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Interplay of masculinity and schooling in rural Zimbabwe

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Doctor of Philosophy

INTERPLAY OF MASCULINITY AND SCHOOLING IN RURAL ZIMBABWE

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the interplay of masculinity and schooling in postcolonial rural Zimbabwe, which has been affected by both local influences that have antecedents in colonization and by the external, current forces of globalization.

By focusing on the construction of masculinities, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the complicated relations between boys, girls and implications on schooling. This is significant because much research on gender in Zimbabwe has excluded boys' experiences and how they are implicated in unequal and unjust gender relations.

A partial ethnographic study methodology was employed and in-depth interviews, informal conversations and observations with ten purposefully selected students were conducted.

From the analysis and discussion of findings using Connell's multiple masculinities conceptual lens it was evident that traditional notions of masculinity were negotiated through the school's gender regimes of practical curriculum and corporal punishment which created unequal gender relations. Possibilities of alternative masculinities that could foster healthy gender relations were also observed.

The study is significant in contributing knowledge and insights into school gender regimes and relations that impact on students' experiences and the political significance of gender instability in institutional settings.

Keywords: Gender, masculinities, femininities, postcolonial, globalization, school, rural Zimbabwe.

DEDICATION

To those rural school

boys and girls

who through this study

have grown to

understand

the impact of their relations

on others and

their selves.

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There is no enough space to list all the people and their roles in this project. I convey my deepest appreciation to all whose names and specific contributions do not appear above.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0. Overview

This study investigates the interplay of masculinity and schooling in a rural postcolonial context in Zimbabwe. The study is informed by Connell's (1995, 2000) multiple masculinities framework that foregrounds the idea that gender is not pre-given but is a structure of social practice that is constructed and contested in specific social contexts. By using the ethnographic methodology, the study explores ways in which gender experiences of students in a rural high school setting in Zimbabwe are affected by their local contexts which have antecedents of colonization, and still susceptible to current flows of globalization. An anti-colonial and global analytic to gender is suggested by Connell (1995). This idea is synthesized in Connell (2009) where the focus has been on corporate hegemonic masculinities. The broad patterns of global masculinities do not easily translate into meaningful everyday experiences of the local and peripheral individuals. Kimmel (2005) notes the increased relations of resistance, discontent and subordination among local and regional masculinities to the hegemonic global versions of masculinity (p. 415). Other researchers take up the issue of globalization and gender to imply international and comparative collection of discrete studies of gender in different parts of the world. A collection of such editions include Frank & Davison (2007) and Cornwall & Lindisfarne (1994). Most of these studies have remained 'metrocentric' (Kenway, Kraack & Hickey-Moody, 2006) exclusively focusing on masculinities in major cities. Remote places, located beyond the precincts of global flows, which Kenway, et al., (2006) have termed, out-of-the-way-places are often portrayed as either removed from the impact of globalization or when they come in conduct with global

influence they are swamped and submerged. With other currents of change taking place locally, this study examines how students in a remote rural high school in Zimbabwe are located and locate themselves in a global matrix in ways that impact on their experiences of gender and schooling.

In this chapter, I present an account of the masculinities conceptual framework that informs the research problem, questions and the rest of the study. I also describe the geo-political context of gender and schooling in rural Zimbabwe. In this regard, I discuss the location of rural Zimbabwe within the context of postcoloniality and globalization, demonstrating ways in which this distinctive geo-political location impacts on masculinities in a rural high school setting. This context portrays the uniqueness of masculinities in rural Zimbabwe. Given that personal experiences often structure the way we understand our research problem and the questions we pose, I also recount my autobiographical journey that inspired this study.

1.1. The geo-political location of Pagomo

Two broad contexts that impacted gender relations at Pagomo community and High school were postcolonization and globalization. Currently there is heated academic contestation of the concepts postcolonization and globalization, especially in terms of definition and application. In Zimbabwe, postcolonization literally refers to the physical absence of imperial colonial power in Zimbabwe after 1980. Political sovereignty of colonized states does not imply a restoration and return to a precolonial condition. Rather the continued indirect impact of the former colonial power as a result of the current reach of globalization (both cultural and economic) makes it difficult to speak of a postcolony.

The assumptions and logic that inform the colonial project are still active forces today in politically independent states. According to Bhabha (1994) the post-colonial world should valorize spaces of hybridity where truth and authenticity move aside for ambiguity (p. 113). This postcolonial condition of ambivalence is further complicated by the impact of globalization, which some scholars have labeled as an extension of colonial domination. The present features of globalization are characterized by speed of movement of labour, capital, and cultures across state borders, resulting in increased connectivity and proximity of geographically distant places. The global information system, for an example the internet, communication satellites, submarine fiber optic cable, and wireless telephones have made this possible. It is within these notions of postcolonization and globalization that Pagomo high school and the unfolding gender relations in that context should be understood.

High school is located at the junction of two major highways. On the western side, about two hundred meters of Pagomo High school is the Johannesburg/Harare highway which connects South Africa and Zimbabwe. On the northern part of the school (about ½ km away) there is a tarred road which branches from the Johannesburg/Harare highway leading to Chiredzi, a farm-town that has stretches of sugarcane and cotton plantations. It would be logical to claim that the two major tarred roads that dissect the heart of Pagomo community introduce a global dimension into the community which is typically not rural. These two roads connect Pagomo to both the orbit of the local urban and outside world. Movements of people to local towns and even outside Zimbabwe become an easy possibility. The terminal destinations of these two roads have always intrigued the imagination of the local inhabitants. Even though most people remain rooted in one local

place, it is becoming increasingly impossible for them to remain disconnected culturally and economically from the broader world they are situated. Acknowledging this cultural infiltration, Giddens (1990) explains that most places are thoroughly infiltrated by and shaped by social influences quite distant from their locality. Tomlinson (1999) also argues that, as a function of global media images, there exists, an increasing sense of world proximity that is accompanied by the very real connections that arise through economic, environmental and communicative links. Such imaginary and actual proximities alter the nature of localities and the identity of their people in complex ways. While the hegemonic idea of globalization assumes, a top-down homogenizing and universalizing Western culture, replacing local cultures and identities (Scholte, 2000), I adopt a view of globalization from below or indigenized globalization (Appadurai, 1996; Miller, 1995) that attests to the complex engagement through assimilation, hybridity, and resistance of the local and global cultural encounter. In their `vernacular` perspective of globalization, Kenway, et al., (2006) argue that globalization may well have ignited local solidarity and particularism. In the face of homogenizing economic and cultural globalization, there has been a proliferation of cultural particularism and alternatives, with attempts to reconstruct tradition and invent the particular.

While the highway is not visible from the school because of a thicket of trees, the sound of passing heavy trucks, buses and small vehicles is deafening. When I first visited Pagomo high school in January of 2010, my attention could not escape the optimism and excitement which pervaded the school and community following the mounting of a mobile phone network tower popularly called a 'booster'. This tower would make it possible for the local community to access mobile phone transmission. Previously,

mobile phone link was erratic and there were few strategic points from which one could make or receive a phone call. Set at the pinnacle of a nearby high mountain, the tower was visible from afar, becoming a symbol of Pagomo's connection with the global world. Within the tick of a second Pagomo residents could connect with friends and relatives in towns and other countries. As for the boys, the mobile phone was not just a communicative technology but also a musical gadget and movie device, which by far transcended the home radio and television due to their portability. In very sarcastic ways boys often remarked that, "…*I have the whole movie and music world in my pocket"*. In very profound ways, rural Pagomo was connected to the global world. As Rizvi and Lingard (2010) noted, the technological developments in transport, communication, and data processing have altered concepts of time and space…it has become possible to lift cultural meanings out of their original context and transplant them in a radically different community (p. 26).

One dominant conception of globalization has been the concentration of multiple cultures and identities in western urban centers which are constituted through immigration (Sassen, 1989). Such notions of globalization tend to exclude what occurs outside major global cities. In many ways, those who migrate to these cities keep in touch with their locations of origination thus connecting their old homes to the changing trends outside their localities. The current radical idea of globalization implies the contraction of geographical space coupled by speed of movement. As Sassen (1989, p. xxxii) notes,

> *….the current era find one of the most extreme forms in electronically based communities of individuals from all around the world interacting in real time and simultaneously as is possible through the internet and kindred electronic networks*

With this idea of globalization, traditional sources of identity such as those bounded by national borders and the village cease to hold, as new notions of community are created. Because of the two major roads and mobile telephone communication, which epitomize modernity and connection with the outside world, Pagomo students became players in the global culture, though positioned at the periphery. Dolby's (2001) study on the construction of racial identities among working class students in South Africa has shown that students were not always on the receiving end of the global flows (p.13). They were active participants in the creation of the dynamics of globalization. It becomes inappropriate to define Pagomo High school and the surrounding community as essentially local and rural. The majority of men and young boys have often drifted to nearby and far away towns, where they have engaged in unskilled jobs thus transforming their livelihoods from peasant agricultural farmers to unskilled plantation, mine and town workers. As noted by Ndawi and Peresuh (1998), these workers always maintained strong connections with their rural homes, visiting once every month and also permanently settling after retiring from their jobs. The movement to work places has been made possible by the easy accessibility provided by the highway network. Of late, movement of most of these men has been to neighboring countries like South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Mozambique. As portrayed by one participant, "….there is not one family which does not have one or more members who are working in South Africa." Recently women have also joined the exodus to South Africa. With the collapse of the industrial economy and associated formal employment in early 2000, migration to towns and South Africa intensified because these places provided better opportunities for 'kukiyakiya' and

better life chances. The emphasis on globalization, in this case does not discount the impact of the immediate local context. As Connell (n/d, p. 9) noted,

> *…the globalization of sexual identities does not simply displace local models…rather they interact in extremely complex ways, generating some entirely new identities, and with many opportunities for code switching*

While rural high school boys and girls in Zimbabwe might live in the same neighborhood, attend the same school and share the same peasant ethnic roots, they were also differently subject to the impact of events outside their locality. That influence bore on their understanding of gender in different ways. Patman (2005) in his study of masculinity among teachers` college students in Zimbabwe has shown that the young men fashion ideas of masculinity by embracing western fashion: dress, hair style, food and language. Appadurai (1996) also explores how modernization and global cultures flow physically, but also imaginatively in different localities. A concept of 'imagining diasporas' (as he puts it) explodes the boundaries of globalization from physical spaces to mental processes thus making it realistic for rural boys and girls from Pagomo to imagine connections with external worlds within their locality.

