like conditions, hence leading to violence against women, when the marriage breaks down".

Buttressing this idea Grossbard (2006) demonstrated that high *lobola* increases the numbers of extramarital affairs for men, but decreases those for women. These extramarital affairs increase the chances of marital problems in the family. Often the man do feel that the woman has become his property because of the heavy *lobola* paid for her.

As I uphold Ansell and Alupo's stance, I note that *lobola* refund is not the only consideration that forces women to stay in abusive marriages. Refund of *lobola* can be reduced to a long battle that can be fought with the in-laws whilst their daughter is in the safety of their homes. The major factor that forces the women to soldier on is their children. Shona women say *ndinogarira vana vangu* (I will stay for the sake of my children).

Rogers (2004) commented on *lobola* and its dehumanization of women and linked it to some violence against women that could destabilize marriages. To him *lobola* is supposed to be a symbol or token of appreciation to the family of the girl to be married off (bride) and not to dehumanize women as property to be owned, sold and bought off in order to satisfy men's selfish desires and egos. He bemoaned the use of *lobola* to abuse girls and women. He further alleged that men tend to think that after paying the

bride price women become their goods, services and personal property to be owned, mistreated and dumped when they have outlived their purpose and use. He concluded that the conception produces a negative effect as the relationship between men and women is affected.

I perceive Rogers as someone who typically represents the feminists' and womanists' position regarding patriarch in general and customary practices, including lobola, in particular. I urge their Zimbabwean counterparts to utilize the power bestowed on them by the Legal Age of Majority Act (LAMA) to dissuade women from opting to have lobola paid for them.

Mvududu (2000) bemoaned the negative impact lobola has on a woman's reproductive rights. She argued that a woman becomes a child rearing machine, with little control over family planning or her sexual health and, therefore, on the healthy development of the whole society. It is no wonder Mvududu complained that the institution of lobola was incompatible with a basic standard of human/personal rights for women and called for its abolition and for government to take a stronger lead in formulating laws that better protected women's marital and reproductive rights.

I submit that this situation may have prevailed around 2000 or earlier in Zimbabwe. I am not aware of any census that has been conducted lately to show the demography of Zimbabwe. Unconfirmed reports suggest that families are tending to have fewer children because of the skyrocketing cost of living. This makes me assume that women now have improved control over family planning, otherwise how else could they manage to control the size of their families. Despite the numerous negative implications of high lobola discussed above, there are positive implications.

2.10. Positive implications of high bride price

One of the positive implications of exorbitant *lobola* is the concerted effort by the wife's parents to make their daughter's marriage work. To this end, Weigh (2003) noted that *lobola* helps in stabilizing of family alliance. "The idea seems to be that the fear of

paying back bride-price after dissolution of a marriage may lead the family of the woman to do its part in ensuring that the marriage is successful.”

The observation made by Weigh is very correct in my view. If the lobola paid was high the bride’s parents would have a huge burden of raising the refund, in the event of divorce. However, the way the parents of the troubled woman go about the business of counseling their daughter, leaves a lot to be desired. Those that have come to me for counseling revealed that their parents merely remind them that lobola was paid so they need to go back to their abusive husbands and be brave.

Another scholar, Anyebe (1985) claimed that lobola makes marriage legal and establishes the legitimacy of children. He regarded lobola as a compensation for loss to the woman’s family of one of its members, a potential child bearer, and as such, it is a marriage insurance to stabilize the relationship and protect the bride. Anyebe retorted that charging exorbitant lobola, gives the impression that lobola has become a money-making venture which has lost its traditional or cultural meaning of uniting families. I sympathize with those who view the current form of lobola among the Shona as commodification of women.

2.11. Commodification of women

According to the Cambridge English dictionary, commodification is defined as treating or considering something as a product that can be bought and sold. I favor this definition because it exposes what is prevailing on the issue of lobola in Zimbabwe. Having made some observations of my own, I concur with Tarugarira et.al, (2014:63) who deduced that through the payment of *lobola*, women are commodified. The kind of figures that are being demanded by brides’ parents point to commodification of women. In support of this notion, Chabata (2011) argued that the terms bride-wealth and bride price that are used by Westerners, are value laden and commodification cannot be denied. These are sound arguments. The amounts of *lobola* being charged by the Shona people, as observed in chapter one, serve to confirm that women are now being treated as commodities. This exhibits evidence of the commercialization of lobola.

2.12. Commercialization of lobola

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines commercialization as managing something principally for profit. I settled for this definition because it resonates with my perception of lobola in Zimbabwe today.

Tagarira et.al (2014), traced the institution of lobola from pre-colonial, colonial to post-colonial periods. He concluded that the violent exposure of the institution of lobola to the radiation of European business ideas and conspicuous consumption of European goods meant that as a source of income it could not survive commercial abuse. In affirmation, Chabata (2012:2), posited that changes during Zimbabwe's serious economic challenges from around the year 2000 to 2008 and the ensuing multi-currency era (from the year 2008 to date) really saw acceleration in the commercialization of lobola.

I endorse both Tagarira's and Chabata's views that lobola has undergone a radical transformation in Zimbabwe from a simple cultural practice into a highly commercialized venture, where the bride has a clear monetary value attached to her. This has put the institution of lobola into disrepute. I forgive the Europeans for looking down upon it as a shameful "buying of wives" and a "commercial racket" since the charging and bargaining of lobola were based on commercial considerations (Tagarira et.al 2014:72).

Tarugarira et.al used the term commercialization of lobola "to refer to a system where the payment of lobola has been transformed from being a mere cultural practice to a business venture, where the bride has a clear monetary value attached to her", (Ibid: 2014:72). Consequently payment negotiations are characterized by intense bargaining leading to the payment of a high fee and is almost equivalent to the selling of a commodity on the open market, (Ibid, 2014: 64). They correctly concluded that "bride wealth continued to degenerate into a fundamentally commercial transaction in which wealth was transferred between generations of males, and women were the bartered goods", (Ibid, 2014:67).

I identify with Zvobgo's view that traditional Shona customs such as *roora* were first formed within a local context and then reformed within a global context. The

intermingling of the past and the present with the local and the global creates tension, which results in friction between the intention of the customary practice of roora and the modern implementation of the practice,(2017:7).

I argue that custom is handed down from generation to generation. Some customs have been handed down for many generations. Mundangepfupfu correctly observed that, as customs trickle down from one generation to another, many aspects are lost and diluted until the custom becomes meaningless and unrecognizable compared to what it used to be, (2015:2/8). For example when my grandfather married my grandmother, he said he only paid a hoe as lobola, which is what he could afford. This signified his appreciation towards his in-laws. My grandmother's family reciprocated the appreciation by sending her off with all the necessary utensils and materials that were required to start a home, such as goats, blankets and food. Both my grandfather's and grandmother's families did this as a sign of goodwill and support for their children in building a family. My point is that, only half of the tradition is now followed among the Shona and the other half has been forgotten and discarded. Only the bridegroom now pays with no reciprocation from the bride's family. A new type of lobola has emerged which activists call commercialized lobola, (Ibid, 2015: 2/8).

In an attempt to draw people's attention to the decadence in the institution of lobola in Zimbabwe, The Zimbabwean carried stories of President Robert Mugabe giving away his daughter Bona at a traditional marriage ceremony to Simbarashe Chikore. Simbarashe Chikore was reported to have made a lobola payment of US\$35 000 (R490 000) excluding an additional fourteen head of cattle, with an average price of US\$700 (R9800) each, pushing the sum to US \$45 500 (R737 000). The same paper also reported that Army commander General Constantine Chiwenga paid more than US\$ 45 000 (R630 000) to secure his marriage to a former model Mary Mubaiwa. The number of cattle he was charged is unknown. Also, Gospel artist Sebastian Magacha parted with US\$10 000 (R140 000) for his bride Nomsa Ndikumwe's hand in marriage.

The above stores, which are in the public domain, impede the cause and spirit of the practice of lobola. They exhibit a glaring departure from the traditional understanding of

lobola as being a token of appreciation, symbolizing togetherness. I subscribe to the view that parents are charging exorbitantly depending on the status of the family and educational qualifications of the young woman concerned. Whether the bridegroom can or cannot afford is his own problem.

White missionaries compared the delivery of lobola to bartering for a wife or trafficking in human beings, and as such, abhorred the practice, (Prestige, 1901). On the contrary, their African counterparts were in support of the custom, (Zvobgo (1996). I am convinced they considered themselves Africans first and then Christians. The white missionaries were obviously ignorant of the African culture. If they took time to understand the culture, they would have been spared the embarrassment of banning lobola in the churches and later revoking the ban ending up resorting unsuccessfully to prohibiting excessive lobola charges. There is no evidence that the latter position is gaining any support in the mainline churches. Surprisingly, it is fascinating to note that lobola still has some positive social aspects.

2.13. Positive social aspects

Bourdillon described the influence of lobola as just, responsible and a stabilizing factor. He considered lobola “a significant gift and acknowledgement of a priceless debt which the bridegroom’s family group owes to the bride’s family group”, (1998:16-19).

Thorpe (1991:7) buttressed this idea by suggesting that lobola helps family structures by “legitimizing the children and conferring marriage status to women,” which may be understood as a guarantee of good faith on the part of both families.

I am persuaded that Bourdillon’s and Thorpe’s perceptions are merely representative of the original intent of lobola at inception. Lobola has since mutated. Its current form seems to be at variance with these scholars’ claims. One only needs to witness or interview a person who has had the misfortune to engage in-laws lately in lobola negotiations, to question the perceived positive social aspects of lobola.

Mills, (2010:10) Categorized the traditional rationale and arguments in favor of lobola as follows:

1. Insurance aspects: - a demonstration by the man that he is able to provide for his wife.
2. Exclusive sexual rights: a man who pays lobola is said to have paid for exclusive sexual rights to his wife and thus helps promote faithfulness within the marriage.
3. Right to the labor of the woman: the family of the woman feels that they would be deprived of her services and help within the family structure and so the man and his family must compensate them for this loss. Mills also noted that lobola “is the compensation for all the trouble and expenses of raising the woman” (2010:9)
4. Reproductive capacity: Traditionally a woman’s reproductive capacity is very valuable and highly prized. Children belong to the husband and his family, and are considered ample return for lobola paid. If a woman fails to produce a child, the husband’s family could demand a return of the lobola or that a replacement wife be sent.
5. Glue for African Marriage: Lobola gives both sets of families an incentive to ensure the success of the marriage. Interest in the success of the marriage is not just limited to the couple but extends to the families and community too. According to Mills “breakdowns and divorce created endless tangles and difficulties, tracing cows over several years, plus their increase or death etc. These were the most complex and difficult court cases to resolve,” (Ibid, 2010:10).
6. An incentive to preserve a girl’s virginity: “The family of a woman who is a virgin at marriage can demand a much higher lobola and so there is an incentive for her family to protect her virtue and purity,” (Ibid, 2010:10).

Sebastian (2005: Online) applauded the practice of lobola in Africa. He even urged the church in India to adopt this custom as a way of improving the status of women in India. Unlike in the African context, the woman’s family has to pay to have her marry; which is a further erosion of the almost non-existent rights afforded to women in Asia. It has become expensive to have daughters leading to abortions for the purpose of gender selection as well as female infanticide.

I consider it amazing that a non-African like Sebastian, noticed something good about our custom. It shows that something can still be salvaged from it even though negative social aspects abound and tarnish the practice.

2.14. Negative social aspects

Botha (2011: Online) declared that “the original purpose of lobola has been misapprehended, distorted and often manipulated in our modern society.” His assertion that lobola has shifted significantly from a formality to a major financial transaction captures its outlook. It is no longer friendship between families. It qualifies to be perceived as an attempt to transfer wealth from the younger generation to the older generation of men, a kind of dog eat dog situation. Lobola has become big business.

In concurrence with Botha, Smith (2011) observed that lobola now places exceptional or even impossible financial burdens on prospective husbands and recently married couples. He contended that the high price of lobola has contributed to social and family degeneration in Southern Africa.

I subscribe to Ansell’s (2001:679-716) observation that studies have exposed a lack of a relationship between the payment of lobola and the decrease in abuse of women. Proponents of lobola argue without tangible evidence, that the payment of lobola empowers women within the institution of marriage, and protects them from abuse and violence. I share the same view with Smith that paid or unpaid, lobola offers little protection to women. I consider the claim an imagination of men and an attempt by them to discourage women from condemning lobola.

Kambarami (2006:205) argued that lobola robs women of their basic rights, erodes equality and widens the gap between men and women. She further argued that, “the woman is even further reduced to the level of acquired property especially in cases where lobola was set at a high price”. She viewed lobola as an instrument of patriarchy that perpetuates the subordination of women.

Kambarami came in from a feminist perspective. I find it difficult to negate her point because not much input is coming from her male counterparts to halt the traumatic experiences that lobola is causing among the Shona. The Pentecostal church seems to be abating the pain by not having a common position on lobola. There is a lot that the church can do. The status quo is thus in contravention of God's Word, in Galatians 3:28 which teaches equality between man and woman, husband and wife. In support of this argument, the Herald of Thursday 2 November 2017 reported a case in which Priscilla Vengesai, a lawyer by profession, approached the Zimbabwean Constitutional Court challenging the constitutionality of the practice of paying lobola. She claimed that it reduces women to mere "assets" that are open for abuse. She wanted the practice to be abolished claiming the practice has no place in a modern industrialized society. She wanted the Constitutional Court to rule that paying lobola is discriminatory and reduces women to mere assets. Alternatively, she wanted parents of both the bride and the groom to be thanked for raising their children well through lobola in the spirit of gender equality. Vengesai lamented that "women's rights to dignity, equality and non-discrimination were at stake and that the court should be quick to declare the customary practice unconstitutional". She favored a situation where couples should be allowed to live together as husband and wife without being compelled to pay lobola. However, in the event that lobola is upheld, she wanted it paid to both families.

I partially agree with Vengesai on the issue of lobola being paid to both the families of the groom and the bride. This, to some extent, can bring in a measure of equality that can easily be embraced by the bridegroom's family. However, her position is oblivious of the knock-on effect of such an arrangement on the new family. The new family is likely to start with a double financial burden. Their parents' families are likely to out-bid each other, given the prevailing greediness among parents. As much as both parents would benefit, the new couple would be condemned to heavy financial strain, devoid of the cushion provided by the wife's income in the current practice. If the bride is not employed the situation is then compounded. Both parties have to find lobola to pay the parents of both spouses. Both of them may be indebted to their in-laws for life. The debt, according to Shona culture, has to be liquidated on death of one spouse by the

surviving spouse or be passed on to their children. Lobola currently demanded is likely to mortgage the couple for life. This makes Shona marriage a risky religious and cultural practice.

2.15. Marriage as a risky religious and cultural practice

Lobola payment sets up men in total control of marriages. It gives them unquestionable power in the unions. Men have room to engage in extra-marital affairs. National Aids Council (NAC) asserted that men in Zimbabwe are involved with mistresses known as small houses, (2005a: 8). This compromises the health of the spouse. Refusal by the men to use condoms with their wives worsens the situation. Their argument is always that the lobola they paid was not wrapped in condoms (Chirawu 2006:7). This infringes on women's rights in marriage and exposes them to HIV/AIDS. Chirawu (2006:2); Dodson (1984:19); and Smedes (1983:59) noted that despite remaining faithful to one partner, many women are infected with HIV. Also, Muzerengwa (2016) claimed that married women in Zimbabwe are facing death from HIV/AIDS related illness more than any other group and that marriage literally leads them to the grave.

Muchena (2012:4) noted consensus in several studies and analyses prepared by prevention experts on HIV/AIDS that multiple and concurrent relationships are a key driver of the epidemic. Women are exposed to high rates of infection especially because they do not often have the power or audacity to insist on safer sex, even when they know that their husbands have multiple sex partners. Lobola was paid for them, worst still if it was exorbitant.

In view of the HIV threats, Mungwini bemoans the pressures that traditional expectations place on women (2008:6). He contended that they are not only constricting on what women can do, but have become dangerous too. This then tips the scales against women in the marriage power dynamics making the argument of equality a plausible discourse.

2.16. Argument of equality

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women defines equality between women and men (gender equality) as equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. They concede that equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality thus implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Equality between men and women is perceived both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of sustainable people-centered development.

As an African man, I view equality as equal opportunities for both males and females in terms of education, jobs, inheritance etc. There are things, though that we can never change, much as we would want to. Pregnancy, childbirth and nursing babies are some of those things. Even in these, I acknowledge that conscientization especially on the part of the majority of the Shona men is required on matters of equality in diversity.

I submit that the equality argument has caused a lot of confusion. Women and men are equally important, with different roles to play in society. One cannot do without the other (life propagation). How people choose to recognize and ceremonise the union of man and woman in marriage is entirely up to every society and community. However, society must be cognizant of human rights as espoused by the United Nations. In the same vein, I recognize the spiritual connection in the custom of roora among the Shona as an issue that requires interrogation.

2.17. Spiritual connection

Traditionally if a wife dies, she goes back to belong to her father. She no longer belongs to her husband but returns to her people – (in death do us part). Only the father or his representative can bury her. The husband does *kuridza mhere kwatezvara*, (the ritual of notifying the father-in-law about his daughter's death done by

a representative of the husband). This ritual involves the surviving husband sending a representative, on advice from senior members of his family: to his in-laws to inform them that *musha waparara* (the home has been destroyed). The Shona consider the wife as the home. Without a woman, there is no home. They say *musha mukadzi* meaning if there is no wife there is no home. Anyhow, the representative is given some money ranging from R200 to R600 to give to the father-in-law as a symbol of the official death notice of their daughter from their son-in-law. The elder among the father-in-law's relatives informs his deceased ancestors of the death of their daughter. If the son-in-law had not paid *roora*, *roora* negotiations and payment have to be done before his in-laws engage their ancestors.

Roora is a traditional spiritual matter of which the most important element is not the eight or ten cattle for *danga* (lobola given to the bride's father), but the one cow, *mombe yeumai* (payment to the bride's mother which comes in the form of a live beast). That *mombe* (beast) is the crux of the traditional value of *roora*, as it points to the vital importance of motherhood in an otherwise male dominated power play. It is valued more than "*mombe dzedanga*," (lobola given to the father). When presented the mother-in-law's relatives kneel down clapping and inform their ancestors about the payment and request them to make their daughter fruitful in her new family.

I consider it foolhardy to totally disregard *lobola* as alleged to be happening among young men, by Peta, (2016:50). She alleged that local media publications reveal a general belief among people in Zimbabwe that men who by-pass the fundamental African custom of paying *roora* are practicing *manenji* (a bizarre act), which will ultimately bring misfortune upon their lives as a consequence of trivializing *roora*. I had a preview of the pain and suffering that these young men go through in my encounter with Sam's predicament described in Chapter one.

The foregoing clearly highlights the spiritual connection of *lobola* which has guaranteed its continuity through the ages even though there have been distortions. I argue that positively deconstructing the custom of *lobola*, as espoused by Pollard may result in meaningful changes especially among Shona Pentecostals (1997:44). There are some

aspects that are bound to be inconsistent with the Pentecostal theology which can be substituted with the word of God and change the complexion of lobola altogether.

Interestingly, scholars have carried out extensive research on lobola and come up with divergent connotations for women.

2.18. Lobola connotations for women

I share Chireshe's sentiments that, lobola has both positive and negative connotations for women (2012:31). Viewed from an Afro-centric perspective, it is perceived positively as a cementing force that unites families, previously unrelated, into a close relationship, (Kethusegile et. al., 2000:67). In support of the positive connotations, Townsend postulated that traditionally, lobola guaranteed protection of the rights of men and women, signifying lasting relationship, (2008:34).

I am at variance with Townsend's assertion. His position ignores the fact that the rights purportedly protected by lobola, promote entrenchment of inequality, and abuse in many traditional marriages. The perceived rights can be counted with fingers on one hand. If there are any rights protected, they are the man's rights. Men cunningly protect their self-interests by perpetuating the practice of lobola in the guise that it protects women's interests.

Acknowledging the benefits of lobola, Chireshe (2010:16); Gelfand (1999:177); Bourdillon (1993:36) concur that lobola symbolizes respect for the woman and gratitude to the woman's family. Gelfand even regarded lobola highly as affording the woman a value in the eyes of all, especially the man. To him the woman then, has value and could not just be taken, (1999:177).

I partially concur with the above assertions by Chireshe, Gelfand and Bourdillon. Lobola does indeed, accord respect to a Shona woman for whom lobola has been paid. The people who know her refer to her as *akabvisirwa pfuma*, (the one for whom lobola was paid). The woman even brags about it saying *ndakabvisirwa pfuma* (lobola was paid for

me). Most men begin to regard her as out of bounds for them and call her “ambhuya” (the mother of our wife).

On one hand, Bourdillon (1993; 36, 38) correctly contended that in Shona culture, lobola validates a marriage. Where lobola has not been paid, the union is not recognized as marriage by society. The woman is consequently stigmatized as someone in a temporary relationship and not a homemaker (*mukadzi wemapoto*). The relationship is regarded as casual sex or prostitution. Thus, Bourdillon rightly concluded that lobola gives status to traditional marriage.

On the other hand, Chireshe 2012:32 argued that the practice of lobola has made girl children to be regarded as a source of wealth among the Shona. They are openly teased for their monetary worth rather than being regarded as children who just deserve to be loved as such. Wiley regards this perception as commoditization of women, where women serve as subjects of economic transaction between men, (2009:63). Shona parents expect their girl child to get married and bring wealth to them through *lobola* (Chireshe 2012:32).

I subscribe to the idea that a girl child should eventually marry when she finds a man of her choice. I however abhor the fact that marriage is now being used as a means to enrich the girl’s father, as evidenced by current lobola charges among the Shona. Chireshe alleged that “the custom is often abused to give the husband and his family a sense of ownership of the wife.” This relegates the custom of lobola, to being a source of oppression for women, thus drawing a lot of criticism from feminists and other rights groups, (Ibid, 2012: 32). I concur with the view that lobola, coupled with patriarchal attitudes, becomes the basis of oppression of women by men (Chireshe et.al.2010:218; Townsend 2008:34; UNICEF 2007:45; Kambarami 2006:8). This emanates from the sense of acquisition that men feel after paying exorbitant lobola charges. They, thus feel they are entitled to control and have unlimited rights over them. This may result in the man meting out punishment if she errs, (Townsend 2008:34; Burn 2005:24). Further, contemporary lobola in Zimbabwe epitomizes the commoditization of women, with implications of buying and selling, (Chireshe 2012:33). Lobola has thus, become

an instrument of male dominance and exploitation (Ndulo 2011:94). Consequently, lobola is viewed as entrenching gender inequality. Buttressing this view Ndulo argued that “Lobola has become what Westerners alleged was “bride price” and has ceased to be a source of African pride”, (Ndulo 2011:94).

In spite of the perceived negative impact of lobola payment, Chireshe et.al concluded that the custom is still held in high esteem as an aspect of the cultural heritage of the Shona (2010;215). In concurrence, Posel et.al. (2011:108) concluded that for many women, lobola represents, a sense of commitment and love of the man, which is why they exhibit commitment to it, I argue that this may simply be a question of old habits dying hard. I am pro tactful implementation of corrective measures that can bear fruit despite the apparent failure of advocacy for legislative and policy change for removal of customary procedures as pre-requisite for solemnization of marriage. Zimbabwe has national obligations to take corrective measures and not remain a spectator when lobola is inflicting immense pain and suffering on innocent men and women whose only sin is their desire to live together in holy matrimony.

