



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

**TITLE: COLONIAL GENDER STRUCTURES AS A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR IN
INFLUENCING THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP LANDSCAPE IN ZIMBABWE**

By

Nontando Ndhlovu

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In the

Department of Political Sciences at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

SUPERVISOR: Prof. C. Wielenga

November 2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to offer my heartfelt gratitude to God. I am thankful Lord for engraving me in the palm of your hands, for your unyielding love, grace, and faithfulness. Your presence has sustained me through every challenge in this journey. You have made it possible for me to reach this milestone, I'm forever grateful. I am immensely thankful to my research assistants Sisasenkosi Mataruse and Nqobile Tshili, for your assistance in the field during data collection. Your hard work and friendship, have been invaluable to this research. To my friends and family, your support, love, encouragement, presence, and prayers have kept me motivated and grounded throughout this journey. I am blessed beyond measure to have you in my life. To my supervisor Professor Cori Wielenga, I thank you for your unwavering support, encouragement, and guidance that have been crucial to the successful completion of this thesis. Your insightful feedback enriched the quality of my research and sharpened my thinking. I am profoundly grateful for your mentorship, patience, and confidence in my potential. In your own words, *'What a journey it has been!'*. I am also grateful for the financial support provided by the University of Pretoria, the National Research Fund (NRF), and the Social Science Research Council's Next Generation Social Sciences in Africa Fellowship, funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

DECLARATION

I, **Nontando Ndhlovu**, declare that this thesis is my own unaided work, both in conception and execution. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science in the Department of Political Sciences at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at this or any other university.

Nontando Ndhlovu

Pretoria, November 2024

ETHICS STATEMENT

I, **Nontando Ndhlovu** have obtained, for this research, the applicable research ethics approval and declare that I have observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Pretoria's Code of Ethics for researchers and the Policy Guidelines for responsible research.

ABSTRACT

Gender equality has become one of the significant agendas in the international, regional, and national political discourse. This has led to the creation of mechanisms that are designed to address gender inequality in governance. These various instruments include legal and policy frameworks, for example that call for the increased political participation and representation of women in leadership and decision making positions. However, for gender equality to be realized in the context of gender transformation in African politics, women's emancipation necessitates that gender equality be situated within historical power structures deep-rooted in colonialism that inform postcolonial political structures. Using Zimbabwe as a case study, this thesis examines the ways in which gendered colonial power structures have contributed to shaping gender transformation in the political leadership landscape. It unpacks these power structures in relation to current legal and policy frameworks for gender equality, those that govern women's political participation and representation. It adopts an interpretivist policy analysis approach, a qualitative research method which provides an understanding of how subjective interpretations and historical contexts shape policy narratives. In-depth structured interviews, policy documents, and archival records are used as primary data sources, in combination with secondary data sources including academic and non-academic materials. The findings of this study suggest that legal and policy frameworks for gender equality are inadequate in accounting for gender inequalities. Beyond merely increasing the numerical representation of women in political leadership positions, there is a need to address underlying gendered colonial structural inequalities that frame the realities of women in postcolonial Zimbabwe.

KEYWORDS: decoloniality, gender transformation, political leadership, gender equality, women's political representation, Zimbabwe

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANC – African National Congress

AU – African Union

CCC – Citizen Coalitions for Change

CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women

COPAC – Constitution Select Committee

FPTP – First Past the Post

GNU – Government of National Unity

GPA – Global Political Agreement

LAMA – Legal Age of Majority Act

LEAD – Labour, Economist, and African Democrats

MCDWA – Ministry of Community Development and Women’s Affairs

MDC – Movement for Democratic Change

MDC-T – Movement for Democratic Change – Tsvangirai

MP – Member of Parliament

MWGCD – Ministry of Women’s Affairs, Gender and Community Development

NAA – Natives Affairs Act

NGP – National Gender Policy

PR – Proportional Representation

SADC – Southern African Development Community

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals

SWAPO – South West Africa People’s Organisation

WCOZ – Women’s Coalition of Zimbabwe

UDHR – Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN – United Nations

ZANLA – Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army

ZANU – Zimbabwe African National Union

ZANU-PF – Zimbabwe African Union-Patriotic Front

ZAPU – Zimbabwe African People’s Union

ZIPRA – Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
DECLARATION.....	iii
ETHICS STATEMENT	iv
ABSTRACT	v
LIST OF ACRONYMS	vi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Research Overview	1
1.2 The research problem	2
1.3 Research questions	3
1.4 Aim and objectives	4
1.5 Justification and Rationale.....	4
1.6 Defining central concepts	6
1.6.1 Gender transformation.....	6
1.6.2 Political participation.....	6
1.6.3 Political representation	7
1.7 Thesis outline	7
CHAPTER TWO: COLONIALITY AND GENDER: A DECOLONIAL INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE	11
<i>There is no de-coloniality without de-coloniality of gender.....</i>	<i>11</i>
2.1 Introduction.....	11
2.2 What is coloniality?.....	12
2.3 The coloniality of power.....	13
2.4 The coloniality of gender.....	19
2.5 Intersectionality.....	23
2.6 Critical engagements with intersectionality.....	24
2.7 The decolonial option.....	29

2.7.1 <i>Toward a decolonial intersectionality: A Decolonial Feminist perspective</i>	29
2.8 Conclusion	32
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	34
3.1 Introduction.....	34
3.2 Research method	34
3.3 Qualities of qualitative research.....	35
3.4 Rationale for using qualitative research	36
3.5 Interpretivist policy analysis	36
3.6 Archival records	38
3.7 Interviews	38
3.8 Data analysis	40
3.9 Ethical Considerations.....	42
3.10 Limitations of the study.....	43
3.11 Conclusion	44
CHAPTER FOUR: THE COLONIAL STATE, PATRIARCHAL ALLIANCES, AND THE SUBJUGATION OF AFRICAN WOMEN	45
4.1 Introduction.....	45
4.2 Gender dynamics in precolonial Africa	47
4.3 Gender dynamics in colonial Africa.....	52
4.4 Gender and anticolonial struggles in Africa	55
4.5 The historical contexts of gender in Zimbabwe during the precolonial and colonial eras	57
4.6 The effects of the capitalist economic system on the lives of African women.....	60
4.7 Colonial policies as instruments of control and exclusion in Zimbabwe	63
4.7.1 <i>Customary law</i>	63
4.7.2 <i>The 1923 Constitution</i>	65
4.7.3 <i>The Natives Affairs Act of 1927</i>	66
4.7.4 <i>Pass laws and the 1936 Native Registration Act</i>	68

4.8 Patriarchal structures and the Zimbabwean colonial state.....	69
4.9 Resistance to patriarchy in Zimbabwe	71
4.10 Conclusion	73
CHAPTER FIVE: WOMEN’S REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION IN ZIMBABWE’S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP LANDSCAPE	75
5.1 Introduction.....	75
5.2 Historical context: Women in the anticolonial struggle	76
5.3 National legislative framework and gender politics.....	77
5.4 Gender equality, legal and policy frameworks (1979-2017)	79
5.4.1 <i>The Lancaster House Constitution of 1979</i>	80
5.4.2 <i>The Global Political Agreement (GPA)</i>	81
5.4.3 <i>The 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe</i>	82
5.4.4 <i>The National Gender Policy (2013-2017)</i>	84
5.5 Women’s political representation and participation.....	87
5.6 Women’s political participation and representation in Zimbabwe (1980-2018)	88
5.6.1 <i>National Assembly</i>	89
5.6.2 <i>Senate</i>	93
5.6.3 <i>Cabinet</i>	95
5.7 Implications of the electoral women’s quota on women’s political representation.....	96
5.8 The broader influence of gendered colonial power structures on gender equality legal and policy frameworks.....	98
5.9 Conclusion	99
CHAPTER SIX: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS	101
6.1 Introduction.....	101
6.2 Themes emerging from the data.....	102
6.2.1 Theme 1: Evaluation of the effectiveness of legal and policy frameworks or gender equality	104
6.2.2 Theme 2: Barriers to political leadership.....	109

6.2.3 Theme 3: Conceiving gender equality and gender transformation	116
6.2.4 Theme 4: The effects of the colonial legacy on gender expectations.....	118
6.3 A decolonial intersectional feminist analysis.....	119
6.4 Interpretation of the research findings.....	123
6.5 Conclusion	125
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION.....	127
7.1 Introduction.....	127
7.2 The Research Summary.....	128
7.3 Key findings.....	131
7.3.1 Objective 1: Identifying the effects of existing frameworks for gender equality in structuring and transforming the participation and representation of women in the political sector in Zimbabwe.	131
7.3.2 Objective 2: Understanding the experiences of women within the political sector in Zimbabwe	132
7.3.3 Identifying strategies to address gendered colonial power structures and enhance the effectiveness of frameworks for gender equality in Zimbabwe’s political landscape	134
7.4 Conclusion	135
REFERENCES	138
APPENDIXES.....	154
Appendix A: Interview schedule.....	154
Appendix B: Ethical clearance letter.....	155
List of tables	156

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Overview

The rights of women through the quest for gender equality have become one of the significant agendas in the international, regional and national political discourse. Various efforts have been deployed by the international community and Africa's organs of states and governance in an attempt to advance women's emancipation. These efforts have been applied through legal and policy frameworks for gender equality that require, for example, increased women's participation and representation in political leadership positions.

At an international level, the United Nations (UN) has integrated the promotion of gender equality through its several human rights and development frameworks including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil Rights and Political Rights, the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In this context of gender equality, on the African regional level the African Union (AU) has gender policy frameworks such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Charter), and the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol). Within the Southern African regional sphere, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) adopted the Protocol on Gender and Development, and the Addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women and Children amongst others.

Zimbabwe is amongst many other African countries that are signatories to the above gender equality frameworks (Gender Policy, 2004:1). Since independence in 1980, the country has strived to address systematic inequalities through various domestic policies and legislations that are aimed at advancing gender equality. These include the Sexual Discrimination Removal Act, Gender Affirmative Action Policy of 1992, National Gender Policy of 2004, Constitution of Zimbabwe adopted in 2013, and the National Gender Policy of 2013-2017 (Parpart, 1995; Maphosa, Tshuma & Ncube, 2015; Chabaya, Rembe & Wadesango, 2009).

However, despite being a signatory to international and regional policies, and having demonstrated a quest to redress historical gender inequalities through domestic gender equality frameworks, Zimbabwe still has persistent gender imbalances in political leadership and decision-making positions (Zvobgo and Dziva, 2017; Hamandishe, 2018). There has

not been evidence of gender transformation through these frameworks.

The study is situated within the discourse of decolonizing gender. It is positioned within the broader discussion on how the colonial understanding of gender, places gender transformation within the confines of patriarchy hence obscuring the subjection and disempowerment of African women. Scholars such as Lugones (2008), Connell (2014), and Oyewumi (1997), argue that the colonial conceptions of gender have continued to shape the political and socio-economic structures of post-colonial societies. Using a ‘coloniality of gender perspective’, this study builds on the work of Lugones (2008), situating itself in decolonial intersectional feminism with a particular focus on understanding the gender discourse within a political and historical context.

This study used a decolonial intersectional feminist perspective to analyse the ways in which gendered colonial power structures have contributed to shaping gender transformation in Zimbabwe’s political leadership landscape. Although it is not the only contributing factor, it is one that has not been widely investigated and therefore warrants attention. This study holds the position that the emancipation of women in the African political discourse will require gender equality to be critically examined within the context of colonial power structures that inform political structures in contemporary post-colonial African societies.

This research will focus on gender equality legal and policy frameworks in the following three historical epochs: the period from 1930-1979; the period from 1980-2013; and the period from 2013-2017. These periods illustrate the dynamics of the struggle for women’s emancipation over the years and therefore provide a framework to understand how gendered colonial identities continue being maintained through political structures in Zimbabwe. Also, these have been periods of key political transitions including the Lancaster House Agreement of 1979 that transitioned Zimbabwe to its 1980 independence, 2013 redrafting of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2009 Government of National Unity (GNU), and 2008 Global Political Agreement (GPA). These efforts provided opportunities to foster gender equality, however were constrained by underlying colonial structural inequalities. It is against this background, that specific attention will be given to the above three historical periods.

1.2 The research problem

The realization of the emancipation of women in Africa, through the pursuit of gender equality using the gender transformation discourse has not been achieved; one reason for this has arguably been the patriarchal colonial structures that are entrenched in the global power

system (Nkenkana, 2015). For gender transformation to take place, these structures need to be dismantled. Decolonial feminist literature speaks about this at length and yet few, if any, studies have been undertaken to tease out these assumptions in tangible political and policy environments.

There has been persistent gender inequalities in Zimbabwe's political leadership landscape despite existing legal and policy frameworks for gender equality. There has not been gender transformation through these frameworks. In line with decolonial feminist thought, this study makes the argument that gendered colonial power structures have hindered gender transformation in Zimbabwe's political leadership landscape. Legal and policy frameworks for gender equality, that have been developed to address gender inequalities have undermined the necessity of interrogating the broader system that defines the oppression of women. Instead, the efforts made have exposed and illuminated the hegemonic system of gender oppression. Nkenkana (2015:45) notes that

“An understanding of the manner in which gender is defined, ...is to precisely understand the global power structure with which gender is contextualized, structuralized, systematised and defined”.

Alternatively stated, to understand and transform the modern gender system, it is important to examine the extent to which it has been adapted to serve the interests of the colonial system of power. It is the ways in which they continue to contribute to shaping gender transformation in the political landscape in Zimbabwe that this study is interested in.

The study sought to bridge the gap in the growing literature on decolonial and intersectional feminism, which has few, if any studies undertaken to examine instruments for gender equality such as legal and policy frameworks in postcolonial African contexts. The study acknowledges that the modern gender system is built within broader global power systems of oppression. As a result, the gender transformation discourse has also been shaped by other global power structures and other factors all together. However, the study will focus particularly on the contribution of the legacy of the colonial system that Africa is situated within, as this is an understudied area of research and will bring much needed application to the decolonial theory.

1.3 Research questions

To examine how the articulation and pursuit of gender transformation in Africa has been

confined within global power structures built on patriarchal colonialism, I use the context of Zimbabwe's political leadership landscape. My study asks the following central question: How have gendered colonial power structures contributed to shaping gender transformation in Zimbabwe's political leadership landscape?

To answer this central question, the following sub-questions are asked:

- What has the effect of existing legal and policy frameworks for gender equality been in structuring and transforming the participation and representation of women in the political sector in Zimbabwe?
- What are the implications of this for women in Zimbabwe?
- What strategies can be used to address gendered colonial power structures and enhance the effectiveness of legal and policy frameworks for gender equality in Zimbabwe?

1.4 Aim and objectives

By asking the above research questions the study's main aim is to analyze the ways in which gendered colonial power structures have contributed to shaping gender transformation in Zimbabwe's political leadership landscape, using a decolonial intersectional feminist perspective.

In advancing a decolonial intersectional feminist analysis, the study is guided by the following sub-objectives.

- To identify the effects of existing legal and policy frameworks for gender equality in structuring and transforming the participation of women in the political sector in Zimbabwe.
- To understand the experiences of women within the political sector in Zimbabwe.
- To identify strategies to address gendered colonial power structures and enhance the effectiveness of gender equality legal and policy framework.

1.5 Justification and Rationale

In the African context, many countries, including Zimbabwe, have been studied in relation to the statistical representation and participation of women in politics. These have been studied

through an analysis of legal and policy frameworks for gender equality that require, for example, increased numbers of women in parliament and other political leadership positions. In the context of Zimbabwe, women constitute more than 52 percent of the population, yet their representation and participation in politics and decision making is still not commensurate with this numerical reality (Policy Brief Zimbabwe, 2020).

Indeed, this is not the main focus of the study; rather it goes beyond numerical representation and participation. It investigates how gendered colonial power structures have affected the effectiveness of legal and policy frameworks for gender equality in delivering genuine gender transformation. The study recognizes that it is crucial to understand that colonialism was built as a power structure dominated by mostly men. Gender alongside race became tools for domination of indigenous women. The legacy of colonialism has permeated all aspects of social existence including shaping postcolonial political structures.

In this context, a decolonial gender transformation perspective exposes how policy frameworks for gender equality tend to take for granted the emancipation of women by merely incorporating them into patriarchal structures using numbers without extensively situating gender within a historical and political state of affairs. This study is consequently significant in that it considers that as far as gender transformation is concerned in Zimbabwe's political landscape, the fundamental power relations at play are embedded in the intersection of gendered, racial, and patriarchal structures.

The study intends to guide policy makers in Zimbabwe and elsewhere in the African continent to develop policy frameworks that consider the intersection of colonial legacies, patriarchy and structural inequality. These policy frameworks must acknowledge and confront deeply embedded hierarchies that perpetuate the marginalization of women. The study's original contribution is in providing a critical intervention by drawing attention to the significance of situated knowledge and embodied lived experiences of women in postcolonial contexts, often neglected in traditional feminist scholarship by perpetuating the idea of a homogenized view of women's experiences and patriarchy. The study brings context-specific, local understandings of structural oppression influenced by global structures of inequality including colonialism, racism, and capitalism, among others and accounts for intersecting contextual identity categories. These tend to weaken efforts aimed at advancing gender transformation.

1.6 Defining central concepts

The key central concepts that are used in the study include gender transformation, political participation and political representation. The following sections define these concepts and illustrate the link between some of the concepts.

1.6.1 Gender transformation

There is a lack of consensus in the literature concerning the term gender transformation, mainly because there is a contestation as to whether it should entail an outcome or a process. However, in the context of women's empowerment and gender equality, the term is related "to an inherently political act, and closely associated with changing social or gendered power relations" (2016:223). In this regard, it interrogates the state of affairs and endeavors to dismantle the inherent power dynamics that exacerbate gender inequality. Parpart (2014:392), nonetheless notes that, "there is no one shot solution to gender transformation, nor are solutions readily apparent".

In this study, I position gender transformation as a process targeting both institutional structures and the lives of individual women, to effectively confront the structure of oppression (O'Neil and Eyben, 2013). From this perspective, gender transformation tackles inequality in the lives of individual women and also through structural changes in gender ideologies. It is also aimed at reforming cultural, social, economic, and political structures that sustain gender inequality. Rather than merely addressing the symptoms of gender inequality, it seeks to disrupt these longstanding structures. In this study, gender transformation fittingly aligns with a decolonial intersectional feminist perspective that interrogates inequality inclusive of marginalized indigenous women and within the context of a brutal colonial past whose legacy is systematic and structural in nature.

1.6.2 Political participation

Although the term political participation as a concept has been used as an analytical tool in various disciplines, including political, social, economic and environmental discourses, there has not been a universal definition of the concept. Some political theorists have related political participation to democratic citizenship and governance (Lamprianou, 2013; Dahl, 1971, 1998; Pateman, 1970). Democracy is a political system that has "a fair and reflective system of representation in politics and decision making for the various segments of its population." (Dube, 2013: 1013). Further, Munroe (2002) defines political participation in

accordance with the extent to which constitutional rights are exercised by citizens, to engage in political activities. While these observations seem to relate the concept of political participation with equal participation of all citizens in politics and decision making, studies have shown that women have less influence when it pertains to government public policy making and implementation (Bari, 2005). Instead, “The majority of governing institutions are dominated by men who further their own interests” (Shvedova, 2002:11).

Although, political participation is broad and multidimensional in nature, the study will restrict the analysis of the concept to the extent in which women participate within Zimbabwe’s political institutions and governance structures to influence leadership and decision making. However, the study also recognizes that the equal participation of men and women in politics and decision making does not translate to the emancipation of women, hence the need to interrogate the dynamics of the power structures that underpin gender oppression.

1.6.3 Political representation

The concept of political representation is interconnected with political participation. Political representation is a consequence of political participation. For example, the participation of women in politics and decision making strengthens their ability to determine policy developments that will also represent and prioritize their interests as a group. Shvedova (2002:3) notes that “Differences between men and women also appear with respect to the content and priorities of decision-making, which are determined by the interests, backgrounds and working patterns of both sexes”. Political representation has to do with the proportional numerical representation of political actors within institutions of governance, so as to incorporate and accommodate issues that affect various citizen groups (Nzomo, 1994; Rai, 2008; Nkenkana, 2015;).

In this study, political representation will be used to identify the effects of the under representation of women within Zimbabwe’s political structures. Also, it will be applied as an analytical concept to interrogate the effects of merely using statistical representation of women to address issues of gender transformation, and in illustrating the importance of going beyond statistical representation when seeking to reconfigure patriarchal colonial structures.

1.7 Thesis outline

This thesis is organized into seven chapters. Chapter one gives the research overview,

outlining the research problem, research questions, and objectives. It introduces and defines the key concepts of gender transformation, political participation, and political representation.

Chapter Two, *Coloniality and Gender: A Decolonial Intersectional Perspective* critically engages with literature on gender and decoloniality to examine how the gender discourse is embedded within colonial global power structures, and how these continue to flourish in postcolonial societies. It subsequently examines the literature on intersectionality, and the ways in which the framework can be situated within decolonial feminist lens to advance a decolonial agenda in the African context.

Chapter Three, *Research Methodology*, outlines the methodology of this research study, starting with an overview of the research method and its relevance to the study's research questions and objectives. This chapter details the sampling strategy, data collection techniques, data analysis process, and ethical considerations. It also provides insight into the limitations of the study and the ways in which they were addressed.

Chapter Four, *The Colonial State, Patriarchal Alliances, and the Subjugation of African Women*, examines the process through which the colonial state used oppressive policies to subjugate African women, while also exploring the mutually reinforcing relationship between colonial and traditional patriarchy. This chapter starts by discussing the gender dynamics in precolonial Africa, and then moves on to situate gender in the wider context of precolonial and colonial Zimbabwe, to map the historical evolution of gender relations over time.

Chapter Five, *Women's Representation and Participation in Zimbabwe's Political Leadership Landscape*, analyzes the political leadership landscape in Zimbabwe, addressing women's political representation and participation within parliament at the national level particularly the National Assembly, Senate and Cabinet. This chapter examines the outcomes of existing gender legal and policy frameworks in structuring and transforming women's political representation and participation and the consequences thereof, highlighting the influence of gendered power structures entrenched in colonialism.

Chapter Six, *Research Findings and Analysis*, presents the research findings and analysis. The chapter starts by giving an overview of the themes that emerged from the research data, followed by a critical discussion of these. This chapter offers a decolonial intersectional feminist analysis of the findings and interprets the findings, integrating the data with the literature review in previous chapters, linking them to the research questions and objectives.

Chapter Seven, summarizes and recaps the key research findings using the research objectives, reflecting on how these have been effectively addressed by the thesis. Drawing from the research findings, the chapter highlights the study's contribution to existing scholarship on decoloniality, gender, and governance. The chapter also accounts for the practical and policy implications of the key research findings, considering recommendations for policy makers in Zimbabwe and other postcolonial African countries.

CHAPTER TWO: COLONIALITY AND GENDER: A DECOLONIAL INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

There is no de-coloniality without de-coloniality of gender.

(Lugones 2010:757)

2.1 Introduction

This chapter locates the gender discourse as arguably embedded in imperial/colonial global designs. To advance my assertion that the gender discourse is embedded in imperial/colonial designs, I use the literature on coloniality and decoloniality to show how it is these global power structures that work in collaboration with patriarchy to define the oppression of women and to undermine gender transformation in contemporary societies. The chapter's point of departure is to explore the coloniality of power. The coloniality of power is one of the three pillars of a decolonial reading of coloniality as per specific decolonial scholars, including the coloniality of knowledge and being (Quijano, 1995; Maldonado-Torre, 2007; Mignolo, 2007).

These key contours of coloniality are inseparable from the analysis of the modern gender system (Lugones, 2010:757). The concept of coloniality is situated within the broader global and African historical legacy of the colonial global power structure that pervaded intersubjective relations, socio-cultural relations, political and economic relations, and knowledge production past the constraints of colonial administrations, hence withstanding colonialism (Maldonado-Torres, 2007:243). The chapter delves into the concept of the coloniality of gender, as engaged with by Maria Lugones (2008) and how it is constituted by the concept of the coloniality of power as understood by Aníbal Quijano (2000) and Walter Mignolo (2007). These concepts are unpacked so as to understand the organization of gender within colonial societies and how this colonial gender structure has subsequently flourished in contemporary societies.

As noted in Chapter One, the assumption on which this study is based is that colonial and patriarchal global dynamics of power structures have hindered gender transformation in the political sphere in Zimbabwe. In analysing the oppressive racialized, hegemonic, capitalist and gendered colonial systems, Lugones (2010) understands these colonial power systems as the 'coloniality of gender'. Using the concept of the coloniality of gender, this chapter seeks to extend an understanding of how the gender discourse is underpinned by the norms in the socio-economic structures of colonial societies imposed by global colonial capitalism. Within this context, it emphasizes the need to locate gender within a historical context. Rather than focusing on patriarchy as the axis of our analysis, instead the point of departure should be "to

understand the relation of the birth of the colonial/modern gender system to the birth of global colonial capitalism – with the centrality of the colonality of power to that system of global power” (Lugones, 2007:186-187). As noted by Gordon (1996:7), the chapter shows how the capitalist economy, which is understood as a hegemonic global power structure, sustains patriarchy and it is within this foundation that the system of patriarchy should be examined in the African context.

Next, drawing from critical race theorist Kimberlie Crenshaw (1989) and the work of Black feminists, I examine intersectionality as a theoretical framework that has been used in discourses of resistance such as feminism and as a key site for critical engagement in social transformation and interrogating structures of power within multiple disciplines. Lugones (2007:192) simply writes “Intersectionality reveals what is not seen when categories such as gender and race are conceptualized as separate from each other”. Following this, I discuss a few critical engagements that have been advanced against intersectionality. On one hand, I acknowledge the significance of critiques especially for a concept that is contested and changing. Yet, I’m also critical how critique narratives can be possibly structured within and reinforce paradigms that intersectionality has called into question and sought to transform throughout its diverse context application.

Finally, the chapter turns towards a decolonial intersectionality situating it within a decolonial perspective. Here, I discuss decolonial feminists’ critical engagements with intersectionality. Decolonial feminists further advance the analyses of oppression provided by intersectional theory, by bringing in the question of colonality. The argument is that intersectionality theory needs to account for global dynamics of colonial history and racial power, by representing the voices of the marginalized women located outside the Global South. It is at the point in the chapter that I propose a decolonial intersectionality that does not reject Western hegemonic epistemologies that have been privileged by modernity, but instead redefine the emancipatory narrative from the location of the oppressed and exploited, hence advancing a decolonial liberation struggle.

2.2 What is colonality?

Colonality addresses the presence of colonial circumstances and colonial power dynamics long after the end of European direct control over colonies (Grosfoguel, 2007; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Grosfoguel, 2007; Quijano 2007). The significance of the concept of colonality is realised in its usefulness to illuminate the illusion of an African continent that has been

decolonized. Coloniality unmasks the façade of freedom from the colonial past that is perceived to have been realized through the dismantling of direct colonial administrations. Yet the reality is that the colonial confederation of powered knowledge and conceptions of existence continue being naturalised and reproduced.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013:7), notes that the significance of coloniality is rooted in it being the darker side of modernity, which has often been disguised by the façade of modernity. This ‘darker’ manifestation of modernity was experienced by “Africans and other peoples of the Global South” and “included such processes as the slave trade, mercantilism, imperialism, colonialism and apartheid” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013: x). Coloniality illuminates a hidden side of history, the ways in which the colonial global power system continues to disregard, invalidate, misrepresent and dismiss other ways of knowing, thinking, and being, understanding and living. In this regard, coloniality becomes apparent when it is analysed from the peripheries of global imperial designs. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013:7) writes that analysing coloniality from a Eurocentric view of global history gives the impression that the modern world capitalist system is “a primarily economic system, driven by the logic of making profits and accumulation of capital on a world scale”. Yet that is an incomplete narrative. Rather “to complete the story, there is a need to shift the locus of enunciation...to the zones of ‘colonial difference’: zones of indigenous peoples and colonized subjects who experienced the dark side of modernity” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013:8). An analysis, undertaken from this point of departure, makes it evident that modernity was more than “an economic system of capital and labour for the production of commodities to be sold for profit in the world market” (Grosfoguel 2007:215).

2.3 The coloniality of power

Modernity/Coloniality scholarship insists that capitalism is central to colonialism; dismissing the claim that capitalism was an autonomous system in contrast to scholarship that suggests that prior to colonization capitalism existed in Europe. The main argument is that in order for capitalism to realise itself, it needed to be situated within the colony. There are continuities of the colonial capitalist system of power and they have intersected with racialized, hegemonic, hierarchal and patriarchal global structures of power. It is this model of power that articulates the coloniality of power, which is organized around the construction of “race” (Quijano, 2001-2: 1). The coloniality of power operates within global imperial designs using colonial matrices of power (Mignolo, 2007: 155-167). Colonial matrices of power illustrate the political,

geographical, ontological and epistemological western subjectivation that deeply ensnare continents such as Africa.

According to Quijano (2008, 2010), the coloniality of power is a process of racialization central to colonialism. Colonialism used race as an instrument to organize, control, and dominate societies. Beyond being a political and economic system, colonialism played a key role in constructing racial hierarchies and categories. These racial structures and power imbalances, continue to shape political, economic, and social systems post-colonial rule. Quijano (1995) historically traces the coloniality of power from the 16th century, describing that this was the historical point of the origination of the modern/capitalist, colonial power system that started in the Americas and has been since expanded globally. The transatlantic slave trade and plantation wealth were the major causes of the growth of capitalism in Europe and the Americas.

The coloniality of power has travelled through sequential and cumulative phases of history. Within each context, “the rhetoric changed according to the needs and the leading forces shaping the spheres of economy, authority, public realm (gender and sexuality), and education (knowledge and subjectivity)” (Tlostanova and Mignolo, 2009:135). Between the 17th and 18th centuries, Dutch, French and British commercial enterprises established a plantation economy using enslaved Africans. This was an economic advantage to the Western European Monarchies. Beyond the 18th century the coloniality of power was extended, mutated and validated by European imperial countries. As it unravelled, it created subjects and subjectivities all in the guise of the philosophy of civilization and developing the world (Tlostanova and Mignolo, 2009). The coloniality of power has permeated cultural, social, political and economic relations between nations in the Global South and North, all intersected by racialized, hegemonic, hierarchal, and gendered discriminations.

The assumed homogenous progress of history in Western Europe was the genesis of the journey toward modernity. The historical points of the perceived emancipatory processes such as the European Enlightenment, Renaissance and the idea of rebirth and progress are the foundation of the modern and colonial order. As a result, “society would be organised the same way, and subjects and subjectivities would all be European clones” (Mignolo, 2018:119). It is within this context that Quijano asserts that:

“With the expansion of European colonialism, the classification of geocultural identities such as European, Indian, African, etc. was imposed on the population of the planet. Since

then, it has permeated every area of social existence and it constitutes the most effective form of material and inter-subjective social domination.” (Quijano, 2001:1).

Racial colonial differences are constitutive of the capitalist global system of power. Capitalism was imposed as a global power system that requires the social classification of people around race. It established a new structure of controlling labour and its resources, placing Africans, African descendants and indigenous people in the lower levels of society while situating white Europeans in the highest rank.

Quijano (2008:184) locates the invention of race in the 15th century and argues that this resulted in the journey towards modernity/capitalism. This is the period when the Spanish government invaded and colonized the Americas (South, Central and North America) in the guise of encountering ‘new lands’ on their expedition to seek a new route to Asia, although there were long established native populations and cultures. Other European governments including the French, the Dutch and the British eventually began to explore and invade these lands. It is in the Spanish-invaded regions that Quijano (2008:184) argues that the international division of labour was formed, where within it; a racial division of labour was contained.

The Spanish invader’s interaction with the inhabitants, the Indians was characterized by violence and slavery, however even after their transition from slavery to serfdom, racial hierarchies within the division of labour continued to exist. Consequently, the Indians were socially classified. It within this context, that Quijano (2008:186) claims that “from the beginning of the colonization of America, Europeans associated non-paid or non-waged labour with the dominated races because they were “inferior” races”. In essence, central to the extension of the Euro-American colonialism was the formation of the inferior ‘other’. Therefore, race has been used as a mental construct that informed the making of colonies according to the structures and systems of Eurocentrism. The conceptualisation of race and racism imposed on colonies including those in Africa was used to ‘organize the world’s population into a hierarchical order of superior and inferior people that becomes an organizing principle of the international division of labour and of the global patriarchal system’ (Grosfoguel 2007: 217). Therefore, race was a key component of capitalism. This included construction of a ‘hierarchy of superior and inferior knowledge ...’ (Grosfoguel 2007: 214).

Central to the colonality of power was the human/non-human dichotomy where there was a predetermined human category. In such a context those who were outside that category were considered non-human therefore lesser beings on the basis of race (Mignolo, 2000; Quijano,

2005). The creation of a human subject archetype on the basis of race advanced the beliefs of superiority and inferiority between humans, contributing to intolerance of human differences, consequently aggravating inequalities and injustices encountered by subalterns.

The coloniality of power has permeated all spheres of existence. One of the many ways the coloniality of power has manifested is in knowledge production. For example, the African continent continues to be misrepresented, stereotyped and poorly framed, by mainstream scholarship. We are therefore reminded that Africans need to learn to “problematize” the matter of representation so that they may have knowledge concerning the motives that might be the key cause of why Africa is portrayed using a particular image (Soyinka-Airewele and Edozie, 2010:4). One single story has been used to understand Africa, yet one single story is not sufficient enough to get an understanding of something or a particular place. Ferguson (2006:8) also recognizes that negative terms have been used to understand Africa and that Africa has been poorly represented. He says Africa has frequently been defined “through a series of lacks and absences, failings and problems, plagues, and catastrophes”; his argument is this view is distorted and sketchy. In other words, Africa is represented by false constructs and imaginations.

The idea that Africa can be studied objectively; independent of how it has been historically represented should be dismissed. As Soyinka-Airewele and Edozie (2010:6) assert, “it is no longer plausible to assume that Africa can be inscribed or studied from a site of unfettered or pure vision that is untroubled by the very act of representation itself”. They maintain that people use “frames” to view the world - the “textual structures” that influence how one sees the world, and how they process what they see (Soyinka-Airewele and Edozie, 2010:15). They therefore propose that Africa must be re-framed and re-presented, in other words it must be viewed using different lenses. Soyinka-Airewele and Edozie highlight how our understanding of the world is socially constructed.

Achille Mbembe together with other African scholars recognize that Africa has been understood through perceptions that are negative. Mbembe (2001:1) for example argues, that the “African human experience constantly appears in the discourse of our times as an experience that can only be understood through a negative interpretation”. The critical issue for Mbembe concerning work previously done on Africa are studies that concern the position of Africa in the illusory of the West. Africa is frequently considered in terms of “elementariness” and “primitiveness”, and seen as a place of everything which is “incomplete, mutilated and unfinished” (Mbembe, 2001:1). The diffusing construction of Africa and African

people is a process that is continuing; as a result, he is against the construction of Africa (and Africans) as a horrific place, a timeless lower-level world excluded from the progressing era of modernity and development. This is because the realities in Africa seem in most cases (if not all) to differ than the Africa that is portrayed in mainstream scholarship.

The other problem with the representation of Africa in scholarship is the manner it is defined in relation to the West. The African continent and its culture and people have been used by the West to imagine itself over versus an eliminated and marginalized ‘other’. In other words, Africa and its people have been framed as inferior. Mbembe (2001:14) notes that every account about Africa is usually an excuse for a remark about “something else, some other place, and some other people”. In order to assert its identity as “civilized” and “modern”, the West has identified itself in relation to Africa as its “other”, which is seen to be primitive and savage (Mudimbe, 1988:12). Therefore, Africa is seen as a category of analysis, however the implication of such commitment to categorization is that Africa and its realities are misrepresented.

The scholarship generated about Africa has not only problems related to academia; it also has political consequences (in global governance). For example, it has influenced the way the “destiny” of the African continent has been shaped by powerful nations (Mkandawire, 1997:27).

Using a political economy perspective, the global imperial designs that are illuminated in the modern world order were understood by Kwame Nkrumah (1965) as neo-colonialism. Nkrumah identifies that the significance of neo-colonialism was to disguise African states as sovereign; meanwhile they were grappling with external control and restraints. This narrows state sovereignty, particularly in that political and economic policies are determined externally. In other terms, Western world views are imposed on African countries whereby they erode their sovereignty and weaken their global position. Che Guevara (1965:10) notes that “As long as imperialism exists it will, by definition exert its domination over other countries. Today that domination is called neo-colonialism”.

Using neo-liberal governance as an example, Jean-Francois Bayart (2009) analyses sub-Saharan Africa’s dependency with the external world. Using a different lens Bayart (2009) proposes the term extraversion to describe the active participation of Africa in the processes that created and maintain the continent’s dependent position within the global system. Rather than indulging the rambles of dependency, the importance of analysing the dynamic of

dependency is stressed. Such an angle allows a historical analysis of change, participation and movement. The argument is that the ability to manage dependency is what defines sovereignty in Africa; this is highlighted by how Bayart (2009) is unsympathetic towards the African elites for adopting extraversion strategies that enable them to “govern” and “master” their communities in their own interest, deepening dependency as a strategy. Neoliberal regional governance illuminates this phenomenon through the extraversion strategies adopted by the political elites enabling them to manage their communities in their own interest, deepening dependency as a strategy. The inferior position of Africa in the global economy is interrogated and serious attention is given to the manner Africans have taken external constraints and re-created them.