Besides the busy highway, Pagomo High school is also located close to a rural *Growth Point*. *A Growth Point* is a rural development centre which bears a lot of urban features (Chiwhewhete, 1986). It has piped water, electricity, a police station, a clinic, a post office, grocery shops, restaurants, night clubs, bus terminal and a properly serviced `outlined above. However what was apparent was that the semi-urban aura provided by the *Growth Point* was significant and added to the social complexity of the location of Pagomo High school.

1.2. Pagomo High School

In January 1981 Pagomo High school enrolled the first group of Form 1 students. Unlike most rural schools which were community-funded, Pagomo was a government-funded rural school. As a result, its infrastructure and educational resources were reasonably better off compared to other rural schools which raised their building levies from the poor local community. Due to its proximity to the *Growth Point* and two major roads, it was able to attract many students and trained teachers compared to other rural schools which were opened in the same year. In the hierarchy of rural schools opened after 1980, Pagomo was positioned at the top as a better school in terms of learning resources and academic results. Within a decade, the school had more than 1400 students with over 65 teachers, making it the largest rural high school in the province, a feat to which the Headmaster nostalgically and proudly attested.

At this point the school was divided into morning and afternoon sessions, with half the students coming in the morning and the other half coming in the afternoon. There are twenty classrooms and five practical workrooms for Fashion and Fabrics, Foods and Nutrition, Metal Studies, Building and Agriculture. The classroom blocks are roofed in asbestos. In each room, ventilation is minimal considering the high tropical temperatures. Ten-three pane windows provided the ventilation and only one of the three panes could be tilted upwards. Unfortunately, most of the window panes are broken and never repaired. The classrooms are lined horizontally in blocks of three rows. All the blocks are more than ten years old and were painted in faint sky blue color. A repainting on most of the buildings was long overdue. A separate administration building which contained

offices for the Headmaster, Deputy Principal, reception, and staffroom stand at the bottom of these rows, with the most senior grades positioned next to it.

In the eastern side of school, about twenty meters from the classroom are a block of white washed pit toilets, separately marked for boys and girls; male and female staff. A thick plantation of gum trees occupies the space between the toilets and the building, providing a safe haven for truancy. A collapsed barbed wire fence demarcates 18 acres of school land. Besides the two official gates into the school, pupils can now enter the school from any point.

On the western side of the classroom buildings lay the sports ground that includes soccer, netball and volleyball. There is also a track for sprinting and seemingly abandoned high, long and triple jump sections. The state of the play-grounds reflects neglect and or inactivity for a long period.

At the time of this research Pagomo High had significantly declined. It had fallen to half its peak size, with about 638 students and 38 teachers. The decline in student population made the double session arrangement defunct. Attendance registers available at the time of the research showed that there were 315 boys and 323 girls at the school. Some of the registers had not been updated and may not have reflected the actual number of students in the school. The decline of student enrollment at Pagomo High makes sense only in light of the crisis that pervaded the lives of teachers and students at Pagomo at the time and impacted their lives at school. Government funding for social services like education were cut in line with the Economic Structural Adjustment program. The Economic Structural Adjustment program was a direct global initiative originating from the World

Bank and International Monetary Fund economic policy designed for the developing world. This meant that students were required to pay fees which were much higher than other local community schools. In an unusual twist, teachers had to receive wages in the form of incentives from the levies paid by the parents because the salaries they received from the Government were barely adequate to support them. Only those students whose parents had paid the levies received tuition.

Talking about the failure of the government to sponsor schooling and its impact on rural poor children, the UNICEF Representative to Zimbabwe, Mr Monasch (2009) said,

> *It is the responsibility of government to ensure that every child receives an education. The burden of teachers` salaries, learning materials and school maintenance should not fall on parents.....This is just not sustainable, most parents cannot carry this burden and many children will fall between the cracks, and rural schools bear testimony to this.*

This was different from the early 1980s, where rural schooling was compulsory and relatively cheap. At the time of this study teachers were preoccupied with making ends meet rather than their teaching responsibilities.

As in most parts of Zimbabwe during 2009, the level of material impoverishment in the Pagomo community was noted as breaking international records in terms of unemployment, inflation, hunger and disease. At Pagomo High school deterioration of the infrastructure was visible through the broken chairs, windows and doors. The supposed piped water system had ceased functioning. Electricity supply was erratic. The flash toilet located in the administration building in which the staffroom was housed emitted a stench. The computer laboratory had no internet connection for the rest of the

period I was at Pagomo. These were indications of the school` s decline. For example the memos by the Deputy Principal (Appendix: A) were written on scrap calendar material (Appendix: B). The Principal who had been in the school for twenty four years could not conceal the past glory of Pagomo High school. In the context of uncertainty and breakdown of standard rules of conduct (Kiyakiya context) how do boys experience schooling and what does it mean for them to be boys? It was a challenging moment for gender relations in the school, home and workplace, where alternative notions of being male or female were possible. Such a context was bound to bear on power relations within the school, division of labor and even in terms of an emotional toll on the lives of boys and girls in school and at home (Connell, 1995). Pagomo High school was also located as a player within the broad events that were taking place in Zimbabwe.

1.3. Pagomo in the local context

In this section, I describe how Pagomo is located within a broader context. I draw attention to the emergence of a very volatile postcolonial context in Zimbabwe. Teachers' and students' experiences were very much tied to the local and global context in which their school was located. The crisis period in Zimbabwe described above (Raftopoulos, 2008; Jones, 2010) was not a feature occurring in urban centers alone. Rural communities (Pagomo community included) were also affected by this crisis. While the crisis presented a challenge to the gender privileges of men, it was an opportunity for change for some young men and women. The crisis period support Connell's (1995) assertion that turbulence of the gendered accumulation process impacts on gender relations as it creates a series of tensions and inequalities in men's chances of benefiting from it. In the face of the crisis, residents of Pagomo community acted

out of the imperative of survival. Dictated by sheer need to make ends meet kukiyakiya was also the mode of operation within the school and outside. Both teachers and students' activities were structured by the need to survive. The signs of economic and social strain were visible throughout the school, from lack of ground maintenance, withered flowers, broken windows, cracked floors, walls, pilling roofs and a general decay of nearly everything. Despite the worn out appearance, there was an aura of, "things used to be good" and an imagining that things would normalize again. Kiyakiya was perceived as a temporary moment.

When I originally decided to carry out this study, I wanted to investigate the ways in which boys understood and practiced masculinity in a rural school setting in relation to girls and schooling. More specifically I wanted to look at boys' experiences of schooling in the context of violence and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) within the rural context of Zimbabwe. While violence and HIV/AIDS are big issues, particularly in Africa and warrant serious academic investigation, my initial observations at Pagomo High demonstrated that these were less visible concerns among boys and girls at Pagomo High during the period of crisis described above. Being an ethnographic study, `replete with the unexpected' (Hamersley, 2006; Atkinson, 2007), I was open to other possibilities that were likely to emerge in the field. As it turned out, my original assumptions were overridden by what I saw in the field. While poverty and HIV/AIDS were still prevalent, they were not the issues of immediate concern to both teachers and students. Their lives were organized around survival or `kukiyakiya'. The whole idea of the instability and previous exclusion of 'kukiyakiya' appealed to me, more so as both poverty and HIV/AIDS were imbedded in it. There was a certain edge and novelty with which things were done at Pagomo High school. For three reasons I deliberately decided to pay less attention to violence and HIV/AIDS and focus more on the Kiyakiya. The first reason is

that violence and HIV/AIDS have been examined in detail in many parts of Africa (Morrell & Swart, 2005; Fouten, 2006). The second reason is that research about violence and HIV/AIDS has presented boys as a threat to girls (Morrell, Bhana & Patman, 2009). And more significantly, the Kiyakiya context provided an opportunity to think otherwise about boys and their relationships in school. While hegemonic and toxic versions of masculinity were still prevalent, the Kiyakiya space allowed for a vigorous contestation of traditionally esteemed norms of gender and encouraged other notions of being boys and girls. What other possibilities for performing masculinities and femininities did the crisis moment present in a rural high school in Zimbabwe?

The economic and political upheavals that characterized life in Zimbabwe between 2000 and 2009 were bound to impact on the traditionally defined gender boundaries in the school and the community. In this context of crisis, one needed no formal schooling to achieve social status or to be a 'responsible' man. Neither did one need formal employment to be a bread winner. While some men might look down upon the new means of livelihood as threatening their manhood, women took it as an opportunity to assert their independence from men (Silberschmidt, 2005). No longer did women need to look up to men for support. For the young men and school boys and girls, the crisis period could provide an opportunity to think and `perform gender` differently (Butler, 1999). However, while change might have occurred to some degree, not much should be read into this crisis. The crisis moment only provided an opportunity in which hegemonic ideas and practices related to gender could be contested.

Silberschmidt (2005) and Agadjanian (2005) noted how colonialism, as a gendered accumulation process in rural East Africa and in urban Mozambique, positioned most African

men on the margins of acceptable manhood because they could not equally benefit from that system. They could not benefit equally from the dividends of patriarchy (Connell, 1995). Such socioeconomic downturns and accompanying reduction of formal employment opportunities precipitated men`s movement into women's occupations (Agadjanian, 2005, p. 258). In colonial Rhodesia (present Zimbabwe), most African men were innovative in negotiating between local and western ideals of manhood, and often succeeded in meeting the normative expectations of both societies, by finding ways of reconciling the two (Summers, 2002). Despite enjoying a range of patriarchal privileges accruing from the colonial system, African men remained subordinated in a racial hierarchy which was summarily presented as, "a man in the village is a boy in the workplace" (Musila, 2007, p. 143). Disruptive moments, especially those involving change in relations of production like these, help to demonstrate that gender roles evolve in specific historic contexts and are subject to change (Connell, 1995).