2.19. National obligations

The Oxford English Dictionary defines national obligation as an act or course of action to which a person is morally or legally bound: a duty, a commitment. I am a proponent of this definition because it exposes the Government of Zimbabwe for its inaction or half-hearted attempt to address the scourge of lobola.

Many scholars like Dube, have endeavoured to remind the Government of Zimbabwe about its obligations to its citizens. Dube 2013:2 postulated that Zimbabwe has obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to “eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations”,(Article 16).

It also has a duty to “modify social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women with a view to achieving elimination of prejudice and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women, (Article 5).

I am of the view that the requisite enabling legislation is in place, namely the various United Nations protocols that Zimbabwe is a signatory to, the Zimbabwean Constitution and a conglomeration of Acts of Parliament. I contend that only the resolve is lacking on the part of those officials entrusted with the duty.

However, to put the matter into perspective I am obliged to delve briefly into what I will call the legal history of Zimbabwe. This may enhance the appreciation of the issue of lobola in Zimbabwe today.

2.20. Legal history

According to Zvobgo, two legal structures exist as a consequence of the British colonizing Zimbabwe. These are customary law to govern the indigenous people and the Roman-Dutch law, which was installed in 1891 from the Cape Colony that is used to govern all Zimbabweans regardless of their ethnic makeup (2009: 291-292).

I argue that although this law may have had insignificant misgivings at inception, with the passage of time, it was saddled with various Acts of Parliament by successive white settlor governments bent on self-preservation and aggrandisement. I contend that these Acts were never meant to benefit the indigenous people in any meaningful manner. I am convinced that the idea was to keep them subservient to the settlers. No effort was made to apply the Roman-Dutch law universally as that would entitle the indigenous people to the same benefits as the white settlers.

Chizororo, asserted that in pre-and postcolonial times Shona families were patriarchal, with gendered hierarchies and roles, with the young being ruled by the old and women and girls being ruled by men and boys, (2010:713). This culture served its purpose even though, with hindsight, its flaws are apparent. Any attempt at the time to change or abolish it and replace it with something foreign may have disoriented the Shona people. There is a school of thought that believes that had the white settlers applied the Roman-Dutch law equally among all people as the only law of the land, we may have been rid of the vices of lobola we are currently grappling with in Zimbabwe. In 1982, the Parliament of Zimbabwe passed the Legal Age of Majority Act (LAMA), to redress inequality, with the express intention to nullify traditional customary law (Zvobgo, 2009:

293). Before LAMA “an African woman was a perpetual minor from the cradle to the grave” (Zvobgo, 2009: 292). Consequently, at law, a woman needed to be represented by a man, either father or a substitute male relative when single and by her husband when married, (Zvobgo, 1983: 46)

On the one hand, I applaud the Parliament of Zimbabwe for the unprecedented move it took to redress inequality in the country by passing LAMA. On the other hand I condemn it for insincerity. They left a leeway for the continuation of lobola by vesting the decision for lobola payment in the girl without setting any parameters regarding amounts payable. As Africans, the majority of who were men, they knew that the girl was unlikely to deprive her father of lobola. They thus protected their own interests and avoided confrontation with their male voters. I also blame the Ministry of Gender and Women’s Affairs and the conglomeration of Gender Advocacy groups for not embarking rigorously on awareness campaigns to educate women about their empowerment through LAMA. It is sad to note that many women, in Zimbabwe today, are ignorant of the power they wield. If they were to exercise it wholesale, practices like lobola could easily be extinct.

It is prudent to reflect on the concept of societal pressure at this stage.

2.21. Societal pressure

According to Mundangepfupfu (2015:4/8), there is societal pressure which all boys grow up with – the pressure of being able to fend for their families. Growing up, as a Shona boy, I was always told that, I need to work hard in school so that one day I could be the head of the house and provide for my wife and children. This idea of the man being the one who provides is emphasized by lobola because it is the man who needs to pay for his bride to be. If the man can afford to pay lobola, then he is considered capable to look after his wife and children. I witnessed men who took money from their wives to pay lobola being looked down upon by society. I heard people laugh disdainfully at men whose wives contributed to lobola. Lobola is a societal custom that propagates the idea that man should be the backbone of the family. Even if the wife is gainfully employed, the husband should provide for the family. This construction, by default, puts the woman

under the man and creates a power dynamic where the man is in charge and the woman is subservient and subordinate to the man (Ibid, 2015:2/8). This is what then warrants comments such as *usataurisa ndakakubhadharira*, (don't talk too much I paid for you), or even feeling entitled to conjugal activities whenever the man wants, regardless of the woman's consent.

I am of the view that when the custom of lobola was invented men were the providers for the family but this has since changed among the Shona. Many women are now family providers. The man no longer has to prove that he is capable of providing for the family because that burden no longer solely rests on him.

2.22. Preliminary conclusion

In this chapter, I focused on the review of literature surrounding the concept of lobola or a related subject, like marriage, that gave a theoretical basis for my research. These scholars have helped to shed more light on my research "Lobola Struggle in Zimbabwe: A Pastoral Challenge." I am going to deal with the methodology of study in the next chapter.



CHAPTER THREE : RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As mentioned in Chapter One, the methodology that the researcher utilized is Charles Gerkin's Shepherding Model described in his book, *An Introduction to Pastoral Care*. The researcher opted for this methodology because it is designed for the caring model for individuals and the community at large. Gerkin's Shepherding Model encompasses the four biblical models of ministry, i.e. the priest, prophet, wisdom and shepherd for pastoral care, (1997:27).

In this model, care is regarded as the central metaphor of life in the Christian Community, which regards the priest as the shepherd who cares for his/her flock. The history of the Israelites exhibits God speaking to the people through his representatives, i.e. the priest who offered sacrifices, the prophets who spoke God's word and the wise man/woman who ruled over the people as God's representative, (Clavo, 2008:32).

These three representatives of God were, in a sense, the forerunner of the ministry of Christ to come into the world. Jesus offered therefore more insight into the shepherding model as he declared himself as the ultimate Good Shepherd in John 10:15. This scripture evidently makes shepherding a metaphor for pastoral ministry. In this context the priest or pastor has been given the task by Jesus Christ to 'nourish, protect, seek, sacrifice, know, manage, heal, love, lead and unite the flock of God, (Ibid, 2008:25). This justifies exploration of Gerkin's understanding of the shepherding model, next.

3.1. Exploring Gerkin's Shepherding Model

This model was first introduced as a metaphor in the religious life of the people of Israel whereby it refers to God's care for his people, and according to Gerkin,

'the prophetic, priestly, and wisdom models of caring ministry we inherited from the Israelite community are not to be sure, the only biblical images with which pastors have to identify. Another significant model is that of the caring leader as a shepherd, (1997: 27).'

The shepherding model is an appropriate model to be employed to assist African people therapeutically to deal with struggles of *lobola* in marriages. The models of healing, sustaining, guiding and caring will be employed in the hope that dignity is restored in African marriages. The church has a major role to play to ensure success in African marriages. The shepherding model is, therefore, ideal in this process of caring, listening and guiding. The researcher is convinced that this model is ideal in this study because the church today is seen as the new Israel, and as such, we see ourselves as the continuation of this caring and prophetic ministry of Israel of the biblical times, (Matthews, 2014:12).

In working with the African families, the church needs to be a shepherd, guiding the flock through paths of righteousness. Gerkin put this caring ministry in its context when he says that; ‘from very early in the life of the Israelite people, imageries, themes, and narratives appeared that held before the people their obligation to care for one another and for the stranger in their midst, (1997:92).

The researcher concurs with Shelp et.al’s assertion that;

”God’s people are called to be prophets to oppose the conditions that generate and perpetuate human deprivation, indignity and oppression (Isa 1:17; Amos 5:14-15). By doing so, God’s people respond to God’s love and compassion for all revealed in the humanitarian legislation of Israel, in the oracles of Israel’s prophets, and in the person and ministry of Jesus”, (1987:87).

This should prompt the Pentecostal Church pastors to assume their prophetic role by engaging our patriarchal society on the cultural practice of *lobola*. The preacher is expected to cross into a cultural context and be a prophet, transformer, developer and healer, (Munthali, 2014:37).

When situations, like the story of Sam and Shorai shared in Chapter one arose while shepherding the people of God, the Pentecostal Church may be empowered to offer guidance. We take a cue from the wisdom model employed by Solomon to resolve the difficult matter brought to him by two prostitutes (1Kin 4:16-28).

Although the church's primary role is preaching the Gospel, this is being done in various ways, including confronting moral decadence and social injustices. Christ always confronted social injustices by the Jewish leaders. He spoke of himself as the good shepherd who knew his sheep and would lay down his life for them, (Jn 10:7-18). After resurrection, Jesus commissioned Peter (the church leader) to feed his sheep (Jn 21:1), a commission which still applies to the church leaders today.

That is why Gerkin talks of four functions that are important to him, namely, priest, prophet, wise man and shepherd. These, he traces from the Old Testament times where the care of the community of people who worshiped Yahweh was entrusted to three classes of leaders namely, priests, who had particular responsibility for worship and ceremonial life; prophets who spoke for Yahweh in relation to moral issues and wise men and women who offered counsel of all sorts concerning issues of good life and personal conduct, (1997:23). The three distinct roles for the care of God's people, which constituted three separate offices, priest, prophet and wise men and women, are now consolidated into the office of the shepherd.

This model is used in this study, in order to give attention to on-going care for the Christian tradition that grounds the faith and the life of the people, (Ibid, 1997:26). The researcher will use it to attend to the life of the community of faith with care and discernment and to give careful attention to the needs and problems of lobola in the Pentecostal Church in the Zimbabwe, (Ibid, 1997:26). The study draws from Jesus' ministry, which typified Gerkin's shepherding model. The above model will help the researcher to journey with poor people who are suffering because of lobola struggles.

Gerkin (1997) refers to the pastor as a caring leader and a shepherd. In this model, care is viewed as the central metaphor of life in the Christian community. The pastor is regarded as the shepherd and the Christians are the flocks that need to be cared for. The researcher shares Ncube's view that this methodology needs to be located within the hearts and souls of traditional African people (2014). In terms of the present study this meant that the shepherd (and researcher) needed to utilize this method effectively in helping people cope with any emotions experienced as a result of the research,

including feelings of shame, hopelessness and despair for many women. Although this shepherding method was written from a Western perspective, the researcher was convinced that it plays a pivotal role in approaching lobola issues faced by African people.

According to Jacobsen, “the shepherding perspective is founded on the basis of the gospel and so unique to Christianity”, (2009:30). He concentrates on the healing dimension of the pastoral task, rooted in Christ’s command to heal, as the central function of the shepherding perspective on ministry, (Ibid, 2009:30). The researcher urges that it is incumbent upon the pastoral care giver to journey with the people who have been subjected to lobola struggles, towards healing and wholeness.

Since Gerkin’s shepherding method focuses on both individual and family needs, it is helpful to African situations. It equips the pastor as the shepherd of the flock, in addressing multi-faceted challenges faced by Shona people.

The researcher agrees with Gerkin’s approach to pastoral care, as it appears to be inclusive. It addresses individual and family problems in relation to various life situations, including the lobola struggles among the Shona people. This approach seems appropriate as it has the capacity to heal people in need of pastoral care therapy, and Shona men who are traumatized by *lobola* struggles. The shepherd metaphor of pastoral care represents the way in which God cares for and supports people in distress. This is depicted in what Jesus Christ says in the gospel of John.

“I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. When he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, I know my sheep and my sheep know me. Just as the father knows me and I know the father – and I lay down my life for the sheep”, (John 10:11-15).

The shepherding model provides a great challenge to pastors who serve African people in their assemblies due to the diverse problems they possess. Some of the challenges

emanate from linking men's dignity to their having families. Shepherding restores dignity to men within the church and the society by eliminating the pain and shame of illegal marriages. Many of the problems endured by church members involve family issues. It is, therefore, paramount that pastoral care remains aware of these issues.

In agreeing with this hermeneutical method of approach, this study encompasses issues of *lobola* struggles within the sphere of African society and their experiences. The researcher acknowledges the important feature contained in Gerkin's shepherding model, which is the recognition of the importance of providing care for the whole family. This concept is also applicable in the care of the larger family and even the broader community, (Ncube, 2014). Gerkin's inclusive narrative hermeneutical model, thus, has a lot in common with the African worldview.

This brings the image of an African shepherd to the mind of the researcher. An African shepherd unconditionally loves his animals so that he gives them names. The naming makes the animal to belong and the shepherd belongs with them. He lives with his animals so that he can feel what they feel. He feeds his animals and protects them from predators. He heals and cares for the wounded and the sick animals to restore them to good health. He seeks the lost to bring them back to the head and timeously stops fights among his animals so that they do not hurt each other. As an African man, it is easy to identify with Gerkin's shepherding model. It takes very little persuasion to adopt it.

In the introductory story mentioned in Chapter one, Sam was obviously traumatized by the loss of his wife and her parents greed. He needs healing and wholeness. Shorai's parents were hurt by the aborted *lobola* negotiations; a consequent of their son-in-law's perceived rebellion and the death of their daughter. They all need someone who journeys with them through their pain. As a pastor, the researcher has been mandated by Jesus Christ to "nourish, protect, seek, sacrifice, manage, heal, lead, love and unite the flock of God", (Clavo, 2008:25).

Gerkin's shepherding model of pastoral care encompasses the thought of a Pastor as an interpretive guide who interprets the word of God to help families engage difficult circumstances confronting them, e.g. the issue of lobola struggles, using the four pastoral functions of healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling, (Gerkin, 1997:114). Employing the modes of pastoral healing, sustaining and reconciling, Gerkin emphasizes guidance that takes into account the broad cultural and societal problems. This makes it communal and gives greater attention to the fostering of inquiry and dialogue between the Christian community, its story and people's life stories.

Again, utilizing the model of the pastor as interpretive guide, the researcher will not simply interpret the Christian tradition and its implications for communal, moral, individual and societal life but also interpret conflicts and pressures, contradictions and pitfalls, the lures and tendencies toward fragmentation of contemporary life as laid out by Gerkin. Hence, the researcher facilitated a dialogue process for the life story of *lobola* recounted earlier and the Christian story of how life should be lived, (Gerkin 1999:137)

The researcher used the image of the pastor as caretaker of the moral life of the people to confront people about the morality of their actions in lobola struggles. This was used to generate debate on the issue. Further the researcher advocated homilies that addressed the abuse of lobola.

However, despite Gerkin's model being able to help us journey with the men subjected to lobola struggles, it lacks a way of helping them to reconstruct and renew their lives. This prompted the researcher to borrow from Pollard's Positive Deconstruction Model.

3.2. Exploring pollard's positive deconstruction

Positive Deconstruction is a methodology employed by Pollard in his book, *Evangelism Made Slightly Less Difficult*. This is a methodology Pollard uses in his evangelism work to engage with worldviews of none Christians, (1997:48). His theory is premised on his belief that almost all people have a worldview and are deeply entrenched in their worldview, which, without doubt holds true for the Shona people. The method

constitutes two processes, namely ‘deconstruction’ and ‘positive’. Deconstruction is the process of assisting people in dismantling what they believe, in order to look carefully at another belief and analyze that belief. Positive connotes that deconstruction is done in a positive way so that it can replace the old with something new and better, thus positively seeking for truth, (Matthews, 2014:16). Inadvertently, the process of positive deconstruction recognizes and affirms the elements of truth that an individual already holds to, but also helps them to discover for themselves inadequacies of the underlying worldviews, (Ibid, 2014:16). The method involves “identifying the underlying world view, analyzing it, affirming the elements of truth contained thereof and discovering errors”, (Pollard, 1997:48). Deconstruction is achieved by identifying an underlying worldview, dismantling the worldview, affirming the elements of truth contained therein, identifying areas of conflict with the Christian worldview. Error is identified and substituted with biblical truth (Ibid, 1997:48). The intention is not to destroy a person’s ideas and belief system, but to build on areas of agreement between the two worldviews in order to argue for the Christian truth, (Ibid, 1997:44). This renders the methodology positive. The researcher unpacked the beliefs, values and intentions that are communicated in *lobola*. He affirmed the truth, and replaced any errors he discovered with biblical truth.

Pollard identified the following four key aspects as crucial in this approach:-

- a) Discovering the worldview, that is represented by the beliefs, values and attitudes being communicated in *roora*?
- b) Utilizing the correspondence, coherence and pragmatic theories to analyze the worldview.
- c) Affirming the truth, being those aspects of the worldview that are in agreement with a Christian worldview.
- d) Exposing aspects of the worldview that are in conflict with the Christian worldview, (Ibid, 1997:48-56).

The researcher decided to use narrative as another method in this study to delve deeper into *lobola* struggles in Zimbabwe.

3.3. Narrative

Narrative can either be a study on its own or a method of study. As a method of study narrative focuses on experiences (Walshaw, 2012: 67). It provides the researcher with reason to write about experiences and life styles of individuals or groups over a period of time, through the stories narrated to them. This method focuses on personal experience of the informants and researcher. The method uses stories to tell the life experiences in a particular context, (White et.al., 1990:33).

The experiences are recorded systematically using both traditional and contemporary methods such as artifacts, videos, diaries, interviews, journals, letters and many others (Walshaw, 2012:67). The personal narrative was edited and adjusted to reflect a “performed preferred self” in which the speaker narrated with a purpose, the story of self or others which is what the analyst wishes to capture (Henning, 2013:123). In Henning, Catherine Riesman provides a narrative structure in which the following leading questions can be asked:

- a) In what kind of story does the narrator place himself and those people whom he stories?
- b) How is the story a part of a larger societal narrative?
- c). what discourses are evident in the story?
- d) How are the coherence and cohesion of the story maintained?
- e). Why is the teller sharing this story?
- f) How is the story plotted and how is conflict presented?
- g) Are there epiphanies in the story?
- h) What is significant about the beginning and end of the story?

These questions helped to tap knowledge from the subjects of study. It is a guide in trying to make sense of stories told by the narrator. This method is used to establish more about the informant's beliefs, life style and even emotions. The method is important in trying to gather as much data as possible about Shona men in the context of *lobola* struggles in Zimbabwe.

The researcher also utilized the narrative method by Edward Wimberley to help families engage the issue of *lobola*.

3.4. Exploring narrative method by Wimberly

This is an indigenous approach to caring that relies upon story telling which takes place in the black (African) church. It is also a basic method used by black people, both lay and clergy to care for one another. Many types of stories are used ranging from long stories, anecdotes, short sayings, metaphors to respond to the needs of the parishioners. The stories function in the caring setting to bring healing and wholeness to the lives of persons and families within the black/African pastoral care context, (Wimberley, 2008:2). The narratives suggest ways to motivate people into action, help them see themselves in a new light, help them recognize new resources, enable them to channel behavior in constructive ways, sustain them in crisis, bring healing and reconciliation in relationships, heal the scars of memories and provide guidance when direction is needed, (Ibid, 2008:2).

According to Wimberley this is a truly narrative style of pastoral care in the black church which draws upon personal stories from the pastor's life, stories from the practice of ministry, and stories from the bible. Genuine pastoral care from a narrative perspective involves the use of stories by pastors in ways that help persons and families visualize how and where God is at work in their lives and thereby receive healing and wholeness. This approach enables the pastor to enter the parishioner's world of experience and see things through the parishioner's eyes. It can help the parishioner take full responsibility for making his/her own decisions. It can enable the parishioner to be specific when

describing events. It can also help the counselor express his / her feelings about what is taking place in the parishioner's life in ways that lead to growth, (Ibid, 2008:1).

The researcher used the narrative in Genesis 24 where Abraham commissioned his servant to find a wife for his son Isaac from among Abraham's people. Here, after being assured by his master that the Lord will help him to identify a wife for his son, the servant departed with various expensive gifts for the bride and her parents. Through the faithfulness of God the servant did not have trouble identifying the bride. When he got to the house of the girl's father, he narrated his story. The father agreed to give his daughter Rebecca to Isaac. The servant then gave Rebecca, her mother, her father and brothers expensive gifts. This action is tantamount to paying *lobola*, in the African context.

This narrative contains four themes that can be useful in to pastoral care givers.

1. God leads young men to good wives as confirmed by Proverbs 18:22.
2. Lobola should be charged within the son-in-law's means. Abraham sent the gifts he could afford. The bible does not tell us that Abraham was in any way stressed by these gifts.
3. Fathers have an obligation to assist their sons to raise lobola. Abraham assisted his son with bride price. This system was prevalent among the Shona when lobola was paid in the form of cattle. Every family had a family head of cattle into which all cattle paid as the daughters' lobola were added and used to pay the sons' lobola. The introduction of money by the Europeans saw lobola being charged in cash though thought in terms of cattle.
4. God is the architect of marriage. Laban understood that God, as the architect of marriage, was involved in this event and did not withhold his consent to his daughter's marriage. The lesson we draw this is that *lobola* should not be used as a scapegoat to withhold the father's consent to his daughter's marriage.

The narrative of Jacob's marriage to Leah and Rachel, Genesis 29:16-27 also came in handy in this engagement. In this narrative, Jacob was a fugitive, who was poverty stricken. When Rachel's father realised that Jacob was in love with his daughter, he did not allow Jacob's poverty to hinder their marriage. He accepted Jacob's offer to work for him for seven years as the price for her. Jacob ended up working for Laban for fourteen years because his father-in-law cheated him into marrying both his daughters, Leah and Rachel.

From this narrative, the researcher noted that: poverty was not an impediment to the marriage of Jacob and Rachel, two people who loved each other. Innovative ways can be employed to accord a poor African man an opportunity to marry legally. Integrity ought to be a virtue in fathers-in-law. Exploiting sons-in-law is unjust and ungodly. Also, the father-in-law's consent to the marriage of his daughter, an important aspect of the African custom, ought not to be withheld as a result of failure to pay *lobola*.

There are several contemporary and biblical narratives that the researcher can use when utilizing Wimberley's narrative approach to help families engage the issue of lobola. Only two biblical narratives have been considered as time and space will not allow the researcher to explore all of them.

Further the researcher employed the qualitative research method over the quantitative method, as the process of gathering the requisite data for the study. The justification for preferring this method is that it consists of an investigation that seeks answers to a question, systematically uses a predefined set of procedures to answer the question, collects evidence, and produces findings that were not determined in advance and that are applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study, (Matthews, 2014:14).

3.5. Qualitative research method

Qualitative research stresses meanings in context rather than numerical measured data (Poole, 2009:24) which are stressed by quantitative research.

“ Through qualitative research we can explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world, including the texture and weave of everyday life, understandings, experiences and imaginings of our research participants and ways that social process, institutions, discourses or relationships work and the significance of the meanings that they generate,” (Masons, 2002). This dispelled any doubt from the researcher that this method is ideal. Further Mudavanhu’s contention that qualitative research aims at knowing how particular individuals or groups understand the world, reinforced the researcher’s decision. The researcher agrees with her , that people may already have an understanding of the world based on their norms and values, despite that knowledge being far from coherent and consistent, (2010:17). The qualitative research method then seemed appropriate for the purposes of this study, aimed at developing a consistent and coherent knowledge of how that understanding informs the church on its approach to marriage among Africans.