Taking into consideration that neo-liberal regional governance is based on an economy that is outward-oriented (Harvey 2005:2), it should be highlighted that this form of governance is nurtured by external actors for example through foreign aid. Extraversion characterizes neo-liberal governance. This measure determines the regional dynamics in the relationship between African countries and the donor community. It shapes and determines Africa’s political domestic strategies by its ruling elite (Peiffer and Englebert, 1999). This weakens African states as they get accustomed to the system of dependency, hence limiting their agency as they will consistently need assistance from the Global North. This is common particularly in countries that are aid dependent for example in Sub-Saharan Africa. Africa’s agency is based on the interplay between leaders and structures. As Soederbaum (2004: 421-422) suggests “governance is constructed by certain actors for certain purposes”, as a result “they can be disrupted from within and from without by the same forces that build them up”. In this regard, neo-liberal governance enables external actors to shape political structures in Sub-Saharan African countries.

As a result of the coloniality of power, Africa is still dominated and exploited within the global power hierarchy, languishing at the subaltern bottom. The modern world order is a consequence of historical processes including mercantilism, the slave trade, imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, neo-liberalism and globalization (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013:16). The concept of the coloniality of power is comprehensive in exposing the structural legacies of historical processes in Africa, however it neglects gender theorization. In this context, Lugones (2010:757) argues that “there is no de-coloniality without de-coloniality of gender”. The subsequent section explores in detail the ways, through the coloniality of gender, which the system and structures

that support a particular understanding of gender continue to flourish in contemporary African societies.

2.4 The coloniality of gender

Lugones (2008; 2010) draws from the modernity/coloniality school, to develop the concept of the coloniality of gender. In analysing the oppressive capitalist, racialized, and gendered colonial systems, Lugones (2010) understands these colonial power systems as the ‘coloniality of gender’. Lugones conception of the coloniality of gender is a critique of Quijano’s (2008) understanding of gender in his conception of the coloniality of power. She argues that his conception of gender is confined within biological determinism and presumes sexual dimorphism where it does not exist (Lugones, 2008:5). She argues against the naturalization of heteronormativity and characterization of homosexuality as a social transgression; highlighting that patriarchal norms were not an aspect of all societies, instead in some societies, egalitarian principles structured gender relations. Therefore, Lugones (2008) suggests that such an understanding of gender is Eurocentric in nature.

For Lugones (2008), gender is viewed as being principal to the formation process of the coloniality of power, as race is to Quijano’s concept of the coloniality of power. In this regard, gender, as with race in the same manner perceived as a colonial construct. The dichotomous hierarchy between women and men imposed on the colonized, Lugones (2010:743) argues, is among the dichotomies of “colonial modernity”. The argument is that the colonial gender system is underpinned by the norms in the socio-economic structures of colonial societies that were imposed by colonial Eurocentered global capitalism.

Lugones (2007), emphasizes the need to locate gender within a historical context where colonial administrators through enunciations created a system of categorization with binary hierarchies of human/non-human; man/woman. Upon that assumption racial and sexual colonial differences were established. Instead of focusing on patriarchy as the axis of our analysis, the point of departure should be “to understand the relation of the birth of the colonial/modern gender system to the birth of global colonial capitalism – with the centrality of the coloniality of power to that system of global power” (Lugones, 2007:186-187). Similarly, Toyin Falola (2005:4) notes that Africans “must situate African politics in the context of colonialism: modern political institutions are derived more from the colonial past than the precolonial”. Gordon (1996:7) also advances the argument that the capitalist economy

which is the global power structure, sustains patriarchy and it is within this foundation that the system of patriarchy should be examined in the African context.

Religion in Europe, in particular Christianity was exploited to establish the colonial difference. Mignolo (2018:158) notes that when the slave trade of Africans began in the sixteenth century, “it was necessary to situate the human and humanity in relation to people whom the Bible did not account for”. As a consequence, “enslaved Africans became *Black* and, therefore, lesser beings in relation to the prototype of the (*White*) human” (Mignolo, 2018:158). In other parts of the world, racism encroached on the sexism that underpinned Western Christians. European white bourgeois women were not placed in the same category as women of other descent, hence subordinating those women the description excluded. For example, “Indian and African women were not properly considered women by Christian men”, they could be anything but women hence “the ascendancy of racism over sexism”, which still anchors the contemporary global order, where “colonial-racial differences encroached upon colonial-sexual differences.” (Mignolo, 2018:158). Moreover, in *Imperial Leather*, Anne McClintock (1995:22) illustrates how women from other continents including, the Americas and other parts of Asia, were also situated outside the parameters of the European white bourgeois perceived superior femininity.

The excluded women from the description that qualified white bourgeois women as women were left at the margins and were precariously situated. For Lugones (2008:13), “they were understood as animals in the deep sense of “without gender”, sexually marked as female, but without the characteristics of femininity”. The racialization of some women as lesser resulted their being “turned from animals into various modified versions of “women” as it fit the processes of Eurocentered global capitalism” (Lugones, 2008:13). This had dire consequences for the structuring of sex and gender systems. In her 2010 essay “Toward Decolonial Feminism”, Lugones argues that there was a notable difference between the gender system that was imposed on indigenous populations and that imposed on European women living in colonized nations. For European women, the enforced gender system was subordinating yet for the indigenous population it was dehumanizing (Lugones 2008: 117).

Drawing from Oyewumi’s (1997) study on the Yoruba, Lugones (2008) argues that gender was a concept introduced to indigenous societies by European colonizers. Precolonial societies prioritized seniority in the distribution of power and authority instead of gender. In this context, just as race was imposed, gender should also be considered a colonial construct, rather than being understood as a perpetual characteristic of social organization. Lugones (2008) advances the argument that the racialization and sexualisation of women and men in the colonies, was a

consequence of gender being employed as a weapon of destruction targeting social relations, through a tactic of divide and conquer employed between women and men. As a result, this European conception of gender generated hostility between women and men through the creation of hierarchies that collapsed the unity between women and men damaging former ties based on harmonious collaboration.

According to Lugones (2008), in the colony gender was used to destroy the determination of indigenous women and men, through sexual violence, the concubine system and exploitation, enforcing colonially institutionalized hierarchies. The bodies of women became sites of survival negotiation. In this context, this systematic sexual violence is characterized as the darker manifestation of the modern/ colonial gender system (Lugones, 2008). Regardless of the colonial understanding of gender being ultimately imposed on colonized females, Oyewumi (1997) using the Yoruba society in West Africa, notes that the status of being gendered as a woman, was devoid of the benefits that complemented the status for European white women.

Lugones makes it clear that the hierarchal dichotomy of human and non-human central to Quijano's conception of the coloniality of power is also embedded in the concept of the coloniality of gender. Similarly, as race, gender was used to differentiate the civilized and human from the uncivilized and nonhuman. Regardless, in the chain of being European men were elevated over European women. As those who lacked gender, the colonized were subject to dehumanizing practice including massacre and brutal exploitation (Lugones, 2010:2006). In spite of the fact that, all colonized and enslaved peoples were considered as subhuman beings, the imposed gender system subordinated indigenous women to indigenous men. Thus, Lugones conceptualizes the coloniality of gender as persistent colonial gendered structures. These are gender hierarchies and systems established during colonial rule that continue to shape postcolonial societies. The coloniality of gender helps locate the root causes of current issues such as consolidated violence against women of colour and gender disparities in all spheres of existence.

Maria Lugones's concept of the coloniality of gender although notably recognised in feminist scholarship, has had some critiques around its ethnographic validity. Mendoza (2010) together with Lugones, critiques Quijano's inadequate conceptualization of gender in his conception of the coloniality of power. Rita Segato in her article "*The Factor of Gender in the Yoruba Transnational Religious World.*" in 2001, questions the scholarship that Lugones uses to sustain her claim that seniority prevailed over gender in pre-colonial societies making it a colonial construct. She uses her own study on the Yoruba in Latin America to argue that there

is critical limitation to the validity of Oyewumi's thesis on the absence of gender among the Yoruba, whose research has been used to support Lugones's argument in her conception of the coloniality of gender. However, she acknowledges Oyewumi's work is of relevance specifically in illustrating the complex gender system of the Yoruba and its difference from the European gender system whose patriarchy was in many ways more intensive.

Segato (2001) uses her research findings as evidence that gender among the Yoruba existed as a repressive hierarchal system of privilege. According to Segato (2001), the gender norms enforced during the process of colonization escalated patriarchies already existing, hence disadvantaging indigenous women as it created more hierarchies. The separation and gendering of the public and private spheres confined indigenous women in the private domain, hence suppressing their previous communal authority. For men, they maintained their dominance in the public sphere yet their masculinities were metaphorically threatened (Segato, 2001:118).

There are other scholars who have suggested that in most African countries, especially in the Southern African region including Zimbabwe, women and men had different gender experiences during colonization as they experienced both traditional African patriarchy and colonial patriarchy (Walker, 1991; White, 2007; Kriger, 1992, Geisler, 2004). The extent of the oppression inflicted by both intersecting patriarchies differed, for example traditional African patriarchy subordinated women by excluding them from positions of decision making, while colonial patriarchy restricted the economic and political freedom of women (Walker, 1991). In the context of colonial Zimbabwe, there were colonial laws that were developed and employed in gendered ways including pass laws and customary laws (Barnes, 1997:59). According to Geisler (2004), women had limited authority that stemmed from their capability to reproduce. Yet even so in some African traditional societies, Walker (1991:13) suggests women widely "occupied a junior position in the basic unit of that society, the patriarchal and extended family". Against this background, in some precolonial African societies patriarchal hierarchies existed but in low intensity but were exacerbated by the imposed gender system introduced through colonialism.

Lugones' concept of the coloniality of gender is relevant particularly because it helps situate gender in a historical context that is embedded in the coloniality of power. It is recognition that patriarchy is inseparable from colonialism. It illustrates that the imposed European gender system had critical consequences on relations between men and women in colonized societies. The racialization imposed on colonized peoples not only violated their human status but also their status as gendered beings, resulting in their countless exploitation, as well as their

elimination. In the context of postcolonial African societies, the coloniality of gender is useful precisely because it helps to reflect on the dynamics of the gender structures that Africa is situated within and to understand the breadth and depth of how such structures have continued shaping the social, economic and political aspects of life. In order to transform the present and the future, it is essential to recognise the critical consequences racialization and gendering.

2.5 Intersectionality

Rooted in Black feminism and Critical Race Theory, intersectionality is an analytic tool for identity, oppression and privilege. Intersectionality accounts for interdependent systems of oppression within structural identities including gender, race, ethnicity and class (Yuval-Davis, 2006; Collins, 1986; Crenshaw, 1989; Hooks, 1984). Intersectionality is critical of how discourses of resistance such as feminism, have been implicitly assuming a universalism of experiences within women. The paradigm argues that there is a specific, for example, racial, gendered, and ethnic or class context in every feminist struggle.

Intersectionality as a theory was constructed on the basis of the lived experiences of women of colour situated at interlocking points of oppression. Taking into consideration the vulnerabilities of women of colour, Crenshaw (1995:358) notes that intersectionality illustrates, the “need to account for multiple grounds of identity when considering how the social world is constructed”. Using an intersectional analysis, Crenshaw (1989) uncovers how African-American women are situated in marginalized identity positions, and their exclusion within feminist and antiracist politics, and also through legal frameworks. For example, Crenshaw (1989:139) uses the experiences of African-American women to illustrate how treating gender and racial oppression as “mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis”, disregards the specific forms of discrimination they suffer. In this regard, the paradigm of intersectionality exposes the systematic ignorance of structural power relations within feminist struggles, that have perpetuated both “political and theoretical inadequacies within feminist and socialist analyses” (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1983:62). Intersectionality accounts for institutionalized structures of oppression, privilege and underprivilege within an identity category.

The Black feminist movement within the Global North has been critical of the invisibility of Black women in hegemonic forms of feminist discourse, because of the prioritization of the interests of White, Western and middle-class women (Hooks, 1981; Carby, 1982; Crenshaw, 1989, 1981). From this perspective, intersectionality brings to the fore the traces of racial

privilege in mainstream understanding of women's emancipation. Feminists of colour argue that hegemonic feminist agendas erase the marginalisation of women of color, poor women, and immigrant (ethnic minority) women, by disregarding their day-to-day existence (Collins, 2008; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Anthias and Yuva-Davis, 1983). In other words, the erasure of women of color has been orchestrated through the lack of a simultaneous analysis of identity markers such as gender, race, ethnicity, and class. In this context, intersectionality demonstrates how feminist and antiracial discourses have reproduced and legitimized forms of discrimination by not accounting for structural differences within social groups. This results in the use of the same structures of oppression that served interests of privilege, to initiate women's liberation.

Intersectionality has also been used a key site for critical engagement in social transformation and interrogating structures of power within multiple disciplines. It has been applied in legal and policy advocacy that challenges gender and racial injustice (Carbado, 2013; Crenshaw, Ocen, & Nanda, 2015; Verloo, 2013), used to foster common and mutual interests among social and political entities, as the differences and commonalities within these entities are used to obliterate discrimination and oppressive structural privilege (Roberts and Jesudason, 2013) , and used to call for advanced economic justice for immigrant women with low income (Chun, Lipsitz, & Shin, 2013).

In summary, intersectionality as a theory has been of significant use in different social, economic and political contexts. The theory is influential in that it interrogates "the interlocking ways in which social structures produce and entrench power and marginalization" and also draws "attention to the ways that existing paradigms that produce knowledge and politics often function to normalize these dynamics" (Carbado, Crenshaw, Mays and Tomlinson, 2013:312). Other academic disciplines have employed intersectionality to further examine how other identity categories such as sexual orientations, religions, disabilities and nationalities, intersect with race and gender to structure discrimination and exclusion.

2.6 Critical engagements with intersectionality

Despite the theoretical contributions of intersectionality, it has been one of the most contested concepts in contemporary feminist scholarship. Internal dynamics of feminist scholarship have been made visible by intersectionality. Although the concept of intersectionality is central to feminist scholarship; it illustrates the need for feminist perspectives to be self-reflective and self-critical. Therefore, rich insights speaking truth to the corridors of power within feminist

scholarship can be offered by critiques especially for a concept (intersectionality) that is contested and changing. However, it is of significance to consider how critique narratives can be possibly structured within and reinforce paradigms that intersectionality has called into question and sought to transform throughout its diverse context application.

Although there are wide ranging critiques of intersectionality, I examine only limited critique examples here. A common critique is that intersectionality has a theoretical overdependence on Black women as their intersectional subjects of analysis (Butler, 2013; Nash, 2008; Carbado, Crenshaw, Mays and Tomlinson, 2013). For example, in seeking to uncover the intersectional marginalisation of Black men in cases of racial justice, Butler (2013) argues that Black men also experience distinctive race and gender discrimination. Consequently, they should be recognized as a specific social group distinct from “Black women and other men” because they are “exceptionally burdened and marginalized”, in issues of racial and criminal justice (Butler, 2013:485). However, the intent was not to undermine or erase the struggles faced by Black women, but to “draw attention to the need of civil rights interventions in cases of racial justice to be framed in a manner that recognizes how the intersection of race and gender, structures the discrimination experienced by Black men” (Ndhlovu, 2019:9).

In her attempt to address the question of intersectionality, McCall (2005:1171) defines intersectionality as “the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations”. In managing the great complexity that intersectionality implies, McCall (2005) questions the restricted accounts of using intersectionality as a methodology and rather argues that it should be used as a framework. McCall (2005:1173) makes a distinction between three categorical approaches in relation to social categories when examining the concept of intersectionality: *intercategorical* complexity, *intracategorical* complexity and *anticategorical* complexity. *Intercategorical* complexity focuses on the distinctions and interrelations between social categories, strategically requiring researchers to “provisionally adopt existing analytical categories”; *intracategorical* complexity focuses on distinctions and interrelations within social categories, “particular social groups at neglected points of intersection” limiting the scope of inquiry to a distinct category as a subject of analysis, instead “at the intersection of a full range of dimensions of a full range of categories”, *anticategorical* complexity deconstructs and rejects social categories the borders of categories with a perspective that these are “simplifying social fictions that produce inequalities in the process of producing differences” (McCall, 2005: 1173-84).

In her article, McCall (2005:1773; 1991) adopts the *intercategorical* complexity approach and argues that intersectionality research neglects and underrepresents this dimension, concluding that “no single dimension of overall inequality can adequately describe the full structure of multiple, intersecting and conflicting dimensions of inequality”. Yet McCall (2005:1771) maintains “that intersectionality is the most important theoretical contribution that women’s studies, in conjunction with related fields, have made so far”. A critical observation from her article is that she does not confront the question of compatibility across the three categorical approaches. The *anticategorical* complexity approach seems to greatly disregard identity categories, hence incompatible with both *intercategorical* and *intracategorical* complexity approaches. Yet these two categorical approaches are not mutually incompatible, as the differences and relations within the *intracategorical* approach are situated at points of intersection, and can simultaneously possibly be intercategorical where they investigate these intersections using a range of dimensions. However, this observation does not undermine the rich contribution of this article that takes into account various ways of framing intersectionality. As Audre Lorde (1984:183) commented, “there is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives”.

Some Marxist feminist critiques of intersectionality argue that intersectionality undermines analysing class as foundational axis of oppression. According to Belkhir (1998: 18) “despite its place in the now-familiar list of race, class, and gender – class is often the last addressed of these issues’ in contemporary feminist theory”. Explaining the underdeveloped analysis of class critique of intersectionality, Mann (2013:112) articulates that “Other scholars have criticized the “theoretically impoverished concepts of class” employed by authors who claim to do race, gender, and class analyses”. Gimenez (2001) offers a critique of intersectional analyses stating that in the Race, Gender and Class (RGC) perspective qualitative differences between categories are flattened or erased, explaining that “In the effort to reject ‘class reductionism,’ by postulating the equivalence between class and other forms of oppression, the RGC perspective both negates the fundamental importance of class [and] is forced to acknowledge its importance by postulating some other ‘basic’ structures of domination”.

In other words, Gimenez (2001) postulates that there isn’t a qualitative equivalence between class and other forms of oppression as intersectional analyses make it seem. Rather, she further argues that the distinctive characteristics of class oppression from either race or gender can be understood through an analysis of the system and structure of capitalism in relation to material production and reproduction rooted in political economy and how it shapes ideology, culture

and politics. As a result, class oppression requires a politically and theoretically distinct treatment that race and gender. Grounded in historical materialism, Marxism views structural, material and historical processes as fundamental when accounting for identities. A Marxist perspective, argues against accounts of identity that do not address the historical framing of structures and institutions which maintain particular identities.

For Mitchell (2013) the absence of a political economy analysis in intersectionality analyses reinforces a particular principle of bourgeois liberalism. She states that “Since identity politics, and therefore intersectionality theory, are a bourgeois politics, the possibilities for struggles are also bourgeois. Identity politics reproduces the appearance of an alienated individual under capitalism and so struggle takes the form of equality among groups at best, or individualized forms of struggle at worst.” (Mitchell, 2013).

While Marxist perspectives are noteworthy concerns, it is however also important that political, social, cultural and economic discussions are not all reduced to class. It is equally important that the processes of capital accumulation are not gender or race blind. Multiple forms of oppression should also be accounted for; it becomes a concern when oppressions are hierarchically situated because marginalisation is perpetuated in the lives of vulnerable members of society. The different structural relations that Marxists argue against when critiquing intersectional analyses, are the same with those that intersectionality is also arguing against but in different contexts of social reality. An agenda that intersectionality offers is that inequalities should be theorized as interconnected. Intersectionality embraces “the working hypothesis of the equivalency between oppressions” (Collins, 1997:74). Although a class analysis is necessary in addressing capitalist and neoliberal structures of oppression, there is a need to recognize the raced, gendered, sexualized, etc. nature of class.

In discussing the limitations of intersectionality, Collins and Blige (2016) raise concerns that intersectionality is becoming a theoretical terminology that is vulnerable to being slowly generalized and diluted hence risking disregarding the agenda of social transformation that the term was originally formulated to address. They are critical of how intersectionality has become a critical theory that lacks critical praxis. Collins and Blige (2016: 2) argue that “The events and conditions of social and political life and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor...Intersectionality as an analytic tool gives people better access to the complexity of the world and of themselves...People use intersectionality as an analytic tool to solve problems that they or others around them face”. Therefore, they are critical about limiting intersectionality to the confines of academia invention and treating the concept as a commodity

for theorization in academia. Instead, they want intersectional analysis to critically inquire into social injustice while simultaneously using critical praxis to promote transformational politics. Collins and Blige (2016: 37) assert that “Intersectionality is not simply a method for doing research but is also a tool for empowering people,”.

Similarly, Carastathis (2016) rejects the masquerading of intersectionality as intellectual property and the idea that intersectionality is reserved for feminism. Carastathis (2016:187) criticizes the “institutionalized forms” of intersectional analysis that situate it as a form of feminism that “can function as an alibi for, and even an impediment to, coalitional praxis” for instance to indigenous and transnational feminisms. Carastathis (2016) in her view, there are other defining characteristics to understand the intersectional dimension of identity politics that should be explored not limited to multiple and relational positions. In her understanding of intersectionality as a research paradigm, Hancock (2007:64) is also of the view that the concept cannot be limited to “a content specialization in populations with intersecting marginalized identities”. Rather it should be widely applicable to the study of various contexts. Carastathis, (2016:9) presents an “analytic clarity, intellectual rigor, and a politicized, historicized understanding” of intersectionality noting that other than complex and multiple experiences of oppression, some identities produce subordination and invisibility. An example that speaks to this view would be certain geographical locations of injustice, such as the erasure and silencing of epistemologies from the Global North.

Dhamoon (2011) argues that although intersectional analysis focuses on contextualizing the discrimination, oppression, forms of resistance and subject formation of particular individual and group identities, there are two main risks associated with this. Firstly, it is essentialism; there is an over-conflation and rigidity of the limitlessness of identity, regardless of the consideration of multiple dimensions of identity). An example the article makes is how each dimension of identity can be interpreted in different ways, yet there is also no specific way of expressing an identity because “some identities are legally imposed rather than self-constituted, and identity-based approaches can have the effect of falsely pitting one identity against another (e.g., cultural identity vs. gender identity” (Dhamoon, 2011: 233). Further, essentializing identities poses the danger of assuming that categories are easily recognizable, when in actual fact whole and absolute identity categories may in some cases not exist because identity is fluid (Dhamoon, 2011: 233). In other words, the critique being advanced is that accounts of identity that are reductive in nature lack historicized context, whereby accounts of identity politics gravitate towards conflation with positionality descriptions (Dhamoon, 2011).

The above critique is significant in that it serves to bring attention to the reality that it is not adequate for a theory to simply offer a description and explanation of the complexity of dynamics of power in particular contexts and at various levels of social existence. Rather, critiquing and deconstructing should be advanced in order to interrupt the power dynamics so as to make available alternative worldviews. This will enable “a self-reflexive critique of the analyst and her or his own implication in the matrix of meaning-making, specifically her or his relationship to knowledge production” (Dhamoon, 2011: 240).

2.7 The decolonial option

Decoloniality seeks an alternative to the existing global power system, by disrupting the absolute universalism and conceptualization of the global. It affirms other ways of re-existence. It is both theoretical and praxical and aims to “unsettle and disobey the reign of theory over practice” yet it is not an academic discipline (Mignolo, 2018: 5, 106). Rather it is another option of re-existing that aims to disconnect and remodel from Western epistemology and ontology that has permeated all spheres globally. Decoloniality is however not an ontological and macro narrative as it “is specific to local geo-political and body –political histories” (Mignolo, 2018:120). In this regard, the thesis explores the concept specifically in relation to the gender discourse in the African context.

2.7.1 *Toward a decolonial intersectionality: A Decolonial Feminist perspective*

Decolonial feminisms emerged from the resistances against enduring legacies of colonialism. A great deal of decolonial scholarships emerged out of Latin American and Latin philosophers. Although engaged with anticolonial and postcolonial theories, decolonial thinking places emphasis on “the importance of the still lingering structures of colonialism in power, ontology, epistemology, and its entanglement with the imposed categorial logics of race and gender” (Velez and Tuana, 2020:366). Decolonial feminisms are part of the philosophical reappropriation movement that contests “the Western-patriarchal economic ideology that turned women, Black people, Indigenous people, and people from Asia and Africa into inferior beings...” (Verges and Bohrer, 2021:13).

Lugones (2010:753) suggests that “The decolonial feminists’ task...begins by seeing the colonial difference, emphatically resisting [the] epistemological habit of erasing it”. In conjunction with ‘the decolonial feminists’ task’, Acevedo-Zapata (2020: 413) writes that “a decolonial feminist praxis starts by recognizing there is necessarily a place of enunciation for authors of philosophy, and that it cannot be neutral, objective or universal”. In short,

positionality does influence academic knowledge-production. As a result, academic researchers need to avoid epistemic practices that sustain ignorance hence enabling colonial mindsets, it is fundamental “that we decolonize our scientific and writing practices so that rationality ceases to be universalized and becomes plural, diversified, and inclusive of the knowledge forms produced by others (Martins, Fernanda and Carrieri, 2020:506).

In this study, I seek to situate intersectionality within the critical lenses of a decolonial feminist approach; this is because the paradigm reflects a similar theoretical practice. Similarly, to intersectionality, decolonial feminisms reject and seek to disrupt the notion that globally women have universal experiences, oppressions and privileges as it is suggested by existing hegemonic feminist narratives. Instead, they recognize that women have diverse and multi-dimensional experiences. Decolonial feminisms maintain that hegemonic global structures including colonialism, neo-colonialism and global capitalism exacerbate power differences (Lugones, 2010; Quijano, 2007; Mignolo, 2007; Grewal and Kaplan, 1994). Decolonial feminisms reject the liberal assumptions that Western feminisms are based on, because these are not homogenous to feminist praxis in other specific locations. For example, they do not account for the experiences of women situated in underprivileged contexts where neoliberal imperialism persists playing an immense role in producing and reproducing a patriarchal system.

As much as they have similarities, decolonial feminism further advances the analyses of oppression provided by intersectional theory, by bringing in the question of coloniality. It exposes how the oppressive identity categories that intersectional theory interrogates are reinforced by coloniality. It is in this context, that I see it fitting to apply decolonial intersectional lenses as an alternative to the mainstream intersectional theory, particularly when examining political structures in post-colonial African societies. Mostly importantly as written by Tamale (2020:40-41), “While patriarchies everywhere stem from the same roots of male power, and whereas there are some overlaps in the way women experience oppression globally...the African continent occupies a separate cultural, social, economic and geopolitical landscape from the West. Moreover, the enduring legacies of slavery, colonialism and imperialism continue to slip through, intersect with patriarchal domination and come out on the other end as subjugation with different strands from those found in Western paradigms.”

A major concern from decolonial feminist scholarship is that prevailing approaches to intersectionality focus on the Global North; it is this domestic intersectionality that they seek to disrupt. The argument is that such a narrow analysis disregards global dynamics of colonial

history and racial power, thereby exposing how the paradigm reflects and reproduces racial dominance and the colonial violence of Eurocentric power structures (Mignolo, 2007; Lugones 2007; Patil, 2013). That is, it silences the experiences of women from the Global South, hence violating the foundation it was built on, namely of representing the voices of the marginalized.

According to decolonial scholarship, such a concept reflects the coloniality of power, knowledge, being and gender (Grosfoguel, 2002; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Mignolo, 2007, 2011; Quijano, 2000; Lugones, 2007). From this point of view, coloniality is a term used to describe the subversive historical colonial legacy that has permeated post-colonial political, social and economic structures, thus enabling a dominant Eurocentric global order. It is in this context of coloniality that decolonial intersectionality becomes a significant analytic tool when examining the experiences of women in the Global South. It becomes imperative to combine an intersectional approach with a decolonial framework (Lugones, 2007).

Lugones (2011) makes critical comments on intersectionality in her conception of decolonial feminism. She first acknowledges the importance of intersectionality theory as documented in the work of Crenshaw and other Women of Color feminisms. Lugones (2011) recognises that the uncovering of the inseparability of race and gender, intersectionality theory causes an epistemic shift in feminist theories that makes visible nonwhite women. Lugones (2011:70) observes that “the intersectional question reveals racism at the fundamental theoretical and epistemological levels”.

However, Lugones (2011) contends that although Women of Color feminists have made important contributions in feminist theorization through intersectionality including emphasising the importance of multiplicity for liberatory theories, they have undertheorized the coloniality of gender. She notes that “Even though understandings of the relation between colonization and racialized gender oppression have been part of the formulations of Women of Color feminisms, it has not been clear how colonization has affected the meaning of ‘woman.’” (Lugones, 2011:72). She further writes that the coloniality of gender “is what lies at the intersections of gender and class and race as central constructs of the capitalist world system of power” (Lugones, 2011:75). Thus, the identity categories that are critically interrogated and criticized by intersectionality are highlighted through the coloniality of gender as the concept highlights “the deep entanglement of the dehumanizing, racializing, and gendering processes of colonization.” (Velez, 2019:399). What decolonial feminism does through the concept of the coloniality of gender in this instance is that it gives meaning to the identity category of ‘woman’. Hence Lugones (2011:72) maintains that her analysis complicates “the

understanding of racialized gender” and goes “beyond intersectionality” yet not departing from Women of Color feminisms.

In this study, I propose a decolonial intersectionality that problematizes the supposition that erases the subject from the analysis, hence perpetuating the misconception about experiences and knowledge being universal. One way of doing this could be through applying the concept of “critical border thinking” whereby the epistemic positionality of the subject of enunciation is not concealed because all knowledges are embodied, epistemically located and subjective (Mignolo, 2000). Instead of rejecting Western hegemonic epistemologies that have been privileged by modernity, critical border thinking becomes a subaltern epistemic response that redefines the emancipatory rhetoric of these from the location of the oppressed and exploited, that is to say from the epistemologies of the subaltern. In this regard, border thinking “is the epistemology of the exteriority; that is, of the outside created from the inside” (Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2006:206). This will critically deconstruct the project of Western modernity, becoming a form of a decolonial liberation struggle, instead of perpetuating the idea that there is a homogenized patriarchy thus falling into the trap of producing a “homogenous feminist master narrative” (Shohat,2001:1270).

A serious decolonial intersectional analysis in postcolonial societies should go beyond viewing the feminist project as aiming to challenge men, instead the systems and structures that empower men to become dominant are the ones that need to be challenged. Rather than being isolation, patriarchy exists in conjunction with coloniality, imperialism, capitalism, neo liberalism and other structures of power. Therefore, without decoloniality of gender, anti-imperialism, anti-capitalism and so on, there can be no feminism. Moreover, deeply questioning existing homogenous notions and categories of oppression should be a matter of significance. We should let women define according to their own terms what constitutes of ‘harm’ instead of making assumptions. Taking into consideration global structures of inequality, intersectional categories that unfold from their contexts should be accounted for, for example, political, economic and social realities that are influenced by both the local and the global.

2.8 Conclusion

The coloniality of power as understood by Anibal Quijano uncovers how the modern world order is an outcome of historical processes. However, although the concept challenges and is critical of imperial and racial oppression, it is oblivious to the institutions of gendered

oppression. It is in this regard, that the work of Maria Lugones goes beyond racism to develop the concept of the coloniality of gender viewing gender being principal to the formation process of the coloniality of power, as race is to Quijano's concept of the coloniality of power. In the context of postcolonial African societies, the coloniality of gender is relevant precisely because it helps situate gender within the process of colonization. This paves a way towards transforming the present and the future because of the better understanding how of racialization and gendering has influenced the shaping of the political, economic and social spheres in postcolonial African societies.

Intersectionality helps us uncover and challenge the erasure of women of colour in their multiple structural identities through the use of identity categories of discrimination. Decolonial feminism goes beyond this awareness by asking the question of coloniality, opening up new insights of investigation. Here "through a decolonial feminist frame we see not only the erasure of Black and brown women at the intersection of categories like race and gender" but the realisation that these are "a colonial imposition" Velez (2019:400). Bringing in the question of coloniality exposes how categorical dynamics of oppression that intersectional theory interrogates are buttressed by coloniality. It is within this context, that an intersectionality that is situated within a decolonial feminist framework becomes an option, thus taking a turn towards decolonial intersectionality. Using the concept of critical border thinking, I propose that an effective decolonial intersectional analysis in postcolonial societies is one that avoids using the feminist project to challenge men, rather the focus has to be on dismantling systems and structures that empower men to become dominant.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to outline the research methodology of this qualitative study that explores the ways in which gendered colonial power structures have contributed to shaping gender transformation in Zimbabwe's political leadership landscape. This approach helped understand the ways in which gendered power structures deeply rooted in colonialism have impacted the effectiveness of legal and policy frameworks for gender equality in Zimbabwe, particularly those that govern women's political representation and participation. It highlighted the importance of considering the historical, cultural, and institutional context when formulating gender policy frameworks in order to design contextually suited policies, this is especially relevant for redressing colonial gender inequities and advancing gender equality in Zimbabwe's political leadership landscape.

This chapter provides an in-depth description of the research method, the selection of the sample, data collection methods, and data analysis process adopted to attain reliable and accurate findings. This chapter also includes the ethical considerations and the limitations of the study. By providing a detailed account of the research methodology, this chapter assures the validity of the study. In addition, this chapter describes how the chosen research methodology is relevant to the research questions and objectives of the study.

3.2 Research method

A research method is a structured and flexible approach for the collection, analysis and interpretation of data (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). The selection of a research method should be aligned to the research philosophical underpinnings, questions, objectives, and the type of phenomenon being investigated. To answer the research questions and meet the research objectives the study used a qualitative research method.

The study used a qualitative research method to answer the following central research question: How have legacies of colonial power structures contributed to shaping gender transformation in Zimbabwe's political leadership landscape? The sub-research questions which this study intends to answer include i) What has the effect of legal and policy frameworks for gender equality been in structuring and transforming the political participation of women in Zimbabwe? ii) What are the implications of this on the political representation of women in

Zimbabwe iii) How have legal and policy frameworks for gender equality in the political leadership landscape in Zimbabwe been confined within a colonial system of power?

By asking these questions, the study's central objective is to understand the ways in which gendered power structures deep-rooted in colonialism have shaped policy frameworks for gender equality in Zimbabwe. The sub-objectives which this study intends to speak to, include i) to identify the effects of current policy frameworks for gender equality in structuring and transforming the political participation of women in Zimbabwe ii) to understand the experiences of women within the political sector in Zimbabwe iii) To identify colonial power structures those that have contributed to shaping gender transformation in Zimbabwe's political leadership landscape.

A qualitative research approach is a method that observes and interprets the perceptions of individuals in each context, and the meanings they attach to that context (Strauss & Corbin, 2008; Gentles et al., 2015; Levitt et al., 2017). Qualitative research seeks to understand "the social world of research participants by learning about their social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives and histories" (Moriarty, 2011:2). The study employed a qualitative research approach because it affirms an understanding of the experiences of women within the political sector in Zimbabwe. As a result, an interpretivist worldview is used for this qualitative research as it will heavily rely on the participant's views and subjective interpretation of their experiences (Mohajan, 2018:2).

3.3 Qualities of qualitative research

In a qualitative study, the researcher is the principal instrument of data collection and data analysis. Qualitative research takes place in a natural setting, in this case there is active engagement with the participants, institutions and sites under investigation (Mohajan, 2018:16-17). There are many forms of qualitative research, although each of them has in common the following characteristics:

- The researcher has the opportunity of collecting data directly from the participants through direct encounters with individuals, through one-to-one interviews or group interviews or by observation.
- A researcher is an integral part of the research process. The issue is not one of minimising the influence of the researcher, but of knowing how the researcher was

involved in data collection and analysis in order to assess better the information they provide.

- It seeks to establish a holistic perspective of a given situation.
- A researcher is responsible to obtain true information and to ensure the participants' ethical treatment.
- If focuses on discovery and understanding which requires flexibility in the research design. (Mohajan, 2018: 17).

3.4 Rationale for using qualitative research

As noted by Mohajan (2018:2), qualitative research focuses on examining and interpreting events as form the viewpoints of the participants. Mohajan (2015:18) affirms that in qualitative research little interest is placed on the overall number of participants “who think and behave in certain ways” instead attention is given to “explaining why people think and behave in certain ways.” Beyond that Mohajan notes that qualitative research has various advantages. It is significant because it is able to highlight relevant “relationships, causes, effects, and dynamic processes” (Mohajan, 2015:18). It creates an environment where participants can open up, making it possible for new evidence to emerge that might not have been initially considered. As a result of the close involvement of the researcher, a first-hand account of the field is encountered, illuminating issues that tend to be neglected in scientific and positivistic research. Providing an integrated perspective, it details the processes that previously have shaped and continue to shape the lives of individuals. Thus, it provides as extensive representation of social phenomena within its context (Mohajan, 2015:18).