In the case of Zimbabwe the period from 2000 to 2009 was not a mere turbulence of gendered accumulation process, but a total breakdown of the economic and political order. It was the, "crisis period….the space of suspension where normal rules and/or procedures do not necessarily apply" (Raftopolous, 2008, p. 226). As will be noted later, the crisis period afforded other young boys and girls and women opportunities to experiment with new roles and responsibilities of doing gender. The traditionally established notions and privileges of older men were reconfigured if not challenged. At the same time, traditional norms of being boys and girls continued to be courted conveniently in order to defend male power. But they had very contradictory consequences in real practice.

While the trajectories of colonialism and decolonization lay outside the scope of my analysis, it is important to note that the current gender structure in Zimbabwe had already experienced major transformation following the British colonial conquest and occupation between 1890 and 1980. As Parpart (2008) and Summers (2002) note, the colonial order impacted on African masculinities, creating a series of tensions and inequalities among men and often bringing some women to visibility because they could also participate in the colonial labor economy, albeit, in subordinate roles compared to their male counterparts. Loss of land and political authority, as well as new opportunities in the urban areas, reduced many senior males` ability to keep their power. Thus colonialism undermined notions of maleness among African men, with many men being reduced to

> *…boys no matter one` s age and doing women` s work as domestic servants in European homes…For most men, the road to respectable manhood was fraught with pitfalls, it had to be pieced together in the rural homelands and in the harsh circumstances of urban life* (Summers, 2002, p.184).

At the same time colonization presented new opportunities for rethinking and doing gender among some Africans. The process of decolonization, which took the form of an armed military confrontation, provided some African men with an opportunity to demonstrate and construct nationalistic masculinity based on patriarchal authority, violence, use of force and loyalty to the protection of dependents (Parpart, 2008). Decolonization did not restore the pre-colonial gender order. Connell (2009) argues that the continued presence of the Empire and the dynamism of the global centre (which now has assumed the character of multinational corporations and international institutions) continue to impact the gender order of postcolonial states (p. 92). Hence, Pagomo High school finds itself located in a very volatile context. The immediate `crisis period' marked

by economic and political implosion (2000-2009), antecedents of military decolonization, colonial and pre-colonial gender regimes all add up to the volatility of gender and economic relations in the Pagomo milieu. As if that was not enough, its rurality was also punctured by poverty and the HIV/Aids scourge, adding further complexity to the already turbulent gender structure. In this situation, traditional hegemonic ways of expressing manhood/boyhood were challenged and new ways were forged. Possibilities also emerge for girls/women to appropriate alternative gender scripts which increased the challenge to patriarchal hegemony. Some women were able to engage in kukiyakiya activities and brought more money home than the men could. The HIV/AIDS scourge destabilized stable family structures, creating many female/child/grandparent headed households. Under these conditions, female family heads had to do much of the roles previously performed by the husband, though at times the extended family kinship was still intact. In what ways and to what extent did these changes impact on the lives of boys and girls in school? The argument maintained in this study is that masculinities as social constructions at Pagomo High school become subject to renegotiation as lived in the above intricate changing postcolonial context. But as Connell advised, gender is not a matter of individual choice performed independently, but involves relationships of domination, subordination, marginalization and complicity in social and group practice. In this study, definitions and ascriptions of gender roles, responsibilities and sexual division of labor among students at Pagomo High were examined in the light of the above changes.

1.4. Rationale and significance of study

The range and scope of research on masculinities and schooling in the Global North is extensive. A few of such notable works include Mac an Ghail (1990), Gilbert and Gilbert

(1998), Walker and Hunt, (1988), Pascoe (2007), Connell (1989, 1995, 2000), Martino (1998, 2001, 2003), Smith (2007), and Mills, Martino and Lingard (2004). Such works have revealed ways in which different masculinities are constructed in specific social settings such as schools (Walker, 1988), male dominated workplaces (Cockburn, 1983; Donaldson, 1991), sports (Messner, 1992) and village communities (Herdt, 1981; Hunt, 1980). Thus, is further research on masculinities and schooling still relevant?

Rural Zimbabwe provides a unique geo-political context of the intersection of postcoloniality, globalization, masculinity and schooling, with the potential to expand our knowledge of masculinities in this specific context. Set against the backdrop of postcolonization and globalization, this study examines boys' and girls' narratives and experiences of what it means to be boys and girls and the implications of this on students' schooling experiences as well as discipline in a rural High school in Zimbabwe. By employing multiple masculinities as a lens in a postcolonial context and also using a partial ethnographic methodology, this study aims to contribute and broaden the corpus of research and literature on masculinities by bringing in a perspective from the Global South. This *Third World* dimension in the understanding of masculinities is timely considering that colonizing and homogeneous representations of gender have dominated academic discourse (Morrell & Swart, 2005; Mohanty, 2003). While emerging gender discourse in the Global South explores the construction of plural masculinities, there is emphasis on how hegemonic masculinities paralyze gender relations (Morojele, 2011; Morrell, 2007a, Bhana, 2005). This discourse often concludes with a clarion call to exploring alternative non-hegemonic forms of masculinities. To date, there has been no explicit study that has explored non-hegemonic masculinities as part of strategies in

addressing gender injustice in schools. Broadly speaking, this study has a dual purpose: a) to deconstruct colonial narratives on gender by presenting situated and context specific knowledge about gender in rural Zimbabwe; b) contribute knowledge to ongoing debates on the plurality of masculinities by bringing in the experiences from the Global South. Specifically, this study focuses on documenting the range and relations of masculinities and femininities within a rural school setting. By adopting a relational approach and acknowledging power hierarchies in gender relations, the study examines relations among boys and girls in a rural school in Zimbabwe. Boys' relationships with teachers and schooling were investigated in the context of their family backgrounds and future career aspirations. The study acknowledges that students' construction of their gender identities is structured by their home, school, local community, and beyond. These factors are what Connell (1995) referred to as the gender structures that affect bodily practices, personality, and culture (p.71).

1.5.0. Conceptual framework and research questions

1.5.1. Masculinities

A framework of masculinities that Connell (1995) consolidated and reformulated (2000, 2005) had already appeared in his early writing on gender (Connell, 1987; 1989). In this writing, Connell argues against the sex-role socialization and the notion of gender as an inert biological disposition fixed at the time of birth. Masculinity theory challenges the view that masculinity is biologically predetermined and natural. At the same time, it rejects the idea that institutions like schools and families are gender making devices that socialize young people into specific gender roles on the basis of their biological sex. Actually, more sophisticated research techniques and frameworks were being elaborated

to dispute the determinism inherent in biological-sex and essentialist social sex-role discourses. Earlier ethnographic studies by Willis, (1977), Thorne, (1986, 1993) and Walker (1988) began to show the complexities and contradictions in the function of schools as gender socializing agents. More recent school ethnographies continue to elaborate the complexities of gender relations and the formation and negotiation of masculinities as contextually contingent (Martino, 2001; Pascoe, 2007; Bhana, 2005). There was no one directional formation of gender and the outcomes and relations were not predictable.

From these studies, institutions do not simply adapt to a natural masculinity among boys and femininity among girls. Rather, they are agents in the process, constructing forms of gender and negotiating relations between them (Connell, 1989). These studies underscore the importance of individual agency within institutions, in the process of actively constructing gender. Connell's (1995) framework of masculinities elaborates these earlier ideas and emphasizes the interlocking relations between the body (reproductive arena) and productive arena (capital) in social practices. In order to, "…grapple with the full range of issues about masculinity, we need ways of talking about relationships of other kinds too: about gendered places in production and consumption, places in institutions and natural environments, and places in social and military struggles" (Connell, 1995, p. 71). From the above relational premise, therefore, no masculinity arises except in a system of gender relations (Connell, 1995). Gender affects all other spheres of life, while also being impacted by those spheres (Connell, 2009). The intersection of the reproductive arena and the productive processes actively produces different masculinities and femininities in different contexts and times. Thus we can talk about multiple

masculinities and femininities in one place in terms of time and also in terms of geography. What I consider as theoretically innovative and critical about Connell's concept of masculinities is the argument about: a) the historical and contextual specificity of gender: b) the structure of a *gender order* that recognizes dynamism within that structure: and, c) the relational understanding of gender.

When the experiences of gender of rural high school students in Zimbabwe are analyzed, using Connell's framework, a more nuanced perspective of gender may be developed. For example, the context of rural Zimbabwe has significantly changed as a result of British colonization, and also due to three decades of post-coloniality. From Connell's perspective, such historical changes intersect with gender, resulting in crisis and contradiction in the gender order. In a further elaboration of how specific historical periods construct gender, Connell (2009) observes that, "change in gender occurs when the intelligibility of the world order is broken especially with the arrival of colonizing powers" (p. 92). In Zimbabwe, the British colonial project (1890-1980) introduced a capitalist mode of production that impacted on practices of gender among many Zimbabweans. The colonial capitalist economy inaugurated new notions of wage labor that was highly gendered. The period of decolonization and postcoloniality added more complexity to the current context of rural Zimbabwe especially, with the additional dimension of neo-colonial-globalization (Childs and Williams, 1997; Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1989). The notion of change in understanding and practices of gender in response to historical moments challenges the ahistorical and naturalness of being male or female that has often dominated discourses of gender in Zimbabwe. Underlying the idea of change and history is that collective definitions of masculinity and femininity are

generated in community life, and are more likely to be contested and changed as the community progresses.