Once the method and technique were identified the next step in the research process involved data collection.

3.6. Data collection

Data collection by this method includes interview. The diversity of interview comprises of face to face or one on one interviews, structured interviews and semi structured interview, unstructured interview, group interview, and or focus group interview.

3.7. Interview

Interview can be defined as a series of questions, or a discussion on a selected topic, asked face to face between two or more people, the interviewer and the respondent/s, (More, 2001: 27). For Moore, it is any form of oral question made to obtain information. Grix correctly sees interviews as a very popular method among students, especially elite interviewing, (2010:126). He contends that interview data can be collected either quantitatively (except for unstructured interviews) or qualitatively (Ibid, 2010:126). The frame of this method is wide and encompassing. In view of this, the undertaken study predominantly depended on this method when collecting data. Inadvertently, the

method compliments other methods. The researcher acknowledges that interview as a method, has both strengths and weaknesses.

3.8. Strengths of interview in the study

Interviews represent something of a compromise between more structured research methods such as questionnaires and the more in-depth method such as participant observation with the ability to be adapted to suit both the practical needs and the theoretical preferences of different sociologists (Haralambos et.al., 2004:828). Unlike participant observation, interview can utilize larger samples, so generalizations are more justified. Haralambos identified the following advantages of interviews over questionnaires: concepts and words used by interviewer and interviewee alike can be clarified; the interviewer's concepts are less likely to be imposed on the social world; issues can be explored in greater depth; and the interviewer does not limit the responses to fixed choices. A good example is where and when the respondent does not seem to understand the one carrying the study. Terms and issues are explained to bring clarity to the interviewee. Thus, interviews can be useful for generating new hypotheses and ideas that the interviewer would not otherwise have thought of (Ibid, 2004:828).

The Interview's advantage of size was another factor considered in this study. An interview can be conducted for a small area of research (Moore, 2001:29). This study is centered on struggles of *lobola*. The other advantage of interviews is flexibility. Interviews are more flexible than any other research methods. They can be used to extract data from people about their attitudes, past, present or future behavior, and their motives, feelings and other emotions that cannot be observed directly (Haralambos, 2004:829). There is higher response rate with interviews than with questionnaires as the process is so much more personal and it is difficult to refuse one conducting the study if approached politely (Moore, 2001: 29). Further interviews provide opportunities for critical reflection by all those involved; so that they can examine and sometimes challenge the perspective through which they see the world. This is critical to studies whose objective is to change the social world. Some sociologists hold that the

interviewing process itself creates new knowledge rather than just revealing data that was previously present in the interviewee's head (Haralambos, 2004:829). However, this method has its own limitations or challenges.

3.9. Limitations of interviews as a method of study

Interviews require a lot of planning, (Marsh, 2009:129). He asserts that, "Carrying out interviews can be very challenging and requires a range of intellectual, social and or practical skills requiring that the interviewer, be:

- a) Knowledgeable about the subject area of the study.
- b) skillful in interruption of others, listening and responding with appropriate questions; and
- c) Organized in arranging and recording interviews", (Ibid, 2009:129).

The main challenge in data gathering pertains to being given lots of data that is neither valid nor reliable, by the participants. Others can give false information. The responses given may not be accurate and may not reflect real behavior (Haralambos, 2004: 829). Respondents may lie, forget, or lack the information required. It is wondered if interviews capture daily life, conditions, opinions, values, attitudes, and knowledge base of those studied as expressed in their natural habitat (Ibid, 2004:129). Other challenges were not considered apart from the ones cited above which the researcher will not delve into at this stage.

However, there are pluses and minuses to all kinds of interviews along the continuum (Wisker, 2008:1994). The researcher considered all of them and settled for the focus group interview for this study because it was appropriate.

3.10. Focus group interview (*dare*)

The focus group interview is a qualitative technique for data collection. A focus group is "a group comprised of individuals with certain characteristics who focus discussions on a given issue or topic" (Anderson, 1990:241)

“Focus group consists of a small group of people, usually between six and nine in number, who are brought together by a trained moderator (the researcher) to explore attitudes and perceptions, feelings and ideas about a topic”, (Denscombe, 2007:115, Welman, 2012:201), which is *lobola* struggles in Zimbabwe, in the current study. A focus group interview provides a setting for the relatively homogeneous group to reflect on the questions asked by the interviewer. A focus group interview has several advantages.

3.11. Advantages of focus group interview

Stewart et.al., (1990) cited the following as the advantages of focus groups:-

Focus groups provide sources of information that can be obtained rapidly at a low cost. They can be conducted within a wide range of settings and a vast range of respondents can be selected. Since the researcher communicates directly with the respondents, he/she can easily clarify some aspects of questions put to the respondents. The researcher can also ask the respondents to elaborate on their answers.

Stewart et.al. contended that focus groups enable the participants in the group to discuss their opinions and experiences in such a way that unanimity regarding research problems can be reached. Allowing participants to share their opinions may lead to new ideas amongst the different respondents, allowing them to reconsider their initial responses. Interviewees stimulate each other and share their ideas and thoughts. However, focus group interview undeniably has its own disadvantages.

3.12. Disadvantage of focus group interview

In comparison to an individual in-depth interview, focus group interviews inhibit responses of participants. Some respondents are not able to express their feelings freely because they are intimidated by the presence of other respondents in the group, (Stewart et.al., 1990)

After careful consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of focus group interviews, the researcher favored this methodology for the study.

The researcher elected to direct the interaction and inquiry in the form of semi-structured interviews.

3.13. Semi-structured interview

The semi-structured interview or in-depth interview is one step down from a structured interview. Here the interviewer has in mind a number of questions which should not exceed 10, for manageability but which does not to follow a predetermined order (Grix, 2012:128). Grix appears to situate semi-structured interview between two extremes, the structured and unstructured interview. In a semi-structured interview, questions or topics for use are developed in an interview guide. The interview guide is intended to initiate discussion with the participants, which will then lead to many further unplanned questions arising from their particular initial responses. This flexibility also means that the questions will not necessarily be asked in a pre-set order (Marsh, 2009:129). Aligning with Marsh, Robert-Holmes asserted that the purpose of the guide is to record subjects that the interviewer intends to cover. Unlike the interview schedule, the guide is not scheduled or predetermined (2011:149). In addition, the guide contains only a few, 5 to 10, open-ended questions to guide the interview rather than to dictate the structure and content. This enables the researcher to keep the interview focused upon the research subject and at the same time be sufficiently flexible to allow the interview to change direction, (Ibid, 2011:149). The semi-structured interview stresses two points, namely few questions to guide the interviewer and flexibility. These two points therefore govern the flow and direction of the interview. The importance of the first provision is that there is at least a starting point, i.e. the set questions. These will guide the interaction between the interviewer and the subjects, (Ibid, 2011:250). Their function is to tease out information from participants to commence the discussion. The second position is the flexibility of the guide. This means that when the discussion has started between the interviewer and the interviewee, both parties are not bound by the guide questions. They can change the direction of the exercise with the subject initiating that change. However the interviewer will have to be flexible and listen to the subject, (Ibid,

2011:251). The undertaken study benefited quite a lot from this method because of its user- friendliness mode.

As in other interviews, the semi-structured interview includes the art of asking and listening (O’Leary, 2012:194). It is evident that asking and listening are both crucial to the interview process. The researcher will ensure that he assigns equal time to both and never over-concern himself with endeavoring to get his questions and questioning right. Most people miss the point by failing to listen (Ibid, 2012:194). The researcher will talk, only enough to facilitate someone else’s ability to answer. It should be the interviewee’s voice that the interview is seeking and it is this voice that has to be drawn out, (Ibid, 2012:194). It is prudent to consider the advantages of semi-structured interview at this stage.

3.14. Advantages of semi-structured interview

Every research method has its advantages and disadvantages. Semi-structured interviews appear to have more advantages than disadvantages. Mason prefers to call these advantages characteristics of qualitative or semi-structured interviewing. For Mason, they involve interactional exchange of dialogue, three examples of which are:-

a) a relatively informal style, for an example, with the appearance in face to face interviewing or a conversation or a discussion rather than a formal question and answer format.

b) a thematic, topic centered, biographical or narrative approach, for an example, where a researcher has a number of points for discussion, or specific “stories” which they wish to cover, or a set of starting points for discussion, or a specific story they wish the interviewee to tell. The researcher is likely to have a complete and sequenced script of questions, and most qualitative interviews are designed to have a fluid and flexible structure and to allow the interviewer and interviewee to develop unexpected themes (Mason 2002:63).

c) Mostly qualitative research operates from the perspective that knowledge is situational and contextual, and therefore the job of the interviewer is to ensure that the relevant contexts are brought into focus so that situational knowledge can be produced.

For some that extends into the assumption that data and knowledge are constructed through dialogic interaction during the interview. Most people would agree that knowledge is, at the very least reconstructed, rather than facts simply being reported in an interview setting. According to this setting, meanings and understandings are created in an interactive environment that is effectively a co-production, involving researcher and interviewee. Qualitative interviewing, therefore, tends to be seen as involving the construction or reconstruction of knowledge more than excavation of it (Ibid, 2002:63).

Mason is of the view that interviewing is all about a search for unearthed knowledge which is situational and is socially constructed. To socially construct the assumed knowledge, the inquirer has to engage the person on the ground, when discussing the subject of the interview. Mutual relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee, makes this possible, (Ibid, 2002:63). It is of uttermost importance for the two, to journey together as the search for this hidden knowledge begins. It is unimaginable for a subject to willingly reveal his personal struggles with lobola in this study. However, a relationship between interviewer and the interviewee ushers in the element of trust, which is a prerequisite. Trust has to be built for the interviewee to allay fears of betrayal by the interviewer.

The discourse of interviewing, as a part of information gathering and also an act of knowledge making, consists of a set of its own conversations, (Holiday, 2001:124); (Mishler, 1984 in Gurbrum and Holstein, 2002:17). These conversations can be explored in discourse analytic mode, in which the language patterns and their relation to social structure are used as ways of making sense out of the data. They can also be interpreted or analyzed methodologically.

According to Henning, “Episodes or turns or the sequencing of communication, the way membership of the group impact on the participation, and the type of language imagery, all play a part in the meaning making process,” (2013:57).

The preceding quotation echoes Henning’s sentiments that interviewers are also willing or unwilling co-constructors of the meaning (the data). Both the interviewer and the interviewee immensely contribute to the meaning making through discursive discourses. Despite being in control of the interview, the interviewer should be cognizant of the importance of maximizing the frequency of the respondents’ voice, which is the source of data gathering. The use by the researcher of a focus group or a group discussion enables meeting all the participants at one place, and rendering the exercise cost-effective. However, the method is also laden with limitations.

3.15. Limitations of semi-structured interviews

The challenge associated with the semi-structured interviews, is the problem of standardization and analysis. A highly structured interview would make life easy because of its standardization. Its interview questions are predetermined and similar for all interviews. In the semi-structured, interviews there are no predetermined questions. Therefore data analysis may not be easy, (Bless, 2013:216). Another limitation is interview bias, (Moore, 2001:27). Interview bias is possible in semi-structured interview because of its design that offers immense flexibility (Ibid, 2001:27). Too much freedom of choice as well as choice of expression is allowed in this method. The onus is on the interviewees to choose what to say and what not to say, to narrate relevantly to their interviewer or to divert. This is dictated by social desirability, (Ibid, 2001:27).

Another limitation is that, in semi-structured interviews, only particular areas of interest to the interviewer will be explained by him/her and consequently depriving other areas of adequate coverage (Ibid, 2001:27). For example, in the issue of lobola struggles, the respondents may be embarrassed to discuss their personal struggles and talk generally about lobola struggles. The expertise of the interviewer to tell when the deviation occurs is required in order not to miss the intended goal.

Despite these constraints, the method remains appropriate for this study. Having made the decision on the method to use, sampling of respondents becomes the next stage in this study.

3.16. Sampling of respondents for interviews

Sampling refers to the process used to select a portion of the population for the study which has to be done before the interviews are conducted. A number of sampling methods exist. The main ones are random sampling, non-probability sampling, criterion sampling, snowball sampling and purposive sampling. Qualitative research is generally based on non-probability and purposive sampling rather than probability or random sampling approaches, (Maree, 2013:79). The researcher opted for purposive sampling for this study and the sample size has already been mentioned in chapter one.

3.17. Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling means that participants are selected because of some defining characteristic that makes them the holders of the data needed for the study, (Ibid, 2013:79). In this study the sample, size will not exceed the eight proposed in chapter one because of the resources and time available for the study, (Ibid, 2013:79).

The researcher now shifts focus to phases in conducting focus group interviews.

3.18. Phases in conducting focus group interview

- The researcher introduces the topic to the focus group.
- The researcher sets rules indicating, for example, that only one person should speak at a time.
- The researcher encourages each participant (in turn) to make an opening statement regarding his or her experience of the topic.
- The researcher guides the open group discussion by asking questions such as “Most people here mentioned Z, how does that fit with A?”

- The interview ends with each person (in turn) giving a final statement that may not be challenged.

After sampling of respondents and interviews, data analysis of the study findings follow.

3.19. Data analysis

According to Henning,(2013) data analysis refers to breaking data into bits and pieces, or to breaking down data which Miles and Huberman (1994) call “coding” and Day (1993) “categorizing”. Data analysis forms the key link between the study findings and the conclusion. Thus, making systematic analytical methods leads to sound results and findings and become the basis of the drawn conclusions, (Ncube, 2016).The researcher resolves data into its constituent parts or components, to reveal its characteristic elements and structure, (Day, 1993:30).

3.20. Ethical considerations

Ethical is derived from the word “ethics” which is derived from the word “ethos” meaning character or disposition. It is related to the term “morality” derived from the Latin term moralist, meaning one’s manners or character, (Bless, 2013:28). A moral issue is concerned with whether behavior is right or wrong, whereas an ethical issue is concerned with whether behavior conforms to a code or set principles, (Ibid, 2013:28).

Ethical concerns apply to the principles guiding this study as a whole, not just interviews. As this study is concerned with collecting data from people, questions will be ethical in nature, (Oliver, 2011:3). Ethical factors are considered right from the beginning to the end of this study.

In this study, the principle of informed consent, which is the principle that participants should be fully informed about a research project before they consent to taking part, is observed. The participants are informed that their privacy is protected and what will happen to their information thereafter, (Ibid, 2011:26) The consent is accompanied by a letter in which organizations also consent to the use of their sites and name, (Henning, 2013:73). Participants in this study included men’s and Women’s Fellowship groups

from The Pentecostal Church Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe and men from Padare. Three consent letters were considered. One from AFM in Zimbabwe and another one from Padare seeking permission to use the institutions' sites and names and permission to speak to their members during their gatherings. The third one was for permission from the participants themselves. All the letters had to be signed by the addressees, (Wisker, 2008:89)

Participants should feel free to withdraw at any time should they feel they are no longer comfortable or no longer want to participate. This study is dealing with people's culture, which is sensitive regarding some taboos and religious factors, (Haddad, 2011:258). So discontinuing participation when one is no longer comfortable should not pose any problems at all.

The researcher made ethical considerations such as confidentiality, privacy and anonymity. These entitled the research respondents to their right of privacy, which I kept confidentially by way of anonymity, (Oliver, 2011:82). I made sure that information provided by respondents did not circulate without their knowledge and consent. I promised confidentiality and ensured it by anonymity.

3.21. Preliminary conclusion

This chapter examined Gerkin's Shepherding Model, Pollard's Positive Deconstruction, Wimberley's Narrative Method and the qualitative method of research. Reasons for preference made were advanced. The chapter also described interviews and the data collecting method. The relevance of the method was determined by the nature of the study. This method is supported by the literature in chapter two.

The next chapter will deal with all aspects of lobola that are pertinent to this study.



CHAPTER FOUR : LOBOLA

4.1. Introduction

It is the main aim of this chapter is to expound on lobola as a cultural aspect of marriage in the Shona traditional religion in Zimbabwe and also to highlight forms of Shona traditional marriages, deal with the definition of lobola, evolution of lobola, the processes and procedures employed in lobola negotiations among the Shona people and the functions of lobola.

4.2. Forms of Shona traditional marriages

According to Chuma, (2017) there are various forms of Shona traditional marriages some of whom are explained hereunder:-

- *Musengabere* – this is where a man carried a woman he admired to his homestead and made her his wife. It is similar to abduction. This type of marriage is no longer practiced among the Shona. It has been outlawed. If anyone attempts it they are charged with abduction, rape and sexual abuse. This may warrant long periods of incarceration.
- *Kuganhira* or *kuganha* – this is where a man paid lobola for a young girl child or a girl child yet to be born. This is similar to betrothal. This was usually done by poor families during times of drought or any other hard times. They would betroth their young or unborn daughters to rich men who would pay lobola in advance, usually in the form of bags of maize, rapoko or millet, cattle and money in more recent times. When the girl became of age, the parents would hand her over to the husband. As the girls grew up, some of them refused to join their betrothed husbands and eloped with their own lovers. *Kuganhira* or *Kuganha* has now been outlawed by the government as it infringes on the girl child's human rights.
- *Kumutsa mapfihwa* – inheritance (*kugara nhaka*) is when a woman replaces her sister in the event of her death and performs the duty of the wife. This type of marriage is no longer widely practiced among the Shona because of the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

Parents are no longer keen to risk the lives of their surviving daughters after the demise of the deceased ones.

- *Kutizira* (elopement) – this is where a man and a woman agree to just live together as husband and wife, usually because the man has slept with or impregnated her. The marriage is expected to be regularized by payment of lobola. There is payment called damage which precedes lobola proper that the husband is charged. This is payment in lieu of sleeping with the girl without the consent of the girl's father. The charge is usually high as it is meant to be punitive.

Matare (group discussions) with men from Pentecostal Church and Padare and with women from the Pentecostal Church highlighted that *Kutizira* is getting more prevalent among the Shona. They further noted that the couples are neglecting to regularize the marriages due to exorbitant demands from the parents and the economic challenges bedeviling the nation. I am in agreement with their observation that resentment of the practice of lobola is now on the increase among the youth. Some youth from my own assembly have asked me whether lobola is scripturally acceptable. When I inquired why they were asking the answer invariably was because of the ruthless manner in which it was being done.

- *Kukumbira* – asking for the girl's hand in marriage with the payment of lobola. In this system the groom's family formally engaged the bride's family in lobola negotiations and met all marriage requirements before the groom and the bride lived together. This is the most accepted and most wide spread form of marriage among the Shona people.

4.3. The *Kukumbira* system of marriage

Traditionally, society helped one to marry. Hence, marriage was a social or communitarian obligation. When one marries, they marry as a representative of a society or community, (Ibid, 2017:2). Contrary to the Western culture, where one marries by consent, in the traditional Shona culture, one marries by consensus. This allows for thorough vetting and assessing of the bride's family background by the groom's family. The marriage preparation helped define the roles and responsibilities of the community which guaranteed a high rate of marriage success (Ibid, 2017:2).

I consider this approach to be a license to the groom's family for perpetual interference in the groom's marriage especially where *the lobola* charged was exorbitant. The fact that they have to approve the marriage and also contribute towards *lobola* makes them declare *takamuroora* (we married her). As a result many wives complain that their husbands' relatives physically or mentally abuse them, a fact that was brought up in the *dare* with women of the Pentecostal Church. It will take a strong husband to protect his wife from abusive relatives. I urge that the church takes a leading role by teaching the husbands to protect their wives from abusive relatives.

Incidentally, the *kukumbira* system of marriage was governed by the *kuroorana vematongo* (*marrying in the neighborhood*) concept.

4.4. *Kuroorana vematongo* concept

Kuroorana vematongo is a Shona religious and cultural concept. *Kuroorana* is derived from the Shona word *kuroora* which means marrying. *Vematongo* is a Shona word which denotes neighbourhood. I concur with Muzerengwa that the *kuroorana vematongo* concept is based on the view that a young adult must date and court a partner from within his/her local community or religious group, (2016:87). The assumption is that the partners and their families know and relate with each other. This gives credence to Maguraushe's assertion that a woman is not simply married to her husband; she is also a 'wife' of the wider patrilineage, and assumes that the shared ideas and practices enrich the relationship of partners and future marriage, (2014:4). I consider prior knowledge, interactions, and relationships and shared values among the families in the community as a factor that can militate against *lobola* struggles in that community. The community is likely to bring to check any errant behaviour among its members. This may not be possible outside the community.

Marriage among the Shona is a process that starts with courtship which may continue for years.

4.5. Courtship

Courtship, in the Shona culture, extends beyond the suitor looking for a partner in marriage. It involves other family members. Marriage proposals constitute two levels, namely *kupfimba* (proposing the prospective bride), and *kukumbira kubikirwa* (proposal by the man's family to the girl's family).

4.5.1. *Kupfimba* concept

In Shona culture the love proposal (*kupfimba*) takes two forms. One is when the suitor identifies a girl of his choice, he proceeds to inform his uncles, who then propose for him and make engagement arrangements. This procedure ensures that a girl that the young man may lack the guts to propose to is successfully approached and proposed by trusted people on his behalf. The second one is where the elders realize that their son has come of age. They take the initiative to search for a suitable wife for him. They seek his approval if one is found. This route is taken because the elders believe that the young man is inexperienced in choosing a suitable wife for himself. In choosing the wife, the elders consider the girl's family reputation to be of paramount importance (Ibid, 2017:3)

The boy and the girl then proceed to exchange *nhumbi*, (love tokens) as a sign of their love.

4.5.2. *Nhumbi* concept

Chuma reported that *nhumbi* is a symbolic expression of love. Traditionally, partners exchanged *nhumbi* (clothes or handkerchief) and *mhete* (jewellery) or something that represented the acceptance of love and pledge to marry. The informal courting of the young couple becomes a private engagement by the exchange of love tokens where the suitor gives the bride a token of their intimacy which can be in the form of ornaments or *chuma* (string of beads). The prospective bride usually gives him a personal gift that she has worn or kept on her person, such as a handkerchief or beads and by so doing she consents to marrying him. An engagement ring is increasingly being given also as *nhumbi* among the affluent Shona people.

I uphold the concept of *nhumbi*. It is a reciprocal expression of the love birds' love which benefits them only. The decision on the type of gift given rests on the parties alone. This may guarantee that they operate within their means unlike in lobola negotiations where other people decide what should be paid devoid of whether the groom can afford it.

Exchange of *nhumbi* subsequently leads to the family of the groom arranging to send a go-between to the bride's family *kunokumbira kubikirwa* (to ask for someone to cook for them).

4.6. *Kukumbira kubikirwa* concept

Under this concept, the marriage proposal is done through the aforementioned *kukumbira* system (asking for the girl's hand in marriage). Here the suitor's family appoints a *munyai* (go-between). He is usually a well-respected elderly neighbor with wisdom and knowledge of the Shona customs (Ibid, 2017:3). He is sent to the prospective bride's family to announce their intention to marry. The *munyai* doesn't approach the bride's family directly, particularly her father because that attracts a fine. He goes through a neighbour, an aunt or grandmother of the bride who guides him to the homestead of the bride's family.