3.5 Interpretivist policy analysis

An interpretivist policy analysis (IPA) is a qualitative research approach which allows for individual interpretation and historical context to gain an understanding of decisions related to policy. IPA helps understand that policy problems are historically and culturally embedded rather than easily recognizable societal problems (Hastings, 1998). As such policy processes do not exist in a vacuum. The primary concern of interpretive policy analysis for the purpose of this thesis is on problem representation and on the different ways of understanding our social reality and representation of policy problems; and how the manner in which these policy problems are framed determines potential policy responses (Rein and Schon, 1993; Bacchi, 1999). Also, language and discourse within the policy process is understood to create particular

ways in which we understand and address particular issues (Yanow, 2000; Colebatch, 2002, Hager and Wagenaar, 2003). As such, IPA gives insight into knowledge dimensions, lived experience, and often hidden power dynamics in other approaches.

An example is the assumption that the statistical under representation of women in parliament and other political leadership positions is merely what must change to enhance gender transformation. The solution adopted has been mostly to increase the statistical representation of women in parliament. In the context of Zimbabwe, this interferes with genuine gender transformation as it neglects the historical, cultural and institutional context in which the country is situated within hence structural power relations at play. In light of this, IPA requires that we rethink the way in which we conceptualise policy problems in policymaking and policy analysis. The manner in which problems are represented in policy, may be intentionally or unintentionally framed in ways that advance particular political agendas and serve the interests of certain political actors (Bacchi, 2009).

IPA in this study allowed me to highlight the often-neglected effects of specific problem representations involved in policy designs. For example, how gender inequality is represented and framed as a policy problem in Zimbabwe has shaped legal and policy frameworks for gender equality, those that govern women's political participation and representation. It challenged the notion that governments simply respond to identifiable societal issues. It drew attention to the need to also take into consideration the deep structural factors that are a cause of gender inequality in Zimbabwe within the political leadership landscape at the national level specifically the National Assembly, Senate, and Cabinet. Other than focusing on increasing the statistical representation of women in parliament, there is also a need to interrogate the gendered power structures deep-rooted in colonialism and the effect they have on the design, interpretation, and implementation of legal and policy frameworks for gender equality.

The IPA approach was combined with in-depth structured interviews and comprehensive review of policy documents, archival records, journal articles, books, and institutional reports. The primary sources of data included archival records, policy documents and structured in-depth interviews. The secondary sources of data included journal articles, books and institutional reports. Through the triangulation of data from academic literature, policy documents and historical archives, the study aimed to enhance the validity, credibility and depth of the research findings, thus a robust understanding the ways in which gendered power

structures deep-rooted in colonialism have contributed to influencing legal and policy frameworks for gender equality in Zimbabwe, those that govern women's political representation and participation.

3.6 Archival records

Archival records constituted as a primary source of data for the methodological framework of this study. Archival data collection from the National Archives of Zimbabwe in Harare during the month of March 2022 allowed for an extensive examination of historical documents. In the archival records selection process, documents that directly relate to colonial policies and other relevant documents including government documents, newspaper articles and books were given priority, providing rich insights into colonial gender structures.

The data extraction process involved a comprehensive review of the selected archival records to determine their relevance. Key data findings were noted down for detailed analysis. To develop a comprehensive understanding of the nature and impact of colonial gender structures, the data collected from archival records was integrated with data collected from interview data and other secondary sources including policy documents, reports, journal articles and books.

3.7 Interviews

In this research, in-depth structured interviews were conducted and used as primary data sources. In-depth structured interview questions are predetermined, and techniques of recording are systematic (Kothari, 2004). For this reason, the interviewer rigorously follows a process, where questions are asked in a structured way (Kothari, 2004). Using structured interviews provided comparable and consistent qualitative data. The interview questions were developed consistent with the research question(s) and objective(s). These questions were open-ended, yet they were formulated to reduce ambiguity and provide clarity, enabling participants to offer specific and relevant information on their experiences within the political sector in Zimbabwe.

A total of 12 in-depth structured interviews were carried out with women, who formerly occupied and those who were at the time occupying political leadership positions as cabinet ministers, members of parliament, leaders of political parties, political and human rights activists. The interviews were conducted in different settings in 2022 and 2023 in Harare and Bulawayo respectively, including in-person and virtually via the platforms of Zoom and WhatsApp, depending on the participant's convenience. While 7 of these interviews were conducted in Harare over two months, the other five were conducted in Bulawayo. The duration

of the interview meetings was between 45 to 90 minutes. With the participant's verbal or written consent, the interview discussions were audio-recorded to ensure that data is captured accurately, relevant observations were documented through taking field notes.

During my fieldwork, scheduling interviews was especially challenging because the fieldwork for this research in Harare was carried out during the period leading to and after the 2022 Zimbabwean National Assembly and Local Authority by-elections. The by-elections were held on March 26. Some of the women I aimed to interview were actively involved in election campaign activities, and as such they had extremely busy schedules. Most of my communication was with their personal assistants, yet the earliest available dates were typically months later. For this reason, I could interview only those who availed themselves after continuous follow-ups. Funding constraints primarily determined the timing of the fieldwork. Although the timing was not ideal, it was necessary for the research to be conducted during this period so that the project could be completed within the approved funding timeline.

I also visited the headquarters of Zanu PF, the ruling party in Harare in an effort of finding women who hold political leadership positions to schedule interviews. Nonetheless, the security detail seemed to some extent hostile, specifically because I was a researcher affiliated with a foreign institution, making them suspicious about my intentions. Despite the fact that I and my research assistant were eventually granted access to the relevant office, I was not given the assistance that I needed as most of the women were not in office and their contact details were withheld. I was instead referred to the Parliament of Zimbabwe to acquire contact information of women who are members of parliament. Unfortunately, at the Parliament of Zimbabwe they could not assist me without the approval of the head of the research department who at the time had travelled outside the country. I followed up several times, and I ultimately had to give up this approach.

However, conducting some of the interviews during this period created an opportunity for a timely analysis of the involvement of women in political participation. Moreover, taking into consideration that during by-elections local campaigns are taking place, this context provided an opportunity to witness some of the realities and challenges that exist for women candidates contesting in the elections. This was significant contextual data that complemented the responses from the interviews. These observations provided insights into the gender and political participation dynamics that would possibly not have been apparent in a conventional interview. For example, one of the women that I needed to interview was engaged in campaigning, thus the interview had to take place after the campaign had ended. As a result of this, when I

arrived with my research assistant for the interview, she asked us to join her in the vehicle they were using to campaign while waiting for the campaign activities of the day to end so that we could have our scheduled interview. This allowed for an observation of the participant's interactions with the public and contributed to establishing rapport and trust with the interview participant and may have perhaps made them better comfortable and open, resulting in more honest and in-depth responses enriching the quality of data collected.

Purposive and snowball sampling were used to select participants for this research. Purposive sampling “is a strategy in which particular settings, persons or events are selected deliberately in order to provide important information that cannot be obtained from other choices” (Taherdoost, 2016:23). It is a type of sampling that falls under the broader category of non-probability sampling technique. Non-probability sampling “is often associated with case study research design and qualitative research..., case studies tend to focus on small samples and are intended to examine as real-life phenomenon...” (Taherdoost, 2016:22). Purposive sampling was used to schedule appointments with 11 of the interview participants, women who formerly and are in political leadership positions including as members of parliament, senators, cabinet ministers, and leaders of political parties. Snowballing sampling is when interview participants are selected through referrals (Silverman, 2016). Snowballing sampling was used for one of the interview participants who is a political and human rights activist and a former women's coordinator for one of the opposition political parties and has endured political violence at the hands of the post-colonial government.

My sample selection criteria focused on the participants being best positioned to provide relevant and rich data needed to address some of the research questions and objectives of the study. More so, I wanted to ensure the data collected reflects varied experiences and perspectives, including political affiliation, geolocation, and ethnic background. Hence, the interview participants permeated across political parties, provinces and ethnic groups.

3.8 Data analysis

Content and document analysis were used to interpret and analyse the data gathered during fieldwork. Using both content and document analysis for my research study is a form of triangulation, which is ‘the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon’ (Denzin, 1970: 291). Triangulating data is a way of providing “a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility” (Eisner, 1991:110), and it reduces biases.

Content analysis is “...a research technique with which conclusions can be drawn on the basis of any kind of data [emphasis added] by means of systematic and objective analysis of its constituent elements.” (Kromrey, 2009: 298). Content analysis helps the researcher “to tease out the broad basic dimensions according to which the people providing the data ... make sense out of the object of study.” (Cropley, 2019:114). It was used to analyse data collected from the structured in-depth interview sessions. The research study adopted the atomistic logical approach of content analysis as expressed by Cropley (2019:114), whereby the contents of an interview are broken down into small categories of content units that each contains particular information. These contents are then re-grouped by arranging similar content units into categories, each category “involving a single broad, general theme summarizing what is common to the content units on which it is based” (Cropley, 2019:114). There is enhanced reliability because rather than focusing on the text as a whole “the narrative it contains is broken down into small units...,” hence giving a deeper understanding of each single idea from the original narrative (Cropley, 2019:127).

Prior to analysing the data collected, I re-examined the research questions and objectives to inform the content analysis. This approach ensured that key issues remained the focus of the analysis. I also had to account for aspects that might potentially compromise the data analysis process, such as my own biases. Identifying external influences as a researcher is crucial so as “to assure rigor and trustworthiness” (Nowell, Norris, et al. 2017: 2).

During the initial stage of my data analysis, I gathered transcribed data collected from field notes and interview audio recordings. This phase ensured that as a researcher I understood “the depth and breadth of the content,” providing “the bedrock for the rest of the analysis” (Braun and Clarke, 2006:92-93). The collected interview data was manually transcribed into word documents that were stamped with names of the participants.

Coding enabled me to structure the data, capturing “the qualitative richness of the phenomenon” (Nowell, Norris, et al. 2017:5). Using In vivo coding I segmented the data collected by breaking it down into smaller atoms or categories using phrases or sentences from the transcribed data. This was done to validate the voices of the participants, as codes were generated by utilizing verbal extracts. The codes were generated based on their relevance to the research questions and objectives, together with emerging data patterns. Yet, I also considered the theoretical framework during this process. Thereafter, codes were systematically assigned to the segmented data. During the data coding, I was cognizant of the

possible evident data pattern contradictions that may differ from the anticipated analysis development. As such, these were documented in Chapter 6 of the study.

I then analysed the coded data searching for recurrent codes to identify underlying themes. As these emerged, in the final coding phase I reorganized and refined the codes to accurately represent the data using pattern coding. This was done to “develop a coherent synthesis of data” (Hedlund-de Witt, 2013:14). Pattern coding ensured the identification of main themes that have emerged so that they can be interpreted in a way that addresses the research questions and objectives. There are four main themes that emerged from the data analysis, and these are: i) effectiveness of gender policy frameworks ii) barriers to political leadership iii) conceiving gender equality and transformation iv) colonial legacy on gender roles. These themes are discussed in detail in Chapter 6 of the study. In the final phase of my data analysis process, I validated the findings by reflecting on the coding process to ensure that there is consistency between interpretation and data.

Document analysis was used to analyse both primary (archival and policy documents) and secondary data sources. Document analysis is a technique that reviews and evaluates documents that are “both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material.” (Bowen, 2009:27). This is done to examine and interpret data for the purpose of drawing meaning from and gaining understanding of the phenomenon under study. This process involves “finding, selecting, appraising (making sense of), and synthesising data contained in documents”, which is “then organised into major themes, categories, and case examples specifically through content analysis” (Bowen, 2009:28). The data collected was used to provide a historical analysis of colonial gender structures in Zimbabwe in Chapter 4, as well as an examination of the political leadership landscape in Zimbabwe in Chapter 5.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

In order to protect participants, assure trust, minimize harm, and protect research integrity ethical principles were applied in this study. According to Friere (1993) engaging in a goal of critical consciousness is imperative in the process of emerging representations from the experiences of participants. Critical consciousness enables the researcher to be aware that internal and external forces might influence the transparency and objectivity of the process, for instance various socio-cultural, economic, and political contexts. Critical consciousness is being able to prevent shortsightedness by being reflective and self - aware (Garcia, Kosutic, McDowell & Anderson, 2009). This ensured that “the participants’ voices and experiences are

represented with due considerations to respect for persons, justice, nonmaleficence, and beneficence.” (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012:67).

In ensuring that participants were fully knowledgeable of what they are about to engage in (Williamson, 2007), informed written consent was sought from the research participants prior to participating. To enable the participant’s full comprehension (Frank and Winter, 2004), the informed consent form was written in a manner that was easily readable by the participants. Moreover, participants were given the option to withdraw for any reason at any stage of the research.

There were ethical considerations such as protecting the participants from harm as a result of their participation, considering the hostile political environment within Zimbabwe. As a result, in the informed consent form there were contents relating to a commitment to preserve confidentiality of the participants’ identities. This was proposed to be done through the use of pseudonyms during the thesis write up. However, all the participants verbally consented to being identified during the thesis write up. This was especially considering that one of the roles of women in political leadership positions is to advance women’s participation and representation in decision-making including within political structures. Therefore, the participants viewed this as an opportunity to advance women’s empowerment by sharing their experiences and the changes they would want to see going forward in the context of gender equality and transformation in Zimbabwe’s political context.

3.10 Limitations of the study

The study was limited to women who have formerly occupied or were at the time of the study occupying political leadership positions. As such, it did not give a voice to other women who have encountered challenges in their political careers and have been unsuccessful assuming political leadership positions. This can potentially limit having a deeper understanding of the existing systematic barriers. I addressed this by using the findings of the study for policy recommendations centered on confronting these barriers, ensuring the study is contributing to initiatives to address structural biases within Zimbabwe’s political structures.

The study also had potential sources of bias. As a researcher I bring to the study my experiences, ideas, prejudices and personal philosophies. In attempting to minimize the biases I enhanced a shared transparent and democratic environment with the participants. This process involved reflective awareness of a critical comprehension of reality. I made the interview process a shared dialogue. This was to minimize bias in that the study did not rely purely on

subjective experiences, rather the participant's experiences and voices were represented in an intersubjective manner. According to Munhall (2004:240) inter-subjectivity requires presence from a place of authenticity and "one to situate knowingly in one's own life and interact with full unknowingness about the other's life".

3.11 Conclusion

This study used a qualitative interpretivist policy analysis approach. This allowed for an in-depth understanding of the impact of gendered colonial legacies on gender equality legal and policy frameworks in Zimbabwe in the context of women's political representation and participation. This approach provided a broader perspective of how specific cultural, institutional and historical contexts determine the ways in which policies are formulated, interpreted, and implemented. Therefore, drawing attention to the need to take these contextual nuances into account in policy making and implementation. Qualitative interpretivist policy analysis also uncovers lived and perceived subjective policy meanings that might not be apparent when using other approaches. As such, it gives insight into the socially constructed nature of policies hence encouraging responsive and relevant policies that consider the needs of different societal groups. This then addresses the unintended consequences of surface level policy analysis.

I integrated data collected from archival research, in-depth structured interviews, and document analysis. This triangulation of data helped gather detailed evidence-based data, bringing multiple perspectives from different groups of women in political leadership in Zimbabwe and contextualizing policy processes and their complex nature. Despite encountering challenges of scheduling interview meetings because it was during the election period, and navigating the complexities of political institutions, those interviews that took place despite the odds provided rich and relevant data. The study ensured ethical integrity by taking measures such as obtaining informed consent from the participants, reflecting my commitment as a researcher to conduct responsible research.

The methodological approach detailed in this chapter is the foundation for the interpretation of interview data findings in Chapter 6, helping draw substantive conclusions regarding the enduring impact of gendered colonial legacies on the political landscape in Zimbabwe. The following chapters present data findings collected from other sources, beginning with the examination of colonial gender structures in Rhodesia, which is present day Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE COLONIAL STATE, PATRIARCHAL ALLIANCES, AND THE SUBJUGATION OF AFRICAN WOMEN

4.1 Introduction

The primary objective of this chapter is to examine how the colonial state systematically subjugated African women by using policies that bolstered patriarchal structures in colonial Zimbabwe. Also, the collaborative dynamics that occurred between colonial and traditional patriarchy, creating new structures of patriarchal control. This helps uncover how the colonial state manipulated and exploited existing gender relations to advance colonial objectives, hence substantiating the assumption that this study is based upon which is that the gender discourse is firmly rooted in imperial/colonial frameworks. This chapter is situated within the broader context of the contemporary gender system being built within global power systems of oppression, providing insight particularly on the contribution of the legacy of the colonial system that Africa is situated within.

Early in the chapter, I discuss gender dynamics in precolonial Africa noting how over the course of history, power structures and social identities have often intersected to shape the lives of marginalized groups in society. Gender dynamics in Africa significantly transformed throughout the precolonial and colonial periods, illustrating the interplay between tradition, power and evolving social structures. In precolonial Africa, gender relations differed in each region, with some societies exhibiting egalitarianism, while others maintained patriarchal practices that undermined the agency of women. Women often occupied roles that significantly contributed in the socio-economic, political, and religious landscapes, however existing cultural norms often determined their societal status. The chapter then delves into gender dynamics during colonial Africa, revealing how gender relations were substantially transformed by colonialism. With the advent of colonialism, patriarchal gender ideologies were propagated, reconfiguring traditional gender relations. Colonial rule relegated women to subordinate positions such as domestic work, excluding them from economic opportunities and political authority.

Next, the chapter explores gender and anticolonial struggles. Here, I consider the gendered experiences of African women in anticolonial struggles and the gendered nature of their participation. Giving attention to the gendered nature of nationalist movements is important because it helps us understand more the depth of gendered “colonial disempowerment” (Geisler, 2004:23).

The chapter then situates gender within the broader historical context of the precolonial and colonial eras, tracing the historical development of gender relations across different time periods in Zimbabwe. This is crucial in understanding the evolution of gender relations in Zimbabwe. During the precolonial era, Zimbabwe had multifaceted structures of gender relations, with women occupying significant positions within their communities, assuming roles in agricultural production, gold mining, alluvial gold panning, trading, and spirit mediumship. However, patriarchal ideologies persistently remained, impacting how families were structured. Similarly to other regions of Africa, colonialism brought a drastic shift in gender dynamics in Zimbabwe. Patriarchal ideologies were upheld and reinforced, women were relegated to domestic roles and were considered inferior to men. As the colonial state seized authority, women endured institutional and legal injustices through colonial policies that resulted in the systematic exclusion and control of African women.

Moreover, colonialism ushered in the capitalist economic system that significantly transformed traditional economic roles and family structures of African societies. As the chapter progresses it explores the effects of the capitalist economy on African women. It uncovers how African women were systemically assigned to subordinate positions, yet they had historically occupied crucial roles in gold mining, agricultural production, alluvial gold panning, and trading. The migrant labor system introduced by the capitalist economy often excluded women from emerging sectors of the economy. Consequently, in colonial Zimbabwe existing gender inequalities were exacerbated by the capitalist economic system, bolstering patriarchal norms that restricted their economic independence and social status.

The chapter then turns its attention to key colonial policies including customary law, the 1923 constitution, Natives Affairs Act of 1927, and the 1936 Native Registration Act focusing on the impact they had on African women. Although seemingly these laws were intended for governance and to maintain social order, they ironically emerged as instruments of injustice that excluded and sought to control African women. In order to provide a holistic perspective, the chapter delves into how colonial and indigenous patriarchal structures of power converged to sideline women in colonial Zimbabwe, showing how they reinforced and transformed one another. Finally, the chapter illustrates the different ways that women resisted the oppressive forces of patriarchy. Regardless, of the difficult circumstances against them, African women in colonial Zimbabwe displayed immense strength and perseverance, affirming their agency and challenging the status quo.

4.2 Gender dynamics in precolonial Africa

Gender is central to our understanding of identity (Freud, 1977). It is in this context that Mama (2001:69) asserts “all identities are gendered, perhaps dangerously so”. Scholarship on precolonial African gender history suggests that gender in its multiple manifestations was a pivotal principle in the organization of African societies. Zeleza (1993:99) comments that “the day of gender-neutral history...is still some way off”. Then again there is scholarship that disregards the relevance of gender in precolonial African societies. Also, in their narratives of identity and nationalism, some mainstream postcolonial theorists have not engaged with questions of gender. Although it is necessary to think about gender historically, it is important not to allow the shaping of the texture of the account to fall through the cracks of a homogenous analysis of gender.

Africa is situated within an historical context of diverse gendered identities, experiences, ideologies and social relations. As noted by Mama (1997:69) “changes in African gender relations have been so profound that they may well have been one of the most dramatic sites of struggle and change”. Extensive and diverse, different African geographical locations had specific political, economic and social structures, which notably shaped the experiences of women in each region. Hence, a complete historical analysis of gender dynamics in Africa requires that we take into account these variations starting from the precolonial period so as to avoid a distorted and generalized view of gender relations in Africa. Moreover, by examining the lives of women in different geographical locations, we are able to better comprehend how other intersecting identities such as ethnicity, class, status, and age determined gender roles and expectations. Historians of gender using historical sources, archaeology and architecture, suggest that gendered themes in precolonial African history were characterized by intersections of analytical categories including gender, age, class and status (Schoenbrun, 2006:249). These set of overlapping categories were central to the historical making of gender and performance of gender.

It is imperative to deeply reflect on the origins of gendered categories and to examine how the concept of ‘gender’ is reinforced by its own history, meanings and conceptual roles, as stated by scholars like Oyewumi (1997) and Amadiume (1997). This helps to recognize the significant role that power structures play in shaping gender and the intersectionality of gender with other forms of structural identities such as race, class, and sexuality. It is relevant for my research study as it is in line with the argument this study makes, that is situating gender within a historical and social context is crucial for dismantling and transforming oppressive systems.

While it is inconceivable to study gender in isolation, gender is one of the many analytical categories.

For a gender analysis to be integrated in African political history, there is the need to uncover and reconstruct women's lives, struggles and contributions. But in order to make that possible, "...some reference points of pre-colonial gender relations have to be known" (Geisler, 2004:18). Women have had differing experiences in precolonial Africa in relation to gender politics, resulting in "conflicting interpretations" (Geisler, 2004:18). In some parts of the continent, women's political and economic power was greatly limited by patriarchal control (Kinsman, 1983; Seidman, 1984; Strobel, 1979). Yet, "...many others awarded women clearly defined and accepted political roles which permitted them to wield power despite fairly minimal authority" (Parpat, 1989:210).

In precolonial Southern Africa, it appears to be the case that women played significant roles that were not only limited to the domestic sphere and that they were not necessarily systematically oppressed, but were instead served in influential roles in religion, politics and production (Becker, 2019; Moagi and Mthombeni, 2020). They extensively engaged in the public sphere; in religion as prophets, rainmakers and seers; and they also participated in politics as regents, queen mothers and princesses (Becker, 2019; Moagi and Mthombeni, 2020). Moagi and Mthombeni (2020) argue that rigid gender division of labour did not exist in precolonial Southern Africa as women could undertake tasks that would have been deemed suitable for their male counterparts and often the duties of both sexes were complementary. The argument put forward by Moagi and Mthombeni (2020) counters the narrative of the political, economic and social spheres being exclusively dominated by men in precolonial African societies.

It is worth noting that precolonial gender and state formation was a complex historical process. Musisi (1991:753-786) illustrates this complexity when she examines the traditional kingdom of Buganda in East Africa during the period from the thirteenth to the nineteenth centuries. She analyses 'elite polygyny' and uses the term to refer to the practice of one man being married to more than four wives at the same time with a particular focus on the elite class. (Musisi, 1991:758). She argues that elite polygyny played a crucial role in the formation and development of Buganda state. In analyzing the intersection of gender, power and sexuality, Musisi highlights how through elite polygyny, elite men forged political alliances, solidified their social status, and enhanced their economic power.

It is illustrated that ‘polygyny’ was also a fundamental component of the intersecting processes of state, gender and class formation. The significance of this discussion in the article is that it sheds light on how the interaction of these patron-client relationships with patriarchy resulted in differential experiences amongst women. Musisi (1991) argues that elite polygyny conferred elite women with specific advantages such as having accessibility to wealth and security, hence stratifying women within the Buganda society. However, most women but not all women experienced exclusion from “direct involvement” in political processes. Yet the Bakembuga elite wives serve as an example of the women having agency in political processes within the polygynous system in the Kingdom of Buganda. In their capacity as wives in political alliances they “played an important role at the state level in balancing internal and regional politics. The Bakembuga became not only the mother of kings but kingmakers as well” (Musisi, 1991:786).

Sudarkasa (1986:91-103) addresses the question of ‘status of women’ in multiple African societies. She notes the different characteristics that some scholars have ascribed to African women including being described as “jural minors” whose guardians have been men particularly their fathers and husbands. Yet others have emphasized and recognized the agency and independence of women in African societies. Using the Yoruba in Nigeria and West Africa (Ibo, Tallensi and Ashanti), Sudarkasa (1986:91) argues that during the precolonial era women were prominent in what she terms “high places”. Women played various roles in the political, economic and social aspects of their societies as “queen- mothers; queen-sisters; princesses, chiefs, and holders of other offices in towns and villages; occasional warriors” and were also farmers, traders or craft producers (Sudarkasa, 1986:91). In African societies, the scope of responsibilities of women and men was designated along the lines of separability and complementarity (Paulme, 1963:1-16). Complementarity is a key component of African feminist perspectives in the context of the history of precolonial Africa. To challenge the idea that patriarchal gender relations are an inherent characteristic of African society, African feminist perspectives often draw from historical accounts of precolonial African societies. They argue that existing gender dynamics were disrupted by colonialism, introducing patriarchal structures that oppressed women and diminished their influence.

Sudarkasa (1986) uses data to examine the linkage between gender and status in West Africa and other African societies to advance her assertion that relationships between women and men were both hierarchical and non-hierarchical. She notes “In West Africa, as in most parts of the continent, the three basic kin groups to which females and males belong are (1) corporate unilineal descent groups, which we term lineages; (2) domiciled extended families made up of certain lineage members and their spouses and dependent children; and (3) conjugally based

family units which are subdivisions of the extended family and within which procreation and primary responsibilities for socialization rest” (Sudarkasa, 1986:95). In this context, both African women and men have rights independent from each other and also specific obligations. Yet with respect to patrilineages, especially senior women are involved in conversations pertaining to lineage affairs but are excluded from occupying formal positions of leadership.

In relation to matrilineages, women and men occupied positions of leadership and wielded equivalent authority. In view of interpersonal relations, seniority regulated both matrilineages and patrilineages “by seniority as determined by order of birth rather than by gender” (Sudarkasa, 1986:95). In her paper Sudarkasa (1986) also briefly examines African families and kinship groups, and points to that “male gender predictably calls forth deferential behavior only within the conjugal relationship. The case of woman-to-woman marriage demonstrates, however, that male gender does not exclusively determine entry into the husband role, which more authoritative of the two conjugal roles” (Sudarkasa, 1986:98). The paper concludes that in most African societies the relationship between particular female and male roles was “neutral” and complementary in nature instead of one of “superordination/subordination” (Sudarkasa, 1986:101).

Similarly, in *The Invention of Women*, Oyeronke Oyewumi (1997), as previously discussed in chapter two in her historical linguistic and cultural examination of the Yoruba society, asserts that imposed and dominant Western perspectives and categories have advanced distorted assumptions regarding the importance of gender in creating a hierarchy between women and men in precolonial African societies. On the contrary, their sexes “did not privilege them to any social positions and similarly did not jeopardize their access” (Oyewumi, 1997:78). From this perspective, it is suggested that gender was insignificant in precolonial societies, and the category women was non-existent. Consistent with some scholarship on African gender history, Oyewumi (1997) maintains that social identity amongst the Yoruba was essentially relational, mutable, contextual, and mostly determined by seniority. Nonetheless, it is important to emphasize that Oyewumi's (1997) analysis cannot be generalized to other parts of the African continent because of its varied cultural contexts.

In her article, *Confronting the Politics of Nonconforming Sexualities in Africa* (2013), Sylvia Tamale notes that in precolonial African societies the common form of sexuality was heterosexuality, where fertility and reproduction were venerated, however same-sex partnerships also existed. The relevance of this article for this study is that it acknowledges and recognizes diverse sexualities in historical contexts, challenging our narratives about gender

identity in precolonial Africa. It provides understanding on how gender identity was conceptualized in different African societies, which contrary to what is commonly believed, was rather fluid and complex. In advancing her argument Tamale (2013) cites historical and anthropological scholarship to illustrate that homosexuality existed in precolonial Africa. Additionally, she shows how the *mudoko dako* or “effeminate male” from the Langi of northern Uganda were regarded as women (Tamale, 2013:35). Again, as an example she highlights that king Mwanga who hailed from the kingdom of Buganda, was gay and that “it was an open secret” (Tamale, 2013:35). As such, she insists that “while homosexuality may have been frowned upon in precolonial Africa, it was not criminalized” (Tamale, 2013:35).

To further prove the existence of homosexual relations in precolonial African societies, she notes the existence of terminologies in African languages to characterize same sex partnerships. Some of the few examples of terms used to describe same sex relationships include *inkotshane* in southern African Shangaan communities, *motsoalle* amongst the Basotho, and *gor-digen* in Senegal among the Wolof (Epprecht 2008; Kendall 1998; Murray & Roscoe, 1998:107 as cited in Tamale, 2013). In other parts of Africa, “adolescent herding boys who spent hours in the fields on their own often explored their sexuality...(referred to as *maotoane* in Sesotho, *hlobonga* among the Zulu, *ukumetsha* among the Xhosa, and *gangisa* among the Shangaan)” (Tamale, 2013:35).

There were other various activities associated with same-sex sexual relations. These comprise “(1) activities engaged in for the purpose of spiritual rearmament among... the Azande in Sudan and the DRC, the Nupe in Nigeria, and the Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi; (2) ritual activities to guarantee bountiful crop yields and hunting, good health, and protection from evil spirits, as practiced in Angola and Namibia by a caste of male diviners (known as *zvibanda*, *chibados*, *quimbanda*, *gangas*, and *kibambaa*) who were believed to carry powerful female spirits that they would pass on to fellow men...; (3) woman-to-woman marriages entered into for reproductive, economic, and diplomatic reasons - for example, among the Nandi and Kiisi of Kenya, the Igbo of Nigeria, the Nuer of Sudan, and the Kuria of Tanzania;...” (Tamale, 2013: 35-36).

The examples I have given reveal that in precolonial African societies gender identity was fluid. Across most African societies gender was not exclusively viewed in binary terms nor did anatomical sex correspond to gender identity. Yet “the manner in which identity and power are configured by gender in postcolonial African states today is mediated by complicated gender politics” (Tamale, 2001:69).

My argument in this section is that women in precolonial Africa were not universally oppressed and that gender roles were shaped by intersecting identities. Across different geographical locations on the continent, women's experiences were diverse and complex. This challenges the prevailing assumption that women were generally oppressed in precolonial Africa, which results frequently in a misleading and generalized conception of gender relations. The roles that women played stretched outside the domestic sphere. For instance, in politics women served as mothers, queens, regents and princesses. As religious figures, women served as rainmakers, prophets and seers. As a result, hierarchical and oppressive gender relations were not always the case, rather in their respective societies women had agency and power.

4.3 Gender dynamics in colonial Africa

Historical evidence reveals that colonialism was a gendered process in nature that manipulated the pre-existing cultural, social, economic and political life of African societies (Geisler, 2004). Oppressive colonial gender ideologies had adverse consequences for gender relations, leaving African women in a vulnerable position. The gendered structure of the colonial state was believed to have substantially cut off the influence and authority that African women wielded in precolonial African societies (Geisler, 2004:18). Furthermore, “the colonial state and the capitalist penetration of kin-based modes of production changed what was there” hence deepening, entrenching and reinforcing, and creating “public/private dichotomies” (Geisler, 2004:18).

Multiple scholars have made the argument that the colonial state developed mechanisms to restrict the mobility and autonomy of African women by subjecting them to legislation controls that reinforced patriarchal and colonial power structures. Some of the legislative measures included pass laws, marriage laws, labour laws, curfew laws and prostitution laws (Parpart, 1986; Schmidt, 1991; Mama, 1987).

Restricted land ownership and labour power were usually connected to the loss of political influence (Akinola, 2018). The primary targets of colonial development policies were men as colonial authorities viewed them as the agricultural workforce of Africa. When land titles were redistributed, they were given to those men who were regarded as “legitimate” heads of households (Parpart, 1986:4). As examples, in Mazabuka, Zambia, it is documented that women forfeited both political and economic influence during the colonial era (Wright, 1981 as cited in Parpart, 1986). Also, in Western Kenya, women's access to land was restricted by new property laws. In Zimbabwe (to be discussed in depth in the following sections) and South

Africa, there were instances where land that belonged to women was transferred to men (Boserup, 1970 as cited in Parpart, 1986).

Colonial policies marginalized women in the distribution of financing and relevant agricultural services, and regarding ownership of land and production equipment, they prioritized men over women farmers (Staudt, 1989:75; McCall, 1987; Bergman, 1985). African women gradually forfeited their rights to land, ownership over produce and subsequently their own work as they worked unpaid in their husbands' or kins' cash crops fields. These developments enabled African men to assert their dominance over African women. Admittedly, this consequently eroded women's control as their production role increased. The ideology which regarded the domestic sphere as the appropriate place for women cemented this loss of control (Geisler, 2004:19).

Women farmers were dismissed as primarily being interested in subsistence farming. Even under such circumstance, of not being able to reap the profits of the cash crops they frequently grew, they continued being food producers and performing domestic chores for the family (Parpart, 1986). While during the colonial period women were shielded by traditional structures, it was to a limited extent as rural living increasingly became burdensome. Patriarchal oppression, rural toil and rumours of social and economic opportunities in the cities, resulted in the relocation of many women to the urban areas. Most women recognized the necessity of some economic independence. In such circumstances, control over African women became a matter of interest to colonial administrations, an interest which seemingly corresponded with that of African men (Parpart, 1986).

Amina Mama (1997) addresses the exclusion of women from the administrative, political and economic structures and from the wage economic systems. In most parts of Africa, the colonial administration intentionally restricted the mobility of African women through the introduction of the wage and migrant labour economy. African women were required to continue living and practising subsistence farming in the rural areas, when African men migrated to urban areas to work in mines. Mama (1997:52) notes that “ the presence of women in the colonial towns was viewed with immense suspicion. Measures taken to remove women from the urban areas included periodic round-ups and forcible deportations, often carried out with connivance of elderly African men, who felt frustrated by what they saw as a loss of control over their homesteads”.

Although, some women also migrated to towns due to various reasons, the colonial administration excluded them from wage labour specifically in the formal sector of the

economy. Women were propelled into the informal sector where they were market traders, domestic servants, and sex workers (Aderinto, 2014; Mgbako, 2019). Colonial officials impeded the advancement of women by restricting them from accessing educational opportunities and gainful employment. Women were seldom suitable for wage labour and less likely qualified for professional jobs with the exception of teaching and nursing.

In Southern Africa, for example, the legislating of what was regarded customary law in British colonies provided rural elders a forum to promote their misconceived views of “tradition” that accommodated their personal interests and those of the British administration (Geisler, 2004:20). The legislation of the actual and fabricated customary African law has been described “the most effective way in which African men could exert influence and power in the colonial polity” (Chanock, 1985 as cited in Geisler, 2004:20). The autonomy of women was significantly diminished as a consequence of marriage and divorce registry, the prioritization of patrilineal above matrilineal inheritance laws and increasing marriage payment (known as *lobola*) that reflected the new capitalist value systems (Geisler, 2004:20).

However, women contested and retaliated against such assaults on their political and economic freedoms. Especially those who were able to remain in urban areas managed to transform colonial paternalism to their benefit. Women were “by no means passive pawns in patriarchal struggles over them” (Geisler, 2004:20), rather “they burst onto the scene of Africa’s modernity, putting down their mark” (Bayart, 1993:113). As a result of their individual and collective demonstrations, “some women achieved economic prosperity and many more won economic autonomy, even if minimal” (Parpart, 1986:7). Those who worked in prostitution and beer brewing in urban areas, protested at municipal beer-halls when colonial administrations in some Southern and Eastern African towns took over beer-brewing in an attempt to boost municipal revenue (Schimdt, 1992: 94). Thus, it is important to acknowledge and regard their agency.

Moreover, colonial patriarchy attempted to domesticate African women by imposing the “Victorian ideology of domesticity” (Mama, 1997:52). African women were viewed as uncivilized, untamed, and uncontrollable; it was believed that they were in need of moral, religious and cultural education. African women were encouraged to attend mission schools to acquire “civilized femininity” skills including sewing, baking, and interior decorating (Mama, 1997; Ejikeme, 2011).

“Civilized” standards of femininity were imposed on African women including codes of behaviour, dress codes and moral codes. Some of the feminine behaviours which African

women were expected to exhibit to be considered “suitable wives” included being submissive, docile and obedient “to those African men who performed administrative roles in the colonial state” (Mama, 1997:52). The imposed norms, values and expectations on the bodies and lives of African women, was one of the ways in which colonial patriarchs asserted the dominance of European moral, religious and cultural values over African societies.