1.5.2. The four-fold structure of gender

Also significant is Connell's (1995) concept of the three-fold model of the structure of gender in which he distinguishes relations of power, production and cathexis (p.74). In a later work *The Men and the Boys* Connell (2000) identifies a fourth structure that he called the structure of symbolization. Thus, when examining gender relations and practices in any context or institution, the analysis should focus on how women and other men are subordinated under patriarchy, gender division of labor, sexual and emotional attachment and symbolic representation of gender ideas

The pattern or structure of power relations between men and women is constructed historically. According to Connell each institution like a family, school or work place can exhibit this structure. The structure of division of labor works through segregation in roles and responsibilities. The more important and rewarding tasks are controlled by the most powerful and a strict code governs who can perform what task. For example, Hollway, (1994, p. 247) provides the following inventory for the gendered division of labor:

- the organization of housework
- the organization of childcare
- division between paid and unpaid work
- segregation within the labor market
- discrimination in training and promotion

- unequal remuneration and exchange

At the school institutional level we may begin to think in terms of how teaching subjects are gendered, how administrative positions are gendered. In institutional settings the structure of power manifests through a number of ways. For example, individual acts of force or oppression, organizational arrangements that restrict access to power, the ability to set the agenda and also formulate ideals and define morality are all manifestations of gendered power. The expression of sexual emotions and relations provides another active structure for understanding and analyzing gender. Heterosexuality is usually privileged in relation to other forms of sexual preferences, but provides one of the unequal forms of emotional/sexual transaction. Cathexis provides one of the visible changes to the gender order through the stabilization of lesbian and gay sexuality as public alternative within the heterosexual order (Connell, 2005, p. 85). In Zimbabwe alternatives to the hegemonic heterosexual unions have received politicized, racial and colonial level denunciations (Philips, 1997). Such relations are condemned as alien to the African tradition (Eppretch, 1998), and White men's disease (Phillips, 1997) and biblically and morally sinful (Pattman, 1998). These discourses also impact in significant ways the sexual expressions of teachers, boys and girl in schools.

The structure of symbolization conveys gender differences in powerful ways. Connell (2000) notes how the media plays a role in articulating gender dichotomy, reinforcing particular gender roles as well as commodifying male and female bodies. In Zimbabwean schools gender symbolization is shown by different dress code for boys and girls. Finer details of symbolic expressions are differentiated acceptable hair styles and greeting

gestures. Seating arrangements in class and standing order at assembly are visible signs of symbolic messages which convey particular notions of acting in appropriate gendered ways.

Connell's framework provides a powerful starting point for the interrogation of the gender order and the disruption of essentialist and categorical understanding of relations between males and females. The framework of multiple masculinities and concept of hegemonic masculinity offer a nuanced account of the processes and relational nature of femininity-masculinity and male power, something the concept of patriarchy failed to achieve (Whitehead, 2002). In the case of rural Zimbabwe, where gender roles and practices have been considered as static, Connell` s framework provides a critical lens of examining these practices and give an account of how these practices are oppressive and also how they are changing. Some critical questions worth posing include: how do some men exert power over women and other men? How are relations of power maintained, challenged and repositioned in gender? How is labor division maintained on the basis of gender? What happens to sexual relations in times of change in the production relations? Such an analysis allows us to understand the intersection of gender with other structures of society. In the Zimbabwean rural context in which is the focus of this study, the intersection of gender may be extended to education, employment/unemployment, health (HIV/AIDS), poverty, religion, rurality and the general context of postcoloniality. Also, within the school context, we can conceive masculinities as intersecting with school authority structure, the curriculum and relationships among students. Using the above model of the structure of gender, Connell (1995), and Kimmel (2010) argue that masculinities and femininities are multiple and varied depending on time and context.

There was no one universal standard or essential masculinity or femininity. We need to unpack the historical, social and political context and scrutinize the gender relations operating within that context. Such scrutiny allows us to appreciate how masculinities are socially constructed and vary from across contexts. Critical moments that affect the transformation of masculinities can thus be identified (Kimmel, 2010, p. xvii-xix). If there are plural masculinities, then we could talk of relations among those masculinities.

1.5.3. Relations among masculinities

Where relations of power and domination are present, hierarchies also exist. Connell's theory therefore, suggests a hierarchy in the relations among masculinities which he called: hegemonic, subordinate, complicit and marginalized masculinities (Connell, 1995, p.76-80). The most popular aspect of Connell's theory is hegemonic masculinity, which he defined as the configuration of gender practice that embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, and guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women (p.77). Hegemonic masculinity is the exalted masculinity in each cultural context or institutional setting. Not all men can assume hegemonic masculinity status and those who do may not be able to do it consistently and across all contexts. Hegemony is contested and maintained through various strategies of persuasion, inclusion, exclusion, and, at times, violence. Hegemonic masculinity makes sense when it is understood in relation to other masculinities.

In gender relations, there are other masculinities that occupy the subordinate status in relation to the hegemonic type. The conspicuous subordinated masculinity in the West is the gay type which is equated to femininity (Connell, 1995) where relations with the hegemonic masculinities are marked by cultural and political exclusion, legal violence,

street violence, murder and economic discrimination. The identification of subordinated masculinities in the gender hierarchy is central to establishing hegemonic masculinity and, hence, what it means to be a real man.

In Zimbabwe, homosexuality has been racially politicized as not African, not cultural and not Zimbabwean (Philips, 1997; Epprecht, 1998). Due to this colonial historical relation, there appears to be an overlap and subsuming of marginalized and subordinated masculinities. But the ferocity in oppressing subordinated masculinities also demonstrates the instability of hegemonic masculinity.

That challenge to hegemonic masculinity may come from women or other marginalized men, the subordinated groups. In this hierarchy of masculinities, most men occupy a complicit position in the gender order. Complicity masculinities accept the status of the hegemonic men and benefit from the general dividends that accrue to men as a result of the patriarchal structure. These complicity men may have good relations with women and children but still maintain their male privilege. Connell gives an example of complicit masculinity as men who bring home the family wage and do a share of their house work, but maintain their dominance as fathers and husbands.

When conditions that sustain patriarchy change, the bases for the dominance of a particular masculinity are also eroded (Connell, 1995, p 77). This illustrates the historical nature of masculinity and how it is affected by changes in other structures in the gender order. The hierarchy of masculinities does not suggest fixed character types, but they are subject to change. The agency of non-hegemonic masculinities rejects the persistence and

autonomy of the hegemonic type. This was an issue that Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) addressed in their reformulation of hegemonic masculinity theory.

It is important to take into account the relations and hierarchies between masculinities when analyzing gender. This relationship and acknowledgment of hierarchies in masculinities has been absent in many analyses of gender in Zimbabwe. First, the idea of hierarchies is necessary to keep the analysis focused on the dynamic of the gender relations at play, as well to prevent multiple masculinities from collapsing into fixed character typologies, always and everywhere the same. Second, it offers what Connell (1995, p. 76) has termed, "…a gain in realism". It reveals the active role of individuals in the construction of gender in everyday interaction, the hard compulsion, the bitterness and pleasures in gendered experience. The gender equity programs that focused on girls alone (described above) lacked an appreciation of the dynamics of gender relations in students' lives. According to Kimmel (2000) introducing masculinity as a conceptual framework for understanding gender equity reveals that boys and girls are on the same side in this struggle, not pitted against each other. Challenging normative stereotypes, decreasing violence, bullying at school and at home enables boys and girls to feel safer at school (p. 2). Gender relations are not fixed before social interaction but are facts of life which are experienced and negotiated on a daily basis.

1.5.4. Conceptualizing masculinities in rural Zimbabwe

Connell's (1995) original conceptual lens of masculinities was developed within the context of a Western Capitalist gender structure. Within that context, the culturally exalted masculinity was defined by the white, tough, middle-class heterosexual male. Connell's (2009) recent work provides a framework for understanding and analyzing

gender relations on a global perspective, showing how individual lives are linked to large scale organizational structures. By using Connell's multiple masculinities framework, there are strategic points of entry from which to begin to analyze gender relations in school settings and in different contexts. For example, acknowledging the relational nature of gender and hierarchies within these relations is significant in the analysis of masculinities because this can replace the sex-role socialization framework. When examining, masculinities in specific contexts and in micro institutions such as schools, the three fold model of relations of power, production and emotional attachment can still be applied, though the dimensions of power, division of labor and cathexis could be different from those outlined by Connell.

When examining gender relations in rural high schools in Zimbabwe, what becomes important is to understand how gender intersects with other broader structures in society that bear significantly on students' lives. These are the means of production, culture, health, education and the unique context of postcoloniality. In the context of postcolonial rural Zimbabwe, these structures went through moments of great change. Gender orders construct multiple masculinities (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). The situation in the Zimbabwean context at the time of this research involved a fracturing and decline of the economic, political systems and education (Raftopolous, 2008; UNICEF, 2009). UNICEF (2009) commenting on the state of the education system in Zimbabwe, notes that the system which was once the best in Africa, was now at the brink of collapse. On the other hand the economy that was once vibrant had also crumbled. For ordinary working class people, this meant loss of jobs and wages, the patriarchal bases upon which unequal relations between men and women were centered on. In postcolonial African countries,

formal employment has always been gendered (Parpart, 2008; Summers, 2002; Silberschimdt, 2005), thus the conditions of unemployment are bound to impact gender relations. Similarly the advent of HIV/AIDS in African contexts, similar to Zimbabwe has had significant impact of heterosexual relations (Barker and Richardo, 2005). In addition, the Christian religious belief systems and practices, added a layer to the gender structure. In postcolonial contexts, the continued impact of neo-colonialism and globalization remains a significant structure in the gender order. As Connell (1989) maintains, research on schooling is usually confined to schooling, and thus has difficulty in seeing where the school is located within the macro structure (p. 292). Consequently, when looking at how gender is constructed within micro-school contexts, we have to examine the relative macro-forces operating outside the school, but that have an impact on gender relations within the school.