Upon meeting the prospective bride's father the *Munyai* explains the purpose of his visit, which is the intention to marry. He utters the expression *ndokumbira kubikirwa* (I would like someone to cook for me). He produces a *badza* (hoe) and hands it over to the companion (bride's auntie/grandmother or neighbor) who then hands it over to the prospective bride's father. This stands for *vhura muromo* (mouth opener) seeking permission to speak to the in-laws. The prospective bride's father calls all his daughters of marriageable age to confirm knowledge of the suitor and to seek her consent to enter into marriage negotiations with him before the start of bride wealth negotiations and payment. If the prospective bride admits that she knows the *munyai* in his capacity as the go-between for the suitor's family, the *munyai* puts down the proposal token or payment. The prospective bride signifies her acceptance to the marriage proposal by touching the proposal token.

In the group interview that I conducted with men from the Pentecostal Church there was consensus that the *badza* has long been replaced by money, varying in amounts from 2000 to 4000 Rands. Further, where the bride signified her acceptance to the marriage proposal by touching the proposal token, she now does so by taking upward of 6000 Rands, (depending on her status and qualification) from money placed in a plate for that purpose.

According to Joachim Kwaramba, in the Shona traditional religion marriage has some cultural aspects that have to be met without which that marriage is not regarded as proper. There are certain things that have to be met before being pronounced married. Some of these things are the small payments and the *lobola* itself, which is the marriage deal proper. Love alone is not enough; *lobola* simply serves as the barometer to test the young man's level of responsibility.

4.7. Definition of /lobola/ bride-price

Lobola is a custom practiced by many ethnic societies in Africa and involves the groom or his family giving money, goods or livestock to the parents of the bride (Burn 2005:24); (Chireshe et.al 2010:211); (Ansell 2001:1). Ansell (2001) alleged that in theory, *lobola* could be interpreted as explicit recognition and valuing of women's productivity and contribution to marriage: but in practice, it often serves to limit women's control over their bodies. According to Nsereko, in many indigenous African societies, it is customary, as a preliminary to marriage, for property to be given or delivered by or on behalf of a prospective bridegroom to the relatives of the prospective bride. This property is variously referred to as "bride-price," "bride wealth," "marriage-consideration" or "marriage-payment." The Shona refer to it as *roora or lobola*, (1975:682).

Being African and Shona in particular, I concur with Nsereko that none of these English terms convey the true meaning of this ancient African custom. These terms are underlined by the idea of sale, which is inaccurate, (Ibid, 682). The people who coined these terms were foreigners who had no understanding whatsoever of the African

custom. Nsereko was spot on by strongly arguing that these terms have to be understood in the African context not in the biased Western context.

Another scholar, Bourdillon, defined lobola as “a significant gift and acknowledgement of a priceless debt which the bridegroom’s family group owes to the bride’s family group.” He described the influence of lobola as just a responsible and a stabilizing factor, (1998:16-19). There is no doubt in my mind that Bourdillon grasped the original intent of *lobola*. If he were to redefine it today, being informed by events on the ground among the Shona, it may not be surprising that he would come up with a totally different definition. The current lobola struggle is likely to have altered his perception of the custom.

Oguli Oumo (2004) perceived *lobola* as a contract where material items (often cattle or other animals) or money are paid by the groom to the bride’s family in exchange for the bride, her labor and her capacity to produce children. In similar fashion, Alupo (2004) viewed *lobola* as payment in cash or property by the prospective husband and his family to the bride’s family. To him, it is the transfer of a productive service to the man’s family, disguised as a symbol of friendship between the groom’s and the bride’s families. This is a view that pits the protagonists of *lobola*, (traditionalists/ patriarchy who stand to benefit from it) and the antagonists, (feminists and reformers who advocate abolition of the practice). I regard the view as a means of unveiling the corporate veil of the *lobola* practice, so to speak.

According to Radcliffe-Brown (1987) *lobola* is the situation where payment of goods and services is made by the bridegroom to the bride’s kin as an essential part of the establishment of the legality of marriage. Bride-price may also be defined as payment made in kind, cash or material as demanded by the custom of a group, by a groom or his family to the family of the bride in order to make the union legitimate. In concurrence, Rakhimdinova (2005) defined bride-price as the amount of money or property or wealth paid by the groom or his family to the parents of the woman upon marriage of their daughter to the groom. The agreed bride-price is generally intended to reflect the perceived value of the girl or young woman.

This definition seems to have undertones of commodification of women and is consequently negative. It may, to some extent, be a contributing factor to *lobola* struggle in Zimbabwe, particularly among the Shona people.

To Meekers (1992), *lobola* symbolizes the transfer of the right of the girl's sexual and economic service to the husband. Also, Anyebe (1985) defined *lobola* as a compensation for loss to the woman's family of one of its members, a potential child bearer, and marriage insurance to stabilize the relationship and protect the wife. Bride-price makes marriage legal and establishes the legitimacy of children.

I favor Mbiti's definition of *lobola*. He defines *lobola* as a marriage practice or rite common in many African and other cultural communities which involves the giving of money, animals or goods by the husband to the bride's family on marriage, (2008:108). He asserts that the custom is aimed at bringing the two families together, fostering mutual respect and indicating that the man is capable of supporting his wife financially and emotionally. He considers it a legal instrument that authorizes the husband and wife to live together and to bear children and which also constantly reminds them that they must continue to live together, (Ibid:108). He also asserts that *lobola* is a custom practiced all over Africa in varying degrees. He contends that different names are used to describe it such as "bride-wealth", "bride-gift", "bride-price" and "lobola", (1969:37).

From Mbiti's definition, the reader can decipher the original intent of *lobola* with very little difficulty. This helps one to be empathetic with the Africans in this practice. You can understand why the custom has endured untold battering from other foreign cultures, particularly the Western culture, over the years. The Africans seem to value the original intent, though at times subconsciously, even though the original intent is now arguably marred by other contemporary factors like poverty and greed.

Traditionally, starting up a new family was communal in nature. As such, the bridegroom did not pay *roora* per se, but his family paid it to the bride's family. The bride price cattle were paid not to the herd of the girl's family but to the family group and were normally reserved for the marriage exchanges of the young men in the group, (Mangena, et.al.

2013:475). This must have kept greed in check as no one benefited individually, unlike now where the father charges cash and pockets it himself. Further young men in the group now have to fend for their own lobola themselves.

Gelfand maintained that the payment of lobola is return for what the father of the girl has expended in bringing her up and caring for her, (1999:73). This notion seems to justify the shift from the traditional practice of paying lobola cattle into the family group to paying it to the herd of the family group. Bringing up a daughter seems to be perceived as an expense that must be recovered from the man who intends to marry her. Greed and profit seem to have become the major drivers of the pain and suffering being inflicted in the name of *lobola*, on new couples, among the Shona, under the guise of cost recovery.

Traditionally in Shona custom, what the bridegroom pays is supposed to be a token of appreciation and a sign of commitment. As Andifasi explains, lobola is “an outward manifestation of the young man’s love for his fiancé and is a safeguard against groundless divorce” (1970: 28). In a way, attaching a value to the woman was a way of according status. The bride price value also surpassed the outward expression of gratitude by the son-in-law; it generally compensated for the loss of a productive daughter. In present day, it becomes a compensation for the economic costs incurred in bringing up a daughter (Bourdillon, 1997).

Lobola, according to Baloyi, is viewed as a gift, which replaces a married woman in her family, reminding the family that she left them but she is not dead. This is a way to show that she changed her place of stay in order to stay in her marriage, (2008:161). I regard his position to be congruent to Mbiti’s view when he says that after lobola has been paid she is bound to her new family to an extent that there is no coming back, since the replacement was done. In my view this may account for the low divorce rate among the Shona as compared to other races who do not observe the lobola custom.

However I subscribe to the view that conceptually lobola practice sounds good but in reality and in many cases nowadays, *roora* is the scourge of the Shona marriages. It is

now done in such a way that it no longer gives a “marriage taste” but a transaction taste. The taste of love between the marrying parties changes once *roora* is paid. A wife is expected to submit to whatever the husband wants. The wife may be confronted with a losing battle to be accepted into her husband’s family. Occasionally there may be reminders that *uri mutorwa* (you are not one of us). When it gets too hot in that marriage, those who accepted lobola, command the wife to be a good wife and to be patient and tolerant because they cannot pay the man back his money.

4.8. Evolution of *roora*

Kileff et al. asserted that *roora* was very simple long ago. They contended that once a young man had come to terms with a girl of his liking, he would proceed to set traps to catch mice. If he was fortunate and caught three or five mice, he would quickly go to the mother of the girl, present her with the mice and ask for the daughter. The mother, who was usually happy with the gift, presented the matter to the father without responding to the proposal. If the father did not object, the man was allowed to go away with their daughter as his wife, (1997:28).

Those who had dogs would go into the forest to hunt and bring back game to their in-laws to pay the lobola. Those with grain would pay a few bags of rapoko or maize. Where lobola could not be raised, one could offer his own services to the in-laws for a period which could be reduced to as little as a few days, signifying that it was merely a traditional formality, (Ibid, 1997:33).

This may seem to be an overly simplified version of lobola but that was what it was among the Shona then. I argue that no one appeared to expect to amass wealth through it. It was meant to serve as a token of appreciation, where no suitor could have any challenges paying it. It simply facilitated the departure of a grown daughter from her family, with the father’s approval, to start a new life with her husband.

Later *lobola* evolved into two payments, namely *rusambo* and *roora*. *Rusambo* was the initial payment associated with the girl’s sexual rights. The payment conferred on the husband “exclusive sexual rights” over his wife and that is one of the reasons why

adultery with a married woman was and is still punishable (Bourdillon, 1982). The second *roora* payment was “a substantial payment in cattle which was associated with rights over children born to the woman” (Bourdillon, 1982). This particular payment bestowed child ownership on the father. These children inherited their father’s name and totem.

I argue that this marked the beginning of the lobola struggle among the Shona in Zimbabwe. Men may have awoken to the possibility of acquiring wealth through the lobola custom. As appetite for wealth grew and spread, men crafted ways of fleecing the groom and his family. This resulted in *lobola* mutating over time to its contemporary state.

4.9. Contemporary composition of traditional lobola

Contemporary traditional lobola among the Shona is composed of an ever growing list of peripheral charges and the main *roora* made up of *rusambo* and *danga*. The peripheral charges are *vhura muromo*, *makandinzwa nani*, *matekenya ndebvubvu*, *mapfukidza dumbu*, among the common ones, (Chigwedere, 1982).

4.9.1. *Vhura muromo*

The first stage of the lobola ritual is the engagement of a *munyai* (go-between) who is the medium who will help in the negotiations of the marriage process. The first payment in the ritual will be the *vhura muromo* (opening the mouth). This is a request to the girl’s father to open his mouth so that he can start the marriage negotiations. This is said to be a way of respecting him because an elderly or respectable Shona man is understood to not open his mouth unwittingly. I am convinced that the justification of this charge is not convincing and therefore it is of no consequence.

4.9.2. *Makandinzwa nani*

The next charge is *makandinzwa nani* (from whom did you hear that I have a beautiful daughter?) This is not a question that requires an answer verbally at all but through payment of money. The justification is believed to be that the suitor must have sneaked

to his daughter behind his back. The payment is perceived as compensation to the father of the bride for the clandestine wowing of his daughter by the groom.

4.9.3. *Matekenya ndebvu*

Next comes *matekenya ndebvu* (playing with the beard). This is a payment for the reason that when his bride was a little girl, she used to play about with the beard of her father. Occasionally, she used to pull it possibly to the inconvenience of the father hence the man to marry her gets to pay for the trouble. Yet when his child was growing up he never took it as an issue because in the Shona tradition beard resembles wealth, growth and gather much respect.

4.9.4. *Mapfukidza dumbu*

The next charge is *mapfukidza dumbu* (covering the stomach). This is a payment made to the mother for the distortion of her tummy or posture when she was pregnant with the daughter. It is one of the few payments made to the mother of the girl. This is not negotiable. I suppose this is because very few payments are made to the girl's mother.

According to Chigwedere, (1982), traditionally, the preceding charges were insignificant and were never considered as an important element of the marriage deal. They have no binding force between husband and wife. They are even not refundable in the event of divorce. Today these charges are believed to be so significant that a young man has to raise tens of thousands to meet just these peripheral charges. Further peripheral charges namely grocery, *mabhachi*, *chiuchiro* and *yedare* have since been added to *lobola* by the Shona.

4.9.5. Grocery

Groceries are food items supposed to be eaten by the people witnessing the *lobola* negotiations. The bridegroom is given a list of the groceries required before hand. The list has now become so exhaustive. It does not only contain food items but beer, cigarettes, detergents, paraffin and petrol. Some young men complain that they are made to buy enough groceries to start a tuck shop business.

4.9.6. *Mabhachi*

Mabhachi are clothes that the groom has to buy for his father-in-law and mother-in-law. These include a suit, shirt, tie, a pair of shoes, a hat and an overcoat for the father-in-law and a costume, a hat, a pair of shoes, an overcoat and a water jar for the mother-in-law. The idea is that they should look presentable at their daughter's wedding, should the couple decide to wed. If the couple does not wed, *mabhachi* still has to be paid.

4.9.7. *Yedare* (for the caucus)

This is a payment to appreciate all male members of the bride's family present during the lobola negotiations. These include the bride's brothers, the mother-in-law's brothers, the father-in-law's brothers and their grown up sons and the father-in-law's close friends. They all would have left their personal chores to be present and assist with the negotiations. Every one of them has to get something, making the charge usually upward of R6000.

4.9.8. *Chiuchiro*

Chiuchiro (formal greeting), is payment to allow formal introductions of the bride's family to the groom's family representatives present. The groom's family representatives, led by their *munyai* request to greet their in-laws after paying *chiuchiro*. The in-laws then accept and everyone present claps their hands while reciting the totem of the other party with ladies ululating.

All the foregoing charges are a typical example of male ingenuity in wealth creation.

The Shona have an idiom that justifies it which says *kakara kununa hudya kamwe* (in order to grow fat one feeds on another). It promotes selfishness among men. This philosophy contaminated the noble custom of *lobola* and reduced it to its current state. I am persuaded that it is this plethora of charges that brings the noble custom of lobola into disrepute. All these charges can be pruned from *lobola* without any adverse social repercussions on the family or society at large. However, despite being of no consequence to the marriage deal, these charges run into several thousands of Rands.

Matare stories with men from the Pentecostal Church revealed that everything that the suitor would have toiled to save towards paying *lobola* is now being exhausted on these peripheral charges. More often than not the suitor returns home with an untackled bill of *roora* (*rusambo* and *danga*) that is several times more than the peripheral charges paid. In a bid to recover the outstanding *lobola* the wife's parents demand that their daughter be returned home, usually against her wish, if it is not forthcoming.

In the dare with Pentecostal Church women, a sobbing, Moreblessing said her parents took her back from her husband of eight years when he failed to pay the balance of their *lobola* as he was not working. They left him with our older son Mairoso, who was five years old then and I took our younger daughter Ruva who was one. Her parents told her husband that if he wanted his wife and daughter back he should bring their *lobola*. They retorted that the comfort that the husband had enjoyed so far was equivalent to the *lobola* he had paid. Like most husbands in this predicament, Moreblessing's husband never returned to his in-laws to clear the outstanding *roora*. Consequently relations were strained and the marriage collapsed.

4.10. *Roora*

Traditionally the marriage deal only begun after paying *rusambo*. This is the payment that was regarded as *roora*. According to Chigwedere, *Rusambo* was paid in the form of some utility article such as a hoe or in some areas a goat. Payment of *rusambo* gave a man the right to claim that he was married and could claim title to the bride. Equally at this stage the woman was married and claimed title to the husband and became entitled to certain rights and privileges, (1982:56).

With the passage of time *roora* was split into two substantial payments, with *rusambo* becoming a substantial cash payment, currently running into several thousands of Rands, depending on the educational qualification of the girl and her status. *Danga* (herd of cattle) became the other substantial payment. This is in the form of cattle. These usually range from ten to fifteen cattle, depending, again, on the education and

status of the bride. Factors considered when these *roora* charges are levied are the education of the bride and her occupation, amongst other things.

As I alluded to in chapter one, I concur with the school of thought that contemporary lobola charges are either ridiculous or outright atrocious and border on selling the daughters or extortion. They seem to be giving other cultures, especially the Western culture, ground to stand on for their disdain and criticism of the African *culture*. The magnitude may be promoting a skewed view against *lobola*.

The payment of the cattle gives one rights to claim the children, which makes it an important item in the *lobola* custom among the Shona. Chigwedere (1982) claimed that traditionally in the marriage deal, paying cattle was for the children. It follows then that this is an essential condition for the husband since the main aim for marrying is children. The major task of a wife was to keep her husband alive by bearing him children. Anything else was perceived as secondary. This position still obtains to the present day among the Shona.

Two other customary payments are payable in the form of a goat and a cow. These are linked with fertility. Both are linked to the matrilineal ancestral spirits, (Kileff, 1970:40). The goat is payment for *masungiro* (a pregnancy ritual) given as a way of thanking the mother-in-law for passing on her fertility to a new generation. Traditionally the *masungiro* ritual takes place as soon as a young wife discovers that she is pregnant. Hence the mother-in-law is thanked by the son-in-law for passing fertility to his wife. *Mombe youmai* (the cow of motherhood) represents a declaration by the son-in-law that he recognized and appreciated the role played by the mother-in-law in the development of his wife. Further, the cow of motherhood is not seen as part of the bride wealth proper but a special gift made by the son-in-law to his mother-in-law's ancestral spirits through her.

As a Pentecostal, myself, my theology does not condone appeasement of or having anything to do with ancestral spirits. I am, therefore, of the view that this charge may be

ignored by Pentecostals, though this may disadvantage the mother-in-law. It is a sacrifice worth taking.

Roora has served, and continues to serve, a number of functions in Shona marriages. I am going to explore some of these functions next to help the reader to understand the importance of *lobola* to the Shona people. My intention is to make the reader understand why the custom has withstood the onslaught of colonialism, Christianity and successful lobbying by human rights activists for its abolition.

4.11. Functions of lobola

This section is going to briefly outline some of the functions, served by *lobola* and the ways both the functions and their interpretations have changed over time in response to changing circumstances in Zimbabwe. I am going to deal with nine functions of *lobola*, namely; material, lineage, identity, legal, religious, expression of gratitude, expression of love, expression of value and relationship building functions. They represent the founding intent of *lobola* among the Shona in my opinion.

According to Jeater, early colonial interpretations of *lobola* in Zimbabwe equated it straightforwardly with the sale of daughters for cattle, (1993:148). I subscribe to Schmidt's assertion that this was a misinterpretation that reflected European regard for property: until European colonization, bride wealth was not understood to confer property rights, (1991:732). However, *lobola* did serve material functions in pre-colonial Southern Africa, Ansell, 2001:698).

4.11.1. Material functions

According to Ansell materially, *lobola* has served to redistribute both scarce consumption resources (cattle as meat, cash etc.) and rights over productive resources: land, cattle and labour (the immediate labour of the young people marrying, and later the labor provided by their offspring), (2001:699). Jeater correctly pointed out that "rights to capacities vested in people are not the same as rights to property", (1993:14). Through *lobola*, households secure both production and reproduction. The combination

of such material functions implied by a particular transfer depends upon the economic context in which it takes place, (Ansell, 2001:699).

The material value of lobola gifts has differed over time and space. Among the Shona, according to Schmidt 'immediately prior to the European occupation, typical marriage payments included four to five head of cattle supplemented by other gifts such as hoes, blankets, and baskets of grain, (1992:17). While of less material worth than later payments, such gifts were not purely symbolic, but could allow petty accumulation of wealth. In the 1870s, trade with the Portuguese resulted in the use of gold and guns in Shona bride wealth payments, (Ibid, 1992:52). European occupation ushered in cash payments. Chigwedere cited in Weiss lamented that: "since 1890, (the year Zimbabwe was colonized) we have become commercialized, every aspect of *lobola* has become a matter of money," (1986:138). Market conditions shaped the nature of Shona bride wealth demands: cash was demanded in the economic depression of 1920s as a result of falling wage incomes and crop prices, (Jeater, 1993:220), and later due to shortages of cattle. The introduction of the plough and the scotch cart, however, made cattle valuable as productive as well as consumption resources, and at times made them the preferred currency, (Schmidt, 1991:85-86).

I perceive this kind of versatility of lobola displayed in the aforesaid conversation as the reason for its continued existence. It always finds a way to fit in any prevailing economic conditions. The driving force, inevitably, is the benefits to be had by men. One cannot but wonder what would have become of lobola over the years if it had remained a token as envisaged on the inception of the custom.

Mangena et. al. argued that traditional lobola ensured that both families, that of the groom and that of the bridegroom, contributed to the establishment of the new home, thus minimizing potential abuse. They regarded lobola today as so capitalistic that the money paid determines the woman's condition in marriage. Communalism made mutual contributions possible; however, capitalism benefits the one who pays to abuse the one who does not, (2013:79). I concur with Mangena et.al. I also regard the introduction of capitalism in Zimbabwe by the European settlers as the beginning of the distortion of

lobola and the resultant *lobola* struggle ensuing today. It negatively affected communalism that prevailed in the Shona society for ages.

4.11.2. Lineage functions

It is widely accepted that, in Africa, marriage unites families, not just individuals, (Ansell, 2001:701). *Lobola* is believed to be the kingpin in this act. In the past, *lobola* paid for a Shona daughter went to her elder brother to enable him to pay lobola for his wife, (Gelfand, 1999:45). She thereby produced children for her husband's lineage and bride wealth cattle for her brother, enabling him to father children for her natal lineage, (Schmidt, 1992:15). Other kin would also be involved in raising the lobola: debts that would need to be reciprocated, (Kuper, 1982:27). This created a bond between lineages in part, because of the persistence of lobola debt.

Further, lobola has been understood as payment for children for a lineage, (Gelfand, 1999:174). It 'brings about the absolute transfer of rights in a woman's procreative capacity from the woman's family to her husband's family, (Murray, 1981:142). That is why Jeater concluded that In Zimbabwe "cattle beget children", (1993:106). He obviously was looking at *lobola* through cultural lenses which see the capping of marriage among the Africans, through the production of children after *lobola* obligations have been met by the husband.

4.11.3. Identity function

Lobola is part of the tradition and identity of African people, (Oliso, 2016:76). Scholars like Chireshe et. al., (2010:218) confirmed the idea that lobola is a valuable part of African culture and that it should not be abolished. I subscribe to this view. We are Africans; we have our own distinct way of getting married. This is what distinguishes us from Europeans, Asians and other races. Lobola is part of our Africanness. Regrettably sad stories narrated in the group discussions with co-researchers beg for its abolition. I believe its noble intentions can still be salvaged from its seemingly mutated current form.