Similarly, in her examination of Robert Baum’s *West Africa’s Women of God*, Marouan (2018) illustrates how colonial authority aimed to domesticate African women, by systemically endeavouring to diminish African women’s leadership and prophetic capabilities, restricting them to the private space, and imposing traditional gender roles. Yet, until then, African women had been, and still, often continued to be, prophetic figures and state leaders, dominating both the political and religious landscapes in precolonial and colonial periods (Chaibou, 1994).

Other scholars have indicated how the colonial state and missionaries colluded by encouraging domestic skills and knowledge, deeming them necessary for African women, highlighting how the colonial state and missionaries shared the perspective that re-educating African women and monitoring the lives of African families were essential to the establishment of ‘civilized’ households that emulated Christian values (Hunt, 1990; Denzer, 1989; Musisi, 1992; and Yates, 1983). In view of this, colonial governments and missionaries, together, significantly remodelled the domestic domain of the colonized across the continent.

In essence, the colonial state played an active role in constructing gender hierarchies and sustaining existing indigenous gender hierarchies. Men were granted authority and valued, whereas women were subordinated, thus creating a hierarchal dichotomy. African women, in many instances, effectively resisted colonial and patriarchal tyranny. Significantly, many eventually participated as political activists and combatants during nationalist struggles against colonial administrations, as will be discussed in the next section. However, the enforced colonial gender hierarchies and the regarding of a majority of women’s issues in the domestic sphere as apolitical “came to be institutionalized in nationalist politics and thereafter in the modern African states” (Geisler, 2004:22).

4.4 Gender and anticolonial struggles in Africa

The 1950s and 1960s witnessed a rise in anticolonial struggles in African countries in West, East, Southern and Central Africa. Armed struggles for independence took place in colonies including Zimbabwe, Kenya, Algeria, Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Namibia and South Africa.

Colonialism was brutalizing, degrading and domesticating to African women. Women were dishonoured not merely as colonial subjects but just as well in specific gendered ways. They were entirely shut out from the political structures and colonial administration. Inevitably, women played significant roles during anticolonial struggles. They actively took part in nationalist struggles as political activists, combatants and additional supporting roles. Yet “on many occasions they took independent action in defense of their own interests as women” (Mama, 1997:54).

Though the gendered nature of the colonial state has been given much attention, it is equally important to consider the gender relations within nationalist movements. The gender norms entrenched in the practice of warfare are framed by the enforced stereotypes about gender during recruitment for armed conflict, which influences the dynamic of armed conflict. The knowledge that gender is “an organising principle for social life” helps reveal that through the practice of warfare, gender “is made and remade” (Kronsell and Svedberg, 2011:10).

In her examination of the experiences of African women who engaged in anticolonial armed struggles, Ndhlovu (2019:21) points to the reality that “gender perceptions were shifted during the liberation war as some women took on combat and other significant roles that were traditionally aligned to men” but suitably asks “on whose terms?”. However, to increase our understanding of the continuing and entrenchment of gendered “colonial disempowerment” (Geisler, 2004:23), we need to examine “the masculinity of many nationalist discourses” (Mama, 1997:54).

African women were reduced to symbols that could be recruited as mothers of the nation, by African inspired nationalists who were rallying support for the nationalist cause. In South Africa, Cock (1991:182) writes that the African National Congress (ANC) garnered support from women by esteeming “their socially assigned roles as nurturing mothers”. In Namibia, Soiri (1996) illustrates the South West African Peoples Organisation (SWAPO) mobilized women by praising their capabilities as “mothers”, “wives”, and “sisters”. Thus, it is noteworthy that “patriarchal revolutionary strategies were adopted by nationalists, therefore patriarchal structures that profited men were reinforced in the participation of women in the anti-colonial struggle” (Ndhlovu, 2019:24).

The identities of women were constructed using gendered roles during recruitment therefore reinforcing “the gender order of male supremacy and female subordination” (Kronsell and Svedberg, 2011:15). Women find themselves in a position of vulnerability when they are mobilized by exploiting their capacity their roles as mothers, which reinforces male authority

over women (Ndhlovu, 2019). Cockburn (2004:44) usefully reminds us that such a “power imbalance of gender relations in most (if not all) societies generates cultures of masculinity prone to violence”.

What, then, were the terms that structured the participation of women in anticolonial struggles? The participation of women in anticolonial struggles, “with notably exceptions, happened largely on terms set by men” and “women’s specific interests were subordinated under nationalist agendas” (Geisler, 2004:23). Yet, in the history of anticolonial struggles, African women are among the “bravest” and “fierce” combatants, regardless, “their experiences should not be romanticized as this might not adequately give an account of their lived realities” (Ndhlovu, 2019:27). Their participation was constructed in such a way that echoed “how the needs of the war system are sustained by gender norms” (Ndhlovu, 2019:27). Having broadly examined the gender dynamics in precolonial and colonial Africa, I will now narrow my focus to Zimbabwe to provide a detailed understanding of how these dynamics adapted to the nation’s historical context.

4.5 The historical contexts of gender in Zimbabwe during the precolonial and colonial eras

The history of gender in Zimbabwe needs to be situated within three different legacies, the precolonial, colonial and the armed struggle. Each distinct historical period has different implications for gender relations and “affect the social institutions that frame women’s lives” (Seidman, 1984:421).

Before I begin examining gender in precolonial Zimbabwe, it is pertinent to highlight that scholarship on gender dynamics in the precolonial era is notably scant, particularly accounts of women. Certainly, some scholars have made headway in advancing scholarship and making women visible in Zimbabwe’s narratives of precolonial history. Yet, with regard to women during the precolonial era, existing research on Zimbabwe’s diverse ethnic groups remains uneven. Most precolonial research in Zimbabwe draws its data from Shona historical sources. Ethnic minorities are almost entirely disregarded with the exception of Ndebele women who belong to the largest minority; however, they are still scantily represented in precolonial historical accounts.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2005) provides a critical analysis of the missing voices of women from historical sources in the context of Zimbabwe. As a starting point, he suggests that it is imperative “to engage the power relations...informing historical accounts and records of the

past” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2005:2). He calls us to recognize “the prevailing politics and power configurations” framing the ideological knowledge of those who produce or narrate the precolonial history of Zimbabwe (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2005:2). As stated by Gallagher, Lubelska and Ryan (2001:6), “If relations of power and inequality determine whose voice and opinions are recorded, then they also determine who has power to speak on behalf of others, who has access to resources which aid the making of history, who is marginalised and is silenced”.

Mainstream precolonial historical accounts in Zimbabwe were mainly produced, pioneered and dominated by male scholars. It is within such a context that Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2001:4) notes that “in addressing the question of women’s relationship to a hegemonically masculinist social order in pre-colonial Zimbabwe, there is a need to tackle issues as the identity (gender) of the producers of the dominant knowledge as well as their perspectival orientation”. The dominant narratives of Zimbabwe’s precolonial past celebrated male activities and subordinated female voices. Schmidt (1996:1) dubs such inclinations “a pattern of neglect”.

The precolonial history of Zimbabwe was narrated as a story where “male activities were considered important, particularly participation in warfare, role in state formation, and expansion of empires” here women were rarely attributed in these narratives (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2001:4). Those women who were attributed in these accounts “were squeezed into parameters of existing male histories” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2001:4). For example, detailed outlines of colonial history in Zimbabwe mention women in passing, and those included are mostly the wives of chiefs, spirit mediums, queens and prophetesses who are used to validate precolonial political history. As such, adding key women to men’s historical accounts is not sufficient representation of the power women yielded in precolonial era. Those mentioned as wives, mothers and daughters are “defined in terms of their relationship to men” and those featured as queens, great warriors, prophetesses and spirit mediums are “masculinised into ‘honorary males’” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2001:7). In short, the women included in these masculine historical narratives are misrepresented and an overwhelming majority of ordinary women lack representation.

Nonetheless, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2001) notes that historians and sociologists who focus on women studies have made insightful contributions to our understanding of the precolonial and colonial history of women in Zimbabwe, through a gendered perspective. As a result, women are not only made visible, but their contributions as ‘actors’ and ‘agents’ are better understood. Regardless, it is necessary to continuously interrogate “the relationship between power and knowledge, noting that the archive itself and existing historical narratives are a form of

knowledge reflecting particular power configurations” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2001:10). As previously mentioned, at the present, there is limited historical academic research that details the lives of Zimbabwe’s precolonial women belonging to ethnic minorities. Therefore, in this discussion, I was compelled to perhaps rely too heavily on evidence from Shona sources.

Agriculture was the basis of both the Ndebele and Shona economies. In reference to the Shona economy, Schmidt (1988:50) writes that those economic activities such as “hunting and gathering, the herding of livestock, mining manufacturing, and trade, were subordinate to agricultural production”. With regards to the gender division of labour, women were responsible for production and reproduction including the production of food and of children. There was an increase of men’s labour at particular phases in the agricultural cycle, usually when the rainy season ended. Their duty was to prepare and clear the fields in readiness for a new cycle of planting (Schmidt, 1988:51).

Yet, both in precolonial Ndebele and Shona economies land was not owned. Rather, it was retained and distributed by the male patrilineage chief (Peters and Peters, 1998:186). The chief of the patrilineage “allocated land to the headmen, who, in turn, held all village lands in the family name and distributed land as necessary to male members of the lineage and, perhaps, with consent of the chief, to male non-lineage members” (Peters and Peters, 1998:186). Although women had access to land, it was structured by their duties in the gendered division of labour. As such, they were given rights to cultivate the land for subsistence and the land remained under their temporary control as wives and daughters. Regardless, women only had “access to the means of production” (Seidman, 1984:421), and “did not control the means of production in agriculture...but instead provided much of the labour required” (Cheater, 1986:66). In addition to their agricultural duties, women were responsible for domestic maintenance including the caring and education of children, cooking, cleaning, and collection of firewood and water. (Schmidt, 1988; Seidman, 1986).

Similarly to Seidman (1994:421), who argues that “women had almost no formal authority outside the home”, Cheater (1986:67) affirms “the only role from which women were systemically excluded was that of *formal* politico-jural authority which, among other functions, controlled the allocation of land”. Over time female authority increased on the basis on seniority especially after acquiring grandchildren, yet the influence remained confined within the private domain. At the same time, some women wielded religious and political authority through spirit mediumship. Spirit mediums in this context were individuals used as mediums for ancestral spirits. Cheater (1986:69) notes that spirit mediums were “the defenders of

religious tradition ... and were paradoxically in a position to define and, therefore change that tradition ... because religious authority overrode and to some extent determined the secular political authority normally wielded by man”. As a result, this circumvented and challenged normative gender structures.

According to Schmidt (1988:54), at the end of the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century, both Shona women and men hunted. Women also participated in gold mining, washing and alluvial gold panning. Schmidt (1988:55) notes that “on many occasions only women were involved in the work”. Through trade with the Portuguese, items such as bracelets, beads, clothing, guns, gun powder and cash were exchanged for gold. Therefore “the production of gold created a surplus the acquisition not only of luxury goods, but also guns and ammunition, important factors in the Shona Risings against the British in 1896-1897 (Schmidt, 1988:56). Moreover, Shona women were also highly esteemed artisans who dominated the trades of salt production, beer brewing, herbalism, and midwifery (Cheater, 1986: 67; Schmidt, 1988:56).

Although scholarly evidence suggests that structurally Shona women in precolonial Zimbabwe were subordinate to men, it also illustrates that in both the private and public spheres, the structures that subordinated women eventually were subject to dispute, negotiation and transformation (Schmidt 1988; 1992). Crucially, the roles they played beyond the domestic, reflect fluidities and how women negotiated their marginalization, creating viable African livelihoods. Fundamentally, dynamic gender constructions thus characterized precolonial Zimbabwe. Indeed, Zimbabwe’s precolonial gender relations cannot be idealized but it should be pointed out that they had agency and subtle yet effectual authority. There are more women’s voices to be recovered from the past. It within this context that Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2005:14) emphasizes the “urgent need to grapple with the fundamental questions about the epistemological structures of power and cultural foundations of domination that continue to overshadow and decentre the voice of women”.

4.6 The effects of the capitalist economic system on the lives of African women

The relevance of the capitalist economic system to the gender question is due to its interconnection with state formation, the political system and the effect it had on African communities during and postcolonial. When examined from a decolonial feminist perspective, these intersections turn out to be crucial in understanding the historical injustices that African women have encountered. Colonialism played a major role in influencing gender dynamics, state formation and political systems in Africa, shaping power structures.. The governance

structures imposed during the colonial era largely excluded women in political, economic and social spheres hence reinforcing gender inequalities. By using a decolonial feminist perspective, we acknowledge the necessity and urgency of addressing the legacy of colonialism and understanding its postcolonial impact on African women. This will help in advancing genuine gender transformation and gender justice.

In Zimbabwe, the emerging capitalist economic system transformed “the relationships between the Ndebele pastoral and the Shona peasant mode of production” and had profound consequences for the two communities (Weinrich, 1979:15). The economic landscape was completely altered by the emerging capitalist economic system, reducing most of independent pastoralists and peasant producers to become migrant wage laborers to survive. However, this was accomplished by the use of both economic and military forces. Mutual provocations resulted in armed conflict and an uprising.

Both the Shona and Ndebele had endured land alienation resulting in a coordinated uprising for independence. As Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009:39) points out, “the 1890s also saw both Ndebele and the Shona reacting violently to the provocative interventions of early colonial rule in what became known as the Ndebele-Shona Rising of 1896-97: the *First Chimurenga* or *Umvukela Wokuqala*”. However, they were defeated, and as a consequence the bedrock of the Ndebele’s pastoral mode of production was undermined, as settlers took over their land and cattle (Weinrich, 1979:16). Although they practiced agriculture, the produce could not sustain their families and over time Ndebele men became wage laborers, leaving a majority of women in impoverished rural areas.

However, for the Shona people, the traditional economy disintegrated at a slower rate. They became peasant producers as the mines developed by settlers became was a market for their produce. Commenting on the Goromonzi district, Schmidt (1992:7) argues that “women were central to the formation of the peasantries that took root in Southern Rhodesia during the first three decades of colonial rule”. African women sold food and beer to migrant workers on the mines, urban dwellers and traders. The profit from their agricultural products sustained their households and paid tax. Schmidt (1992:7) reminds us that “Shona women, as the primary agricultural producers, played a dominant role in peasant response to market opportunities” however, “despite women’s central role in the formation and early prosperity of African peasantries in Goromonzi and elsewhere, their status declined over the course of the colonial period”.

Capitalist interests sabotaged peasant production as it led to capitalist agriculture that required cheap labour. The then Southern Rhodesia was scarce in minerals as a result agriculture was regarded the second best “money maker” alternative for white settlers (Weinrich, 1979:16). Efficient techniques of cultivation were employed, causing small scale producers to move out of the market. Hence the Shona became semi-proletarians and labour migrants, though at varying levels as the Ndebele.

The colonial state rendered African women irrelevant in different ways. Hunting and gathering was no longer allowed as the settlers occupied and made farms out of most of the common forests. Administrative restrictions were placed on hunting and overtime forests were cleared by settlers for firewood as a result limiting the roles that women played in the traditional economy (Schmidt, 1988:79). Moreover, alluvial gold trade with the Portuguese was also heavily obstructed by administrative restrictions, further reducing the economic activities of Shona women.

Besides, colonial authorities increased the importation of European goods hence limiting from the market African -produced goods. Instead, “in order to meet their cash needs”, Africans were “encouraged to offer themselves up for wage employment” (Schmidt, 1992:79). As a result, African women artisans suffered a heavy blow. The aim was to destroy African industries. Schmidt (1992:79) notes “because the economic activities that disappeared were not replaced by others of comparable value, the economic position of Shona women was severely weakened during the colonial era”.

Although access to economic resources was limited to all Africans through colonial policies, the limitation to access was structured in a manner that differed for men and women (Seidman, 1984:425). As a result of wage employment, a considerable number of young men left their homesteads, intensifying the overload of work carried by rural women. The migrant labour system physically separated black women and men. For work purposes, men temporarily migrated to towns and farms, leaving black African women in eroded and overcrowded Tribal Trust Lands. The role of women included domestic work, subsistence agriculture and generally taking care of the children and the aged. The family was sustained by women’s subsistence agriculture considering that the wages employers paid in mines and farms were below the family wage rather and were only enough for a single wage labourer (Seidman, 1984). The settlers had their own views on what it meant to be a woman and where their proper place was, mirroring the nineteenth century British society. Subsequently, the colonial administrators intentionally formulated policies that situated African women as dependents of their fathers,

husbands and brothers. The role that women played as producers in the precolonial period changed, as colonial policy makers had a tendency to treat women essentially as mothers, whose appropriate role was within the domestic sphere or private sphere whilst their husbands financially sustained the family (Seidman, 1984:422).

The intersection of capitalist and gender hierarchies influenced the migrant labour system in Zimbabwe. Although both women and men contributed to the capital accumulation process, cheap labour was required, yet “gender ideologies meant it was men, not women who were directly exploited...women’s labour generally remained unpaid (Seidman, 1984:424). Women were delegated domestic roles whilst men were encouraged to participate in the labor migrant system. Hence, prevailing gender hierarchies were perpetuated. Acknowledging that the experiences of migrant workers in Zimbabwe during the colonial era were shaped by the interconnectedness of capitalist and gender structures is crucial to our understanding of the role of the labor migrant system in entrenching gender inequalities.

4.7 Colonial policies as instruments of control and exclusion in Zimbabwe

In understanding the current political landscape in Zimbabwe, an analysis of colonial policies is of utmost importance. The historical legacy of colonialism has certainly influenced Zimbabwe’s development, framing its social structures, institutions and governance. By examining the colonial past, my study seeks to put into perspective the contemporary issues that Zimbabwe is grappling with, uncovering the postcolonial effects of colonial policies. Policies in colonial Zimbabwe had an unfavourable impact on African women, contributing in influencing their political, economic and social reality during the colonial era. In this section, I will be discussing the impact and relevance of key colonial policies, including Customary law, the 1923 constitution, Natives Affairs Act of 1927, Pass laws, and the 1936 Native Registration Act. There are many policies that impacted African men and the different aspects of the lives of African women. While during the colonial era there were no explicit gender policies, here I limit my examination to those colonial policies that had gender implications and influenced gender dynamics in Zimbabwe’s historical context, reinforcing the systematic exclusion and control of African women.

4.7.1 Customary law

In colonial Zimbabwe, customary law was developed and framed by an amalgamation of indigenous African customs and colonial legal structures. The British South Africa Company (BSAC) after establishing control, intended to govern Southern Rhodesia in such a way that

accommodated both African customary law and colonial legal principles. Initially, justice was administered using Native Commissioners who implemented African customary law through the Native Affairs Department. African customary law was acknowledged as a legal system. For Africans, this was intended to safeguard a certain level of their legal authority, cultural and traditional customs while imposing on them colonial authority.

Yet, African practices were to be recognized to the extent that they served the interests of colonial administrators. The Order of Council in 1898 outlined that in civil disputes that involve Africans, the courts of justice “shall be guided by native law so far as that law is not repugnant to natural justice or morality” (Schmidt, 1990:625). The meaning of justice and morality was confined within what the colonial administration deemed “repugnant”. Although the creation of customary law had various impacts, in the study the focus is on the impact it had on gender relations. It must be highlighted that initially during the first three decades (1890-1920), the colonial state and European missionaries encouraged the emancipation of some aspects of African women’s experiences because they considered practices such as forced marriage, child-pledging and polygamy distasteful to European moral standards (Schmidt, 1990:622). Colonial policy makers went as far as passing legislation to outlaw these practices. Women took advantage of the opportunity in the form of rejecting forced marriages, deserting unloved husbands, and fleeing to farms, mines, missions, and towns. This was convenient for and in the interests of colonial capital. For example, the erosion of indigenous powers structures ensured an increase in African labour.

However, the state was forced to reconsider its African policy as a result of various factors such as the need to exercise control and exert influence over societal norms including those pertaining to labour, land, property and marriage. One of the main reasons included the criticism from rural patriarchs who blamed the state for the deviant behaviour of African women. Additionally, Schmidt (1990:623) notes that the catalyst was the “chronic shortages of labour” between 1908-1929 influenced also by the post war recession. In order to appease African senior males including chiefs and headmen, who were complaining about the crisis of women undermining their authority in the rural areas, the colonial state sought to codify and regulate customary law (Ranger, 1983; Seidman, 1984, Cheater, 1986, Schmidt, 1990, Jeater, 2000).

It must be, however, mentioned that the process of codifying and formalizing customary law was influenced by various groups including colonial officials, legal professionals, African male chiefs, headmen and elders. As a result, the new versions of Ndebele and Shona customary law

sought to undermine the freedom experienced by African women under the colonial legal system during the first three decades of colonization. It is at this point that the foundation of the alliance between indigenous and colonial patriarchy is established. Serving as legal advisers to the colonial state, presented African older men with an opportunity to explore new strategies to reclaim their diminishing authority. They established new bases of power using the created customs. Elite African senior men deliberately approved the distorted customary law to serve their personal interests (Ranger, 1983; Schmidt, 1990; Cheater, 1986).

Patriarchal norms were reinforced when customary law was codified. Indigenous practices that were formerly changeable and flexible were transformed into rigid and fixed customs. The newly created ‘customary law’ was significantly prejudiced in favour of male elders. The colonial state passed legislations that restructured African households. These laws sought to reassure African men that women remained under the clutches of their dominance. For example, the legislations transformed African women into ‘permanent legal minors’ under the authority of their fathers, husbands and brothers (Chavunduka, 1979, Ranger, 1983; Schmidt, 1990). They did not have independent access to property or land. The colonial state recognized and acknowledged African women only as far as they were under male control (Mamdani, 1996). Further, polygamy and bride wealth were codified and a marriage registration system was introduced (Ncube, 1987:193-206).

Cheater (1986:77) identifies some of the illusions regarding ‘custom’ during the colonial period and also illustrates the interaction between “the material and ideological” characteristics of the roles and positions of women in society. She notes colonial legislations misrepresented ‘custom’ and its adaptability, resulting in the construction of a ‘social personality’ for African women that placed them at a lower level than men. She states that “this particular ideological construct was also in the interest of Black men” (Cheater, 1986:77). She concludes that it was therefore important that such fallacies and ideological constructions “be dismantled in order that women can participate fully in national reconstruction in the new Zimbabwe” (Cheater, 1986:78).

4.7.2 *The 1923 Constitution*

The 1923 Constitution marked the self-government of Southern Rhodesia from the British government, however the British government still had rights and duties “to supervise the manner in which the Rhodesian colony is being run internally and externally” (Mutiti, 1974:259). Although the primary focus of the 1923 Constitution was on the political structure

and governance of the colony, it had indirect effects on African women. For example, it restricted their political participation. Although all individuals over 21 years of age were eligible to vote, the income and property qualifications effectively excluded Africans as they did not meet the financial and property requirements. Mutiti (1974:263) comments that “Rhodesia was well aware that Africans could not reach the same economic level as the European settlers as long as the Government remained under Europeans. If ever the Africans appeared to be nearing the mark required for them to vote, the Government would simply raise the income and property qualifications”. Therefore, for the African population, including African women, the constitution was racially discriminatory.

However, considering that the labour system was not only racially segregated but also gendered, the discrimination experienced by women was structured along the intersection of race and gender. Further, African women were affected by colonialism in varied ways based on region, class, marital status, education level, and age (Schmidt, 1992). Therefore, although the 1923 Constitution was primarily racially discriminatory, it was however situated within a broader colonial context of political, economic and social structures that were discriminatory to African women. Fundamentally, the 1923 Constitution rather than addressing socio-economic and political disadvantages bedevilling the African community especially African women, it perpetuated the existing inequalities and gender hierarchies. Although African men experienced racial subjugation, they could still access economic and political spaces where African women were excluded.

4.7.3 *The Natives Affairs Act of 1927*

One of the key colonial policies that shaped the influence and participation of African women in decision-making and governance processes was The Natives Affairs Act of 1927, implemented through the Native Affairs Department. This was a colonial policy whose objective was to create a structure of governance for African locals which was administered by Native Commissioners and Native Councils (Shutt, 2007). The Natives Affairs Act is relevant for this study because it solidified the consolidation of judicial control by Native Commissioners and Native Councils over African communities. Shutt (2007:661) comments that it granted the Native Commissioners and Native Councils “the judicial powers they had craved”. Although the initial aim of the act was that of upholding social order and providing a system for local administration, it marginalized women voices in decision-making processes. For example, the Native Commissioners were mainly male colonial officials who wielded

power and authority to collect taxes, resolve disputes, implement colonial laws, and regulate the political, social and economic aspects of African communities (Barnes, 1992).

The dominance of men in the positions of authority within these structures of governance resulted in the exclusion of women in significant decision-making positions. As a consequence, gender inequalities were perpetuated and the voices of African women were marginalized in affairs that shaped their lives. Moreover, within African communities patriarchal norms and traditional power structures were reinforced by the Native Affairs Act of 1927. Male chiefs and elders were generally recognized as the main decision-makers and representatives at the local level, further subordinating and sidelining women. (Ranger, 1983; Seidman, 1984, Cheater, 1986, Schmidt, 1990, Shutt, 2007). This resulted in policy and decision-making processes that disregarded their specific concerns and needs.

African women challenged colonial gendered political economic structures by exercising mobility. African women who migrated from rural areas to towns or mines “threatened the social, racial, and cultural boundaries that the European community drew” (Summers, 1996:452). The migration of women to towns from the rural areas “not only threatened the profitability of European enterprises, which were established upon the backs of African women and children as well as African men, but their unauthorized migration posed a direct challenge to the colonial order” Schmidt (1988:80). On the other hand, the mobility of women disregarded the authority of African chiefs and elders as the agents of indirect rule, as a result “...a reassertion of patriarchal control over African women, albeit in new and more drastic forms, was deemed necessary to retain the allegiance of male elders and to guarantee the smooth functioning of the colonial system” (Schmidt, 1988:80).

To restrict the mobility of women and girls, the NAA, under section 51 controlled their movement by criminalizing the violation of orders to return to rural areas by a Native Commissioner or Native Council or rural chief (Barnes, 1992). As a result. “...hundreds of women were charged under the NAA with disobeying the order of an officer...” (Shutt, 2007:662). Concurrent with the state’s legislative initiatives aimed at regulating women’s mobility, different ideological constructions of African women emerged. They were regarded naturally immoral by colonial officials. African women were perceived to have turned to being “defiant and obstinate...often a slave to gross passion, deaf to all reason” (Barnes, 1992:589).

Further, the NAA was utilized in controlling and regulating the sexuality of women. In the 1920s, there was widespread African prostitution specifically in the town of Salisbury. As a consequence, the NAA was weaponized to “deal with prostitutes” as the rise of “venereal

infections from infection from contact with Africans was one of the great phobias of the white population, and the state therefore had to be seen to be doing something to protect the white public health” (Barnes, 1992:600). The regulation of the mobility and sexuality of African women was aimed to restrict their personal freedom and sexual autonomy, and was regarded as a criminal offence against the colonial state.

4.7.4 Pass laws and the 1936 Native Registration Act

Pass laws in urban colonial Zimbabwe were laws that required African people to have passes when travelling around the colony. They regulated the mobility of African people, limiting their access to specific areas and controlling the conditions of their employment. These regulations were mandatory and included details of identity, employment, residence, and tax payment (Seymour, 1961; Barnes, 1997). It was, therefore, an offence to not be in possession of a pass yet “The town pass officer was enabled to refuse to grant any such pass for a variety of reasons...” illustrating the discriminatory and oppressive nature of the pass system (Seymour, 1961:114).

Passes were however formulated and implemented in ways that were gendered. In reflecting on the nature of gender structures in urban colonial Zimbabwe, Barnes (1997) explores the intersection of gender and the pass laws. She describes pass laws as “... a construction at the intersection of nationality, gender, identity, and citizenship” (Barnes, 1997:59). She notes that in urban colonial Zimbabwe the stipulations of the pass laws applied initially to African men and boys, exempting African women. Amongst other factors, women were exempted because the colonial political economy had structurally subordinated women on account of being ‘permanent legal minors’ (Ranger, 1983, Chavunduka, 1979, Schmidt, 1990), therefore for the colonial state “women did not qualify for equality” as they were not discriminated equally with men (Barnes, 1997:76). Through the system of pass laws, the majority of women and children were isolated in the rural areas yet there were also other women who lived in towns from the early stages of the development of towns, playing an active role in their development (Seidman, 1984; Jeater, 2000).

Pass laws not only distinguished Europeans from Africans, but they also sought to distinguish the gender difference amongst African people, as a result serving as “markers of race and gender” and also reflecting “gender performativity” (Barnes, 1997:61; Butler, 1990, 2004). Barnes (1997) argues that the implementation and outcomes of the pass laws were significantly

shaped by gender. She points out the ways in which the pass laws promoted the reinforcement of gender identities.

From the early 1920s more women and girls were flocking to towns. For African women in towns, they had “freedom from restrictive parents or in-laws, husbands who were often violent, and the drudgery of agricultural work” (Hungwe, 2006:34). However, African fathers and husbands started complaining to the colonial state about the presence of women in towns with some claiming that their presence had no legitimacy. As a result, urban areas became gendered spaces, where the presence of African men in towns was viewed as normal but for African women being in town was “out of place” (Jeater, 2000:35). African women living towns including Salisbury (now Harare) and Bulawayo were branded prostitutes and “unrespectable”, especially unmarried and independent income earners (Hungwe, 2006:35). Although both African men and women experienced towns as a racialized environment, women however also experienced it as a gendered environment.

As a result of the complaints made by African fathers and husbands, in the early 1930s colonial officials considered ways in which they could exercise “more control” over the mobility of African women (Barnes, 1997:66). It was suggested that extending the pass law system to African women would regulate their mobility, activities and “...assist kraal natives to control their women” (Barnes, 1997:67). The 1936 Natives Registration Act was eventually passed and implemented in 1938, and amongst its many purposes one was to “...to Safeguard Native Society, especially its womankind”. Although the main provision of the act was to restrict the mobility of women, “it did not bring in mandatory registration measures or even traveling passes for women” yet African women living in towns were arrested and harassed by the police (Barnes, 1997:69). It seems for both the colonial state and African rural patriarchs the right place for African women was in the rural areas as evidenced by their construction of town as a gendered space, that reinforced gender inequalities, disadvantaging African women.

4.8 Patriarchal structures and the Zimbabwean colonial state

However, as has been shown by Schmidt (1991), policies enforced by the colonial state are not the only contributing factors of the subordination of African women during the colonial period. Rather, indigenous and colonial patriarchal structures of control reinforced and transformed one another. This intersection resulted in traditional patriarchy adapting to colonial patriarchy, and hence, there was a creation of new structures and models of domination over African

women. These evolved structures of patriarchal control that “not only were compatible with, but actually enhanced capitalist economic development” Schmidt (1992:6).

Senior African men including chiefs and headmen benefited from keeping women and girls under the control of their husbands and fathers as a result supported the colonial state’s attempts to restrain women to the rural areas. They wanted to reaffirm their dwindling authority over women, their labour and reproduction (biological and social) (Schmidt, 1992). Moreover, the migration of young men to urban areas resulted in economic independence from rural patriarchs. Hence, in order to maintain their economic control, rural patriarchs deemed it necessary to control the mobility of those women who were eligible to be wives. The wages that men young men earned could be used as lobola payment, hence establishing “the role they played in brokering and managing marriage negotiations” (Hungwe, 2006:38).

The migratory labour system was a product of struggle rather than a system merely useful for capital. The nature of economic development in the then Southern Rhodesia was determined by both capital and gender struggles within African households. As Schmidt (1992:2) observes, “African women’s unequal access to power and resources is not exclusively the result of colonial capitalism. The household...has been a fundamental locus of gender stratification, and of African women’s oppression”. An analysis of the historical evolution of a given society requires that attention is given to the lives of women within the domestic domain and how it structures their experiences. We need to consider how “the house-hold is a terrain of struggle, manifest in disputes over the allocation of labor, control over female reproduction, the distribution of resources, etc.” (Schmidt, 1992:1).

Further, while rural patriarchs were concerned with controlling the mobility of African women, missionaries focused on spiritual and ideological aspects. Initially to establish an effective labour force, colonial authorities considered critical the education of African men and boys. According to Summers (1996:450) “African men provided the labor essential for all forms of economic activities in the region – agriculture, mining, and commerce”. For example, they worked as miners, farmworkers, or domestic servants. Yet African women were viewed by colonial authorities a danger “to respectable European life, authority, economic activity and homes” (Summers, 1996:452). This is due to their economic, political, and social roles that undermined the gendered, racial, and moral order of the colonial system. In order to encourage women to continue living in rural areas and take care of their families, some colonial administrators strategized to send women and girls to mission school specifically for them to acquire “disciplined moral education” (Summers, 1996:449). It was hoped that domestic

education would support the establishment of “peasant households” which was considered pivotal to the migrant system.

It must be noted that there were African women who ran away from rural areas to seek refuge at mission schools. Yet no matter the circumstances that resulted in African women acquiring mission education, in reality traditional patriarchy was exchanged for European patriarchy in mission schools. Yet, the viewpoints of colonial officials and those of missionaries concerning the role that education played in the lives of African women and girls sometimes conflicted (Summer, 1996). Moreover, the motivations for education of African women and girls differed within colonial authorities.

Some viewed the education of African women vital to capitalist development, while others deemed it necessary to preserve traditional gender norms to circumvent the disruption of social norms (Summers, 1996). Some missionaries advocated for the education of African women and girls for the sake of producing “Christian women who would marry Christian men and form Christian families, acting as a gradual, non-revolutionary leaven which would raise the domestic standards of African households” (Summers, 1996:458). This was implemented in a way that did not threaten “European control” through assimilation. On the other, some missionaries and officials sought to educate African women and girls as a strategy to safeguard European women and girls from African male domestic workers, by training African women to become domestic workers in European households (Summers, 1996).

It is therefore important to explore the ways in which colonialism and capitalism has been differently experienced by women and men (Schmidt, 1992:1). We therefore need to regard “how gender is structured and experienced through colonialism...and through the rise of capitalism” (Moore, 2013:9-10). Particularly, we need to include an analysis of the intersection of patriarchy and capitalism. African women were influenced by a variety of factors during the colonial period. Apart from colonial policies and missionaries, traditional society particularly African patriarchs contributed in structuring the lives of women during colonial rule.

4.9 Resistance to patriarchy in Zimbabwe

The formidable power of the alliance against African women did not deter them from migrating from rural areas to towns, mines and missions. African women in colonial Zimbabwe adopted several approaches to defy colonial and indigenous patriarchal structures, asserting their agency. Traditional gender roles were disrupted and societal expectations were resisted.

One of the ways in which African women disregarded patriarchy was through refusing arranged marriages. Rather than marrying partners that their families had appointed for them, some instead entered into adulterous partnerships, some often fleeing from rural areas to seek refuge in urban areas, missions, mines, or farms (Schmidt, 1991:741). This way, they escaped the drudgery of rural life and sorrowful marriages, and sought opportunities for economic development. Some wives eloped with their lovers, disregarding their husbands' orders, hence being viewed as "fickle and irresponsible, ensnaring and deserting men at will" (Schmidt, 1991:743).

Moreover, in their search of economic independence, African women were often involved in informal and makeshift arrangements with male workers. In exchange for shelter, the woman would provide sexual and domestic services. Urban areas were a terrain of struggle and resistance because the activities that African women engaged in posed a challenge to the colonial administration. For example, for financial sustenance some women acquired money through the brewing and sale of 'illegal' beer. Their beer sales, however, threatened the state's revenue as they undermined the colonial beer halls (Hungwe, 2006). In addition, in 1922 women's access to beer halls after 5pm was prohibited in Salisbury, as a result women boycotted beerhalls influencing their male counterparts to join them, until the restrictions were lifted (Barnes, 1992). This is an example, among many, that African women in urban areas were determined to contend the exclusion and control the colonial state imposed on them.

In addition, to attain economic independence in the political economy of colonial Zimbabwe, mobility was important, however the level of economic independence sought by some African women was defiant to both their male counterparts, state laws and regulations. By the 1930s, a considerable number of African women were formally employed, hence earning money. In Salisbury, an estimated 6 percent of African women were in formal employment (Barnes, 1992:60). Through such economic independence, African women asserted their independence and challenged their assigned traditional roles. The strategic behaviours that African women engaged in undermined both indigenous and colonial patriarchal structures demonstrating their agency and resilience in shaping gender relations. Exploring how women confronted patriarchy in Zimbabwe's historical context emphasizes the necessity to acknowledge historical gender struggles as an inherent aspect of comprehending the complex nature of gender relations in Africa. Subsequently, this reinforces the argument that this research study is based on, which is that an examination of the gendered structures of colonialism is crucial to understanding the gendered power dynamics in postcolonial Africa.