As noted above, Connell's multiple masculinities perspective of gender challenges two basic assumptions about being male: the dominant natural- biological and sex role frameworks. From my experience of living and working in Zimbabwe, I have witnessed how traditional African faith and colonial Western Christianity normalize gender roles into which boys and girls are socialized. There is a strong biblical fundamentalism (Epprecht, 2007) that takes gender as pre-given, with transgression of prescribed sex and gender roles and gender invoking "eternal death".

Given the shifting historical context of rural Zimbabwe, and its position in the broader national structure, this calls for an adequate framework for understanding gender relations. To argue for a simplistic representation of a permanent natural fixed

masculinity becomes untenable. There is need to pay attention to plurality of masculinities among men and their diverse lives and realities (Kimmel, 2010). The range of cultural and local contextual realities in Pagomo School where I conducted my research implies that generalizations about boys' and girls' experiences should be made cautiously. An adequate gender analysis framework should recognize the complex, multilayered and fluid dimensions of gender. In the unstable changing context of Pagomo, a multiple, relational masculinities approach such as the one put forward by Connell is able to uncover the dominant gender hierarchies and show how they have evolved historically and are presently being contested.

1.6. The research problem

The socio-political context of Pagomo High school continued to shift in ways that were likely to challenge and erode the basis for the dominance of a particular traditional patriarchal masculinity. Both global and local factors created conditions which changed gender relations and practices. It is not always the case that changes in the context of gender mean an improvement in relations between men and women. At times, change produces an awareness that stifles positive change and generates resistance. This study examined changes in gender practices within a specific context and time. As shall be described in detail below, Pagomo's social-historical context presented a moment in which hegemonic gender notions could be challenged. Particularly, it should be noted that the relations of production that were the major resources of male power and privilege were close to collapse. The intersection of gender within the broader social and economic structure becomes important in understanding the dynamics of gender relations at Pagomo. Connell (1995, 2009) notes that, to understand gender, we must constantly go

beyond gender, and examine other local and broader structures in society which intersect with gender.

In postcolonial Zimbabwe, most educational programs concerned with changing gender relations focused on girls alone. This one-sided focus has often presented boys and girls in polarized terms. For example, Leach, Fiscian, Kadzamira, Lemani and Machakanja (2003) note that in Ghana, Zimbabwe and Malawi men and boys use violence against girls, which was socially accepted and encouraged, and girls were largely socialized to be tolerant and to passively accept violence (p. 15). In another study in Zimbabwe, Gordon (1998) concluded that schools reinforced traditional sex-roles in which girls were positioned as sexual instigators and temptresses. In that study, girls described themselves as victims of sexual violence and harassment. In Leach, et al's (2003) study, an expansive regional portrayal of violent masculinity and conforming femininity that cut across three countries that have diverse historical and cultural trajectories runs the risk of a homogenizing discourse. From a masculinities perspective, it is important to investigate practices of masculinities in each context and how they intersect with other structures like economy, politics and other cultural practices that bear significantly on people's lives. Additionally, Gordon's (1994, 1998) studies in Zimbabwe Schools depict polarized relations between boys and girls. Some critical questions which may be probed from a masculinities relations perspective would be; Are all boys violent? Are all girls victims of violence? Does the socialization process into traditional sex-roles proceed in one direction? And is it accepted passively by all students? This is where Connell's masculinities framework is useful because it points to a more dynamic and relational understanding of gender relations. Specifically, Connell's (1995) framework allows us to

disaggregate gendered categories in order to avoid essentialisms and to get a better handle on issues of inequality. In rural Zimbabwe, boys' and girls' varied locations in the postcolonial context that was fraught with poverty, HIV/AIDS, unemployment and their different access to the influence of globalization require that their biological sex should not be used as the index of their difference.

Considering the context of rural Zimbabwe in which the dynamics of the structure of gender was changing, it is possible to envision configurations of new gender practices in the personal lives of students that transgress the boundaries of sex-role socialization. Indeed, such configurations of gender practices might have existed but have been suppressed by dominant and hegemonic research narratives that have privileged essentialist representation of boys' and girls' experiences.

As noted by Bhana, Morrell and Pattman's (2009) gender discussions in Third World contexts have remained one-sided, focused exclusively on the plight of girls in schools (p. 703). In a report on AIDS/HIV and violence prevention in Sub-Saharan Africa, Barker and Ricardo (2005) argue that programs that seek to empower girls and women, but ignoring how masculinities are constructed, run the risk of failure. According to Barker and Ricardo, such programs are based on a simplistic bipolar understanding of men as violent and women as victims.

These observations are also relevant to the manner in which gender and schooling have been depicted in Zimbabwe. For example, in Zimbabwe the Girl Child Network (GCN), Girl Education Movement (GEM) and the United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) were designed to improve the educational access for girls by providing them

with financial support and life skills to fight male students' and teachers' abuse in schools. The focus of these programs is the provision of equal opportunities for girls especially in rural areas. A restrictive sex-role conception of the relations between genders dominates the manner in which these programs are framed and implemented. What is not problematized is how violence, HIV/AIDS and girls' schooling is directly related to the construction of masculinities and femininities: What is also ignored is how the construction of these gender inequalities and practices are related to the broad social and historical circumstances where these students live. The underlying assumption is that all boys are well served by the system of education. But when we examine gender practices, privileges and disadvantages using a relational, multiple masculinities lens, we can understand that not all boys are privileged by the gender structure, even though they claim some kind of universal dividends and, therefore, comply with the dominant hegemonic discourses and practices that disadvantage girls. What is needed is an adequate gender analysis framework that recognizes the complex, multilayered and fluid gender dimensions that permeate real life experiences. The use of a multiple masculinities lens is capable of revealing the dominant gender hierarchies that subjugate some groups of men/boys and girls. As Barker and Ricardo (2005) noted above some men and boys within the Sub-Saharan context are simultaneously made vulnerable by rigid social norms of masculinity, while at the same time making women and girls vulnerable. As historical and social processes unfold in Zimbabwe, as detailed by Raftopolous (2008) and UNICEF (2009), critical questions are required to probe into the changes occurring in the realm of gender relations in these moments of upheaval. This would provide a better understanding and appreciation of the complicated relations

between boys, girls, schooling and their contexts. Connell (1995, p.85) vividly conveyed the paradox that arises in the gender `arrangements` in circumstances of political and economic upheavals,

> *the turbulence of gendered accumulation process creates a series of tensions and inequalities in men`s chances of benefiting from it….some men are excluded from its benefits by unemployment, others are advantaged by their connection with the physical or social technologies*

Regrettably, gender analyses which probe the diversity of boys' and girls' experience is absent, resulting in a dearth of knowledge about the nuanced interplay of gender and schooling in Zimbabwe in general and rural contexts, in particular.

The programs that focus on girls and deliberately exclude boys are understandable given the historical context of gender and racial inequality in Zimbabwe (Mungazi, 1991). However, they lack an acknowledgement of how disparities and inequalities in gender are created through both collective group practices and individual actions. Nonetheless, these interventions are informed by a sex-role socialization theory (Gordon, 1994; Swaison, 2005; Ansell, 2002). These programs focus on inequalities between boys and girls by concentrating on expanding access and provision and attuning pedagogy and text to both genders without interrogating the social structures that create and perpetuate these inequalities. But often they neglect the day to day experiences of students in the school context. They fail to acknowledge and take into account the relational nature of gender (Connell, 2009), in which girls' experiences of schooling are closely connected to those of boys'. In most of this educational work, boys are overshadowed, taken for granted, or treated as a homogeneous category and are assumed not in need of intervention (Ouzgane & Morrell, 2005). Within this discourse of uplifting the educational fortunes of girls,

there is a retreat to essentialist and dichotomous notions of gender and an understanding of gender that is ahistorical. If talked about at all, boys are portrayed as the reason for girls` disadvantages. Yet, boys equally have issues with gender in ways which negatively affect their relations with girls and engagement with schooling. By employing the concept of multiple masculinities and femininities that are actively constructed in a specific historical moment, we begin to understand better how some boys occupy positions of subordination within the hierarchical structure of gender relations.

For example, participation in the labor market is highly gendered and impacts on relations among boys and girls and their disposition to the curriculum and school authority. Colonial and essentialist discourses often present boys as beneficiaries of the gendered labor market. Does participation in the labor market reward girls` and boys` academic achievement? Another dimension of the problem relates to the traditional patriarchal structure that perpetually subordinates women in general, particularly the institution of marriage. From a masculinities perspective, with the emphasis on historical, relational, and changing nature of gender, it becomes critically important to locate the context in which gender relations are constructed and negotiated for students in school. Only then, may we understand the contradictions that occur in terms of how boys and girls take up different and multiple gendered positions in that configuration of relations. The masculinities lens permits the recognition of the compulsions under which gender configurations are formed, the bitterness as well as the pleasure in gendered experience (Connell, 1995).

In Western literature, discourses that measure differences and then solicit for resources on the basis of such differences have been called "competing victims syndrome" (Eva Cox, 1995). In those cases, boys and girls are presented as distinct opposites on the basis of their gender. In the case of Zimbabwe, the girls are portrayed as the victim, the powerless and disadvantaged 'other', while the boys are the aggressors and advantaged.

In this study, I take a relational and holistic view of gender, in which the construction of masculinities and femininities is relational and, therefore, needs to be attended to simultaneously. It becomes inadequate to attend to boys without considering the role of girls in the construction of masculinities. Reiterating the relational character of gender, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) states that,

> *…….women are central in many of the processes of constructing masculinities - as mothers; as schoolmates; as girlfriends; sexual partners; and wives; as workers in the division of labor* (p. 848).

A focus on masculinity has had criticism from some groups of feminists, particularly on issues dealing with gender inequality, domestic violence and development (Connell, 1995). The argument is that men and their practices are part of the problem of gender inequality, and involving them will open avenue for backlash. Cleaver (2002) notes the relevance of including men/boys in issues of gender that seek to address the problem of women/girls. The framework of relational, multiple masculinities adopted in this study does not seek to undermine and detract the necessary ongoing struggles that seek to empower girls but to expand our imagination of complexity involved in gender issues and relations.