4.11.4. Legal function

According to Oliso, lobola is verification, in concrete terms, that families have agreed to the marriage of their son and daughter, (2016:76). As a Christian I cherish the parents' agreement or consent to their children's marriage because it gives spiritual blessing to the marriage. Scholars like Burman (1991:46) and Mkhholwa (1991:110) concur that *lobola* validates marriage, and that it ensures the husband's accountability and responsibility to his wife, particularly in the African context where the majority of marriages are not formalized in courts, but traditionally in the community. Other scholars like Chigwedere (1982:56), Kaganas and Murray (1991:116 – 134) and Currie (1994: 146 –168) regard lobola as a bond that cements marriage. They are of the view that lobola makes marriage acceptable, not only to the family, but to the in-laws and the community in which the family lives and the community at large. Lobola thus serves as a sign of approval of marriage by the families and the community, (Oliso, 2016:76).

4.11.5. Religious function

Magesa gives a twofold religious purpose of bride-wealth payment. "The first purpose is, it establishes the right of exclusive sexual access to the woman by the husband and the power to bequeath status and property to the children of the union as the descendants of the husband's group, (1997:42). To the Shona, the payment of *roora*, also gave man custody of the children resulting from the union-rights to genetical inheritance (Goody, 1973). Second, it legitimates the children within the father's lineage, (1997:42).

I concur with Mudavanhu that it is this legitimation that stabilizes the vital force of the clan and that makes the giving and receiving of bride-wealth so crucial from a religious point of view," (2010:63). Anyebe (1985) claimed that *lobola* makes marriage legal and establishes the legitimacy of children. It therefore follows that if lobola were not paid, the family did not approve of the marriage, the marriage was illegal and the children were illegitimate. This is a predicament that can cause traumatic experiences to both the families of the bride and the groom, the husband and the wife and more so, the children from this union. However on the good side, *lobola* denotes an expression of gratitude to the bride's family.

4.11.6. Expression of gratitude

Roora brings the family of the bride and that of the bridegroom together at a traditional ceremony which symbolizes gratitude to the bride's family for birthing and raising their daughter, who by virtue of the traditional marriage is expected to broaden her husband's family by birthing children, (Chireshe et.al. 2010:11). The general belief among the co-researchers is that men who by-pass the fundamental African custom of paying *roora* are practicing *manenji* (a bizarre act), which will ultimately bring misfortune upon their lives. They alleged that young men are the major culprits. Most of them are alleged to resent, not the concept of *lobola* but the magnitude of the charges which tend to be prohibitive to them. However the young men consider *lobola*, in its current form, a ploy to rip them off or punishment for their love of their brides. This IS being seen as, in contradiction to what it should signify, an expression of love by the groom to his bride and family.

4.11.7. Expression of love

Lobola is a sign of love for the woman by the man; just as in Western culture the man provides jewelry for the lady he loves, (Chigwedere, 1982:174). This is an interesting way of looking at lobola. Stories abound of bridegrooms buying their brides very expensive diamond and gold wedding rings as an expression of how much they love and value them. It may be inappropriate to equate these expensive rings to demand by the in-laws for exorbitant *roora* because the bride buys out of his own volition, he can afford it and his bride is a direct beneficiary.

4.11.8. Expression of value

According to Gelfand, lobola has the effect of giving the woman a value in the eyes of all, especially the men. Here is a person who has a value, someone who cannot just be taken. A definite payment has to be made for her. She just cannot be picked up. Consequently man will treasure her and look after her and protect her, (1999:173).

I equate the value that Gelfand referred to, to honor. Thus lobola has the effect of making a woman honorable among the Shona. That is why we refer to a married

woman as *ambhuya*, (my wife's mother). We accord her the respect due to our mother-in-law. This makes the value given to a woman through marriage more palatable than that insinuated by opponents of *lobola*.

In the same vein, Chireshe et. al. asserted that engaging in sexual relations with a woman for whom a man has not paid *roora*, means that the man regards such a woman as one of a lesser value and therefore "one of whiling up time – a kind of toy" (2010:216).

I subscribe to Christian principles concerning sexual intercourse, that sex outside marriage is either fornication or adultery. So as long as a couple is legally married according to the laws of the country I have no qualms with their mutual sex life. It is now possible to be married without payment of *roora* in Zimbabwe, because of the Legal Age of Majority Act. This piece of legislation makes it lawful for a man and a woman who are above eighteen years of age to marry without their parents' consent and payment of *lobola*. However, the parents' blessing, which is a crucial component of a Christian marriage, ostensibly remains the missing link in that marriage.

On the contrary, other scholars have argued that the practice of paying *roora* contributes to the oppression of women who are then treated as objects that are purchased by men on the open market. This position can be blamed on the commercialization of *lobola*. I am of the view that these scholars and many other dissenting voices may be quelled if *lobola* reverted to its former status of being just a token of appreciation.

According to Padare, high cases of domestic violence can be directly or indirectly linked to the commercialization of *lobola*. Consequently men are using the payment as justification to oppress and abuse women who they view as bought property. The group alleges that such men believe the high charges that some parents demand during *lobola* negotiations entitles them to own their wives, equating it to buying enough shares in a company to more or less own the company.

My concern is that the same men who disdainfully point out the lobola struggle, unwittingly fuel the same by acting no differently when it is their turn to marry off their daughters. The issue becomes a vicious circle, just like a dog chasing its own tail.

I am of the view that when a modest gift is offered with respect and thanks for a virtuous woman, there is definitely no issue of inequality and abuse. If anything relation building between families ensues.

4.11.9. Relationship building

According to Chigwedere (1982) lobola is a form of marriage payment that built relationships and also demonstrated the ability of a man to take care of his family. In the custom of lobola, the key issue was not the gift but the communication protocols that related to two families introducing, getting to know each other and bonding, that are important. The whole issue of lobola should rest on building respect, a stable union and mutual understanding between two families. These were the founding principles of the custom. The current lobola struggles, occasioned by gross diversion from the founding principles of the practice, exhibited by the amounts being charged causes bitter resentment by the family of the groom towards the bride and her family.

4.12. Preliminary conclusion

Chapter 4 explored the Shona cultural practice of *roora* from its older form to its contemporary state. This helped to provide an insight into the lobola struggle in Zimbabwe today. The chapter also provided an insight into how the African traditional religion and culture shaped ideas in Zimbabwe about the understanding of lobola and marriage. These constructions were evident in the stories from both women and men shared in their *matare* dealt with in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE : STORIES FROM MATARE (FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS)

5.1. Introduction

Stories of people's lobola experiences are varied. Some bring tears to the hearer's eyes and others shock, horror and exasperated gasps. Numerous stories of human suffering abound as a consequent of lobola. The poor are the worst hit by this practice. This is the human document that this chapter is going to unpack. The Shona society appears to be unwittingly condemning the poor to a life of bachelorhood or spinsterhood against their wish or forcing them to resort to illegal marriages on account of the cultural practice of lobola.

I held *matare* (focus group interviews) with Pentecostal men's and ladies fellowships and also with Padare (men's forum on gender). These co-researchers told their stories of the lobola struggle and from these narratives, it became apparent that much of the struggle is informed and sustained by Zimbabwean African religious and cultural ideas. These *matare* stories exposed the religious and cultural ideas from each organisation and the effect on co-researchers' lives and relationships. I present only stories relevant to the research aims and question. Not everything discussed was presented. The voices of the narrators and the specific responses of *dare* (members) which serve to illustrate a particular point were presented in italics. This made the narrator's voice visible. Texts in regular font are either from literature review excerpts or my own interpretations. Further, the names of the co-researchers I used in this chapter are not their real names. I used pseudo names in order to ensure confidentiality.

5.2. *Dare* with Pentecostal Men

I held this *dare* (focus group interview) with the Pentecostal men, comprising of six men co-researchers. I was curious to learn their experiences, and how they storied the constructions or factors that informed them to abuse the custom of lobola.

The *dare* helped me to understand the socio-economic, cultural and religious constrictions that informed co-researchers about marriage, lobola and its struggle.

5.2.1. Abuse factor

This is how the Pentecostal men's *dare* storied their experiences:

1. Simba said, *"My father paid part of his lobola for my mother in the 70s. A list of the lobola charges reflecting what had been paid and what was outstanding was drawn up. Both my maternal grandfather and my father got a copy of the list. My grandfather, in his wisdom, encouraged my father to clear his lobola balance during his (my grandfather's) lifetime. He warned my father that complications arise if the balance was to be cleared after his death. My father did not take heed of this advice.*

Sometime in 2000 my father gave notice that he wanted to clear his balance. My grandfather's copy of the lobola account could not be found. My mother's brothers rejected my father's copy. They declared that they were now in charge and that they were the new fathers because their father was too old. They declared that what my father and their father had done was now water under the bridge. They wanted to start the lobola negotiations afresh. A harsh exchange of words ensued between my father and my mother's brothers. He left in a huff and declared never to communicate with them again. My father died two years ago and our uncles are now demanding that we pay lobola for our mother, which we cannot do because none of us is gainfully employed.

2. Morgan is a taxi driver. He had a girlfriend living in the rural areas that he wanted to marry. On the day of lobola payment, the owner of the taxi allowed him to use it to transport his delegation. Morgan's friends, who were also taxi drivers, drove their taxis to attend the lobola negotiation ceremony in solidarity. As a result numerous taxis descended on Morgan's in-laws' homestead. Thinking that their son-in-law came from a rich family, the in-laws charged one hundred and twenty thousand Rands as lobola for the girl.

The charge was way out of his league and unjustified. No amount of haggling succeeded to persuade the in-laws to reduce lobola. Morgan was dejected. He was forced to leave the love of his life distraught. As such, Morgan has lost hope of ever

getting married legally because he cannot raise the kind of lobola charges that are prevalent these days among the Shona.

Morgan confessed that the lobola he was charged symbolized lunacy and he felt embarrassed and disturbed, to say the least. This episode created a wound too difficult to heal in his my heart. He is finding it difficult to forgive these greedy and heartless in-laws.

3. Shumba narrated his experience as follows:-

My wife's mother took care of my wife alone until she was twelve because her father denied responsibility of the pregnancy. She left for the diaspora, leaving her twelve year old daughter in the custody of her own mother. When I went to pay lobola I was told my wife did not have a father. Her half-brother, whom her mother also bore with another man, assumed the role of the father-in-law in the negotiations. My mother-in-law participated in the proceedings via Skype as she was outside the country.

A week before our church wedding my father-in-law appeared from nowhere. He demanded his lobola and threatened that no wedding would proceed until he gets his lobola. I had exhausted all my savings. My wife's grandmother and mother vowed that they were not going to give him even a single cent because he had denied responsibility of the pregnancy and never cared for my wife.

My wife's half-brother developed cold feet. He refused to give his consent for the wedding even though he was the father during lobola negotiations. Consequently, the church wedding never happened as a result. We cannot be considered for any leadership position in the church because we did not wed. We are ever asking "God why us? What wrong did we do?"

4. Mujakari had this to say about his lobola experiences:-

My wife's parents died when she was a toddler. She and her siblings were raised by her maternal grandmother with no assistance from her paternal relatives. As a cultural



requirement, the paternal relatives were invited when I went to pay lobola. My wife's maternal relatives accused her paternal relatives of neglecting the children and were only reappearing just to collect lobola. A bitter exchange of words ensued. My father-in-law's relatives were not amused. Their position was, even though they did not look after my wife and her other siblings, they remained their children so they could not abandon my wife at this important juncture of her life. They hatched a plan to fix my wife's grandmother and her relatives. Their plan was to make sure that the grandmother and her relatives get a pittance.

They agreed with my wife's grandmother and her relatives that they would proceed with the lobola negotiations and have a private meeting between the two families to share the lobola as soon as the proceedings were completed. During the negotiations they reduced every charge to a mere token, to the discomfort of the maternal relatives. For instance where we expected them to charge say R36 000 for rusambo, they charged R1200. On "danga" they charged me one cattle, while the norm is ten to fifteen cattle. The other peripheral charges were set at R600 even though they ranged between R8400 and R20000 ordinarily. I had come very prepared because I believed that lobola was expensive.

I settled the whole lobola in that session and remained with more change than what I had paid. I was very disappointed because I came prepared. Though my relatives were very pleased, I was hurt. I didn't feel like I had properly married my wife. I ended up splashing the change around among those who had accompanied me because I felt it was not right to keep it.

5.2.2. Source of wealth

Some Shona people appear to value lobola, not just as a cultural practice but as a source of creating wealth as well. In this regard the brides' fathers regard any reduction on lobola charged as a loss. I say so because of what transpired at my aborted wedding ceremony. Just before the wedding, in full view of my aunties who had come to perform the ritual of kutara (officially come to fetch the bride). My bride's father erupted unexpectedly. He accused me of lying to him that I did not have money when I went to

pay lobola. He accused me of negotiating downwards every lobola item charged to the extent that I ended up not paying in full even the meager lobola that he eventually charged. He correctly observed that the wedding was classy and looked very expensive, from the venue, the horse drawn chariot, and the bridal cars. What he was not privy to was the fact that my three brothers and three sisters who were working in the diaspora were financing the wedding. He however, declared that the wedding was not proceeding until he got the balance of his lobola.

The bride was so embarrassed by her father's action that she then declared that she was no longer proceeding with the wedding. Attention then shifted from the father to her. After her father rescinded from his demand, the bride finally agreed to continue with the wedding. *"Unknown to them I felt so humiliated by his actions that I refused to proceed with the wedding. It was clear to me that my father-in-law was not interested in our marriage. All he cared for was money. I was afraid that I would be haunted with demands for money in our marriage. We aborted the marriage."*

The culprit in this matter was the unwarranted lobola demand. It destroyed a marriage before it had even started

5.2.3. What causes abuse of lobola?

There was consensus among the participants that there was gross abuse of lobola by men. I was curious to know what the cause of these abuses were and the following reasons were advanced in the *dare*.

5.2.3.1. Delays in clearing outstanding lobola balances

If the son-in-law takes undue delays in settling his lobola obligation, as is often the case, the father-in-law revalues the outstanding debt to the prevailing conditions. Factors that were never considered before may play a pivotal role in the revaluation. Things like standard of education of the girl, her status and her job are now critical determinants of the amount of lobola charged. The more educated the girl is, the more highly she is regarded in society and the better the job she holds, the more lobola is charged for her.

5.2.3.2. Hard times

Times are now hard for most people in Zimbabwe. Some people now think that any opportunity that can bring in money must be exploited fully. You find that abuse has increased. The unfavorable economic climate is playing a major role. People now endeavor to get, by any means necessary, more that they are entitled to. Lobola has not been spared.

5.2.3.3. Settling scores

Abuse is happening because people want to settle scores. Since lobola is considered an important event among the Shona, it is sometimes used as leverage to settle scores. For instance, sons who are using their mother's name, because of the father's absence from their lives, are known to be forced by their fathers, to adopt the father's name first, if they want any form of lobola assistance from the father. Thus, the aggrieved party awaits an important event like lobola to settle scores knowing one will not have any choice but to settle.

5.2.3.4. Dare as source of abuse

Abuse emanates from the "dare", (lobola panel made up of the father-in-law's brothers, nephews and sons). These are not the real parents of the bride. They usually make things very difficult. They do not have genuine concern for the daughter. All they are interested in is the money to be gained in the lobola negotiations. The bride's father is gagged by Shona culture. He is supposed to be a passive participant during lobola negotiations.

5.2.3.5. Lies from neighbours

When a neighbour married off her daughter, they lied about the lobola they charged. If say their son-in-law paid say R4 000, they tell their neighbours that he paid R30 000. As a result when it is their turn to marry off their daughter, the neighbors then peg the lobola at R30 000 or more which is what their neighbors purportedly got. These lies fuel the abuse of lobola.

5.2.3.6. Daughters raising their own lobola

Daughters contribute to the abuse of lobola by, firstly, raising their own lobola and secondly, leaking the amount available to their parents. This causes the in-laws to inflate the figures.

I established from the *dare* with Pentecostal men that girls often raise the lobola themselves because the men may not be able to. They, then give it to the men to go and pay their fathers. This is because the girls are usually better paid or the ones with an income. The girls are usually generous because the money is going to their own parents. They inform their parents beforehand what the suitor has “raised” to make sure he does not withhold some of her money. Consequently lobola figures are inflated.

5.2.4. Consequences of the lobola struggle on women

If lobola charged was expensive, when the bride goes to the husband's home, she will be abused. She is given a derogatory name. On any jobs that are done, she is expected to work much more than other women and she is be ridiculed. If she does not cook well, the husband publicly laments the exorbitant lobola he was charged...

Where not much lobola was paid, if the wife errs and the husband confronts her, she says this is equivalent to the lobola paid. What you paid my parents is not enough to give you the right to order me around. She does not accept correction from the husband.

Further, some suitors abandon the girls and look for others, hopefully with less lobola challenges. The abandoned girl is traumatized by losing her lover and may end up looking for someone to impregnate her to spite her parents. When she has the baby, society calls her *mvana*, (a derogatory name meaning a woman who had a child out of wedlock).

5.2.5. How are young men affected by lobola struggle?

Young men are forced to abandon the women they love, because they cannot afford the lobola demanded. They may end up marrying women they do not love because lobola charged for them is affordable. Some of them resort to cohabitation.

5.2.6. What role do religion and culture play in the practice of lobola?

On the one hand, the Pentecostal church is not concerned about lobola. During pre-marital-counseling pastors are not forthcoming on this issue. One is usually on his own. They only inquire whether the man reached an agreement with his in-laws. If the answer is yes then it will be fine with the pastor but if it is a no, then the pastor exhorts the man to work it out with his in-laws as soon as possible. This makes it difficult to know exactly where the Pentecostal church stands on the issue of lobola.

This half-hearted attempt by the pastors to engage the issue of lobola was deemed insincere. This is because the pastors were perceived to desire only to save the wedding ceremony that they conduct from the embarrassment of having the father-in-law refuse to give his consent to the wedding, which results in its cancellation.

On the other hand, the *dare* urged that culture upholds the importance of woman in society. It values the fact that women build homes by bearing children. The woman's parents have a right to a token of appreciation for raising their daughter so that the son-in-law desires to marry her. This makes lobola a way of appreciating the bride's family for their daughter who will increase her husband's clan by bearing him children.

Whether one is a Christian or not is not an issue, our culture applies to both. The girl's parents are entitled to lobola before she can be called somebody's wife. Parents can go to the extent of cutting any communication with their daughter or even disown her if she moves in with a man before lobola is paid.

The *dare* concurred that culture maintains lobola through the elaborate procedures that are inherent to the practice. It is regarded taboo to omit some of the procedures. Every mishap in marriage is usually assigned to the flouting of some of these procedures. For

instance, if a married woman miscarries or fails to have children, it is believed that either *mombe yehumai* (cow of motherhood) was not paid or the rituals that accompany the payment were done incorrectly.

5.2.7. What role is the Pentecostal church expected to play in lobola?

Church has to take a leading role. The church should interpret and teach biblically the issue of lobola. This will help to fine tune this intrinsic custom of lobola. Pastors should accompany men when they go to pay lobola. They are bound to be listened to by all parties in the event of impasses. They can redirect focus of lobola negotiations to the love between the new couple and not the expectations of the girl's parents. They can even bless the new couple immediately after payment of lobola to reduce the burden of the costs associated with a white wedding, which the Pentecostal church urges the couple to have before they can live together. Culturally the couple is married once lobola is paid but the church keeps them apart until after the white wedding.

The dare also expects the church to note relationships among the youth in the church that are five years old or more. The pastor is expected to counsel them. If the man lacks the means to pay lobola, the church can intervene by either offering him employment if it has the capacity, and pay for him or seek employment for him elsewhere.

5.2.8. Should lobola be allowed to continue?

In view of the misgivings highlighted by the dare, I was curious to know whether lobola should continue to be practiced in the Pentecostal church. The consensus was that it should continue because its intentions are good even though it has been tainted by abuse. *Hatigone kurasa mwana nemvura inetsina*, (we cannot throw away the child with dirty water). We only have to do away with the intolerable aspects of lobola and hold on to the practice. Lobola distinguishes us from other nations. It exhibits our Africanness.

5.3. Dare with Padare (men's forum on gender)

I held this *dare* with *Padare* (Men's forum on Gender). The *dare* comprised of five members. Initially, I had planned to have a *dare* of six men. Each man came from each of the six Shona provinces in Zimbabwe even though he was residing in Harare. The

sixth man did not show up. After failing to locate him, we agreed to proceed with the *dare*.

I held this *dare* to learn from men the typical lobola charges among the Shona and the basis of contemporary lobola charges. I was keen to distinguish the important lobola charges from the peripheral charges. I also wanted to learn from the *dare* the challenges associated with the size of the lobola *dare*. I was also curious to know how the men storied the religious and cultural factors that informed them to abuse and perpetuate the custom of lobola.

5.3.1. What are the typical lobola charges?

I learnt from the *dare* that it is very difficult to come up with a universal structure but the main charge was '*Rusambo*' (main lobola charge levied in cash) and '*mombe yehumai*' (cow for motherhood), everything else changes from region to region. Some people do not even comprehend it when charging.

In addition to these, there is what is called '*Danga*', (cattle for the father of the girl). Some people give options of paying money instead of giving cattle. There is also a charge called '*nhumbi*' (clothes for the bride's parents) in other regions as part of lobola. This is usually in the form of jackets but some today even want kitchen utensils like jars – (long ago); and food processors – (nowadays)

The following seem to be common among the Shona. The groom pays '*vhuramuromo*' (opening father-in-law's mouth) when he goes to the bride's family in order to start the lobola proceedings. There is also '*pwanyaruzhowa*' (damaging the homestead perimeter fence). This payment is intended to compensate the father-in-law for the damage to his homestead perimeter fence caused by the groom when he avoided detection by the girl's parents during courtship by avoiding the homestead gate and entering through hidden parts of the fence thereby damaging it. The groom also pays for *ndiro* (plate) where he puts the payment for the various lobola charges as the negotiations progress. The money for *ndiro* is given to the bride's mother. The groom also pays '*makandinzwanani*, this is in answer to a silent question for the groom of how

he came to know that there was a beautiful girl in the family. When the child (bride) was in the womb, she would kick or play, so the groom would also pay a charge called ‘*mapfukidzadumbu*’ (covering the stomach) to the mother. There is also ‘*matekenyandebvu*’, (playing with the beard), which is paid to the bride’s father because it is said that when their daughter was still a child she would play with her father’s beard. The groom will also be charged ‘*tarirambariro*’, which will be given to the mother of the bride. This is because it is said that when the mother bore her daughter, she faced upward to the ‘*mbariro (roof beams)*’, and endured a lot of pain when giving birth. The mother’s clothing, father’s suits/jackets, groceries, *mombe yehumai* (cow for motherhood) and ‘*danga*’ are also part of lobola charges paid by the groom. ‘*Rusambo*’ (the main lobola charge) is usually a big amount of money. There is also a charge called ‘*yedare*’, (payment for the negotiating panel) which is shared amongst the male members of bride’s family present at the lobola negotiations.

All these charges essentially constitute the two classes of lobola payable by a son-in-law to his father-in-law known as peripheral charges and the real deal, (important charges).

5.3.1.1. Peripheral charges

I learnt from the *dare* that peripheral charges, which were not part of the lobola process but are only included for motivating the discussion, were also paid. These included, *vhuramuromo*, *ndiro*, *makandinzwanani mapfukidzadumbu*, *matekenyandebvu*, *pwanyaruzhowa*, *tarirambariro* and *yedare*, which were explained in 5.2.2.