4.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined gender dynamics across Africa during both precolonial and colonial eras. Taking into account the historical context helps us comprehend the evolution of gender relations within African communities. It provides a key reference point to identify the multiplicity of gender relations, roles, and identities that were established prior to colonialism. I show how this diversity was transformed by colonialism, as patriarchal ideologies were buttressed to reinforce colonial rule. I highlight how gender systems were flexible and fluid. Using examples from across different geographical locations, the chapter illustrates how women had experiences that were diverse. This challenges the belief that women were typically oppressed in precolonial Africa, resulting in often distorted conceptions of gender relations.

The chapter also gives attention to the gender question in anticolonial struggles in Africa, highlighting the gendered nature of warfare and how gender was an organizing principle and structured the participation of women. Although in anticolonial struggles African women emerged as key actors, their involvement was often limited by established patriarchal norms. However, their participation was critical and a turning point as it reordered gender norms.

In this chapter, I provided a historical analysis of gender dynamics through the precolonial and colonial periods in Zimbabwe, illustrating the multilayered and complex reality where colonial patriarchy and traditional patriarchy intersected to influence the lives of African women in colonial Zimbabwe. The implementation of colonial legislations consequently negatively impacted the lives of African women, affirming the colonial states' exploitation of prevailing gender relations to promote colonial agendas. The simultaneous expansion of the capitalist economic system, deepened existing inequalities, situating women at the peripheries of an economic system that was biased towards men, subsequently amplified their subordination.

The last part of my chapter discussed the unconquerable determination of women in colonial Zimbabwe, who, in spite of overwhelming oppression, showed resilience. These women confronted and undermined established patriarchal structures, seizing agency through strategic actions. Their efforts remind us that women were not only victims, but also agents who were capable of living their lives according to their own terms.

As postcolonial African societies confront colonial legacies, this chapter serves as an integral ground work for reassessing and reformulating the ongoing gender discourse, with the aim of achieving genuine gender transformation.

In the following chapter, I provide an examination of the political leadership landscape in Zimbabwe, with a particular focus on analysing the impact of colonial legacies and their effects on gender relations. The focal point is on the political participation and representation of women, exploring the effect of current gender equality legal and policy frameworks in structuring and transforming women's political participation and representation as well as the implications thereof.

CHAPTER FIVE: WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION IN ZIMBABWE'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP LANDSCAPE

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the political leadership landscape in Zimbabwe, with a particular focus on women's political representation and participation in parliament at the national level, specifically the National Assembly, Senate and Cabinet. It explores the effect of current gender equality, legal and policy frameworks in structuring and transforming women's political representation and participation, as well as the implications thereof. This validates the study's argument that gender transformation requires more than the statistical political representation of women in the political leadership landscape. Rather, it requires addressing of the gendered power structures deeply rooted in colonialism and the effect they have on the design and implementation of current gender equality legal and policy frameworks.

In the first section, the chapter gives an historical overview of women in the Zimbabwean anticolonial struggle. This is to situate the gender equality discourse in Zimbabwe within an historical context, where women who were involved in the liberation struggle challenged gender norms. Next, the chapter examines the first decade of post-independence with a focus on the national legislative framework and the gender politics involved therein. Here, the chapter illustrates how previous inclinations that were patriarchal and masculine in nature quickly reaffirmed themselves in the newly independent Zimbabwe. The chapter then gives a brief analysis of national legal and policy frameworks (1980-2017) that govern women's political participation and representation in Zimbabwe. These include the Lancaster House Constitution adopted in 1979, the Global Political Agreement (GPA) of 2008, the new Constitution adopted in 2013, and the National Gender Policy (2013-2017).

In the following section the chapter gives a general overview of women's political participation and representation especially within the African continent. Thereafter, the chapter provides an examination of women's political representation and participation in Zimbabwe (1979-2018) at the national level in Zimbabwe with a specific focus on the National Assembly, Senate and Cabinet. Here, the chapter shows how frameworks for gender equality adopted by the government of Zimbabwe to increase women's political representation, have not been effectively implemented, thereby undermining their meaningful political participation and representation. In the last two sections of the chapter, using a decolonial intersectional feminist perspective, I discuss the implications of the electoral women's quota on women's political

representation and also the broader influence of gendered colonial power structures on gender equality, legal and policy frameworks in Zimbabwe.

5.2 Historical context: Women in the anticolonial struggle

As previously noted in chapter four, the gendered experiences of African women and men differed during colonialism. Colonial patriarchy suppressed women's political and economic independence. The colonial state restricted most women to rural areas, limiting their influence to production and reproduction. The public sphere was dominated by men, while confined in the private domain, women reproduced the workforce (Walker, 1991; White, 2007; Kriger, 1992, Geisler, 2004). Moreover, concerning, child custody and property ownership, colonial laws benefited patrilineages and men (Kriger, 1992:75). For African men, their negative experience of colonialism was primarily the land question and their threatened masculinities as a result of the capitalist economic system that caused an exploitation of their cheap labour in urban areas (White, 2007; Bhebhe and Ranger, 1995). Therefore, their exploitation, and their gendered and economic subordination under colonial rule resulted in organized liberation movements to confront the colonial system. However, it should be noted that there were various factors that influenced the armed struggle, only a few are mentioned here.

Notably, nationalists mobilized African women by symbolising them as mothers of nations and affirming gender equality in the liberation movement. They emphasized their roles as mothers and nurturers to encourage their cooperation in the liberation struggle. Motherhood and femininity were promoted, especially in the context of providing sustenance to guerrilla soldiers including sheltering and feeding them. They reinforced expressions such as “forward with the cooking stick” (Nhongo-Simbanegavi, 2000:17).

Some women who enlisted in the anti-colonial struggle associated the freedom of women with national liberation (Mudeka, 2014; Geisler, 2004; White, 2007; Lyons 2004). Further, the socialist influences in most African liberation movements' revolutionary rhetoric fostered the illusion that the liberation war agenda included gender equality (Cock, 1991; Lyons, 2004). Engaging in the liberation struggle for most women was an effort toward “individual as well as national independence” (Seidman, 1984:426). The issue at hand was that African revolutionaries were of the opinion that the emancipation of African women and the independence of the nation were the same social processes although there were not intersected (White, 2006:11). In this regard, the fight for gender and racial liberation is why most women joined the liberation struggle. The expectation that women had was that once the struggle had

been won, gender equality would be achieved. Yet, some women who joined the anti-colonial struggle were forcibly recruited.

Accounts amongst scholars point to the liberation struggle having started during the 1960s (Kriger, 1992; Martin and Johnson, 1981; Bhebhe, 1999). The Zimbabwe African Union (ZANU) and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) were the two liberation movements that militarily opposed the Rhodesian colonial state (Moorcraft and McLaughlin 1982:14). The military wings of both liberation movements were Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) and Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) respectively. During the war, women became both agents and victims. Women who were in the liberation struggle endured victimization as their bodies ended up becoming sites of gender and sexual violence; and moreover, were being targeted as collateral damage in the conflict between the Rhodesian army and liberation armies. On the other hand, although there were power imbalances due to male dominance, these women altered gender norms by participating in the war therefore becoming agents. Some women undertook combat roles and transported deadly military ammunition and weapons, dismissing the notion that women are not capable of participating in spaces that are masculine and military.

Despite the fact that women were involved in the liberation struggle challenging gender norms, their role was often shaped by traditional gender norms. Although women were "trained for guerilla warfare" in the course of the liberation struggle there was an "emphasis on the domestic capabilities of women, rather than their combat abilities" (Lyons, 2004:176). Yet, without the participation of women, the liberation war would have not been successful.

While the armed struggle was key in collapsing the colonial government, a negotiated settlement (the Lancaster House Peace Agreement of 1979) rather than a military victory won the independence of Zimbabwe. As a result of this, the Zimbabwean constitution was drafted and a cease fire agreement was implemented, and Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980.

5.3 National legislative framework and gender politics

Pre-independence, nationalist leaders promised new gender relations and to end the subordination of women in the new independent state. To uphold their promises, they set out an objective to challenge the institutions and gender norms that subordinated women. Shortly after independence the new government established the Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs (MCDWA). The creation of the ministry early post-independence showed commitment to advancing the position of women. Joyce Mujuru an ex-combatant and former

Minister of Youth Sport and Recreation and the then Secretary of the ZANU-PF Women's League, was appointed as minister. The objectives of the MCDWA were to “mobilise, organise, coordinate and monitor public and private non-governmental organisations geared towards closing disparities between men and women in Zimbabwe” (Geisler, 2004:118).

In the early years of its inception, the ministry introduced some legislation aimed at benefiting women. For example, the Sexual Discrimination Removal Act of 1980 aimed at promoting equal political representation (Mudeka, 2014:99), The Legal Age of Majority Act (LAMA) in 1982 provided the foundation for gender equality, providing that both women and men were legally considered adults at the age of 18. As a result, “men and women were for the first time legally equal” (Mahlaule, 1995 as cited in Gudhlanga, 2013:157). Under the Equal Pay Act of 1982, women could earn equal wages as their male counterparts, previously, the colonial economic system had marginalized women by paying them lower wages than their male counterparts (Ngwenya, 1983). The Labour Relations Act of 1985 eliminated sex-based discrimination and established a three month, partly compensated maternity leave, under the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1985, it was regarded that women directly and indirectly contributed in the acquiring of property and, therefore, there should be equitable distribution in the case of a divorce. Moreover, The Electoral Act of 1990 provided an opportunity to contest for presidential office if they willed so (Chung, 2006:287). Regardless, for Essof (2013:34) these legal reforms were nothing beyond “affording women superficial access to state structures”.

The first decade of independence also challenged the notion that through decolonisation, the emancipation of women will be realised. It highlights that patriarchal gender relations were not alleviated by the participation of women in the liberation war and the attainment of independence. The handover of power through the Lancaster House Peace Agreement of 1979 that established an independence constitution was “the beginning and not the end of the process of decolonisation” (Law, 2021:250). Therefore, the viability of the concept of ‘decolonisation’ in relation to the liberation of women requires that we examine the post-colonial “everyday experiences of women in post-colonial Zimbabwe” (Law, 2021:250). This approach fittingly highlights a gendered narrative of postcolonial nation building characterized by patriarchal privilege (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). The gendered nature of the postcolonial political exclusion of women is exposed.

Of particular significance is the 1983 ‘Operation clean-up’, a coordinated campaign to systematically control women and reaffirm state power, illustrated the nature of the post-

colonial state. A lot of women in Harare and Bulawayo, the major cities in Zimbabwe, were arbitrarily imprisoned, with the state insisting that the women were arrested for being “prostitutes, beggars and squatters”, claiming that they had no place in the urban areas (Geisler, 2004; Masakure, 2016; Law, 2021). These women were subjected to “humiliation and abuse” and were detained “in sub-human conditions” (Essof, 2013:36). The techniques in Operation Clean-Up, an unequivocal endeavour to constrain the autonomy of women, demonstrated gender struggles in postcolonial Zimbabwe and also revealed an unsettling continuity from colonial to postcolonial reasoning with respect to the proper place for women in the nation’s urban spaces (Schmidt, 1991; Barnes, 1992).

In the same manner in which the mobility and migration of women to urban areas in colonial Zimbabwe was perceived as a threat to colonial rule, it was similar thinking that women were “believed to be such a major threat to the project of postcolonial nation building” (Law, 2021:251). As noted by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015:1), Robert Mugabe’s presidency was dominated by anticolonial nationalism, instead of a project of decoloniality that set out to “radically transform” what had just become an independent state.

Moreover, in the first decade of independence, previous inclinations that are patriarchal and masculine swiftly reaffirmed themselves, notably with regards to determining what was considered appropriate behaviour particularly for women in the newly independent Zimbabwe. Regardless of their role and contributions in the liberation struggle, women ex-combatants were often condemned for their unwillingness to maintain traditional gender norms in the postcolonial era. As Hungwe (2006:41) noted, “women who had been mobile or active as fighters during the war were now expected to return home and take up traditional domestic chores such as childcare and housework”. Yet, women’s movements used the experiences of women ex-combatants engaging in combat with men to advocate for gender equality in post-independence legislation presenting an exaggerated portrayal of the liberation struggle as a societal process that is emancipating (Chogugudza, 2006:49). However, this mythical notion of equality did not transform the reality that patriarchal tendencies after the war were immediately reasserted, thus tampering with the benefits of the liberation war (Riphenburg, 1997).

5.4 Gender equality, legal and policy frameworks (1979-2017)

This section of the chapter gives a brief overview of the gender equality legal and policy frameworks that Zimbabwe has adopted and also reformed since independence. This is in the

context of gender equality and women's rights in the political landscape as it pertains to participation, representation and decision-making. The section gives an analysis of the Lancaster House Constitution adopted in 1979, the Global Political Agreement (GPA) of 2008, the new Constitution adopted in 2013, and the National Gender Policy (2013-2017). These documents and the political processes which they culminated from give insight into the structures that govern women's political representation and participation.

5.4.1 The Lancaster House Constitution of 1979

The Lancaster House Constitution was the first Constitution that the newly independent Zimbabwe adopted. Although it was initially considered to have been a temporary measure, for 34 years the Constitution remained in existence. The Bill of rights in the Lancaster House Constitution was limited. Gender equality was not acknowledged, therefore women's rights were not protected and guaranteed (Makonese, 2016). For sex and gender to be considered a basis for non-discrimination, it took 27 years under Section 23, which outlawed discrimination in accordance with a list of safeguarded attributes (Flores and Made, 2013:4).

In 1991, Zimbabwe signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). As a member of CEDAW, Zimbabwe endorsed the principle that women and men would be equal under the law. And, thus, enshrined the abolition of gender-based discrimination. All member states consented to "condemn discrimination against women in all its forms and agreed to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay, a policy of eliminating discrimination against women" (CEDAW Article 2). Member states also agreed to "embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation" (CEDAW Article 2(a)).

However, despite the fact that Zimbabwe was a signatory to CEDAW, the struggle for gender equality continued. Women leaders acknowledged that in the absence of a constitutional mandate prohibiting discrimination, the pursuit of genuine gender equality would continue to be a futile endeavor (Zvobgo and Dziva, 2017:67). However, during this period before the 2013 constitutional reform, to demonstrate commitment to women's rights and gender equality, in 2008 Zimbabwe ratified the Protocol to the African Union Charter on Human and People's rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) and in 2009 the Southern African

Development Community Protocol on Gender and Development (SADC Gender Protocol) (Flores and Made, 2013:5).

The SADC Gender Protocol was established to reflect the commitment of member states to abolishing gender-based discrimination in accordance with CEDAW and Article 6(2) of the SADC Treaty (Flores and Made, 2013:5). The signatories of the SADC Gender Protocol also committed to implementing affirmative action to help achieve gender equality (SADC Protocol, Article 5) and to comply with all international legal standards of human rights for women's equality (SADC Gender Protocol, Article 2). Further, member states pledged to follow through on the objectives stated in the SADC Gender Protocol to address discrimination, such as codifying gender equality country constitutions (SADC Gender Protocol, Article 4). However, the Lancaster House Constitution, specifically Section 111 (b), which needed an Act of Parliament for them to be domesticated laws, limited Zimbabwe's capacity of signing and ratifying these agreements (Zvobgo and Dziva, 2017:67). Therefore, Zimbabwe's Lancaster House Constitution was never entirely aligned to international and regional legal frameworks for attaining gender equality and women's rights (Flores and Made, 2013:6).

5.4.2 *The Global Political Agreement (GPA)*

In September 2008 after a disputed election, Zimbabwe's three main political parties, namely, the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU PF), the Movement for Democratic Change – Tsvangirai (MDC-T) and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-N) signed the Global Political Agreement, with support from SADC. The GPA functioned as a foundation for co-operation and power sharing among the three main political parties. As part of the GPA, a constitution making process was proposed and initiated to establish a foundation for a democratic nation.

According to Article 6 of the GPA, a Constitution Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC) needed to be formed and a new constitution was required to have been developed within 20 months of the signing of the GPA. The agreement acknowledged the significance of developing a constitution that recognized the equal treatment of all citizens, “particularly the enhancement of full citizenship and equality for women” (GPA, Article 6).

Organizations that represent women recognized the GPA as a means to advance women's rights under the provisions of the constitution, and pursued efforts to ensure that their proposals were adopted. Women's organizations were among the initial civil society groups to show the willingness to engage in the establishment of the COPAC and thereafter its processes of

designing a new constitution (Flores and Made, 2013:11). In 2013 a new constitution was approved and adopted, replacing the Lancaster House Constitution of 1979.

5.4.3 The 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe

The provisions for equality and non-discrimination from the Lancaster House Constitution significantly changed in the 2013 Constitution. In contrast to the Lancaster House Constitution, Section 17 of the 2013 Constitution makes provisions for affirmative action. It seeks “full gender balance in Zimbabwean society” particularly with regard to promoting “the full participation of women in all spheres of Zimbabwean society on the basis of equality with men” and to take legislative and other measures to ensure that both women and men “are equally represented in all institutions and agencies of government at every level” (Section 17 (1)).

The 2013 Constitution also includes a detailed clause on non-discrimination in Section 56, Equality and Non-discrimination, which articulates every individual has an equal standing before the law and has a constitutional right to be protected by and benefit from the law (Section 56 (1)). Regarding women and men, it is stipulated that they “have the right to equal treatment”, as well as “the right to equal opportunities” as it pertains to “political, economic, cultural and social spheres” (Section 56 (2)). Further, Section 56 forbids all legislation and policies and that unfairly discriminate on account of gender, race, class, nationality, religion, sex, ethnicity, disability, marital status, among others (Section 56 (3)).

Section 56 of the Constitution corresponds to CEDAW’s meaning of discrimination and also with its anti-discrimination mandate, which requires member states to abolish discrimination “in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field” (CEDAW, Article 1). Also, CEDAW obligates member states to “...undertake measures to address discrimination, including prohibition against discrimination, in their national constitutions” (CEDAW, Article 2). Section 56 further confirms Zimbabwe’s adherence to Article 4 (1) of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, which stipulates that all signatories “to enshrine gender equality and equity in their Constitutions and ensure that these rights are not compromised by any provisions, laws or practices”. Provision 56 (6) of the Constitution obligates the state to adopt affirmative action to advance gender equality and to ensure the protection of those who have been unfairly discriminated against. Also, this is in conformity with CEDAW Article 4, which commits member states to adopt affirmative action to attain equality.

In addition, in comparison to the Lancaster House Constitution, the 2013 Constitution includes provisions of Article 9 of the African Women's Rights Protocol, which mandates that in political and decision-making processes, women should be equally represented. It consists of a broadened Declaration of Rights, which categorically stipulates that women and men have equal human rights, that include socioeconomic, cultural, civil, political and electoral rights. The provisions of section 80, in the 2013 Constitution guarantees women's right to fully participate in the political, economic and social spheres. In particular, section 80 (2) of the 2013 Constitution requires the state to engage in initiatives that will promote women's political, social and economic rights. The civil liberties that the Constitution guarantees encompass the right to vote, freedom of expression, association, and assembly. These rights play a significant role in the successful attainment of the equal political participation of women.

The 2013 Constitution commits the state to continuously maintain an equal representation of women and men nominated and appointed body members (Section 17 and 104). The provision Section 17 (b) ensures compliance with Article 9 in the African Women's Rights Protocol. Section 17 (b) stipulates that the state should see to it that "both genders are equally represented in all institutions and agencies of government at every level; and women constitute at least half of the membership of all Commissions and other elective and appointed governmental bodies established by or under this constitution or any act of parliament". It ensures equal participation of women and men in political and decision-making processes and obligates the state to enforce equal representation in various governmental bodies and appointments.

Again, consistent with Article 9 of the African Women's Rights Protocol, the 2013 Constitution included affirmation action measures through the implementation of 30% women's quotas to ensure the representation of women in Senate and Parliament in accordance with the provisions of section 120(2)(a) and 124. In particular, section 120(2)(b) specifies that senate elections require that they be undertaken according to a party-list proportional representation system "in which male and female candidates are listed alternatively, every list being headed by a female candidate". Correspondingly, section 124(1) makes provision for "an additional sixty women members, six from each of the provinces into which Zimbabwe is divided, elected through a system of proportional representation based on the votes cast for candidates representing political parties in a general election for constituency members in the provinces". The goal of women's quotas is to improve the statistical the equal representation of both women and men in the National Assembly. However, the number of women in parliament is still below the 50/50 representation of women required by international and regional policy frameworks,

although the number has increased in comparison to when the Lancaster House Constitution was still in effect (50/50 Policy Brief Zimbabwe, 2020:4).

5.4.4 The National Gender Policy (2013-2017)

The National Gender Policy (2013-2017) is the second Gender Policy that replaced the National Gender Policy (2004). Although the preceding Gender Policy laid a foundation for the promotion of initiatives aimed at combating gender inequalities, the second NGP was intended to rectify the limitations of the first NGP, including the emergent challenges that result from evolving economic, political and social dynamics across local, regional and global contexts (The National Gender Policy, 2013). It aims to “achieve a gender just society where men and women enjoy equality and equity and participate as equal partners in the development process of the country” with the goal “To eradicate gender discrimination and inequalities in all spheres of life and development” (The National Gender Policy, 2013: iv-v).

The NGP identifies seven key areas that will serve as the framework for the establishment of policy objectives and strategies within the period of its implementation. These key areas include Gender, Constitutional, and Legal Rights; Gender, Politics and Decision Making; Gender and Health; Gender, Education, and Training; Gender Based Violence; Gender, Environment, and Climate Change; Gender, Media, Information Communication and Technology (National Gender Policy, 2013).

Consistent with the African Women’s Rights Protocol, the African Union Gender Policy, and the African Women’s Decade, under Section 5(3)(ii) in Gender, Politics and Decision Making the NGP policy strategy is to “develop and strengthen policies, legal provisions and programmes, to ensure attainment of a 50/50 representation of men and women in politics and other key decision making positions”. The equal participation of women in politics and decision making is therefore one of the key seven areas that the NGP makes provision for. Moreover, the NGP acknowledges that women are more than capable to contribute in political and socio-economic development, and advocates for their meaningful participation. One of the notable key policy strategies in the area of gender, policy and decision making that the NGP call for is to “develop a monitoring and evaluation framework and carry out gender audits on representation and participation of men and women in politics and decision making positions” (Section 5(3)(i)). These policy strategies align with national, regional and international policy frameworks formulated to attain gender justice in all sectors.

Table 1 below shows the strategies to implement the NGP as set out by the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, Gender and Community Development (MWGCD), specifically included are those implementing institutions relevant to Gender, Politics and Decision Making.

Table 1: Institutional framework for implementing the NGP

Implementing Institution	Roles and Responsibilities
<p>Ministry of Women’s Affairs, Gender and Community Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Developing a detailed Strategic Action Plan and establishing relevant structures for the implementation of the NGP; ii. Developing a detailed Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and establishing targets and guidelines for achievement of desired results; iii. Coordinating regular collection of gender segregated data on all key success factors, its synthesis, interpretation and dissemination; iv. Mobilising resources and skills necessary for the successful implementation of this policy; v. Providing technical guidance and supporting all implementing partners and gender focal points across all sectors; vi. State party reporting to regional and international conventions and protocols.
<p>Gender Focal Points in all Sectors and Institutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ensuring sector policies and programmes are gender responsive and providing technical guidance on integrating gender justice during planning, budgeting, programming, monitoring and evaluation; ii. Monitoring progress towards implementation and achievement of gender policy objectives outlined in this policy; iii. Building in-house capacity of all staff in their respective institutions to ensure systematic integration of gender issues in all sectors;

	<p>iv. Working closely with multi-sectoral stakeholders on gender compliance in their respective work;</p> <p>v. Collecting package, analyze and disseminate relevant information of gender statistics;</p> <p>vi. Providing progress reports to the relevant forums on the implementation of gender policy in their sectors.</p>
Ministry of Finance	vii. Ensuring Treasury support towards implementation of the NGP
Parliament of Zimbabwe: Relevant Parliamentary Portfolio Committees & Women's Parliamentary Caucus;	<p>i. Facilitating the effective implementation of the national gender policy by engaging in parliamentary debates and passing relevant bills required to achieve gender justice;</p> <p>ii. Providing a legislators' forum for discussion on matters affecting women in the country;</p> <p>iii. Taking a leading role in promoting the effective participation of women in all political spheres;</p> <p>iv. Sensitising all Parliamentarians to the principles of gender equality in the country, regionally and internationally;</p> <p>v. Supporting in parliament the requests for adequate fiscal support and advocating for donor support for the implementation of the national gender policy.</p>
Gender Commission	<p>i. Monitor the implementation of gender equality provisions in the Constitution;</p> <p>ii. Investigating possible violations of rights relating to gender and recommending appropriate redress where rights relating to gender have been violated;</p> <p>iii. Conducting research into issues relating to gender and social justice, and recommending changes to laws and practices which lead to discrimination based on gender;</p>

	iv. Advising public and private institutions on steps to be taken to ensure gender equality; v. Identifying and recommending affirmative action programmes to achieve gender equality;
--	---

Source: The National Gender Policy (2013:21-22)

5.5 Women’s political representation and participation

Women and men’s equal political participation has been globally recognized as significant for democratic and peaceful societies. Therefore “...genuine democracy cannot exist without the equal participation of men and women in politics...” (IPU,2005:1). Promoting women’s political participation and representation in decision making is vital for the development of democratic values. There are points of view to consider when calling for women’s equal representation in decision making. To start with, women’s political participation is acknowledged as a basic human right and a fundamental principle of democratic justice as articulated by various regional and international human rights frameworks including the UN, AU and SADC. For example, because in Zimbabwe women comprise 52% of the population (Statista, 2023). It is in accordance with democratic values that they are proportionally represented in politics in regard to their numbers (Sadie, 2005:17). The equal inclusion and participation of all promotes sustainable democracy.

Moreover, for women’s policy interests to be taken into account, they need adequate representation. Otherwise, their male counterparts will monopolize political decision-making structures hence marginalizing the interests of women. Shvedova (2002:11) notes that “the majority of governing institutions are dominated by men who further their own interests” as a result “male-dominated political institutions of government do not promote women or women’s issues”. Equal and diverse government systems foster accountability. It is however important to take note that adding women to existing structures is not the only way to advance women’s political participation, rather we need to transform and interrogate those structures to enable women’s meaningful participation and leadership.

According to Tripp (2013:1) “the most fascinating development in African politics has been the increase in women’s political participation...Women are becoming more engaged from local government, to legislature and even the executive”. The representation of women in African national parliaments has increased. As of December 2022, Rwanda is ranked the top of the list of women’s political participation in Africa with over 60 percent of the national

parliament seats being occupied by women (Statista, 2023). Rwanda also ranks highest globally for the highest percentage of women in political leadership in the lower houses of parliament that any other country (Statista, 2023). Senegal ranks second in the African continent, registering 46 percent seats occupied by women in parliament. South Africa, Namibia and Mozambique have been reported to have a proportion of women participation above 40% (Statista, 2023). The top-ranked countries in regard to women representation all have implemented electoral women's quotas.

With regard to the increased representation of women in African parliaments, the substantive impact includes advancement of women's interests through the process of formulating policies in terms of championing or implementing specific policy objectives or legislative initiatives (Franceschet et al, 2012). In the context of Africa there are substantive representation examples of the interests of women in parliaments with a high number of women. In Tanzania, women Members of Parliament (MPs) in the past have advocated for policies that addressed the concerns women in several aspects such as access to tertiary education, sexual and gender-based violence, maternity leave, and land reform (Meena, 2004). Women MPs have had a profound influence on the matters being deliberated in parliament, have succeeded in bringing laws into operation addressing the interests of women in a wide range of areas, and have audited the national budget with the needs of women in consideration (Makinda, 2011).

Similarly, the passing and subsequent enforcement of a law in Rwanda aimed at preventing and prosecuting of gender-based violence, due to the initiatives women MPs and women's parliamentary caucus is a case example of women in parliament proactively representing women's needs (Devlin and Elgie, 2008). According to Afrobarometer data, there is an increased citizen women's participation in regards to voting in African countries with a higher number of women represented in parliament (Barnes and Burchard, 2013).

5.6 Women's political participation and representation in Zimbabwe (1980-2018)

In post-colonial Zimbabwean politics, women have been under represented in parliament. In the period under review by the study, there has not been a steady increase of women's representation in parliament as the numbers fluctuated each general election year. Their participation and representation have been peripheral. The political leadership landscape in Zimbabwe continues to be structured in a manner that advances patriarchal practices that hinder the meaningful political participation and representation of women. In this section I examine

women's political representation at the national level in Zimbabwe with a specific focus on the National Assembly, Senate and Cabinet.

5.6.1 National Assembly

In its quest to promote gender equality and the political representation of women in the first post-independence elections in 1980, the new Zimbabwean government appointed a few women to serve as members of parliament. However, how they were represented in parliament was questionable. Out of the 57 seats secured by ZANU-PF in the 1980 inaugural post-independence parliamentary elections, in which 20 seats were secured by PF ZAPU, women won 9 seats and the rest were secured by men in other minority political parties (Sadomba and Dzinesa, 2004:59). In the 1980 ZANU-PF election manifesto a promise was made that “under a ZANU (PF) Government women will enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of political, economic, cultural and family life” (Geisler, 2004:106). Yet the gender composition of the House of Assembly (currently the National Assembly) between 1980-2005 tells a different narrative as Table 2 shows below. However, as small as the proportion of women in parliament was during that period, there was a marginal increase in the percentage of women's representation in parliament. Table 2 illustrates clearly the imbalanced proportion of women in political leadership positions. Even after two decades of independence the empowerment of women through representation in parliament was still stagnant.

Table 2: Gendered composition of the House of Assembly in Zimbabwe (1980-2005)

Elections and Appointments	Seats	Men	Women	% of Women
1980-84	100	91	9	9
1985-1990	100	92	8	8
1990	150	133	17	11.3
1995	150	129	21	14
2000	150	136	14	9.3
2005	150	126	24	16

Source: Maphosa et al (2015:137)

Further, most of the women who were appointed in the new government during the first decade (1980-1990) were affiliated with powerful male political figures as their wives or relatives. For example, Julia Zvobgo who was an MP was married to Edison Zvobgo who was a high-ranking ZANU- PF official; Joice Mujuru a then cabinet minister was married to Solomon Mujuru who was an influential figure who was a ZANLA guerilla and subsequently the general in the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA); Sabina Mugabe an MP who was the sister to Robert Mugabe the then Prime Minister; Ruth Chinamano married to Josiah Chinamano a nationalist leader in ZAPU; and Victoria Chitepo married to Hebert Chitepo a nationalist leader in ZANU (Maphosa et al 2015:138). These appointments lacked diversity and inclusivity. To what extent did women in such positions have independence? Did they represent the interests of other women or theirs and those of their powerful husbands? Was effectiveness and credibility not eroded?

The reality is that there were less women in government in the newly independent Zimbabwe, as a result women's organizations that existed were co-opted and those created were structured in a manner that they remained dependent on the state (Hove, 1994:33-37). Women's political participation was state controlled and circumscribed by using women's organizations as vehicles. Women were mobilized on the terms of the state, instead of the being offered an opportunity to be represented within the state (Waylen, 1996:11). In such political environments women's politics is assimilated, those women who have the opportunity to be recognized by the state "have abused their position to discredit progressive women's aspirations and to entrench women's subordination in the private domain" (Geisler, 2004:25). According to Kandiyoti (1988:274) these women participate in what he identifies as "patriarchal bargain". It has been regarded as an instrument for women to maximize their own needs in restricted opportunity environments heavily influenced by men. When revisiting the analysis in Chapter 4 on how the colonial state controlled and shaped how African women experienced the political, economic, and social landscapes, Zimbabwe's first decade of independence helps demonstrate how the inherited postcolonial state functioned as a tool that reinforced existing gendered colonial power dynamics instead of addressing established power structures. This suggests that the liberation struggle was primarily framed around the independence from colonial rule and establishment of political power, rather than transforming structural inequalities.

Although during the disputed 2008 elections there was a higher number of women contesting for political office, the proportion of women represented in parliament was low as it dropped to 15%, hence resulting in a setback (Dube, 2013:1019). After the disputed 2008 elections that were characterized by violence, SADC sent Thabo Mbeki as mediator between the main

political party ZANU-PF and the two factions of the MDC opposition party. Robert Mugabe was the leader of ZANU- PF, Morgan Tsvangirai and Arthur Mutambara represented the MDC-N. The mediation process led to the signing of the 15 September Global Political Agreement (GPA) (Eppel and Raftopoulos, 2008:1) The GPA “was intended as a roadmap to democratic transition while addressing the immediate demand for peace and economic stability” (Connolly, 2011:1). The GPA Article 8’s commitment to equal representation of men and women, brought about optimism regarding an increased women’s political participation.

However, in the negotiation process, the GPA had one noticeable woman representative, Priscilla Misihairambwi-Mushonga (Hodzi, 2012:4); the gender imbalance in the peace negotiations was questionable. The absence of women consolidated “deep-seated masculinization” of “politics and justice” (Hodzi, 2012:5). The GPA “consistently spoke to the ideals of equality, fairness, justice and non-discrimination, yet there was an absence of political will to follow through on these ideals” (Mangezvo, 2013:76). According to Banda and Masuka (2013:56) “the marginalization of women under the GPA was not exceptional, but rather a continuation of a process that was already entrenched in Zimbabwe's political system”.

The concept of the coloniality of gender discussed in Chapter 2 is important in understanding Zimbabwe’s postcolonial political landscape. It has had a long-standing effect on its political structures. Governance continues to be shaped by gendered exclusions. Under colonialism, African women were structurally excluded from decision making processes, a colonial legacy that has been sustained in the patriarchal structures of postcolonial governance. The GPA’s negotiation process was a reflection of this legacy, as women were absent at the negotiating table. When using the decolonial intersectional feminist theoretical framework established in Chapter 2, the marginalization of women in the GPA negotiation process beyond a representation gap, instead highlights a historical continuity of colonial governance systems. The absence of women’s voice in the GPA context, underscores the necessity of addressing the entrenched colonial hierarchies that persist in dictating whose contributions are recognized.

Section 124 of the 2013 Constitution stipulates that “for the next two lives of the National Assembly (commencing in 2013), an additional sixty women shall be elected under a part-list system of proportional representation based on votes cast for political candidates”. In other words, the provision made by the Constitution is that Zimbabwe from 2013 to 2023, would have a mixed system in the national assembly ; the First Past the Post (FPTP) system would be used for elected 210 seats and then Proportional Representation (PR) would be used to reserve 60 seats for only women candidates appointed by political parties. As a result of the

adoption of the 2013 Constitution leading to the implementation of the election women's quota system, the percentage of women in the national assembly increased from 16% in 2008 to 34% in 2013 (Hamandishe, 2018). This was viewed as a positive development; however as far as equal political representation is concerned the adoption of the women's quota system in this particular context failed to meet the 50-50 representation.

Moreover, some women activists highlighted that the fight for women's meaningful participation is far from being won. Netsai Mushonga, who was the then national coordinator of the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCOZ) commented on the 2013 elections stating that "It was a dog-eat-dog election and ... women were pushed towards the 60 seats and told to vacate the competitive seats for men. It was not unusual for women to be told 'we gave you 60 seats, what more do you want?'" (quoted in UN Women, 2013). However, women activists were determined to strengthen the capacity of the elected women MPs. Grace Ruvimbo Chirenje the then coordinator of Zimbabwe Young Women's Network for Peacebuilding was quoted saying "We want the women in the reserved seats to not be just chess pieces being moved by the men in their political parties. We want to enable them, and all women, to become the chess players" (UN Women, 2013).

The 2018 general elections witnessed a decrease in women's political representation in parliament. There was an issue of concern considering the provisions of the Constitution specifically the provision of Section 17 stating that "women should constitute at least half of members of all Commissions and other elected and appointed governmental bodies and that the State must take positive measures to rectify gender discrimination and imbalances resulting from past practices and policies". In the 2018 general elections, the number of women in the National Assembly decreased to 31%, securing 85 seats out of 270 seats (Gender links, 2020:1). The women's quota system contributed in increasing the proportion to 31% otherwise the initial proportion of women elected in the National Assembly in the 2018 elections was 12.3%.

Further, in the National Assembly only 27 out of the 47 political parties fielded at least one women candidate (Hamandishe, 2018), the remaining 20 of the political parties fielded no women (Gender links, 2020:4). The percentage of women candidates was only 15% and out of 210 constituencies, 84 of those had only male candidates (Hamandishe, 2018; Gender links, 2020). As previously noted in Chapter 4, during the colonial period African women were structurally subordinated and their mobility was controlled by both the colonial state and rural patriachs. As such political parties can inadvertently bolster colonial and patriarchal power structures by restricting women to be empowered beyond party controlled structures. As shown

in Chapter 2, this consolidates the coloniality of gender that sustains systematic inequalities in postcolonial political structures, underscoring the need for structural transformation. In essence without the 60 PR women’s quota seats, women would hardly have made it to the National Assembly, making it a fiasco. It is in this election season that “women's private lives were publicly scrutinised and demeaned, as misogyny and sexism took centre stage...young unmarried women such as independent candidate Fadzayi Mahere and aspirant MP under the MDC-T Linda Masarira, experienced sexist critique (largely from men) about their eligibility to be politicians, given their lack of husbands” (Hamandishe, 2018:1). This shows how hostile and discriminatory the political environment in Zimbabwe is towards women.