1.7. The research questions

The research problem outlined above arose from my experience as an educator working with students in Zimbabwe on a number of the Ministry of Education's programs in Zimbabwe that sought to "empower" girls, such as the Girl Education Movement, United Nations Girl Education Initiative, and Girl Child Network. In my role as a school principal, I was obligated to implement these innovative strategies but I was always frustrated by the failure of these innovations to affect change in the gendered experiences of girls. Some recipients of the program assistance prematurely left school due to marriage or pregnancy, and those who persisted, completed High School with poor grades. As I recollect my experiences with students and also formulating this research problem using a masculinities conceptual lens, I realize that there are broader political issues at stake in gender relations. Something was fundamentally missing. Maybe the real problem had not been diagnosed, thus ineffective solutions were being proffered.

This study was conducted at Pagomo high school located in a rural setting in the province of Masvingo in Zimbabwe during the months of January to March 2010. (The actual names of the school and all participants have been changed in order to maintain their privacy). The main aim of this study was to acquire a deeper knowledge of the intersection of students` masculinities, femininities and schooling. The study aimed to generate an understanding of students` experiences of gender in school in relations to the changing postcolonial and global context of rural Zimbabwe in which they lived.

The following research questions guided my investigation:

- What are the different notions of being a boy or a girl in rural school context of Zimbabwe?
- How are these notions of being a boy or girl contested in the daily lives of students at this school?
- What are the school's gender regimes?
- How do these gender regimes reinforce or challenge students` ideas and practices of gender?
- How do students express their gender identities in relation to the expectations of schooling, demands of labor, and heterosexuality?
- What are the emerging gender notions that challenge normative gender understanding at Pagomo School due to the changing context?
- Are there positive notions of being a boy or girl and are they accepted and encouraged by the school?

In asking these questions, I attempt to bring out the distinctiveness and a deeper understanding of gender relations in a rural Zimbabwean context. In a way, this research expands the scope of our knowledge about gender and schooling by adding a perspective from this unique geo- political context. At the same time, I acknowledge the impact of external forces on local gender change. Connell (2005) and Morrell and Swart (2005) assert that local masculinities and femininities can be reshaped by the global dynamics as a result of the processes of economic restructuring, long distance migration and the turbulence of development agendas. These global imperatives were evident in the Pagomo community.

1.8. Education system in Zimbabwe

When Zimbabwe gained its independence from British colonial subjugation in April 1980, the majority of the people lacked the opportunities and facilities to pursue secondary schooling. This was part of the colonial racial segregation policy in which all white children accessed free high school education while blacks were subjected to expensive fees for their high school education. Thus, at the dawn of independence, provision of education for the Africans was politically and racially motivated. The idea that postcolonial education in Zimbabwe could address gender inequality came as an after-thought. The initial educational concern was addressing racial disparities between Africans and the privileged colonial masters. Over the first 15 years of independence, Zimbabwe's population of over 13 million witnessed incredible strides in school expansion by the opening many rural day secondary schools in many communities across that country. There were, however, huge discrepancies between educational opportunities for Zimbabwe's rural majority and urban population. The apartheid colonial legacy and mismatched policies of the current government have also left their mark on Zimbabwe's education system. The formerly white, private "Group A" schools have more resources and trained teachers in comparison to their Christian mission boarding and government-sponsored counterparts. In the rural areas the government also sponsored rural day community schools such as Pagomo which are at the bottom of the hierarchy of different categories of schools. Zimbabwe's education system consists of seven years of primary and six years of secondary schooling before students can enter university. The academic year in Zimbabwe runs from January to December for a total of 40 weeks of school. Each term is three months long, with a month's holiday after each term.

1.8.1. Primary School: Grades 1 - 7

Most Zimbabwean children begin Grade 1 at the age of six, with a smaller number beginning either at age 5 or 7. The medium of instruction is English, with Shona or Ndebele (the local vernacular languages) taught as a subject. Students begin learning in their mother tongue, but transition to reading and writing in English by Grade 3. The school curriculum is centralized with prescribed textbooks all in English language. The seven years of primary schooling culminate in nationally standardized Grade 7 examinations in Mathematics, English, Shona or Ndebele and Social Studies. Progression into high school is automatic.

1.8.2. Secondary School: Forms I - 6

Secondary grades are categorized as Forms with numerical designation from 1 for the first year in secondary school. Students entering Form I compete for places in the private and mission day and boarding schools based on their Grade 7 examination results, but also on the capacity of the parents to pay the tuition fees in those schools. Most of the poor students attend the rural community schools because they were initially free and are still relatively cheap. Secondary school consists of two levels: a four year- Ordinary, (O) level and two year Advanced, (A) level curriculum. Originally, most rural schools such as Pagomo offered only up to Form 4.

Based on their Form 1 and 2 progress reports, students are assigned to courses for their "O" level studies for Forms III and IV (equivalent to Grades 10-11). In government schools in the high-density urban townships and in the rural areas, students are restricted in their options and usually are only afforded the opportunity to take 8 or 9 subjects.

Elite private schools often allow and encourage students to take up to 12 or 13 subjects for "O" level examination. Since the early 1990's and until 2002, General Certificate in Education (GCE) "O" level examinations were set and assessed by the Zimbabwe Examinations Council (ZIMSEC) in conjunction with the University of Cambridge International Examination General Certificate of Education system. Marks from highest to lowest are A, B, C, D, E, U with A, B, and C as passing grades. Students typically write their "O" level exams when they are 15-17 years old but students as old as 22 years may be found in the formal schooling system.

1.8.3. Table 1: Subjects offered at "O" Level in Zimbabwe

The table below shows the subjects offered at "O" level in Zimbabwe. Because of lack of resources and qualified teachers some subjects are not offered in some schools. In the rural areas where shortage of teachers and resources is common subjects such as German, Latin, Computers and Music are not offered.

Field	**Subjects**
Sciences	Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Physics with Chemistry, Integrated Science, Mathematics
Humanities	English Literature, Religious Education, Geography, History
Commercial Subjects	Accounts, Commerce, Economics, Computer Studies
Languages	English, Shona, Ndebele, French, German, Latin
Practical Subjects:	Woodwork, Metalwork, Agriculture, Technical Drawing, Fashion & Fabrics, Food & Nutrition

Arts	Art, Music

However, offering these subjects depend on availability of teachers and textbooks. In the rural areas where the shortage of teachers and resources hits hard, they do not offer subjects like German, Latin, Computers and Music.

To receive a passing ZIMSEC "O" level certificate, a student needs to have passed at least five subjects including English language with a grading of "C" or better. Entrance into "A" level programs is competitive, with the majority of "O" level students either returning to subsistence farming, entering the informal or formal work force or proceeding to a vocational-technical school or a nursing or teaching college. With Zimbabwe's rate of unemployment currently surpassing 85%, many "O" level graduates face bleak employment prospects. Only those with the best scores manage to find a high school place in an "A" level program. At "A" level, students choose among sciences, commercials and art subjects to study which channel them into specific careers technical college or University.

1.9. Coming to this research

Growing up in a rural peasant family and community in Zimbabwe has always positioned me on the margins, both as a college student and a worker in Zimbabwe. I struggled to negotiate my background of rurality and peasantry in the new urban contexts of college education and work. This position of marginality often drove me to imagine the impossibilities of social justice that was peddled in public and political discourse platforms of educational equality and social mobility. More importantly, I realized that

few youths from similar social locations like mine could walk the road I travelled. When the 'opportunity' to pursue PhD studies was 'offered', (for marginalized others opportunities are rarely available) I embraced it as an occasion to understand in depth the circumstances of those whom I thought were severely experiencing marginality in my rural community. My first research statement of intent was to examine educational challenges facing rural school girls in Zimbabwe. This focus was solely framed on the basis of my experience as a boy growing up and also working with boys and girls in rural Zimbabwe. I was convinced that there was no justice for girls in school considering that most of them did not complete primary schooling. However, I failed to connect girls' challenges in school to the broad structure of gender and patriarchy in society that subordinate women in general. I also could not understand how girls' experiences at school in relation to boys and teachers militated against their achievement in school. Definitely, I was aware of the problem of girls, but I did not understand how deep that problem permeated the social structures and practice of gender. I was part of the system that worked against girls' access to justice and enjoyed the dividends of that gender regime as a man. Considering that I was part of the oppressive gender machinery, my vision was blurred to the intricate ways in which my position as a privileged, professional male was implicated in gender injustice.

On more than one occasion, I have been asked, why I had to go Canada to study gender in rural Zimbabwe. Why could I not do my research in Zimbabwe? Often, I had problems in justifying my pursuit of gender studies about rural Zimbabwe in a faraway place like Canada. Such questions are often framed in essentialist and dichotomous notions of physical geographies of location. Logically, Zimbabwe seemed the most suitable place

for me to conduct a study of this nature. My stay in Canada taught me an important lesson, that is, the need to step out of one's social location in order understand the depth of the problem at hand. This new position as a student in Canada provided me with a different perspective to look at the same problem and enabled me to generate new insights and understandings. My personal experience which was closely tied to the national circumstances culminated in both a "diaspora of despair and terror" (Appadurai, 1996). I relocated to Canada in 2007 at the peak of the crisis period in Zimbabwe, joining thousands of other Zimbabweans who had migrated earlier.

As I look back, the conditions of despair I experienced made this work possible. But it was not a linear academic journey. Having grown up in rural Third World context I was oblivious to the challenges and experiences of being a school boy in that context. As I reflected on my experience in school and at home, I note the ways in which my own subjectivity has been constructed in gendered ways.