5.3.1.2. The real deal, (important charges)

The real deal comprises of *rusambo*, *danga* and *mombe yehumayi*’ also explained in 5.2.1. These are the charges that when paid the girl’s father would say *mukuwasha wangu akandiroorera*, (my son-in-law married my daughter). All other charges are peripheral charges. The men considered *mombe yehumayi* to be quite significant in lobola.

5.3.2. Significance of *mombe yehumai*

Mombe yehumayi is a profound thank you to the bride's mother that she bore a daughter (bride). It is a respected recognition to the bride's mother. This is the major item a mother gets when her daughter is married. Its real significance is never readily articulated. It is believed to bring bad omens to children born from the marriage, to the second or third generation, if it is not paid. As a result, it is given priority in the lobola negotiations unlike the father's charges that can be stretched over a certain period. The cow naturally multiplies and endows the mother with wealth attributable to her. After her death, her relatives want to see what she accumulated during her marriage. This is because she is regarded as *mutorwa* (a stranger) in the family she is married into and belongs with her relatives. As such, her estate vests with her family.

5.3.3. Challenges associated with the size of lobola dare (lobola negotiating panel)

In the Shona custom, it is not permissible for a father to engage his son-in-law in lobola negotiations himself. He invites his brothers, mature sons and nephews to negotiate on his behalf. These then constitute the lobola *dare* (the negotiation panel). The *dare* unanimously agreed that the contemporary lobola *dare* is seriously compromised.

The *dare* claimed that the main challenge is that love and care, which abounded among extended family members, appears to be seriously eroded. Competition, envy, jealousy and outright cruelty seem to have taken over. This causes the envious family (uncles and aunties) to try to frustrate the groom so that he abandons the girl.

The men endorsed the reduction of the size of the lobola dare to just the father and his mature sons as the only way to bring back sanity into the practice. These were perceived to have direct interest in the success of their sister's marriage (in the case of the sons), and her daughter's marriage, (in the case of the father). When I pointed out the omission of the girl's mother in their preferred solution, they were quick to respond, "The mother is an automatic member of the dare".

I learnt that the idea of *dare*, long ago, was for all relatives present to be witnesses that the son-in-law had married their sister so that in the event that the bride faces challenges in her marriage she could be free to approach any one of them for help.

5.3.4. Basis of contemporary lobola charges

People nowadays charge lobola depending on what they heard their neighbor saying they have charged even if they may have been lied to. Lobola is now expensive because of competition amongst in-laws who endeavour to beat others who had married off their daughters earlier. Ultimately, lobola soars to unaffordable levels.

Based on the complaints that some men made, I regard that the level of education of the girl, her status in society, her job and the financial standing and status of the girl's family play a major role in arriving at contemporary lobola charges. Simba Makore's marriage to President Mugabe's daughter and the late former Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai's marriage and the lobola they paid, that I mentioned in chapter two support this argument.

5.3.5. Perception of lobola among men

Lobola is now commercialized. Long ago one would give a simple hoe as 'rusambo' and was considered married. In the past, people gave their in-laws what they could afford as a token of appreciation or gift. Nowadays people place a value on their daughter. To arrive at the value, they take into account economic variables like her level of education, how much they spent on her education and upkeep, her job and status. They also charge according to how they perceive the social standing of the groom. If you come to the in-laws in a big car, you will be charged more because they perceive that you are rich.

5.3.6. Ways of resolving the lobola challenges

I agree with the observations of the *dare* that the challenges bedeviling lobola can be resolved in several ways, some of which are:

Men need to be taught about original intent of lobola to counter greed and its accompanying ills. They need to desist from efforts to recover everything spent on the upkeep and education of their daughter through lobola, which are prevalent in Zimbabwe. They spend equal or more money raising a son but they never invoke recovery plans. They should be of the same mentality towards their daughters.

Foroma (not his real name) married a university graduate before she landed her first job. This devastated her parents. They hoped she would compensate them on the things they had to forgo in order to educate her, before she got married. Getting married before she had even started working was a terrible blow to them. They felt they had to recoup their expenses on her lobola. The lobola I was charged “*kwangakuri kuuraya munhu chaiko*” (was committing murder for sure).

We need to remove the element of greed, competition and self-enrichment and uphold the philosophy that marriage is about uniting two families. Lobola should revert to its purpose of being a token of appreciation of the girl’s parents. Out of love for the new couple, men should consider doing away with the peripheral charges without compensating the decrease by inflating the “rusambo” and “danga”.

5.3.7. Consequences of non-payment of lobola

When lobola has not been paid, the groom is not recognized as a son-in-law, depriving him of any relationship with the bride’s family. When challenges arise between the couple, any approaches by the groom to bride’s family for help are met with strong resistance. Formally, the groom will not be recognized as part of the bride’s family before paying lobola. The couple is considered as “varikubika mapoto” (co-habiting). In the event of the wife’s death, demand for lobola for the dead woman is inevitable.

5.4. Dare with Pentecostal Women’s Fellowship

In the *dare* with Pentecostal Women’s Fellowship, I sought to find out about their personal lobola experiences and their views on how lobola was exploited, the deep pains that they experience because of the lobola struggle and how it affected them. I was curious to know their views on whether men should be allowed to marry more than

one wife if they could afford it, whether lobola should continue, effects of none payment of lobola and the changes they desired to be made to the practice of lobola. The following is how they responded:-

5.4.1. Personal lobola experiences and how lobola is exploited

When an orphan gets married, those who charge lobola do not really care. They only want to maximize on what they can get from the lobola. They charge much more money than they ever charge when their own daughters are getting married. They don't care whether the bridegroom can afford it or not.

Mai Sarudzai grew up as an orphan. When her childhood sweetheart came to pay lobola he was charged one hundred and thirty Rands. Her uncles wanted him to pay at least eighty thousand Rands before he could wed, as they wanted a white wedding, (a church wedding conducted by a church minister, where the bride is dressed in a white garment). Her suitor was a simple shop assistant. He could not afford this type of lobola. They were forced to break up their relationship, even though they were deeply in love. She was heartbroken. She still finds it hard to forgive her uncles. Her uncles often caution her not to teach their daughters “zvehunzenza” (loose morals) because she then decided to have a child out of wedlock and forget about marriage. She cannot relate freely with her cousins, whom she considers her closest relatives. Tears were flowing on her cheeks as she narrated her ordeal.

Mai Hama bemoaned that her lobola negotiations broke down when her brothers and uncles insisted that her husband buys fifteen crates of beer and seven cartons of cigarettes. Because of our convictions as Christians, my husband, with my concurrence, refused. My brothers and uncles accused him of attempting to impose his dictates on their family. Negotiations collapsed when my husband refused to compromise. They refused to allow the son-in-law to dictate things to them in their own home. They would rather the son-in-law abandoned marrying her if he was not prepared to buy beer and cigarettes as these were their fathers' food. Her husband refused to compromise his faith. He was adamant that under no circumstances was he going to buy these two items. Mai Hama was very hurt by this demand. She could not understand why her

fathers could not buy themselves beer and cigarettes with the money my husband had already paid. My husband and I agreed that the collapse of the negotiations was not our fault. We proceeded to live together as husband and wife. The thought that we did not finalize lobola negotiations haunts us to this day. Whenever my husband thinks about the issue, he always reminds me of how unreasonable my parents were. This torments me. Relations with my parents are strained. They accuse us of embarrassing them in front of their relatives. Relations between my parents and us are so strained that we are not welcome to my parents' house.

Narrating her own experience of lobola and how it affected her, Mai Chigubhu gave the following narrative:-

A lot of my relatives came to witness payment of my lobola, including those who were not invited, of which all of them were expecting to be given something from the lobola. We did not even visit each other with some of them, but they still came for lobola. In an effort to ensure that every one of them gets something, lobola was hiked such to an extent that what my husband had brought became insignificant. He remained with a heavy debt and this infuriated him. He does not like my parents as a result. He only visits my parents' home when a close relative dies, just to attend the funeral. My own visits to my parents are restricted because he fears my parents may teach me "zvehudyire" (greediness). He constantly reminds me that "vabereki vako vane hudyire" (your parents are greedy). This is painful.

Mai Tsoka, (not her real name) narrated her experience as follows:-

When we got married, my husband was charged 180 000 Rands for lobola. He did not have that kind of money so he only had 4500 Rands, which he paid. When it was time for the introductions, my parents refused to see him because he had paid very little. Up-to now they do not know their son-in-law even though we have been living together as a couple for three years. My father tells anyone who cares to listen that his daughter (meaning me) is not married, "arikubika mapoto" (she is co-habiting). Whenever I hear the word "kubika mapoto" spoken, it torments me.

5.4.2. Deep pains that women experience due of lobola

Mai Musara (not her real name) narrated her experience as follows:

My late husband and I moved in together ten years ago. He never paid a single cent towards lobola to my parents because he was poor. He fell ill and died two years ago. We have three children. My parents attended the funeral in order to claim lobola. They demanded “matare” (meeting to discuss issues). My late husband’s brothers obliged and invited their elderly relatives to the “dare” (meeting) to assist them. They acknowledged the lobola debt on behalf of their deceased brother. My parents laid out their lobola charges which were accepted. They demanded that a deposit be paid and that my late husband’s brothers sign an acknowledgement of debt for the balance. They refused to sign but indicated their willingness to pay as and when they could because they were also not employed. This infuriated my father. He hired a taxi and ordered me and my youngest child to collect all our belongings and get into the taxi. We left before my late husband’s burial. He told my late husband’s brothers to come and get us when they have his lobola. I do not know where the man I loved, the father of my children, was buried. My youngest daughter and I have also been separated for two years from my other two children that remained behind with my late husband’s brothers. We are under strict instructions from my father never to visit their homestead until they pay lobola. My brothers-in-law are making sure that I do not see my children. My heart is bleeding.

It emerged from the *dare* that women perceived men as uninterested in their married daughters’ welfare as long as they got their rich pickings of lobola. The effect of the exorbitant lobola charges on their daughters’ lives seemed to be the least of their worries.

They don’t care how their daughter lives in that marriage in regard to such high charges. For sure, if high amounts are charged and you don’t perform accordingly or as expected where you go, you are harassed because of that money. Huge amounts should not be charged in order to have a good relationship in marriage, lest your husband thinks of the

money charged and beats you. The daughter may suffer even after making a silly mistake when she gets to her in-laws family.

I also learnt from the *dare* that those husbands who managed to pay the high lobola charges felt they owned their wives. They were part of their property. The wives were constantly reminded that the husbands had bought them. They were just like any other expensive property that the husband owned. He emphasized his freedom to do what he wanted to and with the property.

5.4.3. Effects of lobola abuse on young girls

Lobola is hindering many women from getting married. Men simply cannot afford to raise the requisite lobola. Most men in Zimbabwe do not have jobs, so charging such colossal amounts, puts marriage out of their reach. Some men labor to pay part of the charges and promise to return to settle the balance but are never able to honor their pledge, thus enduring a heavy debt. The in-laws will still claim that the son-in-law is not properly married, so it is difficult.

Currently, we have many God fearing girls in the twenty-eight to thirty-six age groups, in church, who are not married because many boys are not formally employed and thus cannot afford the kind of lobola demanded by their fathers these days. They feel intimidated to try their luck with the girls' fathers.

5.4.4. Should men marry more than one wife if they can afford it?

The women considered polygamy to be the worst solution to the current lobola struggles among the Shona people. They claimed that most of them grew up in polygamous families and experienced the ills of polygamy such that none of them wished them for their children or other women. They raised a question “*should the poor not marry?*” To them attention should not be diverted from lobola itself, because that is where the problem lies.

5.4.5. Should the custom of lobola continue?

I pointed out to the women that Government had legislated that lobola was no longer compulsory. The law made it optional, leaving the onus on the girl to decide whether she wanted lobola to be paid for her, (Zimbabwe Legal Age of Majority Act, 1982). When I then inquired whether lobola continued to be observed in Zimbabwe, the women unanimously agreed that lobola should continue to be practiced.

Lobola is about uniting families. Paying lobola is just a way of appreciating the parents for looking after the daughter. Huge amounts should not be charged in order to have a good relationship in marriage, lest your husband abuses you. One should be wary of bad omen if lobola is not paid.

5.4.6. Bad omen

I learnt from the *dare* with women that if lobola was not paid, particularly *mombe yehumai* (motherhood cow), the new family may have a bad omen. Their children may be cursed and get sick and die or never prosper in life until the cow is paid. This was believed to be a punishment from the wife's ancestors. Hence discontinuing the practice of lobola was impossible. They were convinced, though, that the way lobola was being charged was forcing husbands to fail to pay it or ignore it and cause families to live in constant fear for the lives of their children.

5.4.7. Desired changes to lobola

“Mukuwasha ngaazvibaye ega” (Let the son-in-law charge himself)

I learnt from the *dare* that the women advocated a situation where lobola was left to the son-in-law to decide what he could afford, as was done “*pasi chigare*” (*long ago*). Then, a man brought whatever game he caught from the forest to the parents of the girl he wanted to marry, as lobola and the parents happily accepted. Allowing sons-in-law to offer their fathers-in-law what they could afford would enable every man, who so wished, to marry hassle free.



5.5. Preliminary conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter, I pointed out that the human document among the Shona in Zimbabwe was full of despicable stories of the lobola struggle. This chapter proceeded to unpack the said human document. The three *matare* unpacked the religious, cultural and socio-economic factors that inform men to abuse the ancient custom of lobola and the resultant effects. The *matare* unpacked some of the effects of exorbitant lobola charges on women, and some men. The participants shared their lobola stories. These, enabled them to establish the role of religion and culture in constructing and sustaining them during the lobola struggle. These stories were useful in figuring ways to sojourn, heal and work towards the wholeness of married poor people, which are dealt with more fully in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX : Data Analysis and Healing Methodology.

6.1. Introduction

In this chapter the research reverts to the *matare* stories for purposes of analysis in an attempt to engage the data of participants and comment on all the collected information verbally articulated and recorded from the co-researchers as pertaining to the research topic. Also the research proceeds to discuss an appropriate healing methodology.

6.2. Data analysis

This analysis is an attempt to engage the data of participants in the *matare* (group interviews) with the Pentecostal Church Men's Fellowship, Pentecostal Church Ladies Fellowship and Padare (Men's Forum on gender) and comments on all the collected information verbally articulated and recorded and responses to the critical question pertaining to the research topic. The reader is advised that in this chapter the terms "participants" and "co-researchers" are used interchangeably to refer to those co-researchers who participated in the focus group interviews.

It is crucial to note from the onset that marriage issues are perceived to be very private and personal among the Shona. Consequently, it is very difficult for an individual to reveal such information to another probing person, worse still in the presence of an audience. If one decides to disclose, they are likely to do so to a trusted person in private. Be that as it may, I decided to use the focus group interview because of the therapeutic effect and many other advantages mentioned in chapter three.

At the beginning of each group discussion participants were hesitant to narrate their personal stories. They started by narrating stories they had heard. It was only later in the conversations that it invariably dawned on them that I was sincere and that I was not claiming to have answers to their challenges but rather I was a representative of Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd. This became the foundation of our relationship which was built on trust. Each time a member of the group took the initiative to share their personal story; it motivated the rest of the group to do likewise voluntarily. Furthermore one or

two had opened up the rest of the group realized that it was not only them who went through such an ordeal regarding lobola, but others had also had similar or worse experiences.

Participants in the *matate* brought well-informed personal lobola narratives fashioned and shaped by their experiences of shame. These experiences of shame are characterized by a pervasive sense of worthlessness, being unlovable, and a feeling that there is a fundamental flaw in one's being, (Wimberly, 1999:17). The feelings came from people's insensitivity towards other people, especially towards the poor who cannot afford the kind of lobola demands they are confronted with. As revealed in the group interviews, poor sons-in-law were made to do menial jobs at their in-laws' family gatherings while the rich ones, who had fully paid their lobola, just sat and were afforded the best treatment. Every guest knew that those doing the menial jobs were the poor sons-in-law who owed their fathers-in-law lobola. This is tantamount to carrying a tag that reads "poor man". Their humiliation was compounded by the hosts' *sahwira* (family friend who usually acts as the master of ceremony at such gatherings) throwing careless jokes at the expense of these poor sons-in-law. Thus shame became an all too dominant experience of self to these people which preaching and counseling must address, (Ibid, 1999:17).

Participants showed that the lobola struggle represented shameful acts that they were subjected to. They had kept these events secretly inside, swallowing them. According to Wimberly these events were not only devastating, but they also left negative boot prints and open, festering wounds on the participants' lives, (Ibid, 1999:57). Some of them had their families destroyed by their fathers-in-law when their wives were recalled home, together with their children because of outstanding lobola. Because of poverty, they failed to raise the lobola and were made to endure permanent separation from their families. Others still had their deceased wives belongings in their custody because their in-laws refused to distribute them until the surviving husband settled his lobola debt.

This inhibited closure and the ability of the surviving spouse to move on with his life. Others, yet again, were humiliated by their in-laws in the presence of their relatives and

friends, when the lobola they had raised was rejected because it was too little. As a result their friends used this unsavory experience to ridicule them. Only when they told their stories in the *matare* and made the shame external to themselves did the wounds begin to heal and a scab begin to form over the open wound, (Ibid, 1999:58).

In the case of Simba, he and his brothers had the unenviable task of paying lobola for their mother. They are all married men who are not employed and also have lobola obligations for their own wives. The tension this schism created for them strains relationships with their mother's brothers, and relations which are considered very important in the Shona culture. Their situation is one of hopelessness occasioned by clear abuse of the African cultural practice of lobola, emanating from men's greed. Simba's story portrays pain, shame, rejection and deceit which leaves one disappointed if not bitter and much traumatized.

In Morgan's case, he was forced to break up with the love of his life, leaving her distraught because he could not raise the lobola demanded by her parents. He was extremely hurt and disappointed. He suffered so much shame and guilt that he lost hope of ever getting married legally. All his friends witnessed his demise and now carelessly joke about his ordeal. He internalized the shame. He even struggled to relate his story. He, like other co-researchers, needed to be primed. Sadly, the interview opened the wound of shame and embarrassment again. We all realized that he still needs to be assisted to find healing. Psalms of lament in the Bible which enable us to confront our shame, vulnerability and humiliation and express our feelings about them were essential in this situation, (Wimberly, 1999:54).

Shumba's narrative, which points to commercialization of lobola, epitomizes some of the lobola struggles which are common among the Shona. Commercialization is defined by Tarugarira et.al, as a system where the payment of lobola has been transformed from being a mere cultural practice to a business venture, where the bride has a clear monetary value attached to her. Inevitably payment negotiations are characterized by intense bargaining, leading to the payment of a high fee and is almost equivalent to the selling of a commodity on the open market, (2014: 64). Those men with daughters

perceived them in terms of how much lobola they could derive from them, and not merely as daughters.

Those co-researchers who grew up with an absent father and were raised by maternal relatives suffered traumatic experiences that are commonly endured by many Shona children who grow up without a father. People refer to the child not by his/her name but as *asina baba* (*the one without a father*). Other children also teased him/her "*hauna baba. Baba vako varikupi?*" (You don't have a dad. Where is your daddy?). The frequency with which these statements are repeated to the child makes the child internalize the shame.

This was exacerbated by the sudden appearance of the absent father for the first time at the daughter's wedding, just to disrupt wedding proceedings until his lobola was paid. This action humiliated the new couple and caused them to suffer profound shame. The resultant scars of shame and pain lay dormant because they were not addressed properly through healing interventions. These can scar the victims for life, worse still, the victims start questioning the love and care of God as Shumba and his wife were doing. It is despicable that God's people are exposed to such tortuous pain and sadness emanating from lobola which is exacerbated by the church's lack of healing interventions.

6.2.1. Shame

Shame is essentially a threat to a person's self-worth. It is a form of pain that directs attention to the disorienting effects of pain and challenges to deepen the understanding of the clergy's role as personal comforter. It is the type of painful experience that we desperately want to disguise from others, so that it becomes a peculiar private form of suffering, (Capps, 1983:81).

On the one hand shame is a deeply held view that one's being is flawed. It can manifest as a core feeling of not being good enough, of not deserving or of not feeling worthy and of not being lovable. Deep feelings of shame have the ability to disrupt people's lives in profound ways. It affects human identity (a sense of who one is), intimacy with others,

and self-esteem. Shame is not one's identity; it is a learned belief about self. This faulty belief underpins the development of a false or adapted self. It comes in many forms and is directed towards the developing self in countless verbal and non-verbal ways. The lesson of shame is all the more indelibly learned if the messages are repetitive and if there is no opportunity to talk about the experiences. Shamed people are stigmatized by society and go through life with a spirit of rejection, and feeling unwanted.

It is generally agreed that shame is one of the most powerful, painful and potentially destructive experiences known to humans. It involves the total self and deals a severe blow to our sense of self-worth, (Wimberly 2003:45).

“This concerns the fact that shame is painful because it simultaneously exposes and isolates us. Thus pain reveals things about ourselves which we would prefer not to acknowledge (our weakness, vulnerability or previous errors in judgment) and it creates barriers between ourselves and others (our inability to communicate what we are going through and their inability to understand and respond meaningfully” (Capps, 1983:49).

The co-researchers felt this deep sense of being exposed after telling their stories. Notably, some got so quiet after revealing their lobola ordeal. The pain revealed things they would rather not have acknowledged. They needed to be journeyed with to healing and wholeness. This confirmed that the tentacles of the shame they suffered have the ability to strangle the human spirit and their power had the potential to crush their sense of worth and value. Further the fear engendered by its presence can lock a person in perpetual bondage.

“Shame is an assault on our dignity because it makes us feel humiliated and embarrassed and it results in loss of self-esteem or it makes us ashamed of ourselves. Our first reaction to this inflicting of injury on self is to seek escape (make a quick exit, make ourselves invisible, convince ourselves it's all a dream). When escape fails we may defend ourselves through anger, putting the blame on others for getting us in the painful situation or for failing to prepare us adequately for it or becoming angry with ourselves for getting involved in something we should have avoided. Blaming ourselves

or others may be a useful coping mechanism. But this is hardly an adequate interpretation of the experience. There is more at stake than assigning blame,” (Capps: 88-89).

6.2.2. Guilt

On the other hand, “guilt is the painful emotion triggered when we become aware that we have acted in a way to bring harm to another person or to violate some important code. Guilt is about action and laws,” (Nathanson, 1992:19).

It is apparent from Nathanson’s definition that guilt is directed at one’s actions. Mariri differentiates shame and guilt as follows:-

“Guilt is believing that one has done something bad and shame is believing that someone is bad,” (2012:113). For Wimberly the difference between shame and guilt is that shame involves global attributions of fault to the entire self while guilt is attributed to a specific act, (1999:75).

The co-researchers acknowledged that they had to deal with emotional reactions such as fears, helplessness, anxiety, hopelessness and anger – having been angry at life’s situation and at God. They had questions such as: why did God not intervene? Why did God let this happen? Where is God in their paining experience? Such questioning about God and the anger towards God subsequently brought about guilty as a result of ‘telling-off” God (Palmer, 2012).