5.6.2 Senate

From 1980-1989 the Zimbabwean parliamentary system was bicameral, from 1990-2004 the parliamentary system was unicameral as the government had removed the Senate, and since 2005 it has been bicameral. Since 1980, women’s representation in the senate has generally improved over the years. Yet women still remain under represented. Table 3 below provides an overview of the gender composition of the Zimbabwe senate during the period 1980-2008 under the Lancaster House Constitution of 1979.

Table 3: Gender composition of the Senate in Zimbabwe (1980-2008)

Elections and Appointments	Seats	Men	Women	% of Women
1980	40	37	3	7.5
1985	40	37	3	7.5
2005	66	42	24	36.4
2008	60	40	20	33.3

Source: Gudhlanga (2013:160)

The above percentages in 2005 and 2008, 36.4% and 33.3% respectively, matched the minimum quota of 30% women in positions of decision-making by 2005 required by SADC. However, SADC adjusted the percentage to 50%. Notably, in 2005 Edna Madzongwe a woman was appointed the president of the Senate (Gudhlanga, 2013:160). Although this was a positive development, it was not anything to be celebrated considering the low numbers of women appointed and elected to the senate. Instead, what was evident is that the efforts by the

government to increase women's representation exhibited a lack of serious commitment, again revealing the gendered nature of the political leadership landscape in Zimbabwe. The politics of gendered exclusions is at play just as it was in colonial Zimbabwe, as observed in the previous chapter.

The senate's composition under Section 120 of the 2013 Constitution is summarized below:

Table 4: Composition of the Senate in Zimbabwe

Criteria	Number	Electoral System	Special Provisions
Elected from province (10 candidates x 9 provinces)	60	PR	Male and female candidates are listed alternatively, every list being headed by a female candidate.
Chiefs – 2 each from the 8 provinces excluding the metros (Harare and Bulawayo)	16	Elected by assembly of chiefs	
President and Deputy President of the National Council of Chiefs	2	Elected by chiefs	
Persons with disability	2	Appointed	
TOTAL	80		

Source: Gender links (2020:2)

After the implementation of the women's quota, 37 women were elected to the Senate, from the two seats allocated to persons with disability, one woman was selected, making it 38 women in total, which is 47.5% of the total 80 Senators (UN Women, 2013). In 2018, there was 43.75% women's representation in the Senate (35 of the 80 Senators), which still did not meet the 50-50 threshold of gender representation in political decision-making positions (Gender links, 2020:1). Instead, the proportion of women in the Senate receded. This decline in women's presentation in the Senate and the failure to meet the required 50-50 threshold, demonstrates a major concern over the representation of women in postcolonial governance structures. More than a numerical setback, it reflects the persistent impact of colonialism on gender dynamics. As examined in Chapter 2, the coloniality of gender highlights how historical structures have

shaped politics, reinforcing inequalities that perpetuate women's marginalization. The same chapter brings attention to the importance of understanding postcolonial societies using a decolonial intersectional feminist theoretical framework, where the need to dismantle underlying systems of gendered exclusions is emphasized, so that women's leadership can be effectively recognized in governance.

5.6.3 Cabinet

At independence in 1980, a total of 3 women among 37 men were appointed in the Cabinet. Joyce Mujuru as Minister of Youth and, Sport and Recreation; Naomi Nhiwatiwa as Deputy Minister of Posts and Telecommunications; and Victoria Chitepo as Deputy Minister of Education and Culture (Sadomba and Dzinesa, 2004:59). The nationalist rhetoric of building a post-colonial state premised on equality seems to have excluded gender equality.

Under the GNU after the disputed 2008 general elections, 8 of the 50 posts in the Cabinet (16%) were occupied by women (Shaba, 2011:154; Gender links, 2020:4). According to Nyemba and Muzavazi (2013:108), the GNU "inherited a decrease in the number of women parliamentarians due to political violence which minimised their involvement in the harmonised elections of 2008". Notably, following the establishment of the GNU, for the first time in the history of Zimbabwe the presidium had two women, Joyce Mujuru as Vice President and Thokozani Khuphe as Deputy Prime Minister. Regardless, this perceived victory did not transform the status quo as far as women's representation in decision making is concerned.

Following the new Constitution which was adopted in 2013, the proportion of women decreased to 12% in the Cabinet (3 women of 26 members), consequently lowering their representation and influence in decision making processes (Gender links, 2020:4). Yet the President Robert Mugabe when confronted about the very low representation of women in the cabinet, he made the following remark: "Give us the women. This time we did proportional representation; there were just not enough women. Women are few in universities. It's no longer necessary to do affirmative action. It's free for all" (quoted in Maphosa et al 2015:146). In the context of such a reckless comment the President was also in violation of the Zimbabwean Constitution, specifically Section 104(4) that stipulates that "In appointing Ministers and Deputy Ministers, the President must be guided by considerations of regional and gender balance".

After the 2018 elections, an era dubbed the 'new dispensation' by President Emmerson Mnangagwa who took over through a coup from late President Robert Mugabe who had

previously occupied the office for 38 years, the proportion of women's representation in the Cabinet increased to 31% (Gender links, 2020:4). However, again this was a marginal change which some celebrated as a victory showing the existing low expectations in regards to equal political representation in decision-making processes. The reality is that the progressive exclusion of women has been an inherent nature of the postcolonial Zimbabwean state. This is with a context of a brutal colonial past whose legacy is systematic and structural in nature.

5.7 Implications of the electoral women's quota on women's political representation

As previously mentioned, the quota system was implemented as a strategy to improve women's access to political representation. This was a way to address the barriers that hindered women from being recognized for nominations to contest at the national legislative level. Moreover, as a group, women have specific interests and because "they are universally subordinated to men", specific legislation was needed to counter the disadvantages experienced by women hence raising the need for affirmative action (Geisler, 2004:33). In reference to the discussions in Chapter 4 regarding the colonial experiences of African women, postcolonial gender imbalances in Zimbabwe, in the context of women's political representation are rooted in colonial legacies. Therefore, the quota system is an attempt to address women's exclusion from decision making positions in politics, as an acknowledgement of these historical injustices.

In the context of Zimbabwe, the quota system has marginally increased the representation of women at the national level. The truth is that although Zimbabwe is a signatory to international and regional frameworks designed to achieve gender justice, gender balance in decision making has not materialized. The low proportion of women successfully elected or nominated, is proof that political parties are reluctant in adopting gender affirmative measures aimed at gender balance. Especially considering that political parties are the main channel in which equitable women's political participation is realized. Despite the absence of a legal framework that accounts for gender provisions within political parties, however their party constitutions commit to gender balance or equity in accordance with the provisions of Section 17 of the Zimbabwean Constitution (Gender links, 2020:3).

In Zimbabwe, for those women politicians who have benefited from the women's quota, some have raised concerns about how it sometimes decreases their credibility in comparison to their male counterparts. They have been ridiculed by those MPs who have been directly elected. For example, those women MPs on proportional representation have been called 'BACOSSI' which in the context of Zimbabwe refers to something of no value (Maphosa et al 2015:149).

As stated by Maphosa et al (2015:149) that “the ability of quotas to increase women’s physical presence in legislative bodies does not give the recipients the ability to shape these bodies in the same manner as their non-quota colleagues”. This reveals an underlying limitation of the quota system, although it ensures an extent of representation, it does not provide effective political participation. This dynamic suggests an institutional gap instead not solely a gendered one, reflecting the importance of reforms that extend beyond statistical representation to advance women’s effective representation. As critically examined in Chapter 4, colonialism created hierarchical dynamics that restricted women’s political agency. These hierarchies still persist in postcolonial political structures and often limit women elected through the quota system, by hindering them from meaningfully engaging in their leadership roles.

It is also important to measure the extent to which women’s quotas have actually ensured equitable women’s political representation. What does equitable women’s political representation even look like? Geisler (2004:38) notes that “Proportional representation systems offer advantages for women’s increased participation but they might also have drawbacks in that representatives are detached from the people they are supposed to represent”. Is it possible for those women in political leadership positions to at all times represent the interests of women? Can the interests of women be universally represented? The context in which women find themselves in, determines what their interests look like. This includes the historical, political, social, cultural and economic context. Linking this back to the decolonial intersectional feminist theoretical framework introduced in Chapter 2, the impact of the quota system needs to be examined in a manner that takes into account the diverse backgrounds that women in postcolonial Zimbabwe are situated within. For example, is the quota system able to equally benefit women of all races, classes, ethnicities, and other identity categories? Or do some groups of women continue to be excluded? In this way women who find themselves at the intersection of multiple identities that are excluded from benefiting from such gender affirmative action policies.

In the broader context of Africa as a continent, the historical, socio- economic and geo-political reality of countries needs to be considered. For example, the strategies used to formulate and implement policies such as quotas, requires that they are tailored in such a way that accounts for structural colonial legacies. Also, the specific concerns and gender experiences in postcolonial in that specific postcolonial society need to be taken into account, rather than mimicking Western models of the quota system. Women in Africa also have the agency to co-create policies; therefore, it is important to acknowledge their agency. That way their voices

contribute to the policies that will govern and structure their political participation and representation.

5.8 The broader influence of gendered colonial power structures on gender equality legal and policy frameworks

As previously noted in this chapter, Zimbabwe is a signatory to international and regional legal and policy frameworks that seek to advance gender equity. In the national context, these efforts have been applied through gender equality legal and policy frameworks. However, Zimbabwe still has persistent gender disparity in political representation and decision making positions. There has not been evidence of gender transformation through these frameworks. Why? By applying decolonial feminist lens, as an analytic tool for the Zimbabwean experience, it helps understand the continued impact of gendered colonial power structures in shaping gender equality in postcolonial Zimbabwe by entrenching systematic inequalities in policy and practice, hindering effective policy implementation. As illustrated in Chapter 4, the colonial state strictly enforced gender hierarchies, systematically excluding African women from decision making processes. The structural limitations that have endured are anchored by these historical foundations, reinforcing barriers that hinder the implementation of frameworks for gender equality in Zimbabwe's political landscape. Rather than dismantling the inherited gendered colonial governance structures, the postcolonial state reinforced and adapted them to sustain power. It is therefore imperative to recognize that increasing numerical women's political representation using frameworks is not adequate. More than that, it is necessary to seek to transform underlying structures.

The emancipation of women in the Zimbabwe will require gender equality to be critically examined within the context of gendered colonial power structures that are deep-rooted in colonialism, and that inform political systems in post-colonial Zimbabwe. In line with decolonial feminist thought, the argument is that gender equality frameworks and instruments that have been developed to address gender inequalities in Zimbabwe have undermined the necessity of interrogating the broader system that defines the oppression of women. With reference to the women question in Burkina Faso, in the context of dismantling the system of slavery, Thomas Sankara (quoted in Nkenkana, 2015:44) comments that "...The first step is to try to understand how this system functions, to grasp its real nature in all its subtlety, in order then to work out a line of action that can lead to women's total emancipation". Similarly, in Zimbabwe for gender transformation to take place, gendered colonial power structures and systems need to be dismantled to avoid exerting influence in the formulation and

implementation of gender legal and policy frameworks. Rather than incorporating women into patriarchal structures using numbers without extensively situating the conceptualization of gender within a historical state of affairs.

As previously noted in Chapter 4, colonial authorities in Zimbabwe continually reinforced and institutionalized patriarchal norms. As a result, European gender hierarchies and cultural values were enforced on indigenous societies (Schmidt, 1992; Summers, 1996; Barnes, 1997). Also, existing patriarchal structures were bolstered, where political leadership and decision-making was often reserved for men within both indigenous communities and colonial administrations. On account of this, African women experienced discrimination and exclusion especially in the political landscape and decision-making. Their primary roles were limited to domestic work and caregiving, whereas their male counterparts were given leadership positions (Ranger, 1983; Seidman, 1984, Cheater, 1986, Schmidt, 1990, Shutt, 2007).

In Zimbabwean postcolonial politics, we see persistent gendered colonial power structures regardless of gender equality frameworks designed to promote gender parity. There is a historical continuity of gendered colonial power structures. For example, the postcolonial political leadership landscape is primarily male, resembling the colonial pattern of male-dominated leadership. The postcolonial state inherited centralized and hierarchal systems of governance, and when power is centralized women's political representation in decision-making is undermined.

A decolonial intersectional feminist perspective, recognizes the need not only to challenge and dismantle existing gendered colonial power structures, but to also reform political structures starting by acknowledging and embracing indigenous knowledge systems and practices when designing gender equality legal and policy frameworks. This promotes a more inclusive decision making process. It is also important to use an intersectional approach, taking into account the needs of specific groups of women those being represented and those participating in the political leadership landscape because women in Zimbabwe have diverse experiences. This will contribute to realizing gender transformation, as it will target both institutional structures and the lives of individual women.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter examined the political leadership landscape in Zimbabwe, and discussed women's political participation and representation at the national level in the National Assembly, Senate and Cabinet. It highlighted the effects of existing frameworks for gender equality in structuring

and transforming the participation and representation of women in Zimbabwe's political sector. The chapter started by giving an historical overview of women who participated in the anticolonial struggle, highlighting how they challenged gender norms. The chapter examined post-independence Zimbabwe, showing the ways in which the postcolonial government attempted to address historical gendered inequalities using frameworks designed to advance gender equality. In doing so, it also revealed how patriarchal and masculine tendencies that were prevalent under the colonial administration and within liberation movements, were reestablished in the newly independent Zimbabwe.

In the context of legal and policy frameworks for gender equality, that govern women's political participation and representation, the chapter provided an analysis the Lancaster House Agreement of 1979, the Global Political Agreement (GPA) of 2008, the new Constitution of Zimbabwe adopted in 2013, and the National Gender Policy (2013-2017). The chapter gave a broad overview of women's political representation and participation in Africa. Thereafter, it provided an examination of women's political representation and participation at the national level in Zimbabwe between 1979 -2018. Here, the chapter demonstrated that although there has been an increase in women's political representation in the National Assembly, Senate, and Cabinet since independence, it has been marginal and continues to fall short of the 50-50 threshold required by regional and national gender legal and policy frameworks for gender equality. It highlighted how the quota has been effective in increasing women's political representation but has differently shaped the realities and experiences of women nominated through it. Some women on the quota system are ridiculed and their credibility is questioned by their counterparts since they would have not run for office. For others, their ability to shape decision making processes is undermined, hence affecting their meaningful political participation.

Using the decolonial intersectional feminist theoretical framework introduced in Chapter 2 and drawing from the discussion on the structural subordination and exclusion of African women in the hands of the colonial state and African patriarchy in Chapter 4, the chapter has shown that the limitations of gender equality frameworks is as a result of an institutional or structural gap. It has illustrated that the gendered colonial power structures established under colonialism in Zimbabwe have continued to flourish in postcolonial political structures. They have reinforced patriarchal colonial structures and systematic inequalities, thereby impeding the effective implementation of frameworks for gender equality. The chapter has shown that advancing gender transformation in Zimbabwe's political leadership will require more than the numerical increase of women's political representation. What is instead required is that these

existing structures are dismantled and transformed. The political systems in postcolonial Zimbabwe are informed by the inherited and sustained colonial governance structures. The chapter has also emphasized the significance of an intersectional approach in the design and implementation of gender equality frameworks, so as to account for the intersecting identity categories that shape women's realities and experiences in postcolonial Zimbabwe, including but not limited to, race, class, and ethnicity. This will promote inclusivity and take into account the diversity of women's backgrounds in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER SIX: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the qualitative data that was collected in Zimbabwe and offers an interpretation of research findings within the context of the overall framing of the thesis. The aim of the study has been to analyse the ways in which gendered power structures that are deeply rooted in colonialism have contributed in the shaping of gender transformation in Zimbabwe's political leadership landscape. The objectives guiding the research study, which this chapter intends to speak to, include i) to identify the effects of current legal and policy frameworks for gender equality in structuring and transforming the participation and representation of women in the political leadership landscape in Zimbabwe ii) to understand the experiences of women within the political sector in Zimbabwe iii) to identify strategies to address gendered colonial power structures and enhance the effectiveness of legal and policy frameworks for gender equality.

Gender transformation in the context of this research study is positioned as targeting both institutional structures and the lives of individual women, to effectively confront the structures of oppression (O'Neil and Eyben, 2013). From this perspective, gender transformation tackles gender inequality in the lives of individual women and also through structural changes in gender ideologies. The research interview questions were framed in the context of the research questions and objectives. The in-depth structured interviews were conducted with 12 women politicians including members of parliament, councillors, and human rights activists. The in-depth structured interviews in person were held in 2022 and 2023 in Harare and Bulawayo, and over the online platforms of Zoom and WhatsApp.

Chapter 3 provided more details on the research methodology of the study including the research approach and design, sample selection, methods of data collection, and the data analysis process. Thematic analysis was applied as a data analysis technique; it was utilized for the development of themes based on the study's research questions and objectives and theoretical underpinnings.

Importantly, four themes emerged from the data analysis process, including i) the evaluation of the effectiveness of gender policy frameworks ii) barriers in political leadership iii) conceiving gender equality and transformation iv) the effects of the colonial legacy on gender expectations. These form the subsections of this chapter.

The core argument of this chapter is that colonial gendered power structures that consolidate patriarchy norms have been inherited and reinforced within postcolonial political structures in Zimbabwe, and thus becoming a contributing factor in hindering endeavours towards gender transformation. This then underscores the necessity of dismantling and reforming these structures to ensure that instruments that have been developed to address gender inequalities are impactful and transformative. The research findings reveal that although attempts have been made to promote gender equality through frameworks, there has been lack of their effective implementation. Moreover, women have encountered structural barriers, including gendered discrimination, societal and cultural norms, financial challenges, lack of unity among women, gendered campaigns, and gender-based violence. The intersection of these have undermined women's equal political participation and representation, and have also shaped their experiences within the political environment in Zimbabwe.

6.2 Themes emerging from the data

This section presents the research findings using four major themes identified during the data analysis process. Each of these themes will be discussed in depth in the course of this chapter. The next two sections will provide an analysis and interpretation of the research findings presented in this section.

- I. **Evaluation of the effectiveness of gender policy frameworks** – perspectives regarding the effectiveness of existing gender policy frameworks in addressing gender inequalities within the political context.
- II. **Barriers in political leadership** – challenges that exist for women contesting for key political leadership positions.

- III. **Conceiving gender equality and transformation** – views on what it would take to achieve gender equality and transformation within the political context in Zimbabwe.
- IV. **Colonial legacy on gender expectations** – effects of colonialism on the conceptualization of gender in Zimbabwe.

THEMES	CODES
Evaluation of the effectiveness of gender policy frameworks	i. Improved political representation ii. Absence of implementation iii. Lack of political will iv. Lack of commitment v. Patriarchal systems
Barriers in political leadership	i. Lack of unity among women ii. Societal and cultural norms iii. Gendered discrimination iv. Gendered Campaigns v. Financial challenges vi. Gender-based violence
Conceiving gender equality and gender transformation	i. Involvement of grassroots women ii. Gender non-discrimination iii. Change of electoral system iv. Policy implementation v. Gender balance
Colonial legacy on gender expectations	i. Patriarchal structures

6.2.1 Theme 1: Evaluation of the effectiveness of legal and policy frameworks or gender equality

When using the study's theoretical framework, discussed in Chapter 2, to account for the research findings, it was argued that the effects of gender equality frameworks that seek to address historical gender imbalances in Zimbabwe's are shaped by inherited gendered power structures deeply-rooted in colonialism. It was argued that these continue to define postcolonial governance systems and structures. Although these instruments aim to promote women's equal political participation and representation, the structures that they are embedded within, bolster systematic inequalities stemming from colonial legacies. These gendered colonial structures have hindered the effective implementation of gender equality instruments because they were established in such a way that excluded and marginalized women. As a result of institutional continuities, these structures compromise the impact gender equality frameworks might have had in addressing gender inequalities, thus serving patriarchal colonial interests in postcolonial Zimbabwe. This thematic section gives insight into the effect existing legal and policy frameworks have in addressing gender inequalities within the political sector, as revealed by participants.

While a considerable number of women raised concerns about the lack of the implementation of legal and policy frameworks for gender equality, intended to address gender inequalities within the political landscape, there were nevertheless those few who shared positive feedback considering the progress realized in women's political representation.

Some of the women politicians interviewed acknowledged that there has been improvement in women's political representation since independence, although marginal, and that on paper at least, the legal and policy frameworks are solid. However, the problem is that there is lack of implementation.

For example, Honorable Joana Mamombe, an elected Citizen Coalitions for Change (CCC) MP for Harare West Constituency, commented

“In Zimbabwe we have everything in black and white, as I said in our blueprint right, which actually supports gender equality...so for me it's a question of implementation”
(15 March, Harare).

In reference to the quota system, she admits that “if we didn't have the quota system, definitely it was going to be a loss on our part”. However, she is against the extension of the quota system beyond the initially stipulated 10 years.

She has observed,

“To some extent...I think our political parties, they are now relaxed, that’s to say woman you got your PR you see relax, don’t go for the constituency have your quota system” (15 March, Harare)

As a result, this has caused a dilemma whereby some women tend to also relax. As such, she thinks that “it’s the time to realize this is enough, we have built the capacity that we wanted, we have built the momentum that we wanted, so now let’s leave PR and go the zebra system”.

Her reasoning is that, “What is in our constitution lets implement that, let’s have 50/50. Why not? Because it’s there in our constitution so I think now we need to go 50/50” (15 March, Harare).

Similarly, Linda K Sibanyoni who contested as an independent MP for the Harare East Constituency seat in 2018, made the observation,

“Our situation here in Zimbabwe is cracked by an inability to implement you know what we have agreed on policy wise. We do have the policies, the structures, but why is it not translating on the ground? That is something that we need to look at” (17 March, Whatsapp)

She further explained,

“You know we have that 50/50 policy, that is in parliament we are supposed to be 50/50, on boards we are supposed to be 50/50. It is good as a policy but effectively it has not been implemented, it has not been fully implemented. We also have the quota system in parliament that was also a bridge for more women to try and participate you know, get more representation in parliament, but even though sometimes that quota is not met” (17 March, WhatsApp).

For Lucia Matibenga, who was an elected MP for Kuwadzana Constituency from 2008 to 2015, and also the Minister of Labour and Public Service from 2009 to 2013, under the MDC faction led by Tendai Biti, since independence gender equality legal and policy frameworks have improved women’s political representation and participation. Speaking of the quota system, she says,

“I am extremely happy with those efforts around what I may call affirmative action, what I may call quotas that then enable women to at least find themselves in those leadership spaces”.

However, she highlighted that,

“Practically we are still very far from achieving that what our constitution stipulates...we want to see the liberate efforts by political parties to do gender mainstreaming as they come up with their leadership structures” (9 April, Zoom).

Her point of view is that,

“For me the laws I have no problem but I think we need now to get down, sit down as women’s rights activists and say how do we make sure that the implementation happens” (9 April, Zoom).

Similarly, Honorable Tatenda Mavetera, an elected PR Zanu PF MP for Chikomba West, and the newly appointed Minister of ICT, Postal and Courier Services following the 2023 general elections, in reference to the quota system remarked “when I look at PR, I do not want to lie to you, I feel we have done quite significant things” (10, April, Harare). She went on to make examples of specific women within Zanu PF who were appointed as MPs through the quota system and eventually became senators and ministers of states.

She commented,

“Those women would not have become the ministers of the state if it were not that, they had been put in through the PR system. So, for us we celebrate it because we have women who are occupying certain positions of power and authority, for me I feel that is a step in the right direction” (10 April, Harare).

In addition, expanding on how she has benefited from the quota system she highlighted “so far I am now an assistant speaker”, referring to one of the positions she then occupied in the parliament. As such she is of the opinion that “there is progress which is being made in terms of the representation of women” (10 April, Harare). Her concluding remarks on this particular issue were that “the PR which is there, right now it is effective” (10 April, Harare).

Linda Tsungirirai Masarira, a human rights defender, former spokesperson of the MDC faction led by Thokozani Khuphe and the founding and current President of Labour, Economist, and African Democrats (LEAD) political party, states that “We actually have a good gender policy in Zimbabwe that lacks implementation” (10 March, Harare). In regard to the impact of gender equality frameworks since independence in the context of women’s political representation, she is of the opinion that “they have never made any difference; we just have policies that have never been implemented”, acknowledging that “Zimbabwe is one of the countries that come

up with the best policies in every aspect, but the issue goes back to implementation” yet “as long as we are not implementing the gender policies that we have we will never achieve 50/50 gender balance in this country” (10 March, Harare). Sharing her views on the quota system, Linda reflected that “the quota system is useless, it has not addressed anything”.

She observed,

“I have never heard anyone advancing the women’s agenda who went through Parliament through the quota system, I have not heard of such” (10 March, Harare).

Tendai Lynette Mudehwe a political activist and former women’s coordinator for MDC-T, stated that,

“Gender policies that we have in Zimbabwe they are just policies; they are pieces of paper... We have a bus but it does not have wheels” (7 March, Harare). She made an example saying “currently in Zimbabwe let’s not even go far and deep, look at our Presidium, we do not have 50/50 in the Presidium, it’s all men”.

Further highlighting, “The parliament is not 50/50, so all these policies are just paper, paperwork but there is no implementation and there are no laws to enforce the implementation of these policies” (7 March, Harare).

The data findings pointed to the multifaceted and oftentimes difficult experiences encountered by women elected through the quota system, with some describing cases of being ridiculed. These narratives and experiences draw attention to the complex nature of the issues that continue to engulf women within the realm of political leadership, underscoring the need for strategies that are extensive and inclusive to effectively address these issues.

Honorable Stella Ndlovu, an elected Citizen Coalitions for Change (CCC) MP for Luveve Constituency, had this to say “although the country is trying, we have not reached where we are supposed to reach. We still have a lot of gaps” (April, Bulawayo).

She shared her opinion that,

“The quota system is problematic because those who are elected under Proportional Representation are given names. They are called Baccossi [A Government grocery relief system extended to the public during the hyper inflationary environment of 2008], free things and such kind of words are used in reference to them. I have spoken to those in the PR and they said next time they would rather contest for an elected constituency

seat hence some of them are now vying for elected constituencies and we are seeing some of them have started campaigning” (April, 2023).

This interview finding is consistent with what was highlighted in the literature in Chapter 4, within the section that discusses the implications of the electoral women’s quota on women’s political representation, pointing to how MPs elected through the quota system are ridiculed by those who have been directly elected (Maphosa et al 2015:149).

Sikhululekile Moyo, an elected Citizen Coalitions for Change (CCC) Councilor for Bulawayo Ward 17, is of the view that the minimal representation of women in political leadership positions is that “leadership at top is failing to implement the 2013 Constitution which is clear” (April, 2023).

With reference to the quota system, she observed that

“The quota system from my observation in my own political party and what I’m obtaining on the ground is that men no longer want women to contest for elected political positions. They contend that women should just wait for PR positions...Men now want to occupy all the contested seats” (April, 2023).

As a result, she revealed that she never wants to be elected under the quota system. She reveals that those “who were elected through PR are now being called names, Baccossi” (April, 2023).

For Honorable Musa Ncube, Zanu PF MP for Tsholotsho South, the outcomes of the frameworks have been limited. She commented,

“To a certain extent they have been effective, the number of women participating in politics is increasing” (April, 2023).

The biggest challenge in her view is that “the implementation part is not satisfactory”. She once again highlights the disregard that women elected through the quota system experience, saying that they “are relegated to back benchers” (April, 2023). However, she is a proponent of the extension of the quota system term, and expressed gratitude toward the approved extension of the quota system to 2028.

Some women seem to slightly differ on their views regarding the current gender equality frameworks, for them they seem to have solely yielded positive results, as they have only shared positive feedback. For example, Honorable Stars Mathe, Zanu PF Committee Central Member and MP for Nkayi South had this to say,

“The country’s laws are very supportive to women. Quota system has assisted a lot of women to participate in political process. We have women who are elected across the political divide to represent their political parties in Parliament without going for an election. This is supported by the country’s Constitution”.

Similarly, Honorable Elizabeth Masuku Zanu PF Central Committee Member and Proportional Representation MP for Matabeleland North, had this to say,

“The laws that are there, support women’s participation in politics, even the President supports them, the President has appointed so many women in leadership positions...this has given us confidence as women to stand our ground” (April, Bulawayo).

She spoke highly of and praised the gender equality legal and policy frameworks. She remarked,

“The policies are more supportive for women, initially it seems women’s rights were not being prioritized but now we feel there is a deliberate effort to support women and we would want to thank the President and the Second Republic. In the Second Republic there is nothing that is done without including gender. So, we are happy with the laws, we are happy with the Government for involving more women” (April, Bulawayo).

These diverse perspectives within this thematic section, serve as an urgent call for intervention, encouraging a more gender-responsive approach, that will lead to effective implementation of legal and policy frameworks for gender equality.

6.2.2 Theme 2: Barriers to political leadership

This thematic section highlights the various barriers that women in politics encounter, as articulated by the women politicians who were interviewed. These challenges frustrate women’s meaningful political participation and representation. From gendered discrimination to societal and cultural norms, absence of solidarity among women, gendered campaigns, financial challenges, and gender-based violence in the form of sexual violence, physical violence, psychological violence, political violence, emotional and verbal abuse. Their male counterparts emerged at the center of these experiences within political structures such as parliament and political parties, especially considering that these are male dominated.

The research findings in this theme, validate what was highlighted in Chapter 4 in the literature examined the gendered nature of the colonial state, thereof it’s institutions of governance that

systematically marginalized African women by creating gender hierarchies that shape the realities and experiences of women in politics. Chapters 2 and 4, also illustrate the sexual and physical violence that women experienced in the colonies. This phenomenon has continued in postcolonial political structures in Zimbabwe, as evidenced by patriarchal tendencies that seek to sabotage women in political leadership. Further, societal and cultural norms play a major role in aggravating gendered discriminations, highlighting an intersection between traditional patriarchal structures with patriarchal colonial structures to undermine women's political participation. As such act a barrier to political leadership

This thematic section will uncover the complexity of these barriers. This will provide an understanding of the multifaceted reality that frames women's experiences within the political leadership landscape.

Gendered discrimination shows up as a persistent barrier, deeply embedded within political structures, hindering the advancement of women to positions of political leadership. Hon Joana Mamombe shared that there is patriarchal dominance that result in gendered stereotypes in politics. This usually poses as a challenge when she engages her constituency and even her male counterparts in parliament.

She explained,

“I have faced gendered criticism...which affects my work...it affects me mentally, then obviously it will affect me socially” (15 March, Harare).

Hon Tatenda Mavetere recounted instances of sexual harassment where as a woman politician, male counterparts sometimes subtle or explicitly demand sexual favors within the political landscape. She shared,

“When you are in positions that we are in, people want to take advantage of you...this always comes with your gender” (10 April, Harare).

Linda Tsungirirai Masarira, expressed that the patriarchal nature and dominance within the Zimbabwean political systems play a significant role in gender-based discrimination with the political environment. She recalls, “Even when I was in the MDC, I was never given space...”, saying this was because of “the sexism, the marginalization of women in the party” (10 March, Harare). In referencing to one of the party leaders whose identity will not be revealed here, she mentioned,

“He is one of the most misogynistic men I ever seen in my life, in a meeting you would be speaking, and he would tell you ‘shut up, we do not want to hear what you have to say’. You know these are things that I have faced” (10 March, Harare).

Similarly, Lucia Matibenga shared that political institutions are male dominated. She made an example of how elective processes at congress within political parties are dominated by male delegates, where women delegates are in the minority. In that regard,

“It means if your campaign is going to yield that you have to be elected, it has to resonate across all the delegates, men and women. So, the fact that there are not many women in decision making positions... makes it very difficult for women to even make it to the top” (9 April, Zoom).

Even during the colonial era as previously noted in chapter four, there was a dominance of men in positions of authority within structures of governance resulting in the exclusion of women in significant decision making positions.

These interview data findings highlight the prevalence of gendered power structures and dynamics, uncovering the systematic marginalization faced by women within political institutions.

Societal and cultural norms further aggravate gendered discrimination within the political landscape, often impeding women’s political aspirations. Linda Tsungirirai Masarira stated that society still views women as second-class citizens. She mentioned that,

“We also have a section of the society that is uncouth, that is intolerant of women who want to venture into leadership, they are viewed with gender lenses, they are called all sorts of names; whore, a woman of loose morals, an uncontrollable woman and unsubmitive woman.” (10 March, Harare).

She shared that marriage was a barrier for women’s participation in politics, explaining that “a man will tell you that I do not want you to participate in politics” (10 March, Harare). Also, she identified cultural norms as a hurdle, commenting “We also have the distorted cultural barrier, where our culture got distorted along the way and they say women cannot lead” (10 March, Harare).

Similarly, Stella Ndlovu, highlighted that when women get married it becomes difficult to pursue politics due to patriarchal tendencies within the family. She mentioned,

“men do not want to see their wives in leadership positions that are higher than theirs...because there is a common belief that a woman’s place is in the kitchen...the woman is expected to cook and bear and nurture children” (April, Bulawayo). She went on to add that “women struggle let alone to even join politics as their husbands will not even tolerate the idea. So, because of that many women have decided to take a step back” (April, Bulawayo).

Moreover, some interviewees pointed out to family responsibilities as one of the notable barriers constraining women’s political participation, identifying challenges in juggling family obligations with commitments to politics. Lucia Matibenga explained that their male counterparts who are married “have an assistant in the form of a partner or a wife looking after the family while they go on a chase for power” (9 April, Zoom). Yet, in the case of women politicians as wives and mothers they are likely to choose family obligations over the pursuit of political leadership, as a result she remarked “Already you are on your back foot as a candidate” (9 April, Zoom). Similarly, Hon Joana Mamombe expressed,

“We have kids to look after, we have siblings, we have other you know roles that the society expects us to do you see. So, who would want to join politics with all the hustle, honestly?” (15 March, Harare).

Financial challenges have also emerged as an additional obstacle for women contesting for political office, such as insufficient and unequal access to campaign financial resources. Hon Joana Mamombe shared that most women lack financial independence and struggle financially. In this regard, when they are faced with a decision of where to channel the limited resources that they have, she stated “what you think of first is your family” as a result “the lack of resources has really affected women, to actually participate” (15 March, Harare). Also, Linda K Sibanyoni shared,

“You have to pour in a lot of your own resources and sometimes as a woman, you have to make a choice on either to sacrifice for family or sacrifice for yourself. Sometimes and most of the times you end up choosing family” (17 March, WhatsApp). Hon Stella Ndlovu, also explained that being active in politics requires financial stability because “Money is needed for campaigns and it’s not just campaigning. There is so much to be done that require financial muscle in politics so women struggle” (April, Bulawayo).

Sikhululekile Moyo, shared that electoral processes are usually challenging for women because “men will be having money”. She revealed,

“I’m a single mother and I need to take care of my children and at the same time you need money. So, when you are campaigning the electorate is expecting to be given some money and other things” (April, Bulawayo).

Again, Hon Stars Mathe highlighted financial handicap as a challenge stating “as women we don’t have any means compared to men”, as a result she expressed that “Equal opportunities can only come when women are supported financially. Women need to access finances without collateral” (April, Bulawayo).

These interview data findings indicate the urgent necessity of particular financial support structures aimed at addressing the hurdle caused by financial limitations and promote women’s meaningful political participation.

There have been cases of gender-based violence in the form of physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, political violence, emotional abuse, and verbal abuse; perpetrated against women in politics. This has had a negative impact on the proportion of women who participate in politics. Hon Joana Mamombe remarked,

“Our political culture right now in Zimbabwe its marred with violence that’s the honest truth...so you see so that violence, it deters women from participating so woman do not want violence we need also to create a safe space so that it’s not violent” (15 March, Harare).

She further revealed,

“I have gone through a lot as an individual you see if other women who would want to join politics look at me as a legislator with what I have gone through, the trauma, the physical harassment, the abuse, the prosecution, the persecution and all those things that I have gone through. Who would want to join politics? So that’s the violence I am talking about, it’s not only just physical but also emotional violence you know what you go through every day. You see at some point I had to be taken into a mental institution because I was deteriorating mentally you know with so much depression, so much anxiety” (15 March, Harare).

Similarly, Linda K Sibanyoni shared,

“I will speak from a safety position; politics is not safe at all, there is physical threat, there is mental threat, there is emotional threat. You go through so much when you dare to even say you want to contest. I speak of my experience as an independent politician

and I am independent because I could not take the abusive nature of political parties. So even women in political parties still suffer from mental threats, physical threats, emotional threats, you know and all those things” (17 March, WhatsApp).

Also, Linda Tsungirirai Masarira when talking about the barriers that exist for women contesting for political office, she commented, “its political violence, the sexual harassment, the sexual abuse in political parties...” (10 March, Harare).

Hon Musa Ncube also expressed that political parties need to have policies in place that protect women politicians against violence and abuse. She shared,

“The abuse that we encounter as female politicians is very serious. We are being insulted and recently I was involved in a fight with a former councilor, calling me a whore, a prostitute and all sorts of names and I ended up taking him to court. But on the party side there have not done anything and if they are no clear policies, it becomes very, very, difficult” (April, Bulawayo).