One personal anecdote is relevant at this point. I can only imagine now how this experience and others of similar nature bore on my notions of gender. This incident was not just an isolated case, but it represents a series of moments in which most boys related to school power and the consequences of these social relations on boys and 'others'. On that fateful day, I was caned severely for refusing to bring a sweeping broom to school which was part of the routine cleaning chores we were required to do as students. I became unconscious, only to wake up after being drenched in cold water- a resuscitation method in rural remote Zimbabwe in the absence of emergence medical care facilities. When I arrived home, my mother had already got the news of what had happened to me in school. She asked me about it. Knowing very well the intention

behind her concern, I denied that I had been beaten at school that day. Accepting would have meant that I would receive a further beating from her and later face embarrassment in school the next day when she would confront the headmaster about it. The best option available to me was to act like *'a real boy'*. I denied that something so dreadful had happened to me at school that day.

Division of labour on the basis of gender, enduring corporal punishment, the power of regulating one's self, and body in this story reflect gendering practices at the school. This experience conveyed indirect messages of what being a *normal boy* and inversely a *normal girl* meant. Working as an educator in one of these rural schools a few years later, I noted that little had changed in terms of these gender notions.

As a teacher in Zimbabwe, I was involved in implementing some of the projects aimed at improving the lives of girls in rural schools, but was always disappointed by their outcomes. Despite these projects' noble intentions, most girls still experienced many hardships in school and at home.

What struck me most as I read literature on gender and education from other places especially in the West is the silent attention given to the issues of boys in gender related educational programs in rural Zimbabwe. The literary journey landed me on feminist, postcolonial, gender and masculinities theories. In one of my PhD term papers which became a decisive turn in my research focus, I wrote a paper titled Feminism and Feminist postcolonial theory: Framework for understanding experiences of rural school girls in Zimbabwe. By claiming the need for "solidarity" between men and women in this endeavor (Mohanty, 2003), I argued a strong case for attending to the problem of rural school girls. However, I became convinced that I was leaving my dominant and

privileged status as a man in relation to women intact. I thought for once about my experience as a student and educator in Zimbabwe and about ways in which my experiences helped to further entrench injustice. I realized that there were many benefits for girls and even boys could change how they viewed themselves as social and gendered beings. Thinking along these lines led me to reformulate my original understanding of the problem of girls as an issue of the impact of masculinities on girls' and boys' lives.

The problem of the interplay of schooling and masculinities in rural Zimbabwe is an issue I experienced in my personal life as a student. It is a problem I unsuccessfully attempted to solve during my experience as an educator. In response to personal challenges of survival caused by broad national constraints, I moved to Canada. Now, I am stating an old problem which I experienced but in new ways, hoping to get a better understanding of the problem

1.10. Organization of thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter one introduces the research problem, questions and the theoretical framework that underpins the whole study. In this chapter I also describe the context of the study.

Chapter two presents a detailed review of relevant literature on masculinities and schooling. The review is divided into two sections: a general review of gender and schooling research in the Global North and a focused review of studies in the Global South. The literature review concentrates on research that deal with the curriculum, school authority and social relationships that impact of masculinities within different contexts.

Chapter three discusses the ethnographic research methodology. The problems of representing the `other` and complicit with project of colonization are debated. Additionally, I discuss my insider position demonstrating how my insider status impacts the collection and analysis of data.

Chapter four provides participants' profiles including their family and school experiences. The profiles document how narratives and identities of gender are constructed in students` lives in school at home and broader context in Zimbabwe and beyond. A table summarizes these profiles at the end of the chapter.

In chapter five I present the findings. Participants' experiences of gender are analyzed into themes using masculinities analytic tools. Relevant literature on issues of gender and schooling is also used to discuss participants' experiences.

Chapter six provides a conclusion of the thesis. The research problem and questions are restated. Also the research findings, recommendations, limitations and directions for future research are summarized.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the relevant international literature on gender and schooling as it relates to my topic. The purpose is to situate the study of the interplay of gender and schooling in rural Zimbabwe in the current broader field of gender studies and schooling. Considering that there is significant research on gender and schooling in the Global North, what contribution would the study of gender and schooling in rural Zimbabwe bring?

While it is a relatively new field of study that spans less than three decades, masculinities study has generated immerse research and new knowledge about the way gender is understood and constructed (Connell, 1995) especially in the Global North. The research on the interplay of masculinity and education can be divided into four categories: popular-rhetorical, theoretically oriented, practice oriented and feminist and pro-feminist oriented literature (Weaver-Hightower, 2003). However, some studies break the above typology. In comparison to the Global North little work has emerged in the Global South. As Usman (2006); Morrell and Ouzgane (2005) have noted, boys/men have been overlooked and not given much attention in gender studies in Africa. The emerging research on masculinities in Africa that explores multiple masculinities has emphasized the construction of hegemonic types as sources of dysfunctional gender relations, resulting in anti-school, lack of discipline and gender violence among most boys (Morojele, 2011; Morrell, 2007a 2007b; Bhana, 2005). There are no specific studies that examine the construction of masculinity in schools in rural Zimbabwe. Notwithstanding a growing body of research that connects globalization with other structures of society,

there is little work that has examined the impact of globalization on masculinities in remote and isolated spaces like rural Zimbabwe. The call for such an analysis which moves beyond the micro-school gender experiences have already been registered elsewhere (Kenway, et al., 2006).

There are a few donor-sponsored technical reports which focus specifically on girls, in which boys and masculinity are subsumed. These reports present findings about gender and education across Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa (see Randell & Gergel, 2009; Swaison, 1995). However, such reports are prone to gender essentialism. They homogenize the diverse experiences of African boys/men. There is indeed an urgent need to conduct research on gender and schooling at the micro-level of schools and communities such as rural Zimbabwe and offer analysis that pertains to these specific contexts.

2.1. Emergence of current masculinity discourse

For a long time the category of gender was conceived as natural and biological justifying the continued subordination of women by men. Nobody bothered to question the unequal power relations and practices between men and women. Even today such natural notions of gender continue to circulate with a lot of force in some areas generating popular media support and coverage (Biddulphs, 1998; Pollack, 1998; Sommers, 2000). But there are contesting gender discourses as well. It was not until the rise women's movements and feminism in the 1960s and 1970s that a focus on understanding men developed. Liberal and Radical western feminists identified the patriarchal structure as the basis of the oppression of women and depicted all men as beneficiaries of that system (Pascoe, 2007). From the beginning the study of masculinity did not emerge as a coherent field (Kimmel,

2010). Some studies about men, therefore, attempted to reject the essentialist presentation of men portrayed by feminists. These studies were a response in defense of existing gender arrangements which were oppressive to women. But there was also a growing recognition of the cost of some notions of being male, on men's health and emotions (Connell, 2000).

Within these two broad positions, were a myriad of responses that research about men adopted. Messner (1997) has called these responses, "…the masculinity terrain". In South Africa Morrell (2005) has replicated Messner's typology in order to describe gender transformation in a post apartheid context. Contrary to the essentialized characterization of men presented by the liberal and radical feminists, a radical research program on understanding men and boys has drawn heavily on Connell's (1995) concept of multiple masculinities. Connell's framework of analyzing gender asserts that, in any given context there are relations between masculinities and femininities that change over time. In this regard Connell remains the architect of the concept of hegemonic masculinity which has informed and transformed most of the current understanding of gender in the family, workplace and community. These theoretical developments in understanding men also spurred research on the interplay of gender and schooling. Much of this research has produced complicated and nuanced understanding of boys' experiences in education in the Global North with Australia, North America and United Kingdom taking a leading role. No corresponding research has emerged from the Global South. Because of its specific context of postcoloniality, punctured by the current moment of Global economic restructuring that has impacted the inhabitants in diverse ways, there is therefore a need

to conduct 'local ethnographies' (Connell, 1995) of masculinities even in schools. This Geo-political specificity opens up research opportunities within the Global South.

There has been little analysis of men and masculinities in the Third world. Within the Global South and specific to the African context the study of masculinity is a fairly recent phenomenon. For a greater part, this work has been informed by a postcolonial discursive framework (Morrell and Swart, 2005). Mainly, the focus of this research has been on trying to depict a diverse identity and experiences of the African men countering an established monolithic Western colonizing anthropological presentation. In *Orientalism*, Said (1978) explains how Western literature has consistently conveyed the Third World as the `*Other'* defined by 'emaciated children, oppressed women and violent men engaged in heinous holocausts (Morrell and Swart, 2005). While at present scholarly Western literature has moved away from this binary and negative portrayal of the 'Other' *Third World* and working towards a more balanced appraisal, public Western Media still continue to channel pathologizing images of the Third World men and boys. The impact of these media messages is profound given the global reach of modern technologies. My own personal memoir would suffice to exemplify this point.

"….you come from Zimbabwe in Africa, do you speak Swahili? Another flip to this question is, "….do you speak Afrikaans?" With all good intentions, most of my Western friends and even other Western strangers I happen to enter into conversation with would ask me that question. A question such as this overlooks the fact that there is linguistic diversity in Africa with an estimate of 1500-2000 African languages. Morrell and Ouzgane (2005) identify the point of departure for an African masculinity research agenda as starting from a position of diversity and acknowledging that not all residents of

Africa are black. Nor do they all speak Bantu languages. Some are Christians, Muslims Hindus, traditional believers, and non-believers. The variations are infinite (p. 7). In the same vein, Barker and Ricardo (2005) argue that, there is need to pay attention to the plurality of men and their diverse realities in Africa, "….the range of cultural and local contextual realities implies that generalizations about men and masculinities in Africa should be made with caution" (p. 3). From this premise significant research about men have been generated in South Africa showing how racial apartheid is important in understanding the construction of violent masculinities among black boys in schools (Morrell, 2007, Bhana, 2005). Some of this work also examines how masculinities are constructed through risk taking behavior among school boys in the wake of the HIV/AIDS scourge (Jeftha, 2006 and Fouten, 2006). In Lesotho Morojele (2011) has documented how rural school masculinities are constructed in the context of Basotho patriarchy and United Nations Millennium Development Goals of Free Primary Education. This research is beginning to illuminate the diversity in masculinity among African school boys.

Besides the research from South Africa, studies in many school settings in Africa have been dominated by representations that position girls as victims of harassment, violence and other forms of gender injustice. This leaves a research gap not only in our understanding of boys, but also a gap in terms of its capacity to inform our understanding of the intersectionality of masculinities and femininities in this particular context.