Co-researchers felt guilty because they had not managed to liquidate lobola obligations for their wives as demanded by culture. Those who had to marry their second choice lovers because they could not raise the *roora* demanded for the first ones felt they betrayed these first ones. Consequently the co-researchers were suffering from guilt which needed to be worked through, as well.

6.2.3. Fate of lobola

Only one lady co-researcher felt that lobola was archaic and needed to be discarded totally. She regarded it as being a means through which men assert themselves and

constructed a dominant, although fragile, position as heads of families” (Aboim; 2008; 9; Mwamanda, 2016:89). She articulated her position with such passion that it was clear that she subscribed to the feminist view held by the elite black women in Zimbabwe who are lobbying for the total abolition of lobola in Zimbabwe.

The rest of the co-researchers were unanimous that, despite all the current shortcomings of the practice of lobola among the Shona, lobola should continue to be practiced. The rationale being that it is an important aspect of the Shona culture that distinguishes us from Americans, Europeans, Asians and many other societies.

Further, the custom is noble as it is premised on appreciating one’s in-laws for raising a wonderful daughter suitable for marriage. As a means for building relations, lobola unites families. They contended that the lobola struggle is manmade and can equally be rectified by man, if man puts his mind to it. They concurred with Chigwedere that lobola has been corrupted and that the corruption is not a tradition, but a distortion of tradition and must be eliminated, (1982:50). They are, without doubt guided by the Shona concept of *kusarasa mwana nemvura yakasviba*, (not throwing away the child with dirty water).

6.3. *Kusarasa mwana nemvura yakasviba* concept

This concept is premised on the traditional way the Shona endeavour to resolve difficult issues facing society. The matter is brought before a “palaver” (a meeting place designated by Zimbabwean culture) where problems, differences and issues are listened to, deliberated on and advice given, (Mucherera, 2009:132). They explore how the matter was in the past. They analyze areas of departure from the custom. They affirm the true custom and remove the errors. Thus, they clean up the custom and retain it rather than revoke it because of assumed errors.

6.4. Theological perspective on suffering

In an attempt to define suffering, Masango and Dreyer acknowledge that it cannot be understood but it causes a wound which seeks to be healed. They alleged that the

victim experiences brokenness and strives to become whole again, (2015:23). It was evident from the *matare* I held that the participants were wounded and were in need of healing. Their suffering was inflicted on them by fellow human beings who were supposed to heed Jesus call to love one another. The participants needed to come to grips with, find acceptance in and, even meaning to their suffering occasioned by the lobola struggle even though the suffering was inflicted on them by people who were deemed close to them.

Masango et.al. further assert that there is no theology of suffering in the Bible because God intended wholeness and joy for human beings, (Ibid, 2015:23). They view pain as a contradiction to this position though it is part of human existence. We associate human suffering with Jesus suffering on the cross. As the clergy, our responsibility is to assist people to understand and explain suffering, to work through the events in their lives which cause suffering and to fight and if possible to beat suffering, (Ibid, 2015:13). Therefore, the current practice by the Pentecostal pastors of letting the congregants tackle their lobola struggle alone is not in sync with this philosophy. Means (2010) quoted in Masango et.al concludes that “when the church fails to confront evil at any level it ultimately robs those touched by evil of the faith resources for which they so desperately long.” I am not implying of course, that lobola is evil but that the corruption of lobola is evil. Pastors ought to be actively involved in the lobola struggle. It is considered ungodly for pastors to be indifferent to the lobola struggle prevailing among the Shona, in the Zimbabwean context.

At this stage this research considered issues of care from a practical theological paradigm for purposes of coming up with a healing methodology to journey with victims of the lobola struggle towards healing and wholeness.

6.5. Pastoral care

Individuals and families, which comprise the Pentecostal Christian community among the Shona, require special care, the kind of care God’s chosen people the Jews, have always received directly from God and indirectly through God’s servants the priests,

prophets and wise men. With the coming of Jesus this care was epitomized by Jesus himself as a good shepherd who knew his sheep and also laid down his own life for his sheep. This care is pastoral care which the pastor is commanded by Jesus to offer to his sheep, the church.

Pastoral care is traditionally known as Care of Souls, (*Cura Anima rum*). The Latin word *cura* means care, although it also contains the notion of “healing”. *Anima* is translated “soul” in Greek. In New Testament “soul” stands for the essential human being with emphasis on its transcendent destiny, (Asquith, 2010).

W. A. Clebsch & C.R. Jaekle (1975) define care of souls, (pastoral care) as; “helping acts done by representative Christian persons directed toward the healing, sustaining and guiding, and reconciling of troubled persons whose troubles arise in the context of ultimate meanings and concerns.”

Pentecostal Church pastors have an obligation to meet their congregants’ pain with compassion, and, human guilt with grace and forgiveness in their care of souls. It is critical that they exercise empathy, exemplified by Jesus as he dealt with troubled souls. Empathy is the ability to identify with and experience another person’s experience, which is accomplished by suspending one’s frame of reference in order to enter the perceptual and emotional world of the other. Exercising empathy, especially in counseling, breeds trust between counselee and counselor. As result the counselee is more likely to trust the counselor with deeper feelings and enter the therapeutic process more deeply and productively.

Another scholar, Daniel Low, regards *cura anima rum*- (cure of human souls), as a fundamental function of pastoral care. For him, human search for meaning and the contemporary quest for spirituality in a post-modern society challenges the church to re-evaluate the task and purpose of pastoral ministry. He urges pastoral theology to develop a model which not only takes the salvation of the gospel seriously but also endeavors to understand and interpret human existence within contexts and relationships. He recommends the interaction of the gospel narrative with the life

experience of human souls and vice-versa. Daniel Louw perceives this challenge as essentially hermeneutical warranting paying particular attention to the following:

- the specific hermeneutical process which takes place in the pastoral encounter.
- the implications of salvation for individuals in their social context.
- the method used in pastoral counseling.
- the ultimate healing or therapeutic effect of pastoral intervention.

However, Daniel Louw's main argument is: "how the good news of the kingdom of God and salvation should be interpreted in terms of human experience/reality and social context so that the substance of our Christian faith may contribute to a life of meaning and quality".

The interpretation of the word of God in the context of the lobola struggle is critical in the caring and healing process of people like Morgan, Shumba and Simba.

6.6. Charles V. Gerkin's Shepherding Model

In his Shepherding model, which was explained fully in Chapter two, Charles V. Gerkin traced pastoral care to the ancient leaders of Israel who were the priests, a hereditary class that had particular responsibility for worship and ceremonial life; the prophets who spoke on behalf of Yahweh in relation to moral issues, sometimes rebuking the community and its stated political leaders, and the wise men and women who offered counsel of all sorts concerning issues of good life and personal conduct (1997:23). All these offices have been merged, in the Pentecostal Church, into the office of the pastor.

It is evident from the *matate* held that the offices of prophet and wise men and wise women are not functional in the Pentecostal church in relation to the lobola struggle. The pastors are not vitally concerned with the care and discipline of God's people, the Shona, both as a community and as individuals in their lobola custom. As prophets they need to confront people regarding their deviation from the godly conduct of lobola. The pastor has to display God's care in the pastor's prophetic acts of leadership and confrontation with the implications of the will of God for mutual care of the people that is care for all human affairs, (Gerkin, 1997:24). This kind of care should prompt the pastor

to confront issues of injustice and moral integrity in the life of the Shona people. Gerkin urges that to care pastorally for the people, both individually and communally, is to consistently inquire about and help the people to consider the morality of their actions. It is high time that Shona men be compelled to consider the morality of their conduct in the prevailing lobola struggle. Pastors are ideally situated to do so as no one else seems to have the heart to act. They can use the Shona concept of *kurovera musaga* (address a pertinent issue generally rather than confront the perpetrator directly). This approach can be very useful in addressing the lobola abuse through the pastor's homilies. Further, as wise men and wise women, Pentecostal Church pastors have to engage the lobola custom and offer guidance concerning its conduct, contrary to their current indifferent stance.

The Pentecostal church pastor should also assume another model of the caring leader as shepherd, which is most clearly captured in the imagery of Psalms 23, (Ibid, 1997:27). By assuming this model, the pastor incorporates the priestly, prophetic and wise men roles to fully care for the daily lives of the people of God as they faithfully live under the strain of everyday life in a predominantly secular world, (Gerkin, 1997:29). The pastor can take a cue by reflecting on the actions and words of Jesus as he related to people at all levels of social life. According to Gerkin, this provides us the model *sine qua non* for pastoral relationships with those immediately within our care and those strangers we meet along the way (Ibid, 1997:80). However, in the quest to offer pastoral care, the Pentecostal Church pastor is called upon to assume the function of mediator and reconciler between individual believers and the community of Christians (Ibid, 1997:81). The *matare* held in this study revealed great animosity and despicable hatred between fathers-in-law and sons-in-law in the church of Jesus Christ, even though Christ commanded love among his people. Thus by correctly acting as mediator and reconciler, the Pentecostal Church pastor can facilitate the sustaining and healing of people traumatized by the lobola struggle.

6.7. Nick Pollard

In his Positive Deconstruction model, which was fully explained in chapter two, Nick Pollard endeavors to help people who are currently comfortable with their non-Christian beliefs to think again about them – and possibly to become uncomfortable with them, so much so that they then want to find out about Jesus, (1997:13). In response to calls from *matare* for involvement of Pentecostal Church pastors in congregants' lobola issues, this model can be used in dealing with the lobola struggle. To this regard, the pastor should highlight the prevailing lobola struggle to men in his personal interactions with them and in his/homilies. The pastor should help the people to deconstruct (take apart) the custom of lobola in order to look carefully at it and analyze it. The process should be done in a positive way – in order to replace it with something better, (Ibid, 1997:44). It helps the people to recognize and affirm the elements of truth to which they already hold and also helps them to discover, for themselves, the inadequacies of the underlying worldviews they have absorbed, (Ibid, 1997:44). The pastor acknowledges what he/she finds out about lobola. He/she should retain and blend the good and positive with the belief system that he/she wants to introduce, but discard the bad. This way the pastor would have positively deconstructed the custom of lobola. This research is endeavoring to gradually do so.

6.8. Church and ancient rites

According to Palmer, (2012) black people should not feel ashamed to practice ancient rites like lobola because they have converted to Christianity. He urged the church to play a vital role in allowing, assisting and encouraging black people to practice these rituals without losing their dignity, credibility and identity. The unanimous endorsement of lobola by *matare*, leaves the Pentecostal Church with no choice but to actively embrace the practice among its members. Palmer (2012) urges that the church will not become polluted or less holy and irrelevant while mingling with people as they practice their cultural rite of lobola. The church can deal with the ills of lobola better through its visibility in the process.

6.9. Wimberly's narrative approach

Although Wimberly's work is from an African American perspective, while this study is done in the Zimbabwean context, the challenges the Pentecostal church is confronted with in relation to (a) lobola (b) role of the church in critiquing political, social, economic ills in society (c) role of the church in strengthening the faith by instilling hope in believers, is similar. Wimberly proposed a model that the church and its care givers could use in journeying with troubled people. He proposed the use of bible stories to help troubled people. He perceives this as an indigenous approach to caring that relies upon story telling which takes place in the black (African) church. He also regards it as a basic method used by black people, both lay and clergy to care for one another. He acknowledged the use of many types of stories ranging from long stories, anecdotes, short sayings, to metaphors, to respond to the needs of the parishioners. The stories function in the caring setting to bring healing and wholeness to the lives of persons and families within the black/African pastoral care context, (2008:2). The narratives suggest ways to motivate people into action, help them see themselves in a new light, help them recognize new resources, enable them to channel behavior in constructive ways, sustain them in crisis, bring healing and reconciliation in relationships, heal the scars of memories and provide guidance when direction is needed, (Ibid, 2008:2).

Since storytelling is adept in communicating previously silenced and unspeakable topics I therefore concur with Mariri that storytelling prepares participants to esteem and cherish the conglomeration of human experiences. As a result positive deconstruction ensues, unpacking the interpretive assumptions of a system of meaning under examination, for the purpose of interrogating the assumption that the model is premised upon.

Wimberley asserts that, "genuine pastoral care from a narrative perspective involves the use of stories by pastors in ways that help persons and families to visualize how and where God is at work in their lives and thereby receive healing and wholeness", (1991:9). This assertion confirms Wimberly's view that caring within a local black congregation is a response pattern to God's unfolding story of the defeat of the powers

of evil, oppression and suffering in its midst. It is a story of healing and wholeness when people live meaningful lives in the community. He believes that God seeks to draw people and communities into His story so that the resources of God's reign can be made available to them for their growth and development. This changes their vision and character, resulting in an increased ability to have common concerns with God in the church and in the world.

Wimberly believes that care and nature, that the Pentecostal Church is in dire need of, result from faithfulness to God's vision revealed within the community. It is only God's care for us that draws people into the richness of his caring resources for healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling. Therefore caring is visualizing God's story as it unfolds in church members' lives, in spite of their suffering, pain and cries whilst the caregiver, (pastor) is helping them to respond to God's presence and story in their lives. Wimberly believes that the caregiver should possess the ability to take seriously the need and plight of people, understand it and come up with the possible way of addressing it within a context.

According to Wimberley this is a truly narrative style of pastoral care in the black church which draws upon personal stories from the pastor's life, stories from the practice of ministry, and stories from the bible. This approach enables the pastor to enter the parishioner's world of experience and see things through the parishioner's eyes. It can help the parishioner take full responsibility for making his/her own decisions. It can enable the parishioner to be specific when describing events. It can also help the counselor express his / her feelings about what is taking place in the parishioner's life in ways that lead to growth, (Ibid, 2008:1).

Wimberly urges the pastor to use these stories in preaching and pastoral counseling by telling them from the point of view of one who carries the shame. He emphasizes that the story must be narrated in a manner that helps the hearer to identify and sympathize with the shame based person in the story. After articulating the shame of the person, Wimberly urges the preacher or the counselor to proceed to introduce the transforming aspects of the story so that the hearer can have firmly planted in his /her mind new

possibilities for dealing with his/her shame. He considers it critical that the preacher or the counselor ensures that the alternative to shame is told in a dramatic way, so that the hearer can see the point of new self-expectations, (1999:73). Wimberly is thus convinced that black pastoral care is essentially narrative.

6.10. Retelling of the story

A story is retold with the express intention to convert it from a burdensome and oppressive story into a redemptive one. Any shifting of the perspective results in a new meaning. Once a new perspective is gained on that particular traumatic experience, the story must be retold and not only that story but many other stories (Mariri, 2012). The therapeutic effect derived from retelling stories facilitates learning about selves and also prompts individuals to act accordingly. Further retelling of our stories facilitates and aids our responses to new situations. Retelling stories and its therapeutic effects which facilitate learning about selves and enable and aid our responses to new situations, enhances emotional maturity. This releases images from the process and practice of telling one's story.

6.11. Alternative understanding

Alternative understanding based on a Christian perspective becomes possible. This effectively ties up one's story with the Story of God revealed through Jesus Christ.

In this regard, the alternative accords a corrective opportunity to continually demystify the limiting realities that we create. Mariri correctly noted that the intention is to achieve positive deconstruction by tackling toxic aspects of the discourse through deciphering and unknotting the discourses without destroying them. We thus, engage and reconstruct previously negative narratives, by opening up possibilities for re-storying; with an intention to bring about alternative stories. As an alternative, positive deconstruction enables realization of the transformative and redeeming meaning of the story. However it is without doubt that positive deconstruction needs to be complemented and buttressed by other means, (Mariri, 2012).

6.12. Alternative stories as necessary contribution for healing

The co-researchers got involved in fledgling love and nurture with a trustworthy person whom they would journey with, by retelling their stories. This person who acts as a mentor facilitates the journey and reconnection by leading the co-researchers from being relational refugees back to human community and companionship, (Mariri, 2012). This requires reframing.

6.13. Reframing

Reframing begins when the co-researchers begin to engage by reviewing how they have been acting and behaving; and subsequently, how this had impeded or aided the transformation of trauma and eventually healing. This is done thorough storytelling and results in nurturing taking place. To facilitate healing, it is paramount that the co-researchers be aided and journeyed with. During reframing, the trauma that had been experienced and its impact is acknowledged and embraced since it is an intrinsic part of one's being. Acknowledgement is done through confessing shame and guilt. Psychologically, confessing shame and guilt is an attempt to acknowledge that shame has occurred and to relieve it by going to others and telling them about it, (Lewis, 1995:131). This enables one to externalize the shame during the process of confessing the shame. By allowing oneself to be aware of the existence of shame, one acknowledges it but by placing it outside the self, one detaches the self from it, (Wimberly, 1999:75). Further, confession of shame is catalytic in undoing the original shame scene. In the original shame, the expected lobola was not paid and the co-researchers attributed the blame to the entire self, not just to the non-payment, (Ibid, 1999:75).

6.14. Incompetence of clergy

There is a school of thought that believes that the seeming indifference of Pentecostal Church pastors to the lobola struggle is due to their inability to handle the matter pastorally. This school of thought is supported by the fact that the Pentecostal Bible College only produces holders of Pastoral diplomas only. The majority of these pastors

hardly ever advance themselves academically. I concur with Prof. Dames that pastors ought to be empowered through training to become skilled spiritual and moral leaders for authentic witness and mission. In his view, pastors can become culture creators in order to bridge the gap between gospel and culture, public and private, science and experience, western and African culture in a Zimbabwean African cultural context.

6.15. Preliminary conclusion

In this chapter *matare* stories were revisited. Data from participants was engaged. The researcher commented on all the collected information, verbally articulated and recorded from the co-researchers concerning the research topic. The scope of pastoral care was surveyed. Also the research proceeded to explore appropriate healing methodology, suggesting ways in which the Pentecostal pastor could intervene in the lobola struggle in order to facilitate the healing process of lobola victims. The next chapter deals with findings and recommendations.

CHAPTER SEVEN : FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1. Introduction

This chapter deals with the findings from the study. The findings are organised under the relevant research questions and objectives to make the research results clear. The chapter also presents recommendations and states the conclusions of the study.

7.2. Discussion of findings

Research findings are drawn from the focus group interviews conducted. They are organized under the relevant research questions and objectives. The following are the findings:-

7.2.1. Causes of lobola abuse by men

The *matare* exposed the following as the causes of lobola abuse by men:-

- i) delays in clearing outstanding lobola
- ii) general economic hardships
- iii) settling scores
- iv) jealousy
- v) cultural exclusion of the girl's father
- vi) false reports from neighbors and acquaintances
- vii) daughters raising own lobola
- viii) commercialization

7.2.1.1. Delays in clearing outstanding lobola

It is generally understood among the Shona that *kuroora hakuperi* (one can never finish paying lobola) applies. As such, lobola is paid in installments during one's life time, usually on demand by the father-in-law. Inevitably the outstanding lobola is eroded by the hyperinflation that is subsisting in Zimbabwe. This compels the fathers-in-law to institute fresh negotiations for the balance at the point it is payable.

7.2.1.2. General economic hardships

The economic meltdown in Zimbabwe has resulted in the majority of men being unemployed. Consequently lobola becomes a main source of income when it is due. This makes men strive to maximize on the expected windfall.

7.2.1.3. Settling scores

Absent fathers force their children who were raised by their mothers using the mothers' surname to adopt their names first before they can participate in the children's lobola. This causes an unnecessary financial burden on the children because they have to enlist lawyers' services.

7.2.1.4. Jealousy

Members of the lobola negotiating panel usually have mixed fortunes with lobola for their own daughters. Some never got lobola for their own daughters. They endeavour to scupper the whole lobola process by making unreasonable demands to force the bride to abandon the negotiations and ditch the girl so that they are all in the same predicament.

7.2.1.5. Cultural exclusion of the girl's father

The father is not expected to play an active role in the lobola negotiations of his daughter. His role is to receive the proceeds when the process is complete. The whole proceedings are done by a panel (dare made up of his brothers, uncles and cousins) without his participation. He is thus incapacitated to correct any irregularities.

7.2.1.6. False reports from neighbours and acquaintances

Some Shona men tend to inflate figures of lobola paid for their daughters when they discuss with neighbors and acquaintances in an effort to boast about their daughters' achievements. Hearers tend to accept these inflated figures as the prevailing rate. This affects their charges when it is their turn to negotiate lobola for their daughters.

7.2.1.7. Daughters raising own lobola

According to the Shona culture, lobola is raised by the man who intends to marry. However, in an effort to solemnize marriage where the husband does not have the money the wife raises lobola for him, if she has the capacity. If she does, she informs her parents the amount the husband will be bringing to ensure that her husband does not retain some of it. The daughter tends to be generous because the money is benefitting her parents.

7.2.1.8. Commercialization

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines commercialization as managing something principally for profit. Tarugarira et.al, used the term commercialization of lobola “to refer to a system where the payment of lobola has been transformed from being a mere cultural practice to a business venture, where the bride has a clear monetary value attached to her.” Shona men now send their daughters to school and properly care for them to increase their worth when they get married. Education and status are key determinants of lobola charged. Shona men endeavour to recoup all expenses paid on rearing their daughter plus profit. Men now perceive their daughters the same way an investor looks at his investment. Tagarira et.al (2014) concluded that as a source of income lobola could not survive commercial abuse. To buttress this idea scholars like Tagarira et.al. and Chabata argued that lobola has undergone a radical transformation in Zimbabwe from being a simple cultural practice into a highly commercialized venture, where the bride has a clear monetary value attached to her. Consequently, payment negotiations are characterized by intense bargaining leading to the payment of a high fee and are almost equivalent to the selling of a commodity on the open market, (Ibid, 2014: 64).

Zvobgo’s view that traditional Shona customs such as *roora* were first formed within a local context and then reformed within a global context holds true for lobola. The intermingling of the past and the present with the local and the global creates tension, which results in friction between the intention of the customary practice of *roora* and the modern implementation of the practice,(2017:7).

I urge that custom is handed down from generation to generation. Some customs, like lobola, have been handed down for many generations. As correctly observed by Mundangepfufu, the lobola custom trickled down from one generation to another resulting in many of its aspects being lost or diluted until the custom almost became meaningless and unrecognizable compared to what it used to be, (2015:2). Be that as it may, the custom must be commended for its resilience. It has managed to defy the odds and withstand onslaughts from the western culture for centuries, though it has not been immune to inherent capitalist influences, particularly commercialization.

7.3. Is lobola still being observed as a custom that builds relationships and family structure in African families?

In its current form, among the Shona, lobola is causing untold suffering. Narratives from the focus group interviews exhibited the struggle that lobola is imposing on people. The practice of lobola has and continues to degenerate into a fundamentally commercial transaction in which wealth is transferred between generations of males, and women are the bartered goods”, (Tagarira, 2014:67). Further, relations between the groom’s and bridegroom’s families that are envisaged will be built positively, are damaged from the onset by the abuse of lobola. Sons-in-law regard their fathers-in-law as greedy, evil and exploiters whilst the fathers-in-law regard their son-in-law as mean and ungrateful fellows. As a result the sons-in-law shun their in-laws and the fathers-in-law shame the defaulting sons-in-law at every available opportunity.