Tendai Lynette Mudehwe, revealed that during the 2008 general elections that were marred with political violence, her life was in danger. Describing her experience, she shared,

“I stopped going home during election times because I was being hunted now everywhere. Even at the hotels I was living, I was using pseudo names... it was a war and all the leadership of the party had gone into hiding” (7 March, Harare).

The lack of unity among women within the political landscape is another barrier, that has further created complexities when contesting for political office. Hon Joana Mamombe speaking from her own perspective as a young woman had this to say,

“The time that probably I wanted to contest I found out that a lot of women were probably supporting men than women. I think lack of support from maybe older women who have walked the journey, who have been there” (15 March, Harare).

She made an example how older women who have occupied seats through the quota system for the past 10 years, “they want to remain in there because it’s comfortable” as a result this hinders the number of young women taking space (15 March, Harare). Also, Linda K Sibanyoni explains,

“I must say that the women that have gone before us in political leadership have not held the door open for the young, for the young female politicians” (17 March, WhatsApp). She further explained that older women in politics “They have not done so

much to protect the young female politicians from the abuses that they endured and, in some cases, I have seen women abusing each other you know” (17 March, WhatsApp).

For Hon Tatenda Mavetera, there is a pull her down syndrome describing it as “women not supporting each other”, further emphasizing “We don’t support each other and we pull each other down” (10 April, Harare). Linda K Sibanyoni also reiterated this,

“The pull her down syndrome at play in political circles especially and it is just a sad case we find ourselves in in Zimbabwe” (17 March, WhatsApp). Hon Stars Mathe similarly highlighted “we hate each other as women...Women in power abuse their power against other women” (April, Bulawayo).

Hon Elizabeth Masuku shared,

“The challenges that we experience is that as women we do not support each other. If you put a woman and a man for a political position women will opt to elect a man because we largely look down upon each other” (April Bulawayo).

However, she highlighted,

“We have tried to discuss the matter as women in leadership positions and we believe there is a semblance of change. We are seeing more women supporting each other” (April, Bulawayo).

Gendered campaigns, particularly the biased representation of women in the media has emerged as another barrier impacting women in politics. Lucy Matibenga had this say,

“One of the things as well is our media, they will go for your scandals rather than for the little efforts you are making in trying to sustain a campaign or to gain votes... So, the media is not very friendly to women aspiring to political office and it still remains the biggest nightmare for women as they seek political office” (9 April, Zoom).

Sikhululekile Moyo, shared that

“Right now, there is social media and it is demoralizing for most women, women are vilified on social media and most of the backdown due to backlash on social media” (April, Bulawayo).

In addition, she revealed

“We are still advocating for free spaces that you can use to stand up and talk. Right now, women who are in politics are afraid of being bullied on social media so they stay

away from the platform. Even for young women who are in politics who use social media, they are also vilified, instead of focusing on the substance of their content, their social life is interrogated” (April, Bulawayo).

The barriers to political leadership encountered by participants highlighted in this thematic section, draws attention to the obligation of challenging the gendered systematic inequalities deep-rooted in colonialism, that frame their experiences.

6.2.3 Theme 3: Conceiving gender equality and gender transformation

This thematic section looks into the different ways in which gender equality and gender transformation is conceptualized by the women interviewed. The codes that were identified under this thematic section included involvement of grassroots women, gender non-discrimination, change of electoral system, policy implementation and gender balance. Their varied perspectives are critical in aligning initiatives as regards to women’s meaningful political participation and representation. Notably, these point out to the need of structural changes that cannot be accounted for by gender equality framework, and an intersectional approach as discussed in Chapter 2. Taking into account the varied perspectives of women will promote a more inclusive and holistic strategy that recognizes and regards the multifaceted needs of women in postcolonial Zimbabwe. In this way women get to define gender equality and gender transformation according to their own terms.

For some women interviewed, for meaningful gender equality and transformation to be realized, there is a need for a practical implementation of gender policy frameworks. As Hon Joana Mamombe shared,

“Once we implement what is in the constitution the 50/50, for me that would be a clear transformation because I am tired of celebrating the little milestones...for me a transformation is the respect of the constitution” (15 March, Bulawayo).

She went on to explain,

“It’s quite disappointing and its very unfortunate that we don’t have a government or we don’t have a leadership that actually appreciates the role that we play as women in leadership” (15 March, Harare).

Similarly, Hon Tatenda Mavetera expressed that “we need implementation”. Further she stated,

“We need to be able to come up with policies that are measurable and that are capable of being implemented... implementation is also key” (10 April, Harare).

Alluding to the need for the implementation of gender policy framework, Hon Stella Ndlovu also articulated “I would say each party should make it mandatory that out of the 100 seats that we have as a party, 50 should be reserved for women” (April, Bulawayo). Hon Musa Ncube admitted that she didn’t have an all-rounded perspective, however

“There is a lot that needs to be done. We must have clear policies and also implement the country’s constitution that there must be a gender balance. We must achieve 50/50”.

In addition, Tendai Lynette Mudehwe shared that gender equality and gender transformation for her would be,

“Having policies that are supported with laws to implement those policies, involving women at grassroots levels, having proportional gender representatives being elected by women and not appointed by men” (7 March, Harare).

She further emphasized that,

“Women must be engaged from the grassroots levels... Women know what they want as women, let us engage them, ask them what they want and hear from them what they want and start implementing what they want. That gives them ownership of what they will be wanting. It’s unfortunate and very unfair for women to have these pseudo proportional representatives who do not consult the women constituency” (7 March, Harare).

Linda Tsungirirai Masarira, perceives a change in the electoral system a great step toward achieving gender equality. She stated that,

“We just need to change the electoral system... if need be, we are going to push for a constitutional challenge, for women are underrepresented, section 17 is being violated and see how it goes through the constitutional court” (10 March, Harare).

She also highlighted that,

“Genuine gender transformation will be having women holding the levers of power, as long as they are not holding the levers of power, there is no transformation at all because you cannot change what you are not in control of” (10 March, Harare).

Otherwise stated, she is advocating for women to have “equal footing and grounding” (10 March, Harare).

Some women interviewed expressed that gender balance would for them achieve gender equality and transformation. As Lucia Matibenga explained,

“Gender transformation is when gender is not used as a tool of discrimination when contesting for or occupying political leadership positions (9 April, Zoom). For Linda K Sibanyoni, genuine gender transformation would be regardless of gender, people treat each other “with respect and dignity” (17 March, WhatsApp).

The collective perspectives of the interview participants, underscores the need to implement existing gender equality legal and policy frameworks and for structural reforms, that will foster women’s meaningful political participation and representation.

6.2.4 Theme 4: The effects of the colonial legacy on gender expectations

This thematic section focuses on the effects of colonialism on the understanding of gender within the Zimbabwean context as expressed by the women who were interviewed. As was discussed in Chapter 2, in the aftermath of colonialism, the intersection of historical power imbalances, cultural imposition, and patriarchal structures made a long-lasting impact on social conceptions of gender norms. Patriarchal structures emerged as the single code that was identified under this thematic section. Participants struggled to articulate the direct influence of colonial legacies as they may appear as normal norms, instead as colonial impositions. This shows the often unseen nature of colonial legacies. These are so deeply embedded in societal structures and nearly invisible, yet they can shape realities and experiences without conscious awareness. As such this thematic section is short. Using the reflections of interviewees, this thematic section provides an overview of these and their influence on existing attitudes toward gender equality.

As demonstrated in Chapter 4, gender norms were significantly impacted and patriarchal structures reinforced by colonialism, as a result women were relegated to subordinate positions. As Linda K Sibanyoni has this to say,

“Our societies were traditionally matriarchal...when colonialism brought in gender roles that were in contradiction of what you know society had been used to (chuckles), that’s when now we have these equality issues, but the African society has traditionally been matriarchal” (17 March, WhatsApp).

She further explained,

“African men had traditionally never had problems with women leading. Our African society never had problems with the matriarchal society, never had the problems with gender up until colonialism brought in these opposite or polar gender roles (chuckles) you know” (17 March, WhatsApp).

Tendai Lynette Mudehwe, highlighted

“Colonialism is a system; It came with the religious part of it, the political, social and economic system part of it. Yet, we had our own system, our own religious, political, economic and social system as well before colonialism” (7 March, Harare).

Contrary to the narratives that women were oppressed during precolonial times, she highlighted that women were respected and held in high regard, and therefore during and after colonialism she doesn't understand “How does that person become a second-class citizen?” (7 March, Harare).

Lucia Matibenga, assertively stated, “colonialism brought about disadvantages to women” using Harare and Bulawayo, she explained that the economic system that colonialism introduced where women were restricted to rural areas while their husbands were working in mines, farms and industries in towns, separated communities and families. According to Lucia Matibenga “that was the starting point of decimating a people who were developing together” (9 April, Zoom). She further revealed that “we had our own structures that respected women”, as a result she says “I am blaming it all on these colonial structures of the economy, which they introduced, and social structures, which they introduced” (9 April, Zoom).

Taking account of the historical context of gender relations in precolonial and colonial Zimbabwe as shown in Chapter 4, reinforces the necessity of adopting a decolonial intersectional feminist approach in postcolonial Zimbabwe as explored in Chapter 2, to promote initiatives that will help in dismantling embedded gendered colonial structures and fostering gender equality and women's empowerment in all facets of life.

6.3 A decolonial intersectional feminist analysis

Using decolonial feminist lens help us in understanding the multifaceted ways in which colonially shaped power structures, have influenced gender dynamics in postcolonial societies. This theoretical perspective draws attention to the significance of dismantling not just apparent colonial legacies, but also deeply rooted practices and ideologies that persist perpetuating

gender inequality and discrimination. By applying an intersectional perspective, the analysis points to the interplay between gender, class, race and other structural hierarchies, highlighting the mutually reinforcing lingering effects of the colonial system on the different aspects of the lives of women in postcolonial societies (Lugones, 2011:75).

In the context of postcolonial Africa, using a decolonial intersectional perspective draws attention to the manner in which colonialism introduced patriarchal structures, that not only subordinated African women but also entrenched hierarchal norms and systems that continue to exist. It underscores the relevance of acknowledging women's diverse experiences within different social, cultural, geopolitical and economic contexts, giving insight to the specific challenges experienced by underrepresented groups (Tamale, 2020:40-41). By recognizing the historical context in which colonialism is situated within, a decolonial feminist perspective attempts to challenge hegemonic narratives, represent marginalized voices, and establish a transformational pathway that fosters gender equality and an inclusive approach to development in the African continent (Tamale, 2020). My study focused on women in the political leadership landscape in Zimbabwe, however it does recognize the effects that politics and the gender equality legal and policy frameworks that govern it have on the lives of women who are not in mainstream politics.

Considering that my data analysis process was not only guided by my research questions and objectives, but also the theoretical lens of decolonial intersectional feminism, here I integrate the research findings within the theoretical framework. The research findings reveal that the research participants had varied perspectives regarding the effects legal and policy frameworks or gender equality have had in addressing gender equality in governance and political institutions as it regards to structuring and transforming women's political participation and representation. Most participants shared the view that on paper the gender equality policy frameworks are good, however they lack implementation. Patriarchal structures emerged during the interviews as one of the major causes of the absence of implementation.

The decolonial intersectional feminist perspective helped with investigating how colonial gender ideologies played a role in reinforcing patriarchal structures within the existing political institutions, affecting the effective implementation of gender policy frameworks. It assisted in understanding how colonial gender norms persist in influencing power dynamics, resulting in the continuation of colonial historical gender inequalities in the political context. Research findings reveal that the political leadership landscape is dominated by men as it was during the

colonial era, where they dominated within both indigenous communities and colonial administrations. Hence, these are institutionalized patriarchal norms.

Moreover, some participants perceived a lack of commitment and political will as one of the factors influencing the implementation of gender equality legal and policy frameworks. This is anchored in the colonial social and historical context. A decolonial intersectional feminist perspective in this study helps to situate existing gendered colonial power structures within past inequalities. As the study has shown in Chapter 4, under the discussion of colonial policies as instruments of control and exclusion in colonial Zimbabwe, institutions of governance during colonialism lacked accountability and responsiveness with respect to the welfare of the African population, especially women who were excluded from the colonial political economy. These institutional weaknesses have been adapted in postcolonial political systems, and they keep undermining initiatives to advance gender equality, and hinder the practical implementation of gender policy frameworks. The lack of implementation suggests a neglect of women's needs, which is not a new phenomenon.

Participants revealed that some women, especially those elected through the quota system, have in some instances encountered ridicule and belittlement from both men and women. As reflected in Chapter 4, under the section that examines patriarchal structures and the colonial state, traditional patriarchal structures adapted to colonial patriarchal structures to create new structures domination. The experiences of some of the women elected through the quota system reflects a similar dynamic where deeply entrenched gender biases intersect with power struggles to resist women's meaningful political representation, albeit in often invisible way. An intersectional lens helps uncover how women in politics have different experiences, therefore underscoring the need for the application of an intersectional approach in the design and implementation of gender equality frameworks, to foster a political environment that account for the realities of different groups of women.

Although women's political participation and representation remains marginal, the research findings indicate that there has been an improvement since independence, especially with the introduction of the quota system. This progress has empowered some women in politics. As a result, of the quota system some women have become MPs, Senators and Ministers. However, although quotas seek to redress gendered historical injustices in postcolonial Zimbabwe, when examining this positive milestone using decolonial intersectional feminist lens, quotas do not effectively challenge colonial power structures, as these can still continue influencing the political landscape. Women's representation may be increased, but it does not mean women's

diverse experiences are fully represented or that these women have power to shape decision making processes as illustrated by the research findings from the literature in Chapter 5 and from some participants interviewed. If structural transformation does not take place, the quota system can inadvertently function as a reinforcement of gendered colonial power structures. This way, the quota system can promote a more inclusive and collaborative decision-making process that has potential to represent the different realities of marginalized groups, if an intersectional approach is adopted.

The barriers identified within the thematic section of barriers in political leadership, align with the decolonial intersectional feminist theoretical framework which can be applied on different analytical levels. The research findings revealed barriers that women encounter in the political leadership landscape are deep-seated in cultural, societal and institutional structures. The reality being that more than anything colonial legacies are systematic and structural; they inform political systems in postcolonial Zimbabwe as discussed in the previous chapters. As such, they continue to perpetuate structural patterns that sabotage women's meaningful participation and representation.

Furthermore, the research findings reveal that societal and cultural norms are also barriers to women's effective political participation. These hinder women's political aspirations and propagate stigmas that undermine women's leadership capabilities. As shown in Chapter 4, within the section of the analysis of patriarchal structures and the colonial state, colonial power structures intersected with traditional power structures, establishing new structures of subjugating African women. In the context of the research findings, these societal and cultural norms are as a result of the intersection of colonial power structures with traditional power structures, establishing barriers that impede women's political participation, underpinning the idea that political leadership is reserved for men.

For example, Hon Stella Ndlovu shared that

“Men do not want to see their wives in leadership positions that are higher than theirs...because there is a common belief that a woman's place is in the kitchen...the woman is expected to cook and bear and nurture children” (April, Bulawayo).

As Schmidt (1992:2) observes that “African women's unequal access to power and resources is not exclusively the result of colonial capitalism. The household...has been a fundamental locus of gender stratification, and this of African women's oppression”. In the same vein, Linda Tsungirirai Masarira mentioned that

“We also have a section of the society that is uncouth, that is intolerant of women who want to venture into leadership, they are viewed with gender lenses, they are called all sorts of names; whore, a woman of loose morals, an uncontrollable woman and unsubmitive woman” (10 March, Harare).

There is a continuation of colonial era tendency, as Chapter 4 showed how different ideological constructions of African women emerged because they challenged colonial gendered political economic structures by exercising mobility. African women were regarded as naturally immoral and perceived to have turned to being “defiant and obstinate” (Barnes, 1992:589).

In addition, women in political leadership have faced intimidation and gender-based violence. This is a tool that has been historically used since the colonial administration, to exclude and undermine women. For example, Chapter 4 has shown how urban spaces became gendered during the colonial era where African women’s presence in towns was viewed “out of place” (Jeater, 2000:35). Moreover, as illustrated in Chapter, as part of the section on pass laws and the 1936 Native Registration Act, These colonial structures and power differentials have been adapted in postcolonial Zimbabwe, Barnes (1997) shows how African women were arrested and harassed in towns. Similarly, although in a different context, in postcolonial Zimbabwe women experience politics as a gendered environment. What’s striking is that most of the participants that highlighted gender-based violence as a barrier, belong to opposition political parties with the exception of one who is a member of Zanu PF, the ruling political party. What is evident here is the intersection of gender with political affiliation, exacerbating women’s vulnerability to different manners of abuse in the political environment.

Research findings also highlight how ongoing colonial legacies have influenced gender expectations, as previously reflected in Chapter 4 the manner in which colonialism disrupted existing gender relations, creating colonial gender expectations. Decolonial intersectional feminist lens help uncover a nuanced intersection between historical power imbalances, cultural imposition, and patriarchal structures. Patriarchal structures embedded in colonial gender ideologies are exposed, and how these bolster colonial gender expectations, shaping and undermining women’s political participation and representation.

6.4 Interpretation of the research findings

The aim of this study was to examine how gendered power structures deep-rooted in colonialism have contributed to shaping gender transformation in Zimbabwe’s political leadership landscape. According to the research findings, there is an endurance gendered

colonial power structures and amongst other challenges within existing political structures. These patriarchal colonial structures have been inherited and preserved within postcolonial political structures in Zimbabwe, and also intersect with traditional patriarchal structures to hinder efforts toward gender transformation. Although there have been legal and policy frameworks designed to promote gender equality, there has been lack of their effective implementation. Moreover, women have encountered various barriers that are structural in nature as previously examined in this chapter, these undermine their equal political participation and representation.

In light of the literature reviewed in Chapter 5, and as previously noted in this chapter, as it regards to the effectiveness of legal and policy frameworks for gender equality, most participants positively acknowledged their existence. But they stressed that there has been an absence of effective implementation, while others applauded both the frameworks and implementation process thus far. These research findings validate the argument that legal and policy frameworks for gender equality are inadequate, as they perpetuate structural barriers. They are symbolic and fail to address underlying structural inequalities. It must be noted that the two participants who had positive feedback were all members of the ruling party, Zanu PF. In this regard, it is not known whether this was their genuine perspective or it was out of loyalty to the political party. More than anything, the lack of implementation has been a result of underlying systematic and structural gender hierarchies that inform political systems in postcolonial Zimbabwe, that need to be transformed, as illustrated by the research findings from Chapters 5 and 6.

When such systems are not interrogated, dismantled and transformed, they reinforce and reproduce unequal power dynamics that impeded efforts to address gender inequalities. In reality, the influence that they exert shapes the formulation and implementation processes of gender policy frameworks. Building on the concept of the coloniality of gender and theoretical framework, established in Chapter 2 and the discussions in Chapters 4, and 5, as well as the data presentation and analysis earlier in this chapter, the lack of political will and commitment in implementation of gender legal and policy frameworks is embedded in patriarchal structures that are informed by gendered power structures deep-rooted in colonial legacies. Incorporating women into these patriarchal structures will not lead to gender transformation, rather it will perpetuate a cycle where women's political representation in decision-making is encumbered.

The barriers for women pursuing political leadership, the intersection of these have shaped their experiences within the political context. The barriers that were cited included lack of unity

among women, societal and cultural norms, gendered discrimination, gendered campaigns, financial challenges and gender-based violence. Some participants shared that some of these barriers have negatively impacted not only their political work, but also their mental health. These challenges undermine women's meaningful political participation and representation and are firmly-rooted in cultural, societal, and political structures as previously noted in this chapter. Therefore, there is a need for these structures to be dismantled and reformed in order to address the existing barriers and promote efforts toward gender transformation. For this to effectively take place, it is necessary to understand the ways in which these structures have been adapted to gendered power structures entrenched in colonial systems of governance.

Participants had varied perspectives regarding what it would take to achieve gender equality and transformation within the political context in Zimbabwe. The codes that were identified under this thematic section included, policy implementation, gender non-discrimination, change of electoral system, gender balance, and involvement of grassroots women. Most of the participants emphasized the need for the effective implementation of gender equality legal and policy frameworks with the exception of a few who had different perspectives on what gender equality and transformation would mean for them. As much as implementation would be a step towards the right direction, structural and systematic transformation should be at the forefront of the agenda because colonial legacies are systematic and structural in nature. Solely increasing statistical or numerical women's political representation using legal and policy frameworks is inadequate, this initiative will instead be adapted to patriarchal colonial structures. Consequently, countering gender transformation.

In essence, the research findings illustrate that a decolonial intersectional feminist perspective needs to be taken into account when addressing gender inequalities in the political leadership landscape in Zimbabwe. This will extensively position the emancipation of women in the Zimbabwean political discourse where gender equality is critically examined within the context of colonial gendered power structures. This will allow these structures of colonial legacies to be dismantled and transformed, hence advancing gender transformation in Zimbabwe's political leadership landscape.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter focused on qualitative data presentation and interpretation of research findings. The chapter analysed the qualitative data within the framework of the methodology, theoretical framework and literature review. The qualitative data presentation was divided into four thematic sections which included i) the evaluation of the effectiveness of gender policy

frameworks ii) barriers in political leadership iii) conceiving gender equality and transformation iv) the effect of the colonial legacy on gender expectations.

In accounting for the research findings using the decolonial intersectional feminist theoretical framework discussed in Chapter 2, legacies of gendered colonial power structures shape current legal and policy frameworks for gender equality, defining Zimbabwe's postcolonial political structures. As such, these underlying power structures have obstructed the effective implementation these frameworks for gender equality, compromising their impact. The research findings have illustrated how barriers such as gendered discrimination, societal and cultural norms, gender-based violence including sexual violence, physical violence, psychological violence, political violence, emotional, and verbal abuse, undermine their meaningful participation and representation in politics. The gender hierarchies and systematic violence created by the colonial state as highlighted in Chapters 2 and 4, has flourished within postcolonial institutions of governance and political environment. These patriarchal colonial structures sabotage women who hold political leadership positions, thus framing their realities in politics. The research findings underscore the need for structural changes that legal and policy frameworks cannot account for.

The research findings have shown that the interviewed women in politics have varied perspectives regarding what gender equality and transformation would like to them. Their perspectives included change of electoral system, involvement of grassroots women, policy implementation, gender non-discrimination, and gender balance. Notably, these draw attention to structural changes and an intersectional approach as explained Chapter 2. Taking their varied perspectives into account foster an inclusive and holistic framework that acknowledges the diverse priorities of women in postcolonial Zimbabwe. In essence, through the research findings presented, the chapter has demonstrated that existing legal and policy frameworks for gender equality have hindered gender transformation as a result of gendered colonial structures. Therefore, are inadequate as they have failed to account for gendered colonial continuities. Underlying structural inequalities stemming from colonialism need to be addressed to advance gender transformation.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to analyze the ways in which gendered colonial power structures have contributed to shaping gender transformation in Zimbabwe's political leadership landscape, using a decolonial intersectional feminist perspective. The specific study objectives were to:

- To identify the effects of existing frameworks for gender equality in structuring and transforming the participation and representation of women in the political sector in Zimbabwe.
- To understand the experiences of women within the political sector in Zimbabwe.
- To identify strategies to address gendered colonial power structures and enhance the effectiveness of frameworks for gender equality in Zimbabwe.

This chapter provides a research summary and recaps the key research findings in the context of the research objectives. In providing the research summary, the chapter highlights the original contribution of the study and the gap in the literature that it sought to bridge. The chapter concludes the thesis by reiterating the research findings.

Drawing from Chapters 2-6, the research summary outlines the ways in which colonialism and the capitalist economic system transformed gender relations in African colonies, creating gender hierarchies. In the context of Zimbabwe, existing patriarchal norms were escalated, thus African women were subjugated by both traditional and colonial patriarchy, intersecting to create new structures of oppression. In collaboration with Africa patriarchs, the colonial state used colonial policies to exclude African women from and marginalize them within political and economic structures. Using decolonial intersectional feminist lens, the research summary illustrates how these gendered colonial power structures have flourished in Zimbabwe's postcolonial political structures. As such, research findings have shown that legal and policy frameworks for gender equality those that govern women's political participation and representation at the national level, including National Assembly, Senate,

and Cabinet, have been limited in addressing gender inequalities. It is established that these frameworks are inadequate, rather in their design and implementation, gendered colonial power structures and intersectional identities need to be considered, thus promoting gender transformation in postcolonial Zimbabwe.

7.2 The Research Summary

The research study used a qualitative interpretivist policy analysis approach to analyse the ways in which legacies of gendered colonial power structures have contributed to shaping gender transformation in Zimbabwe's political leadership landscape. Archival records and interviews were used as primary data sources. Purposive and snowball sampling was used to select 12 women who were former, and with some at the time occupying, political leadership positions as cabinet ministers, members of parliament, leaders of political parties, political and human rights activists. In-depth, structured interviews were conducted in person and virtually using the platforms of Zoom and WhatsApp.

Drawing from the schools of thought related to coloniality and decoloniality, the thesis has shown that norms in the socio-economic structures of colonial societies instituted by colonial global capitalism underpin the gender system. It used the concept of the coloniality of gender as understood by Lugones (2010) to emphasize the importance of locating gender within a historical context characterized by oppressive capitalist, racialized, and gendered colonial systems. It has shown that when examining the system of patriarchy, the point of departure needs to be the understanding of the global colonial power structure of capitalism that sustains patriarchy, as noted by Gordon (1996:7). Through the concept of the coloniality of gender, the thesis has shown that the European conception of gender imposed on colonized populations enforced colonially institutionalized hierarchies through sexual violence, the concubine system and exploitation. Although all colonized and enslaved peoples were dehumanized, the gender system imposed subordinated indigenous women to indigenous men. In this way, women were at the intersection of racialization, sexism and sexualization. This systematic violence against women is conceptualized as withstanding colonialism, thus it is understood as the coloniality of gender. This sheds light on locating some of the underlying causes of existing issues, in particular the continued violence against women of colour and gender related inequalities in postcolonial societies.

The thesis has shown that in the African context, gender dynamics have significantly shifted throughout precolonial and colonial times, noting how tradition, power structures and social

identities have evolved. Gender relations in precolonial Africa differed according to region, with some societies reflecting egalitarianism, in some seniority prevailed over gender, whereas others upheld patriarchal customs. In some societies, women made significant contributions to the socio-economic, political, and religious landscapes, yet their social status was often determined by existing cultural norms. Colonialism substantially transformed gender relations, whereby patriarchal gender ideologies were perpetuated, restructuring traditional gender relations. Already existing patriarchies were escalated during the process of colonization, creating more hierarchies thus disadvantaging women. In view of this, there existed patriarchal hierarchies in some precolonial African societies, but these were intensified by the imposed colonial gender system.

Using the context of Zimbabwe to situate gender within an historical context, the thesis has shown that precolonial Zimbabwe was characterized by multifaceted structures of gender relations. Shona women assumed tasks that included agricultural production, gold mining, alluvial gold panning, trading, and spirit of mediumship, illustrating that they played a pivotal role. However, patriarchal ideologies still influenced family structures. Similarly, to other regions in Africa, Zimbabwe experienced a major shift in gender dynamics during the colonial era. The capitalist economic system that colonialism introduced, significantly restructured traditional economic roles and family structures. Although women had historically assumed significant gold mining, agricultural production, alluvial gold panning, and trading, the migrant labour system established usually economically excluded women. Thus, the capitalist economic system worsened existing gender inequalities, sustaining patriarchal norms that constrained their economic independence. Gendered colonial experiences were evident as women lived through oppression inflicted by two intersecting patriarchies, that is traditional and colonial. The impact of the subordination of these two patriarchies differed, for example traditional patriarchy excluded them from positions of decision making, whereas colonial patriarchy restricted their economic and political freedom.

They were also subjected to institutional and legal injustices using colonial policies. Although on the surface these colonial policies were for governance and to uphold social order, they contradictorily emerged as instruments of systematic exclusion and control of African women. Yet, in the face of adversity, African women showed remarkable strength and tenacity, affirming their agency and disrupting the status quo. They strategically undermined both indigenous and colonial patriarchal structures by challenging their assigned traditional roles and exercising mobility which was restricted by state laws and regulations as illustrated

in Chapter 4. By situating gender within a historical context, the thesis provided better insight into the impact of racialization and gendering during colonization.

Through the use of a decolonial intersectional feminist perspective, the study has shown that when designing and implementing legal and policy frameworks for gender equality in postcolonial contexts, the historical, socio-economic and geo-political reality needs to be taken into consideration. It considers how the gendered colonial dynamics continue to shape postcolonial political structures. While that has been the primary focus of the study, it also recognizes the need for legal and policy frameworks for gender equality to be formulated and implemented in such way that accounts for how gendered colonial dynamics intersect with other identity categories such as race, class, and ethnicity, among others to shape women's political representation in Zimbabwe. This is to address women's exclusion and to ensure that those from diverse backgrounds benefit.

The study has shown that Zimbabwe's postcolonial gender imbalances in political representation is embedded in the persistent legacies of colonialism. As such, legal and policy frameworks for gender equality seek to rectify women's exclusion from roles of decision making within political institutions, as recognition of historical injustices. However, the persistent gender disparity in Zimbabwe's political representation and decision-making positions at the national level including the National Assembly, Senate, and Cabinet, requires a recognition that the use of legal and policy frameworks to increase the statistical or numerical political representation of women in leadership positions is inadequate. Not just that, but what is important is the need to identify, dismantle, and reform the underlying structures rooted in colonialism, rather than incorporating women into these structures that reinforce patriarchy. In essence, the conceptualization of gender needs to be extensively situated within an historical context. Zimbabwe's postcolonial political leadership landscape manifests a historical continuity of gendered power structures rooted in colonialism, where there was pattern of male-dominated leadership. The postcolonial state inherited and sustained centralized and hierarchal systems of governance. Power is centralized in postcolonial Zimbabwe, evidenced by women's political underrepresentation in the National Assembly, Senate, and Cabinet during the period under study.

In accounting for the key research findings of this study, this thesis has shown that the experiences of women politicians and the effectiveness of existing gender equality legal and policy frameworks in structuring and transforming their participation and representation in the political sector, are framed by ongoing gendered colonial power structures that have been

sustained within postcolonial political structures. These have also intersected with traditional patriarchal structures, hindering efforts toward gender transformation. The research study has shown that legal and policy frameworks designed to promote gender equality, have lacked effective implementation undermining women's equal political participation and representation. They view patriarchal structures, lack of commitment and political will, as underlying causes of the lack of effective implementation of legal and policy frameworks for gender equality. This advances the argument that gender equality legal and policy frameworks are inadequate as they perpetuate gendered colonial structures. They provide symbolic measures, but do not address structural issues. The thesis has shown that women in politics experience the political leadership landscape as a gendered environment. Their narratives reveal that societal and cultural norms, gendered discrimination, gendered campaigns, gender-based violence and financial challenges have been cited as barriers to their political participation and representation.

Using the context of Zimbabwe, the study has illustrated that legal and policy frameworks for gender equality need to go beyond merely increasing women's political representation in leadership positions and address underlying structural inequalities. The study has shown that for legal and policy frameworks to advance gender transformation, they need to account for gendered colonial continuities and intersecting identities that shape the lives of women in postcolonial Zimbabwe.

7.3 Key findings

The research findings are recapped in the context of the research objectives.

7.3.1 Objective 1: Identifying the effects of existing frameworks for gender equality in structuring and transforming the participation and representation of women in the political sector in Zimbabwe.

The study engaged with this objective by using a review of existing literature and interview data collected from women in politics, interviewed to evaluate the effectiveness of existing frameworks in addressing inequalities in the political sector. The research findings drawing from literature review in chapter 5 on women's political participation and representation in Zimbabwe and interview data collected from women in politics, have shown that although there has been improvement in women's political representation since independence, it has been marginal. In writing these frameworks are sound, but lack effective implementation, thus

have not resulted in gender balance and addressed gender inequalities as evident in the continued underrepresentation of women in positions of decision making including the National Assembly, Senate and Cabinet.

It emerged from the research findings, that patriarchal structures, a lack of political will and a lack of commitment are regarded to be the cause of failure to effectively implement current of legal and policy frameworks for gender equality. In view of this, to achieve women's equal political representation requires more than frameworks but a transformation of institutional structures that maintain the progressive exclusion of women in postcolonial Zimbabwe. Using decolonial feminist lens, the study established that these are gendered power structures are deeply embedded in colonial hierarchical systems, hence there it is an institutional continuity that perpetuates historical power dynamics in postcolonial political institutions.

The research findings have shown that women elected through proportional representation (the quota system) encounter oftentimes difficult situations, including ridicule and belittlement by their counterparts, those who have been directly elected. As such, their ability to effectively contribute to decision-making is compromised as their credibility is questioned. This draws attention to the complex nature women's political participation and representation and reflects a need for an intersectional approach to policy governance that will address multiple discriminations faced by women in politics.

The study has demonstrated the critical need for women to be given the opportunity to define gender equality and gender transformation according to their own terms so that their perspectives are aligned with initiatives that govern their political participation and representation. The research findings reveal that gender equality and gender transformation, more than gender balance means different things for women in politics. The codes that emerged under the theme of conceiving gender equality and gender transformation included involvement of grassroots women, gender non-discrimination, and change of electoral system. This underscores the need to take into account varied perspectives of women, even those who are being represented, so that more inclusive and holistic strategies are developed to address their different needs.

7.3.2 Objective 2: Understanding the experiences of women within the political sector in Zimbabwe

The study addressed this objective by examining the barriers to leadership that are encountered by women in politics. The research findings have shown that some women

experience gendered discrimination from their male counterpart within political institutions including in parliament and within political parties. They are criticized, marginalized, and sexually harassed. The reality that most of these institutions are male dominated, undermines their meaningful participation and representation. The study used a decolonial feminist theoretical framework to account for the gendered power structures and the systematic marginalization of women within structures of governance in politics. Validating what literature has established in regards to the gendered nature of colonial rule, the research findings have shown that male dominance in institutions of governance within postcolonial Zimbabwe is not a new phenomenon, instead a continuation of colonial legacies, where exclusionary power structures and gender hierarchies established under colonial governance still shape postcolonial landscapes. The gendered discrimination experienced by women in politics is further aggravated by societal and cultural norms that disregard women's political aspirations and propagate stigmas to sabotage their efforts. Here, the research findings have shown the intersection of colonial power structures with traditional power structures, creating barriers to women's access to political power by undermining their meaningful political participation.

The research findings have shown that, intimidation and gender-based violence in the form of physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, political violence, emotional abuse, and verbal abuse, have plagued the lives of women in politics. This obstructs democratic processes as it limits women's political participation and perpetuates gender inequalities, eventually eroding democratic governance. Also, the research findings have shown that gendered campaigns against women in politics have been a barrier that has significantly structured their participation. This is in the context of the biased representation of women in the media. As a result, their credibility as political leaders is undermined and also it leads to decreased women's representation as the gendered media attacks can discourage women from holding political office.

Both gender-based violence and gendered media campaigns are instruments to silence, discredit and marginalize women in politics. They reinforce gender norms and stereotypes that seek to sustain male control and dominance over political spaces. Consistent with the patterns observed in Chapter Four, of the lived experiences of African women during colonial rule in Zimbabwe, the research findings have shown that this is a continuity of patriarchal structures established during colonial rule, where gendered violence through colonial policies was used as a primary instrument to maintain power in governance and politics, and this

involved the controlling of the roles of women both in the public and private spheres.

The research findings have shown that financial challenges engulf women campaigning for political office, including unequal access to campaign financial resources. This highlights the need for financial support structures whose specific purpose is to address the financial limitations faced by women in politics, thus promoting meaningful participation.

7.3.3 Identifying strategies to address gendered colonial power structures and enhance the effectiveness of frameworks for gender equality in Zimbabwe's political landscape

This objective uses a decolonial intersectional perspective to identify mechanisms that can enhance the effectiveness of frameworks for gender equality in Zimbabwe's political landscape, by considering the following recommended strategies for government officials and policymakers:

- Acknowledge the historical context of gender inequality in which Zimbabwe is situated within, this is important for developing an understanding of the ongoing impact of colonial legacies on frameworks for gender equality. This will highlight the limitations they have in addressing historical and systematic inequalities that shape women's political participation and representation. It will draw attention to the need of dismantling and transforming these patriarchal colonial structures.
- Integrate an intersectional approach into the design and implementation of gender equality frameworks. By accounting for the embedded structural inequalities due to the intersection of the identity categories of class, race, ethnicity, amongst others with gender, the frameworks can be better suited to address the diverse needs of women in postcolonial Zimbabwe.
- The lack of commitment emerged as a major barrier to the effective implementation of gender equality frameworks. To promote genuine commitment to the effective implementation of responsive gender equality frameworks, there is a need for the establishment of accountability mechanisms, for example monitoring and evaluation. It is essential for these accountability mechanisms to be established for institutions of governance, including government departments, civil society organizations, and political parties, among others, and it is necessary for these stakeholders to be held accountable. Further, monitoring and evaluation processes need to be inclusive and participatory, for example this could include involving women from marginalized

groups by integrating community led feedback mechanisms and assessments.

- To confront gender-based violence experienced by women in politics, it is necessary to establish support systems for women in politics, including strictly upholding and implementing laws against gender-based violence, with clearly outlined consequences for violations. A gender sensitive and trauma informed approach is necessary, to strengthen support for victims.
- Gendered media representations can be transformed through initiatives and campaigns that foster positive representations of women in political leadership, to challenge existing biases and stereotypes.
- To address challenges related to campaign funding, capacity building initiatives on fundraising strategies can be offered to equip women candidates in acquiring campaign funds. Further, promote public-private collaborations between government institutions and private entities to develop funding programs that assist women's election campaigns. It is also crucial to formulate and implement policies that require all candidates to have equitable access to campaign financing, ensuring equality for all genders.

7.4 Conclusion

Using the framework of the coloniality of gender, the thesis has shown that the gender system in postcolonial societies is framed by capitalist economic structures in colonial societies. It has further shown that it is significant to position gender within an historical perspective rooted in capitalist colonial structures. It is in this context that the system of patriarchy should be examined to understand how these structures reinforce patriarchy. The study has highlighted that colonialism created systematic gender hierarchies, which marginalized indigenous women. The intersection of racialization, sexism and sexualization shaped their reality and structured their reality. What has further been shown is that this institutional violence has endured colonialism and flourishes in postcolonial societies, therefore it is understood as the coloniality of gender.

The study has demonstrated that although patriarchal customs existed in some precolonial African societies, women made substantial contributions in the socio-economic, political, and religious domains. Gender relations were altered during colonialism, and gender ideologies rooted in patriarchy were entrenched, reconfiguring existing gender relations.

Ongoing patriarchal tendencies were reinforced, causing additional hierarchies that undermined women. The thesis has shown that in precolonial Zimbabwe, African women were involved in agricultural production, gold mining, alluvial gold panning, trading, and spirit of mediumship. However, when colonialism and the capitalist economic system were introduced, gender dynamics were reformed, reorganizing traditional economic roles and family structures. African women's economic independence was frustrated as a result of the migrant labour system. The gender inequalities that were already established were aggravated and patriarchal norms were upheld, limiting their economic independence. Women were suppressed by and experienced colonial patriarchy and traditional patriarchy. The two patriarchies varied in the ways they subordinated African women, the former marginalized them from decision making roles, and the latter constrained their economic and political autonomy.

The study has argued that colonial policies were used to enforce institutional and legal injustices against African women. In addition, these policies became tools to exclude and control African women, but they challenged and sabotaged both these and traditional patriarchal systems through various ways. This thesis situated gender within a historical background, providing a better understanding of the effects of racialization and gendering in the colonial period.

Through the lens of decolonial intersectional feminism, the study has highlighted the importance of considering the historical context of gender inequality in the design and implementation of legal and policy frameworks for gender equality in postcolonial societies. The thesis has shown the ongoing impacts of gendered colonial dynamics on postcolonial political structures. It acknowledged the necessity of formulating and implementing legal and policy frameworks for gender equality in the context of accounting for gendered colonial dynamics, and their intersection with the identity categories of race, class, and ethnicity, among others, to structure the representation of women in politics.

The thesis has thus brought attention to the fact that women's underrepresentation in politics is rooted in colonial legacies. In decision making and leadership positions at the national level including the National Assembly, Senate, and Cabinet, there are persistent gender inequalities regardless of gender equality frameworks that require the numerical increase of women in political leadership positions. For gender transformation thus to take place in Zimbabwe's political leadership landscape, it is necessary to go beyond numbers. Instead, of assimilating women into patriarchal structures which in the context of postcolonial

Zimbabwe are ingrained in colonialism, these need to be dismantled and reformed so as to advance meaningful gender equality, rather than maintaining a historical continuity of gendered colonial structures.

Using key research findings, the thesis has illustrated that existing frameworks for gender equality have not been effectively implemented, as such disregarding women's equal political participation and representation. Patriarchal structures, lack of commitment, and political will emerged as the main causes of lack of effective implementation of gender equality frameworks. This emphasized the need to address underlying structural issues that frame the way in which gender equality frameworks structure women's experiences in politics and their representation. The thesis has shown that gendered discriminations, societal and cultural norms, gendered campaigns, financial challenges and gender-based violence are some of the barriers women's political participation and representation, highlighting the need to confront structural issues embedded in colonial legacies, that frame these barriers. This thesis has established that current legal and policy frameworks for gender equality in Zimbabwe, to ensure that they advance gender transformation they need to account for gendered colonial power structures and their intersection with structural identities that influence women's realities in postcolonial Zimbabwe.

REFERENCES

- Aderinto, S. 2014. *When Sex Threatened the State*. University of Illinois Press.
- Akinola, A. O. 2018. Women, Culture and Africa's Land Reform Agenda. *Frontiers in Psychology* 9.
- Aluwihare-Samaranayake, D. 2012. Ethics in Qualitative Research: A View of the Participants' and Researchers' World from a Critical Standpoint. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 11(2): 64-81.
- Amadiume, I. 1997. *Reinventing Africa: Matriarchy, religion & culture*. New York: Zed Books Ltd.
- Anthias, F. and Yuval-Davies, N. 1983. Contextualizing Feminism: gender, ethnic and class divisions. *Feminist Review*, 5 (1): 139-167.
- Acevedo-Zapata, D. M. 2020. Letter-Writing as a Decolonial Feminist Praxis for Philosophical Writing. *Hypatia*, 35 (3): 410–423.
- Bacchi, C. (2009). *Analysing Policy: What's the Problem Represented to Be?* Pearson, Sydney
- Bacchi, C. 1999. *Women, Policy and Politics: The Construction of Policy Problems*. Sage, London.
- Bari, F. 2005. 'Women's political participation: Issues and challenges'. Draft Prepared by Farzana Bari. Accessed: 15 November 2020.
- Barnes, D. T and Burchard, M. S. 2013. "Engendering Politics: The Impact of Descriptive Representation on Women's Political Engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa,". *Comparative Political Studies*, 46 (7): 767–790.
- Barnes, T. A. 1992. The Fight for Control of African Women's Mobility in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1900-1939. *Signs*, 17(3): 586–608.
- Barnes, T. 1997. "Am I a Man?": Gender and the Pass Laws in Urban Colonial Zimbabwe, 1930-80. *African Studies Review*, 40(1):59–81.
- Bayart, J. F. 1993. *The State in Africa. The Politics of the Belly*. Harlow.
- Bayart, J. F. 2000. 'Africa in the world: a history of extraversion'. *African Affairs*, 99(395): 217–67.

Bhebhe, N. & Ranger, T. (eds.) 1995. *Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War: Volume two*. Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications.

Boserup, E. 1970. Women's Role in Economic Development. New York: St. Martin's, 22 (1): 59-61.

Bowen, G. 2009. Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2): 27-40.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2): 77–101.

Butler, P. 2013. “Black Make Exceptionalism? : The Problems and Potential of Black Male-Focused Interventions,” *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*. Cambridge University Press, 10(2): 485–511.

Carastathis, A. 2016. *Intersectionality: Origins, Contestations, Horizons*. University of Nebraska Press

Carbado, W.D. 2013. Colorblind Intersectionality. *Signs*, 38(4): 811-845.

Carbado, W. D., Crenshaw, W. K., Mays, M. V. & Tomlinson, B. 2013. Intersectionality: mapping the movements of a theory. *Du Bois Review*, 10 (2): 303-312.

Carby, H. 1982. *White Woman Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood. The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in Seventies Britain*. London: Hutchinson, 212– 235.

Chabaya, O., Rembe, S. and Wadesango, N. 2009. The Persistence of Gender Inequality in Zimbabwe: Factors that the Advancement of Women into Leadership Positions in Primary Schools. *South African Journal of Education*, 29(2): 235-251.

Chanock, C. 1985. *Law, Custom and Social Order. The Colonial Experience in Malawi and Zambia*. Cambridge.

Chavunduka, G. 1979. *A Shona Urban Court*. Gwelo: Mambo Press.

Cheater, A. P. 1986. The role and position of women in pre-colonial and colonial Zimbabwe. *Zambezia*, 13 (2): 65-79.

Chogugudza, P. 2006. *Gender and War: Zimbabwean women and the liberation struggle*. London: CPI Group.

Chun, J., Lipsitz, G. and Shin, Y. 2013. Intersectionality as a Social Movement Strategy: Asian Immigrant Women Advocates. *Signs*, 38(4): 917-940.

Chung, F. 2006. *Re-Living the Second Chimurenga: memories from the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe*. Sweden: Weaver Press.

Cock, J. 1991. *Colonel and Cadres: war and gender in South Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Cockburn, C. 2004. 'The Continuum of Violence: A Gender Perspective on War and Peace', in Wenona Giles (ed.), *Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones*. Oakland, CA. California.

Colebatch, H. 2002. Policy Berkshire. Open University Press, Buckingham.

Collins, H. P. 1986. Learning from the Outsider Within: the sociological significance of black feminist thought. *Social Problems*, 33(6): 14-32.

Collins, H. P. and Bilge, S. 2016. *Intersectionality*. Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Connell, R. 2014. The Sociology of Gender in Southern Perspective. *Current Sociology*, 64(4): 550-567.

Connolly, D. 2011. *The Global Political Agreement and Democratic Transition in Zimbabwe*. Oxford Transitional Justice Research Working Paper Series.

Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Internet: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>. Accessed: 11 November 2024.

Corbin, J. and Strauss, A. 2008. *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Crenshaw, W. K. 1989. Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: a black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 140(1): 138-167.

Crenshaw, W. K. 1991. Mapping the Margins: intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6): 1241-1299.

Crenshaw, W. K., Ocen, P. and Nanda, J. 2015. Black girls matter: pushed out, overpoliced, and underprotected. New York: *Center for intersectionality and Social Policy Studies*.

Creswell, J. W. 2009. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Dhamoon, R. K. 2011. Considerations on Mainstreaming Intersectionality. *Political Research Quarterly*, 64 (1): 230–43.

Dahl, R.A.1971. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. 2005. Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research. In: Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y. S., Eds., *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, (pp 1- 32). 3rd Edition, Sage, Thousand Oaks.

Denzin, N. K. 1970. *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. NewYork: Aldine.

Devlin, C. and Robert, E. 2008. “The Effect of Increased Women’s Representation in Parliament: The Case of Rwanda,”. *Parliamentary Affairs*, 61(2): 237–254

Dube, T. 2013. Engendering politics and parliamentary representation in Zimbabwe, in *International Journal of Development and Sustainability*, 2(1): 101-1024.

Eisner, E. W. 1991. *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice*. Toronto: Collier Macmillan Canada.

Eppel, S. & Raftopoulos, B. 2008. *Developing a Transformation Agenda: political crisis, mediation and the prospects for transitional justice in Zimbabwe*. Pretoria: IDASA and the Zimbabwe Institute.

Epprecht, M. 2004. Hungochani: *The History of a Dissident Sexuality in Southern Africa*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Essof, S. 2013. *Shemurenga: The Zimbabwean Women’s Movement, 1995–2000*. Harare: Weaver.

Ferguson, J. 2006. *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*, Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Flores, C. and Made, P.A. (n.d.). *The Politics of Engagement: Women’s Participation and Influence in Constitution-making Processes*. Weaver Press, Harare: UN Women. Internet:<https://constitutions.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/202303/politics%20of%20engag>

[ement%20%282%29.pdf](#) Accessed: 05 November 2021.

Franceschet, S., Krook, L. M., & Piscopo, J. 2012. “Conceptualizing the Impact of Gender Quotas. In: S. Franceschet, M.L. Krook and J. Piscopo, eds., *The Impact of Gender Quotas*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Freud, S. 1977. *On Sexuality*. Vol 7 The Pelican Freud Library. Harmondsworth. Penguin.

Freire, P. 1993. *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Continuum.

Franck, L. and Winter, I., 2004. Research participant information sheets are difficult to read. *Bulletin of Medical Ethics*, (195): 13-16.

Galal, S. 2023. *Africa: women in parliaments by country*. [online] Statista. Internet: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1248493/percentage-of-women-in-national-parliaments-in-african-countries/>.

Gallagher, A.-M., Lubelska, C., & Ryan, L. 2001. *Re-presenting the Past: Women and History* (1st ed.). Routledge.

Garcia, M., Kosutic, I., McDowell, T., & Anderson, S.A. 2009. Raising critical consciousness in family therapy supervision. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy*, 21(1): 18-38.

Geisler, G. 2004. *Women and the Remaking of Politics in Southern Africa: negotiating autonomy, incorporation and representation*. Uppsala: Nordiska.

Gender Links for Equality and Justice. 50/50 Policy Brief Zimbabwe. (2020). Available at: <https://genderlinks.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/50-50-PB-ZIM-FEB20rev.pdf>
Accessed: 14 November 2020.

Gentles, S. J., Charles, C., Ploeg, J., and McKibbin, K. 2015. Sampling in Qualitative Research: Insights from an Overview of the Methods Literature. *The Qualitative Report*, 20(11): 1772–1789.

Gimenez, M. E. 2001. Marxism, and class, gender, and race: Rethinking the trilogy. *Race, Gender and Class*, 8 (2): 23-33.

Global Political Agreement. 2008. Internet: http://www.mlgi.org.za/resources/local-government-database/by-country/zimbabwe/peace-agreements/Zimbabwe_GPA.pdf.

Accessed: 10 November 2024

Grewal, I. and Kaplan, C. 1994. *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices*. University of Minnesota Press.

Grosfoguel, R. 2002. Colonial Difference Geopolitics of Knowledge, and Global Coloniality in the Modern/Colonial Capitalist World-System. *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, 25(3): 203-224.

Grosfoguel, R. 2007. The Epistemic Decolonial Turn: Beyond Political-Economy Paradigms. *Cultural Studies*, 21(2/3): 203-246.

Gudhlanga, E. 2013. Shutting Them Out: Opportunities and Challenges of Women's Participation in Zimbabwean Politics - A Historical Perspective. *Journal of Third World Studies*, 30(1): 151–170.

Hamandishe, A., 2018. *Rethinking women's political participation in Zimbabwe's elections*, Africa Portal. South Africa. Internet: <https://coilink.org/20.500.12592/6f17vg> . Accessed: 14 November 2020.

Hajer, M. and Wagenaar, H. 2003. *Deliberative Policy Analysis: Understanding Governance in the Network Society*. Cambridge University Press, New York.

Hancock A-M. 2007. When multiplication doesn't equal quick addition. *Perspectives on Politics*, 5(1): 63–79.

Harvey, D. 2005. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press.

Hastings, A. 1998. Connecting linguistic structures and social practices: a discursive approach to social policy analysis. *Journal of Social Policy*, 27 (1): 191–211.

Hedlund-de Witt, N. 2013. Coding: An Overview and Guide to Qualitative Data Analysis for Integral Researchers . 1(1):1–22.

Hodzi, Obert. 2012. *Sexual violence as political strategy in Zimbabwe: Transitional justice blind spot?* Oxford Transitional Justice Research Working Paper Series.

Hooks, B. 1984. *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. Boston: South End Press.

Hove, C. 1994. *Shebeen Tales. Messages from Harare*. London and Harare.

Hungwe, C. 2006 . Putting them in their place: “respectable” and “unrespectable” women in Zimbabwean gender struggles. *Feminist Africa*, 6: 33–47.

Inter-Parliamentary Union – IPU. 2005). "*The Participation of Women and Men in Decision-Making: The Parliamentary Dimension*." Internet: <https://www.ipu.org/>. Access: 09 November

2024

Jeater, D. 2000. 'No Place for a Woman: Gwelo Town, Southern Rhodesia, 1994–1920', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 26 (1): 29–42.

Kandiyoti, D. 1988. Bargaining with Patriarchy. *Gender and Society*, 2(3): 274–290.

Kendall, K. 1998. "When a Woman Loves a Woman in Lesotho." In *Boy-Wives and Female Husbands: Studies of African Homosexualities* , edited by Stephen Murray and Will Roscoe, 221-38. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Kinsman, M. 1983. "Beasts of Burden": The Subordination of Southern Tswana Women, ca. 1800-1840. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 10(1): 39–54.

Kothari, R. C. 2004. *Research Methodology: methods and techniques*. 2nd Revised Edition. New Delhi: New Age International Publishers.

Kruger, N. 1992. *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War: peasant voices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kronsell, A. & Svedberg, E. 2001. The Duty to Protect: gender in the Swedish practice of conscription. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 36 (2): 152-176.

Lamprianou, L. 2013. Contemporary Political Participation Research: A Critical Assessment. *Democracy in Transition: Political Participation in the European Union*. 21-42.

Lancaster House Constitution. 1980.

Law, K. 2021. 'We Wanted to be Free as a Nation, and We Wanted to be Free as Women': Decolonisation, Nationalism and Women's Liberation in Zimbabwe, 1979–85. *Gender & History*, 33: 249-268.

Leedy, P. and Ormrod, J. 2001. *Practical Research: Planning and Design* (7th Ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Levitt, H. M., Motulsky, S. L., Wertz, F. J., Morrow, S. L., & Ponterotto, J. G. 2017. Recommendations for Designing and Reviewing Qualitative Research in Psychology: Promoting Methodological Integrity. *Qualitative Psychology*, 4(1): 2–22.

Lorde, A. 1984. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Crossing Press.

Lugones, M. 2007. "Heterosexualism and the Colonial Modern Gender System." *Hypatia*

22(1): 186–209.

Lugones, M. 2008. *The Coloniality of Gender. Worlds & Knowledges Otherwise*, Spring, 1-17.

Lugones, M. 2010. *Toward a Decolonial Feminism. Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*, 25(4): 742-759.

Lyons, T. 2004. *Guns and Guerilla Girls: women in the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggle*. Trenton: Africa World Press.

Masakure, C. 2016. 'We will make sure they are rehabilitated': Nation-building and Social Engineering in Operation Clean-up, Zimbabwe, 1983. *South African Historical Journal*, 68(1): 92–111.

Mahlaule, J. 1995. "*Feminist Writing in the Context of Listening and Culture: A Comparative Study of Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions and of the Film Script Neria*," (p.7) M.A. Thesis . University of Natal: Department of English.

Makinda, A. 2011. "Promoting Gender Equality in the Tanzanian Parliament," in *African Parliamentary Reform*, (Eds). Stapenhurst, F., Kroon, C., Draman, R., Imlach, A. & Hamilton, A. London: Routledge.

Makonese, M. 2016. 'Women's rights and gender equality in the new Zimbabwean Constitution: the role of civil society in implementation and compliance' in CM Fombad (Ed) *The implementation of modern African Constitutions: challenges and prospects* , (pp 156-176).

Maldonado-Torres, N. 2007. On the Coloniality of Being. *Cultural Studies*, 21(2-3): 240- 270.

Mama, A. 2001. Challenging subjects : Gender and Power in African contexts. *African Sociological Review*, 5(2): 63-73.

Mama, A. 1995. Feminism or Femocracy? State Feminism and Democratisation in Nigeria. *Africa Development*, 20 (1):38-57

Mama, A. 1997. "Shedding the Masks and Tearing the Veils: Cultural Studies for a Post-Colonial Africa" in Imam, A., Mama, A. & Sow, F. (Eds). *Engendering African Social Sciences*. Dakar: CODESRIA.

Mamdani, M. 1996. *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late*

Colonialism, (pp 16-23). London.

Mangezvo, P. L. 2013. 'Debating the Global Political Agreement and gender equality in Zimbabwe: A critical analysis of women's access to land ownership and political decision making', in *Southern Peace Review Journal*, 2(1):75-96.

Maphosa, M., Tshuma, N. and Maviza, G. 2015. Participation of Women in Zimbabwean Politics and the Mirage of Gender Equity. *Journal of Conflict and Social Transformation*, 4(2): 127-159.

Mann, S. A. 2013, 'Third Wave Feminism's Unhappy Marriage of Poststructuralism and Intersectionality Theory'. *Journal of Feminist Scholarship*, 4: 54–73.

Marouan. M. 2018. When Women Are Central to African Religious History: On Power, Prophecy, and Memory. *Journal of Africana Religions*. 6 (1): 130–133.

Mbembe, A. 2001. *On the Postcolony*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

McCall, L. 2005. The Complexity of Intersectionality. *Signs*, 30 (3): 1771-1800.

McClintock, A. 1995. *Imperial Leather*. New York: Routledge.

Meena, R. 2004. "The Politics of Quotas in Tanzania," in *The Implementation of Quotas*, ed. Ballington, A. Stockholm: International Idea.

Mendoza, Breny. 2010. "La epistemología del sur, la colonialidad de género y el feminismo latinoamericano." In *Aproximaciones críticas a las prácticas teórico-políticas del feminismo latinoamericano*, vol. 1, edited by Yuderks Espinosa Miñoso, (pp 19–36). Buenos Aires: Enla frontera.

Mendoza, B. 2014. *Ensayos de Crítica Feminista en Nuestra América*. Mexico D.F.: Editorial Herder.

Mgbako, C. 2019. Sex Work/Prostitution in Africa. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*.

Mignolo, W. 1995. *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Mignolo, W. 2000. *Local Histories/Global Designs. Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Mignolo, W. D. 2007. Introduction: Coloniality of Power and De-colonial Thinking. *Cultural Studies*, 155-167.
- Mignolo, W. D and Walsh, C. E. 2018. *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Mkandawire, T.1997. The Social Sciences in Africa: Breaking Local Barriers and Negotiating International Presence. The Bashorun M.K.O. Abiola Distinguished Lecture Presented to the 1996 African Studies Association Annual Meeting. *African Studies Review*, 40(2):15-36.
- Moagi, A. L and Mtombeni, B. 2020. Women in Pre-colonial Africa: Southern Africa. In: Yacob-Haliso, O., Falola, T. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of African Women's Studies*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
- Mohajan, K. H. 2018. Qualitative Research Methodology in Social Sciences and Related Subjects. *Journal of Economic Development, Environment and People*, 7 (1): 16-17.
- Moriarty, J. 2011. *Qualitative Methods Overview*. London: National Institute for Health Research.
- Mudeka, I. 2014. Female Combatants and Shifting Gender Perceptions during Zimbabwe's Liberation War, 1966-79. *International Journal of Gender and Women's Studies*, 2 (1): 83-104.
- Mudimbe, V. Y.1988. *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the order of knowledge*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Munhall P. L. 2004. "Unknowing?: Toward another pattern of knowing in nursing (239–246). In Reed P. G., Shearer N. C. & Nicoll L. H. (Eds.), *Perspectives on nursing theory*. Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- Munroe, T. 2002. An introduction to politics: Lectures for first-year students. Kingston: Canoe Press.
- Murray, Stephen, and Will Roscoe, eds. 1998. *Boy-Wives and Female-Husbands: Studies of African Homosexualities*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Musisi, N. B. 1991. Women, "Elite Polygyny," and Buganda State Formation. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 16 (1): 757 - 786.

- Mutiti, M. A. B. 1974. Rhodesia and Her Four Discriminatory Constitutions. *The African Review: A Journal of African Politics, Development and International Affairs*, 4(2): 259–278.
- Nash, C. J. 2008. Re-thinking Intersectionality. *Feminist Review*, 89(3): 1-15.
- Ncube, W. 1987. "Released from Legal Minority: The Legal Age of Majority Act in Zimbabwe," in *Women and Law in Southern Africa*, ed. Alice Armstrong. Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House.
- Ndhlovu, N. 2019. *A gender analysis of the transitional justice framework in Zimbabwe*. Masters Dissertation. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. 2001. Imperial hypocrisy, settler colonial double-standards and denial of human rights to Africans in Zimbabwe. In N. Bhebe & T. Ranger (Eds), *The historical dimensions of democracy and human rights in Zimbabwe: Volume One: Pre-colonial and colonial legacies* (pp. 53-83). Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. 2005. "Can Women's Voices be recovered from the Past? Grappling with the Absence of Women Voices in Pre-Colonial History of Zimbabwe," *Wagadu: A Journal of Transnational Women's & Gender Studies*, 2(1): 1-19.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. 2009. *Do Zimbabweans exist? Trajectories of nationalism, national identity formation and crisis in a postcolonial state*. Bern & Oxford: Peter Lang.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J., & Chambati, W. 2013. *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa: Myths of Decolonization*. CODESRIA.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. 2015. 'Mugabeism and the Entanglements of History, Politics and Power in the Making of Zimbabwe', in Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (ed.), *Mugabeism? History, Politics, and Power in Zimbabwe*, (pp. 1–25). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Nhongo-Simbanegavi, J. 2000. *For Better or Worse? Women and ZANLA in Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle*. Harare: Weaver Press.
- Nkenkana, A. 2015. No African futures without the liberation of women: A decolonial feminist perspective. *African Development*, 40(3): 41-57.
- Nowell, L.S., Norris, J.M., White, D.E. and Moules, N.J. 2017. Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16 (1): 1-13.

Nzomo, M. 1994. The Status of Women's Rights in Kenya and Strategies to overcome Inequalities. *African Issues*, 22(2):17-20.

O'Neil, P. and Eyben, R. 2013. It's fundamentally political: renovating the master's house, in Eyben, R and Turquet, L. (editors), (pp 85-100) *Feminists in Development Organizations*, Practical Action Publishing, Rugby.

Oyewumi, O. 1997. *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press.

Parpart, J. 2014. Exploring the Transformative Potential of Gender Mainstreaming in International Development Institutions. *Journal of International Development*, 26(3): 382-395).

Parpart, J. L. 1986. 'The Household and the Mineshaft: Gender and Class Struggle on the Zambian Copperbelt, 1926-64', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 13 (1):36-56.

Parpart, J. L. and Staudt, K. 1989. 'Women and the State in Africa' in Parpart, Jane L. and Kathleen Staudt (eds), *Women and the State in Africa*. Boulder and London.

Pateman, C. 1970. *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Patil, V. 2013. From Patriarchy to Intersectionality: A Transnational Feminist Assessment of How Far We've Really Come. *Signs Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. 38(4): 847-867.

Paulme, D. 2004. Introduction. Translated by H.M. Wright. In: D. Paulme, ed., *Women of Tropical Africa*, (pp.1-16). London: Routledge.

Peters, B. L. & Peters, J. E. 1998. Women and Land Tenure Dynamics in Pre-Colonial, Colonial, and Post-Colonial Zimbabwe. *Journal of Public and International Affairs*, 9: 183-203.

Quijano, A. 2000. *Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America*. Nepantla: Views from South, 1(3), 533-580.

Quijano, A. 2007. Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality. *Cultural Studies*, 21(2):168-178.

Quijano, A. 2008. "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Social Classification." In *Coloniality*

at Large, edited by Marel Moraña et al., (pp 181–224) . Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Quijano, A. 2010. “Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality.” In *Globalization and the Decolonial Option*, edited by Walter D. Mignolo and Arturo Escobar, 22–32. London and New York: Routledge.

Rai, S.M. (2008), "Women and Political representation", in Desai, V. and Potter, R.B. (Eds.), 2ND ed., *The Companion to Development Studies*, Hodder Education, London.

Ranger, T. 1983. 'The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa' in *The Invention of Tradition* , (Eds). Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger, (pp. 212, 247-258). New York.

Rein, M. and Schon, D. T. 1993. Policy discourse. In Fisher, F. and Forester, J. (eds), *The Argumentative Turn in Policy Analysis and Planning*, (pp. 145–165). Duke University Press, Durham.

Riphenburg, J. C. 1997. ‘Changing Gender Relations and Structural Adjustment in Zimbabwe’, *Istituto Italiano per L’Africa e L’Oriente* 52: 237–60.

Roberts, D. and Jesudason, S. 2013. Movement Intersectionality. *Du Bois Review*, 10 (2): 313-328.

Sadie. Y. 2005. Women in Political Decision-Making in the SADC Region. *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity*, 65: 17–31.

SADC Protocol on Gender and Development.

Internet:[https://www.sadc.int/sites/default/files/202108/Protocol on Gender and Development 2008.pdf](https://www.sadc.int/sites/default/files/202108/Protocol%20on%20Gender%20and%20Development%202008.pdf). Accessed: 11 November 2024.

Sadomba, F. & Dzinesa, G. A. 2004. Identity and Exclusion in the Post-War Era: Zimbabwe’s women freedom fighters. *Journal of Peace-Building & Development*, 2 (1): 51-63.

Shaba, Luta 2011. Dreaming of equality: Time to fulfil the GPA promises to women. *OpenSpace*, 1:154–155.

Shohat. E. 2001. Area Studies, Transnationalism, and the Feminist Production of Knowledge. *Signs*, 26(4): 1269-72.

Shvedova, N. 2002. "Obstacles to Women’s Participation in Parliament". Internet:

<https://www.idea.int/> . Access: 09 November 2024.

Schiwy, F. 2007. Decolonization and the Question of Subjectivity: Gender, Race and Binary Thinking. *Cultural Studies*, 21(2-3): 271-294.

Schiwy, F. 2010. “Decolonization and the Question of Subjectivity: Gender, Race, and Binary Thinking.” In *Globalization and the Decolonial Option*, edited by Walter D. Mignolo and Arturo Escobar, (pp125–148). London and New York: Routledge.

Schmidt, E. 1988. Farmers, Hunters and Gold-Washers: a re-evaluation of women’s roles in pre-colonial and colonial Zimbabwe. *African Economic History*, 17 (1): 45-80.

Schmidt, E. (1990). Negotiated Spaces and Contested Terrain: Men, Women, and the Law in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890-1939. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 16(4): 622–648.

Schmidt, E. 1992. *Peasants, Traders and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870-1939*. Harare: Boabab.

Schoenbrun, D. (2006). Gendered Themes in Early African History. In *A Companion to Gender History* (eds T.A. Meade and M.E. Wiesner-Hanks).

Seymour, F. L. 1961. Legislation affecting Africans in urban areas in Southern Rhodesia. *Zimbabwe Law Journal*, 1 (1): 103-117.

Shutt, A. K. 2007. “The Natives Are Getting out of Hand”: Legislating Manners, Insolence and Contemptuous Behaviour in Southern Rhodesia, c. 1910-1963. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 33(3): 653–672

Segato, R. 2001. “*The Factor of Gender in the Yoruba Transnational Religious World.*” Brasilia.

Siedman, W.G. 1984. Women in Zimbabwe: post- independence struggles. *Feminist Studies*, 10 (3): 419-440.

Silva, F., P. Martins, and Alexandre, C. 2020. For the Decolonization of the Researcher's Self: An Encounter with Brazilian Quilombola Women and Reflections about the Coloniality of Rurality. *Hypatia*, 35 (3): 490–508.

Silverman, D., (Ed.), 2016. *Qualitative research*. London: Sage.

Soderbaum, F. 2004. Modes of Regional Governance in Africa: Neoliberalism, Sovereignty

Boosting, and Shadow Networks. *Global Governance*, 10(4):419–436.

Soiri, I. 1996. *The Radical Motherhood: Namibian women's independence struggle*. Ohio: Ohio University Press.

Soyinka-Airewele, P. and Edozie, R.K. 2010. *Reframing Contemporary Africa: Politics, Economics and Culture in the Global Era*, Washington: CQ Press.

Staudt, K. 1989. 'The State and Gender in Colonial Africa' in Charlton, E.M., J. Everett, K. Staudt (eds), *Women, the State and Development*. New York.

Strobel, M. 1979. *Muslim Women in Mombasa, 1890-1975*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Sudarkasa, N. 1986. "The Status of Women" in Indigenous African Societies. *Feminist Studies*, 12(1): 91–103.

Summers, C. 1996. "If You Can Educate the Native Woman...": Debates over the Schooling and Education of Girls and Women in Southern Rhodesia, 1900-1934. *History of Education Quarterly*, 36 (4): 449–471.

Taherdoost, H. 2016. Sampling Methods in Research Methodology; How to Choose a Sampling Technique for Research. *International Journal of Academic Research in Management (IJARM)*, 5(1): 18-27.

The National Gender Policy, (2013-2017)

Tlostanova, M, and Mignolo. W. 2009. "Global Coloniality and the Decolonial Option." *Kult 6, Special Issue "Epistemologies of Transformation: The Latin American Decolonial Option and its Ramifications"*, 6: 130–147.

Tamale, S. 2013. Confronting the Politics of Nonconforming Sexualities in Africa. *African Studies Review*, 56 (2): 31–45.

Tamale, S. 2020. *Decolonization and Afro-Feminism*. Ottawa: Daraja Press.

Tripp, M. A. 2013. *Women and Politics in Africa Today | Democracy in Africa*. Internet: <https://democracyinafrica.org/women-politics-africa-today/>. Access: 10 November 2024.

UN Women. 2013 . *Women make up more than one-third of Zimbabwe's new Parliament*. Internet: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2013/9/zimbabwe-women-mps-sworn-in>

Accessed: 10 November 2024.

- Vergès, F., Bohrer, A. J., & the author. 2021. *A Decolonial Feminism*. Pluto Press.
- Verloo, M. 2013. Intersectional and Cross-Movement Politics and Policies: Reflections on Current Practices and Debates. *Signs*, 38(4): 893-915.
- Walker, C. 1991. *Women and Resistance in South Africa*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Waylen, G. 1996. 'Analysing women in the politics of the Third World' in Afshar, H. (Ed.), *Women and Politics in the Third World*. London.
- Weinrich, H. 1979. *Women and Racial Discrimination in Rhodesia*. Unesco.
- Williamson, T.M. 2001. Research, Informed Consent, and the Limits of Disclosure. *Bioethics*, 15(4): 341–363.
- White, A. 2007. All the Men are Fighting for Freedom; All the Women are Mourning Their Men, But Some of Us Carried Guns: Fanon's psychological perspectives on war and African women combatants. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 32 (4): 857-884.
- Yanow, D. 2000. *Conducting Interpretive Policy Analysis*. Sage, Thousand Oaks.
- Yuval-Davis, N. 2006. 'Intersectionality and Feminist Politics'. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 13(3): 193–209.
- Zezeza, P. T. 1993. *A modern economic history of Africa*. Dakar, Senegal : CODESRIA.
- Zvobgo, F, and Dziva, C. 2017. Practices and challenges in implementing women's right to political participation under the African Women's Rights Protocol in Zimbabwe. *African Human Rights Yearbook*, 1(1): 60-81.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A: Interview schedule

Interview guide

1. How did you obtain your current/previous position? Was it an elected position or political appointment?
2. Has there been anything related to your gender (or to being a woman) that has posed a challenge or affected your work in any way?
3. Do you think current gender policies/legislations/provisions have been effective in addressing gender inequalities in the political leadership landscape of Zimbabwe? If so, in what specific ways? If not, what changes need to be made?
4. Since independence, how, if at all and in what specific ways have gender policies made any difference to the participation and representation of women in the political sector?
5. How, if at all and in what specific ways, do you think colonialism may have affected the understanding of gender equality in Zimbabwe?
6. What barriers, if any, do you think exist for women contesting for key political leadership positions in Zimbabwe?
7. In what ways has the quota system affected the way that gender inequalities within the political sector are being addressed?
8. In your opinion, what will it take to achieve gender equality within Zimbabwe's political context?
9. What role, if any, do you think you have played in advancing gender equality within the political leadership landscape in Zimbabwe?
10. What would gender transformation look like to you?
11. What advice would you give young women who have career aspirations in the political sector?

Appendix B: Ethical clearance letter



Faculty of Humanities
Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Lefapha la Bomotheo



15 November 2021

Dear Miss N Ndhlovu

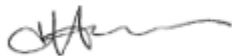
Project Title: Colonial gender structures as a contributing factor in influencing the political leadership landscape in Zimbabwe: An intersectional feminist critique
Researcher: Miss N Ndhlovu
Supervisor(s): Dr C Wielenga
Department: Political Sciences
Reference number: 18379487 (HUM020/0121)
Degree: Doctoral

I have pleasure in informing you that the above application was **approved** by the Research Ethics Committee on 15 November 2021. Data collection may therefore commence.

Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the proposal. Should the actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, it will be necessary to apply for a new research approval and ethical clearance.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely,



Prof Karen Harris
Chair: Research Ethics Committee
Faculty of Humanities
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
e-mail: tracey.andrew@up.ac.za

Research Ethics Committee Members: Prof KL Harris (Chair), Mr A Bizos; Dr A-M de Beer; Dr A dos Santos; Dr P Gubura; Ms KT Govinder Andrew; Dr E Johnson; Dr D Krige; Prof D Maree; Mr A Mohamed; Dr I Noomé; Dr J Okeke; Dr C Puttergill; Prof D Reyburn; Prof M Soer; Prof E Tajard; Ms D Mokalapa

Room 7-27, Humanities Building, University of Pretoria, Private Bag X20, Hatfield 0028, South Africa
Tel +27 (0)12 420 4853 | Fax +27 (0)12 420 4501 | Email pghumanities@up.ac.za | www.up.ac.za/faculty-of-humanities

List of tables

Table 1: Institutional framework for implementing the NGP

Table 2: Gendered composition of the House of Assembly in Zimbabwe (1980-2005)

Table 3: Gender composition of the Senate in Zimbabwe (1980-2008)

Table 4: Composition of the Senate in Zimbabwe