Lobola has since ceased to create friendship between families. It has become a thinly veiled attempt to transfer wealth from the younger generation to the older generation of men. Lobola has become big business exploiting and inflicting unbearable suffering on the poor. Buttressing this view, Botha (2011: Online) declared that “the original purpose of lobola has been misapprehended, distorted and often manipulated in our modern society”. Lobola has shifted significantly from a formality to a major financial transaction, (Ibid, 2011: Online). The practice of lobola can no longer pass the litmus test of bringing friendship between families among the Shona. It now places exceptional or even impossible financial burdens on prospective husbands and recently married couples,

(Smith, 2011). With the ever worsening economic climate in Zimbabwe, there seems to be no end in sight of the lobola struggle among the Shona wreaking havoc to the eschatological community.

7.4. Eschatological community

The current lobola struggle among the Shona impedes the kind of relationships envisaged in the eschatological community. Eschatological community is defined by Wimberly as the faith community that exists between the time Jesus inaugurated the rule of God and the time it is finally established at the end of time, (1997:4). As part of this community, the Pentecostal Church is bound by its norms. The lobola struggle negates the ethical norm of love that is regarded to be central in this community, (Ibid, 1997:5). The attitude and actions of the Shona fathers towards their daughters' lobola and the consequent reactions of the sons-in-law are not in tandem with this love motif.

This should present enough motivation for the Pentecostal Church to come up with a model of care for its members.

7.5. Deep pains that women suffer as a result of the lobola struggle

Some women are abandoned by their lovers, at the point of marriage, for other women whose lobola is affordable. Some of those women, whose husbands strived to pay the overcharged lobola, are subjected to tremendous abuse by their husbands and the husbands' relatives. They are overworked and ridiculed at family social functions. They are subjected to unwarranted lifelong scrutiny by both their husbands and their husbands' relatives. Women, thus bear the brunt of angry and traumatized men, men who are traumatized by other men.

Further, the right to make important decisions like safe sex, through the use of condoms, to protect herself from HIV and AIDS are taken away from women by their husbands. The husbands claim that when they paid lobola they never wrapped it in condoms. Other important decisions that impact on the women's wellbeing are made without consulting them. Those whose husbands die without settling lobola are usually

deprived closure because they are dragged away from the funeral of their husband by their furious parents. Some women are separated from their children when their parents forcibly recall them home because of none payment of lobola.

Further, some Shona girls of marriageable age are condemned to single life because prevailing lobola charges are beyond the reach of some young men. Out of desperation some of these girls resort to consulting traditional or faith healers, who often sexually abuse them, for help. Those girls who are employed resort to raising their own lobola. If society discovers that the girl has paid her own lobola, she is regarded with disdain and labeled a foolish girl. Their husbands are regarded as irresponsible and unable to look after their wives. Some of these wives eventually endure these marriages even when they become abusive just to defend their action.

Those Shona girls who feel that time is running out and are concerned that they may never have children succumb to bearing children out of wedlock. Others have children out of wedlock to spite their fathers for scaring off their suitors through unreasonable lobola demands. These women are derogatorily called *mvana* (woman with child out of wedlock). They are stigmatized because the term has undertones of a loose or immoral woman. The father of the girl shifts the blame to his wife whom he accuses of not teaching the girl well and making him a laughing stock among other men. This causes both the mother and her daughter to suffer the kind of shame that is characterized by a pervasive sense of worthlessness, and a feeling that there is a fundamental flaw in one's being, (Morrison, 1996:13).

I found out that some of those women, for whom lobola was paid, are usually their husbands' second choices as the husbands were unable to raise the lobola demanded for the women they really loved. They bear scars that are occasioned by forced break up of their love affairs. Their right to love and affection is infringed by callous men hiding behind a cultural rite of lobola. This infringement is in direct contravention of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Article 16 (1), (which Zimbabwe ratified in 1991), which provides that men and women of full age have the right to marry and have a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to

marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. It further provides, in 16(2), that marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending parties. This, in a sense, exempts one from paying lobola though the fear of the consequences of non-payment among the Shona men compels them to submit to lobola demands by in-laws.

7.6. Effects of lobola abuse on young men

Some young men are shunning girls because they know they can never raise the kind of lobola parents are demanding for their daughters. They are either resorting to homosexuality, which appears to be on the increase, masturbation or prostitution because they are unable to live a life of celibacy. I found out from the dare with men that because of the current economic hardships in Zimbabwe, sexual favors now cost a mere five Rands. Thus one can have all the sex they need for less than one hundred Rands per month and avoid the hassles associated with lobola.

Other men resort to co-habitation, a phenomenon that is believed, to be on the increase, particularly in urban areas. However, the husband lives in constant fear of the wrath of his partner's parents if she falls ill or dies. I learnt that if fathers would accept tokens of appreciation as their lobola, every Shona man who desires to marry would be legally married.

Marriage is traditionally believed to be the pinnacle of every Shona man's life. It is probably the most important single event in the life of the Shona man - that great day when he becomes a full member of the group, a full participant of the society (Gelfand, 1973:167) or attains adult manhood, (Orina, 2014:12; Aboim; 2008: 9; Mwamanda, 2016:89). That great day remains a pipedream to some men. Collapsed economies and states, men's inability to save enough money to marry serves to keep poor and marginalized men from attaining adult manhood" (Orina; 2014; 12). This aspect of manhood and being able to financially provide for their families further influenced major decisions such as the decision to marry and pay lobola, (Mwamanda, 2016:88). These assertions portray the prevailing situation among the Shona in Zimbabwe today. The

resultant hopelessness that the situation imposes on the poor among the Shona produces a culture of shame that undermines one's sense of self-worth and works against one's growth and positive mental emotional and spiritual health, (Wimberley, 1999:17).

However, if a Shona man dies single, he is buried with a maize comb or a rat, which may be difficult to find, especially in times of drought. These replace the wife, the deceased never had. This is believed to prevent the dead man's spirit from returning, with vengeance, to haunt the living for letting him die single.

7.7. Church complicity

The Pentecostal church is aiding and abating the abuse of lobola by discriminating against those with lobola challenges, when it comes to leadership appointments in the church. This is tantamount to forcing or blackmailing people to pay lobola to qualify for future lay leader positions in the church. The church's hypocrisy was exposed. It was established that pastors stay clear of lobola issues but assume a leading role after suitors settle with their in-laws and intend to proceed to a white wedding. The co-researchers felt that the church abandoned them at this crucial point in their lives, despite numerous prayers for them to get married. They struggle to understand why, on one hand, pastors distance themselves from their lobola struggle and on the other hand, preach that marriages are institutions started by God. To them this casts doubt on the sincerity of pastors on the whole marriage issue.

7.8. Trending marriages among affluent and rich women

There is a growing group of affluent and self-supporting Shona women who resent the traditional subordination of women to their husbands. These women now prefer marriage without lobola payment. They allege that lobola accords husbands too much authority which causes them to expect their wives to be obedient to them and lay claim on their wives labor and income, (Bledsoe 1990, Roberts, 1988). Their escape route is avoiding contracting a formal marriage and resorting to either cohabitation or having lovers who do not reside with them, in order to maintain their independence

(Mwamanda 2016:88). On the one hand, this type of union is undoubtedly foreign to the Shona culture and unchristian. On the other hand, the union is perfectly legal in terms of the Legal Age of Majority Act 1982. What is not yet clear are the psychological effects on children born from this type of union. This may be an area for further study by other researchers.

7.9. Consequences of none payment of lobola,

Culturally, the groom is not recognized as a son-in-law by his bride's parents if he does not pay lobola. They view his union with their daughter as *kubika mapoto* (co-habitation) and as such unacceptable. The wife is regarded as someone of loose morals. Children from this union are deemed orphans by the wife's parents. They are obliged to pay lobola for their own mother when they grow up. They are also expected to pay *chiredzwa* (compensation paid to maternal grandfather or his sons for raising their daughter's children); if at any point in their childhood they reside with their mother's parents. Payment is paid in the form of cattle, though it is not uncommon to be charged in cash, especially in urban settings.

The other major consequence is that the defaulting family is isolated and turned into relational refugees. Their being shunned by the wife's relatives deprives them of family support and counseling that is essential in African marriages, (Wimberley, 1997). This lack of support spells doom for the family. Divorce or separation is a strong possibility as the vested interests accorded to the wife's parents through lobola are absent. Hence nobody cares whether the marriage endures or collapses.

7.10. Is lobola mandatory in terms of the Zimbabwean law?

Despite the fact that most Zimbabwean women are subject to Customary Law, all women over 18 are accorded certain rights under the Legal Age of Majority Act (LAMA), passed in 1982. This Act was meant to redress inequality as it aimed to nullify traditional customary law, (Zvobgo, 2009:293). Lobola is no longer a legal requirement of customary marriage, but the Customary Marriages Act assumes that, in most cases, lobola will be paid. While couples over 18 can choose to marry without lobola, this is

rare. In an attempt to justify the status quo, Zvobgo maintained that changing laws does not lead to an automatic change of cultural behavior, (1983:46).

7.11. Fate of *roora* (lobola)

The three *matare* (focus group interviews) blamed the abuse of lobola as the driver of the lobola struggle among the Shona. The abuse was regarded as the main cause of distortion in the custom which tended to complicate the process of the practice, (Olise, 2016:144). Only one co-researcher felt that lobola was archaic and needed to be discarded totally. She regarded it as being a means through which men assert themselves and constructed a dominant, although fragile, position as heads of families” (Aboim; 2008; 9; Mwamanda, 2016:89). The rest of the co-researchers were unanimous that, despite all the current shortcomings of the practice of lobola among the Shona, and Government interference through the LAMA, lobola should continue to be practiced. They felt that this piece of legislation should be ignored just like any other bad legislation. The rationale being that it is an important aspect of the Shona culture that distinguishes us from Americans, Europeans, Asians and many other societies.

Further, the co-researchers endorsed the custom as being noble as it is premised in appreciating one’s in-laws for raising a wonderful daughter suitable for marriage. More importantly, lobola unites families as a means of building relations, they contended that the lobola struggle is manmade and can equally be rectified by man, if man puts his mind to it. They concurred with Chigwedere that lobola has been corrupted and that the corruption is not a tradition, but a distortion of tradition and must be eliminated, (1982:50).

7.12. Recommendations

The recommendations that are made are meant to mitigate against the effects of the lobola struggle among the poor people and to empower the Pentecostal Church to deal with it in Zimbabwe. The following are some of the recommendations made:-

- ❖ The Pentecostal Church should review the pastoral care it affords God’s people. It should be prompted by lack of biblical evidence in support of the current lobola

practice in Zimbabwe. The manner in which lobola is being practiced can neither carry God's approval nor can it be ethically and morally justified. God has created us to live in an acceptable and significant relationship with him and for one another just as God cares and loves us.

❖ The Pentecostal Church should inculcate the norm of love in its members as a basis of engagement with each other or other people.

7.13. The role the church should play

The Pentecostal Church should play the role of “game changer” regarding the issue of the lobola struggle in Zimbabwe. It is better placed and is obligated to do so by the great commission in Matthew 28:19f, “go ye into the world and make disciples of all nations”. This commands the church to reach out to people in love and make people's actions conform to biblical dictates. In obedience to this command I recommend that the Pentecostal church does the following:-

❖ Maximize on men's fellowship meetings by making lobola discussions topical at these meetings, ensuring that even non-members of the church are invited to increase the reach.

❖ Constitute smaller groups of victims of lobola in the church to offer them opportunities to share their experiences thereby enjoying healing from the therapeutic effect of such sharing.

❖ Pastors should attend their church members' lobola negotiations to provide guidance in the event of an impasse since they are bound to be listened to by both parties. This offers the pastors opportunities to effect spiritual and physical shepherding.

❖ Pastors should drive maintenance, transformation and development of cultural practices in their assemblies through their homilies. They should be invigorated and energized by the ethical dictates of God to champion the cause of transformation, development and healing of human society by the conviction and belief in the God of the Bible. In his homilies, the pastor should cross into cultural contexts and be a prophet, transformer, developer and healer, (Munthali, 2014:37).

- ❖ The church should encourage income generating projects amongst the youth to emancipate them from poverty. This ministry should be open to all youth irrespective of their status and standing in the church.
- ❖ The Pastor should address every lobola struggle among the church members that comes to his/her attention. Where there is a risk of alienating the perpetrators the Pastor can use the Shona concept of *kurovera musaga*, (addressing a matter during preaching without mentioning names).

7.14. Role of Government

The Zimbabwean Government should run awareness campaigns to educate its citizens about important pieces of legislation like Legal Age of Majority Act, 1982. This assists them in making informed decisions in matters like lobola. The magnitude of the problem can be appreciated if one considers that despite this being an old statute, most of the co-researchers in this study were ignorant of its existence.

7.15. Training of pastors

Pentecostal pastors should receive training relevant to the needs and challenges of contemporary African society. This enables them to influence positively the local politics, social life and morality of their community. Amongst other things the training should include African religion and culture, social concern and counseling services in its curriculum, (Obeng, in Waruta and Kinoti, 2005:8).

Pastoral care models for training pastors by the Pentecostal Church should be extracted from Charles V. Gerkin (1997). These mould the pastor into a shepherd of the flock who emulates Jesus Christ, the good shepherd who showed a lot of love, care, concern and compassion towards the needy when they approached him, (Palmer, 2014). This is the image that Pentecostal pastors should have in front of them when dealing with the lobola struggle.

In addition, The Pentecostal Church should encourage its pastors to become graduates in full time ministry. Most of them are holders of diplomas in theology only. This leaves

them handicapped as they remain semi-literate pastors in charge of assemblies with a number of university graduates, (Ibid, 2005:8). As a result, pastors fail to navigate through critical issues like the lobola struggle, which are affecting the church.

7.16. Conclusion

The study found out that the lobola struggle in Zimbabwe stems from abuse of the custom by men. The causes of this abuse were identified as delays in clearing outstanding lobola, general economic hardships, settling scores, jealousy, cultural exclusion of the girl's father, false reports from neighbors and acquaintances, daughters raising own lobola, and commercialization.

The co-researchers presented stories about the deep pains they suffered as a result of the lobola struggle. There was evidence of shame and guilt amongst the co-researchers which they suffered as a result of their lobola experiences. They needed a trusted care giver to journey with them towards healing and wholeness.

The co-researchers displayed ignorance about the law governing marriages. This study concluded that prior knowledge of the law would have afforded the co-researchers a different predicament. The study advocates continuation of the practice of lobola, only on condition that the girl exercises her right of choice as provided for by LAMA. The original intent of lobola, that is, uniting families and appreciation of the girl's parents for raising a wonderful girl suitable for marriage, should be the only considerations.



APPENDIX A

Demographic Information

Sex:

Female		Male	
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Marital Status:

Single		Married	
Age:		Tick	
18- 25 years			
26 – 34 years			
35 – 40 years			
41 – 50 years			
51 – 55 years			
Highest level of Education:		Tick	
Certificate			
Diploma			
Bachelor			
Masters			
Other			

Category: Christian

Non-Christian

How do you prefer your information referenced?

Write my name as: -----

Use a pseudo- name as: -----

Prefer the researcher to give me one: -----



APPENDIX B

Research questions for a focus group interview (Pentecostal women)

- 1) What was your experience with lobola?
- 2) What do you think about the *lobola* demanded?
- 3) What role do women play in lobola negotiations?
- 4) What are the deep pains that women experience as a result of lobola?
- 5) What do you think causes fathers to abuse the custom of lobola in Zimbabwe?
- 6) What do you think about *mombe yehuma*?
- 7) Which lobola charges do you think are important and why?
- 8) What role can the church play in lobola practice?



APPENDIX C

Research questions for a focused group interview (Pentecostal men)

- 1) What was your experience with lobola?
- 2) What do you think about the *lobola* demanded?
- 3) What role does religion and culture play in the practice of lobola that helps to perpetuate the custom(s)?
- 4) What do you think causes fathers to abuse the custom of lobola in Zimbabwe?
- 5) What role can the church play in lobola practice?



APPENDIX D

Research Questions for a Focused Group Interview (Padare Men)

1. What religion or culture informed their ideas of women and who benefits from these ideas?
2. Who suffers from these ideas?
3. What are the typical lobola charges?
4. Which charges are important in lobola and which ones are not?
5. How does the contemporary lobola practice compare with olden day custom?
6. At which point do you consider a couple married?
7. What does the law say about lobola?

APPENDIX E

LOBOLA STRUGGLE IN ZIMBABWE: A PASTORAL CHALLENGE.

INFORMATION SHEET FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS.

Thank you for your interest in this research on Lobola Struggle in Zimbabwe: A Pastoral Challenge. The research title, aims, question, inspiration and my commitment to the research will be introduced at the *dare's* meeting. These elements will be negotiated with the two organisations that return the information sheet and consent form (see appendix A & B).

This research is being undertaken as part of the requirements for a Master's degree in Practical Theology. The aims and question of the research are as follows:

Research aims and question

The research aims to:

Unpack the religious and cultural factors that cause Zimbabwean men to abuse the cultural custom of lobola.

Unpack the ways these factors affect married Zimbabwean women in their relationship.

The question that will focus this research is:

What religious and cultural factors inform Zimbabwean men to abuse lobola; and how do these factors affect women and their relationships?

Co- researchers needed for the research

Six co-researchers will take part in *dare* (focused group conversation). Co-researchers will tell the *dare* the factors within their religion and culture which informs them to abuse lobola. The co-researchers will explore the ways religious and cultural factors affect married women and their relationships. It will also unpack the factors

and the effects religion and culture has on married women for whom *lobola* has and has not been paid.

What will be required of co-researchers?

Co-researchers will give consent for me to access their information during the *dare*. The information is for use in a research project. If you decide to take part in the research, you will be asked to attend two *dare* for one and half hours. After every *dare*, co-researchers will receive a summary. You will be asked to read your summary, make any necessary comments, improvements and feedback about *dare* stories. The other co-researchers will make further comments and clarification.

The *dare* will be conducted in local languages. Despite the *dare* in local languages, the report will be written in English. Therefore, all summaries and any correspondents will be prepared in English. At your request it can be translated into local languages.

No financial or any form of payment will be made for co-searching in this research.

Free co-researching

You are free to withdraw from the research without any consequences to you.

Confidentiality

The information obtained during the *dare* will be discussed with my co-researcher Prof, Maake Masango. The information will be used in the report. With your prior consent, the *dare* will be audio-taped. However, should you wish that I rather make notes, I would be happy to do so? I will provide you with a summary of the *dare* meeting. Your comments, improvements and/or feedback will be included in the final report. This information will be locked up. It will be destroyed after the completion of the research. I, John Tendai Chisi, my co-researchers, will have access to the audio-tapes and notes taken during the *dare*.

Results of the study

The results of this research may be published. At your request, details (names and places) will be distorted to ensure your anonymity. You will have the choice to use your own name or a pseudonym of your choice. You are welcome to request a copy of the results of the research.

Questions for co-researchers

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the research either now or later, please feel free to contact me. John Tendai Chisi

Telephone: 263-772 271 535 Email: johntendai.chisi@gmail.com

Or my supervisor, Prof, Maake Masango at the Department of Practical Theology, University of Pretoria

Telephone: +27(0)124203397 Email: maake.masango@up.ac.za

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Department of Practical Theology,

University of Pretoria.



APPENDIX F

LOBOLA STRUGGLE IN ZIMBABWE: A PASTORAL CHALLENGE.

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

I have read the information sheet, concerning the research and I understand the research aims and question. All my questions have been answered satisfactorily. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:

1. My participation in the research is totally voluntary.
2. I am free to withdraw from the research at any time without any disadvantages.
3. I understand that my personal information (including tape-recordings) will be kept Confidential and can be destroyed at the conclusion of the research. But that any raw data the research depends on will be retained for ten years.
4. I will receive no financial gain or any form of compensation for participating in the research.
5. All the personal information I have supplied will remain confidential throughout the research.
6. I am aware that John, his supervisor, Prof, Maake Masango will have access to all relevant material.

I am willing to participate in this research.

(Signature of co- researcher) Date G. CHIPISA

Date: 6/7/2018

Name of co- researcher in capital letters

(Signature of witness) G

Date 6-7-2018



APPENDIX G

LOBOLA STRUGGLE IN ZIMBABWE: A PASTORAL CHALLENGE.

CONSENT FORM FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION BY RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

1. I have read the summary of the research.
2. I had the opportunity to improve the information, i.e. making corrections, additions and comments about my personal story.
3. I agree that my corrections, additions and comments be included in the research.
4. I have read the final summary of *dare* and agree that this is an accurate and satisfactory account of the research process. I therefore, give permission for the summary to be used in the research report.
5. I understand that the information obtained during *dare* may be included in an article format for publication. I understand that should I decide that I do not wish the information to be published, I am able to withdraw my permission at any stage of participation in the research.
6. I hereby give my permission for information concerning myself to be used in the research and in the publication. I understand that my confidentiality will be preserved throughout the research, in the written report and in the publication. I also understand that any information that may lead to my identification may be used or included in the research or publication.
7. I prefer the following name to be used in the research or any other publication resulting from the research.

Name to be used: MORGAN

(Signature of co-researcher) G. G. H. P. S. A.

Date: 6/7/2018

Signed: [Signature] (Researcher)

Date 6-7-2018



PADARE / ENKUNDLENI MEN'S FORUM ON GENDER

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30 May, 2017

University of Pretoria
Department of Practical Theology
Pretoria
Republic of South Africa

Dear Reverend

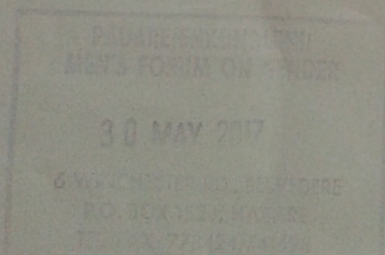
Re : Permission to engage with Padare employees for the Research

This letter seeks to acknowledge and offer support to you Reverend John Tendai Chisi, Student Number 16396074 a registered student at university of Pretoria for the area of masters in Practical Theology. The research topic in the subject matter is "Zebra lines of Lobola in Zimbabwe Today: A Pastoral Challenge."

It is by way of this letter that Padare is allowing you to engage with the staff at Padare for the purposes of satisfying your research requirements. Your research area is of social interest to our work and we are grateful for this research arrangement. Padare will gladly assist.

Yours sincerely

PP **Walter Vengesai**
Director
Padare/Enkundleni/Men;s Forum on Gender





Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe
CRANBORNE REVIVAL CENTRE

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13 June 2017

University of Pretoria

Pretoria 0002

Republic of South Africa

Dear Prof. M. Masango

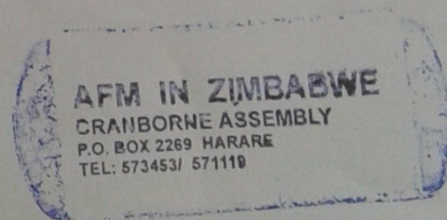
RE: INTERVIEWS APPROVAL

We write to advise that Reverend John Tendai Chisi Student Number 16396074 has been granted permission by Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe to carry out research on his topic titled "*Lobola in Zimbabwe Today: A Pastoral Challenge*" through interviewing Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe congregants.

We, however, want to emphasize that confidentiality of congregants information and organizational information should never be compromised.

Yours faithfully

Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe





UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Theology



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