The findings from that kind of research and reports pertaining to Zimbabwe will be discussed in the later section of this chapter.

2.2. Masculinity research in education

In 'The Boy Turn' in research on gender and education, Weaver-Hightower (2003) presents the origins and divergent directions that research on gender and education has taken especially in the Western World. Weaver-Hightower` s analysis starts from the same premise as the above discussion of the emergence of masculinity research in general in which he notes that originally most policy, practice and research on gender and education focused on girls (p. 471). Within this background a focus on boys in education emerged that was driven by media furor, parental pressure, practitioner effort, policy attention and a great deal of research. A constellation of interrelated factors contributed to 'the boy turn'. The earliest of these factors was feminist theorizing of gender. One dominant view that influenced the "boy turn" argues that boys are performing less in literacy measures and engagement with schooling. For example they outnumber girls in suspensions and expulsions, dropout rates, and attention deficit disorders. Some proponents of boys' education and those adopting a men's right perspective, however, tend to identify the source of the problem in the feminization of schooling and, hence, in its incapacity to meet the "natural" needs of boys (Biddulph, 1998).

A focus on girls did not take the concerns and needs of boys into account. Kenway and Willis (1998) argue that feminists' original formulation of indicators of gender inequality was a 'strategic mistake'. By setting up equality as a matter of enrollment and test score gaps rather than economic and social outcomes of education, feminists unintentionally laid the groundwork for boys' advocates to claim disadvantage at the first signs of access or test score advantage for girls (Weaver-Hightower, 2003). Also, even before girls made

any gains in science and math, it was already being argued that boys were underperforming in reading and writing.

There was also an explicit backlash politics that contributed to the boy turn (Mills, 2002; Kimmel, 2000). Constant claims were made that girls have made great strides in those areas they were deemed to be previously underperforming and underrepresented in education. Some scholars argue that certain factors that contributed to the boy turn lay outside the confines of schooling. These were located within the changing economies and labor demands of the developed nations. They note that the expansion of the service sector, which traditionally was staffed by women, value work cultures and feminine modes of interaction that excluded men (Arnot, et al, 1999). According to Arnot, et al (1999), schools should help boys transition to the new labor regimes that value feminine skills:

> *Young men have been expected to adapt to an increasingly unstable set of circumstances in the work place, threatening the conventional basis of masculinity and its associated ideal of the male as the breadwinner. Such instability has been deepened, we suggest, not by the work of the schools challenging and transforming masculinity, but rather by their failure to do so. While schools challenged girls to adapt to new circumstances, young men were not offered similar possibilities to adapt to the social and economic change, even though the restructuring of the work place and family called for men with modern and more flexible approaches to their role in society. New sets of values, aspirations and skills were being asked of men as workers, husbands and fathers. The failure by the government , society and schools to address the prevailing forms of, ideas about, masculinity, particularly in relation to changing work identities and challenges to the patriarchal dominance of the male breadwinner, has had negative repercussions for boys* (p.125-126).

A crisis in masculinity as a result of changing relations of production is vividly captured above. The ideal of male breadwinner loses hegemony in the changing modern sector

economies and men respond often in harmful ways that have detrimental consequences for themselves, others and women.

While the above reasons for the 'boy turn' seem plausible, they have been challenged for a number of shortcomings. The immediate question which comes up is what would the sudden focus on boys imply for the educational fortunes of girls? It is a valid concern that programs for boys might roll back the gains made for girls so far? Often cited are curriculum and pedagogical practices that seek to align literacy practices with the interests and preferences of boys (Brozo, 2002) in order to enhance the literacy skills and scores of boys. Such practices are bound to affect girls whose reading preferences may be in conflict with the traditional preferences of boys. Another criticism advanced against advocates of the boys` education has been their failure to identify "which boys" are in danger or at risk (Jackson and Salisbury, 1996, Epstein, et al, 1998). According to Weaver-Hightower (2003: 485), to argue that the disadvantages in boys' education pertain to the majority of the White, upper-class, and heterosexual boys is suspect at best". Advocates of the boys' programs must work harder to disaggregate what they mean by 'boys" (Lingard, Martino and Mills, 2009)

Mills (2001, p.70) maintains that,

> *…….totalization of boys and girls enables the suffering that some boys experience to be used in ways which work to shore up the position of many already privileged boys and it also enables the gains which some girls have made to be used in ways that divert assistance away from girls who are most in need of educational assistance.*

Rather than treating all 'boys as a bloc' (Connell, 2000) in an era of scarce resources, there is need to identity the actual boys who are underachieving or in crisis (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998). And still, critics of the focus on boys maintain that boys' post school

advantages and outcomes surpass that of girls. They still earn more and occupy high positions in the private and public sectors in society. Within the African context, a clear example is given by Morojele (2011) in Lesotho where men who have basic formal schooling occupy high public and private positions than women who have advanced in formal education.

Connell (2000) maintains that gender difference in reading scores is not a measure of boys' disadvantage, but an index of short term cost of maintaining a long term benefit. Higher literacy scores for girls have not translated into post school social and economic gains. Statistically framing the discourse of boys' and girls' disadvantage in terms of test scores and reading skills therefore conceals the broader complexity of gender inequality that exist beyond schooling. The above debates have spurred research on gender and schooling in the West. And significant findings have been generated and programmatic interventions have been made. An example of compensatory policies and practices that seek to create separate classes, schools for boys and girls, align pedagogy to particular sex, or advocating for more male teachers for boys are informed by some of the above arguments.

The fact that in Zimbabwe gender has been understood basically in terms of girls' disadvantage should not invoke a compensatory shift to boys such as the "Boy Turn" has generated in the West. Focusing on the boys alone would occlude the practices of girls in the construction of gender among boys. Weaver-Hightower (2003) argues that masculinities research has failed to move beyond the male/female dichotomy:

> *…..the very fact that we can speak of a turn in the literature indicates that educationalists have thus far been unable to envision gender in its relational interdependencies; instead, first it was girls, and now it is boys. What is needed, rather, is curriculum, pedagogy, structures, and research*

> *programs that understand and explore gender (male, female and other) in complexly interrelated ways and that avoid "girls then, boys now* (p. 490).

A relational understanding of gender suggested by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, p. 848) call for a simultaneous exploration of intersection of femininities, masculinities and other structures of society that regulate and condition gender

> *....research on hegemonic masculinity now needs to give closer attention to the practices of women and to the historical interplay of femininities and masculinities…a holistic understanding of gender dynamics and hierarchies recognizing the agency of subordinated groups.*

Masculinities are socially defined in contradistinction from some model of normative femininity. In the reports and few studies that explore gender in postcolonial Zimbabwe, the relational nature of gender has not been acknowledged. While this study explores masculinity and schooling in rural Zimbabwe, there is a deliberate attempt to understand masculinities in relation to femininities within the broad economic context that is undergoing drastic transformation.

2.3. Summary of research evidence from the global north: Gender and schooling

Ethnographic and life history studies in school contexts in the West have vividly shown that there is no single, universal, ahistorical version of masculinity to which all cultures subscribe. A characteristic of most school masculinities research in the West is its clinical or micro-level descriptions of what obtains within specific localities. For example the study on playground interactions (Thorne, 1994), whole school process (Walker, 1988; Pascoe, 2007, Smith, 2007) are important in this regard. These ethnographies provided rich local details and have managed to tease out the complex relations of masculinities within school settings. At the same time, other studies have examined how certain patterns of masculinities are constructed around larger social processes. While not

specific to schooling, Gutmann (1996, 2002) shows how masculinities are shaped in an urban-fringe working class settlement in Mexico City. Men's lives are analyzed in relation to the broad economic and political processes which were reshaping their lives. Also Morrell (2001) in South Africa detailed a reconstructed social history of how white colonial schools in Natal in early 1900 deliberately helped construct a frontier masculinity of power and conquest among white boys. Here the close link between the construction of a specific masculinity of racial superiority to the geo-political processes of colonization and conquest in a particular stage in world history is exemplified. Mac an Ghail (1994, 2000) draws the connections of masculinities to large scale social developments in which economic changes in Britain produced particular masculinities around vocationalism and the need for new credentials in an era of deskilling and deindustrialization. Kenway, et-al (2006) presents a penetrating analysis of globalization and masculinities in places beyond the metropolis but within a Western Australian context. By focusing on places beyond the metropolis, Kenway, et al (2006) provides a new line of analysis to scholarship on both masculinities and globalization that challenge metro-centric narratives of gender (p. 3).

The fact that broad social processes are critical in the formation of masculinities as noted by Gutmann, Morrell, Mac an Ghail and Kenway, et al (2006) require further elaboration. Their findings reveal that there is no universal masculinity even within the same context. They also show that masculinities change especially in responses to broad social and political transformations. As described in Chapter 1, the Zimbabwean postcolonial context in early 2000 was in a social and economic crisis (Raftopolus, 2008). This study aims therefore to describe how that broader economic context of *Kukiyakiya* intersected

with the schooling of boys and girls in rural Zimbabwe, and with what implications on gender relations and configurations of masculinities and femininities.

For the purpose of this study I will focus on significant conclusions drawn from the works of Willis (1977); Walker and Hunt (1988); Mac an Ghail (1994); Connell, 2000; Pascoe (2007) and Kenway, kraack and Hickey-Moody (2006). These ethnographies are selected because they adopt a perspective of gender construction that is useful in understanding the complexity of gender in relation to schooling and wider society.

In his widely quoted study that broke new ground in understanding the construction of white working class masculinity in a British comprehensive high school, Willis (1977) drew the following conclusions:

- Working class boys actively and subjectively construct their identities in opposition to the school system. Contrary to the dominant discourse at the time, put forward by structural functional theorists about the social and class reproduction (Parsons, 1954) that portrayed students as objects of the school authority and curriculum Willis concluded that it is through active resistance to the school culture that working class boys eventually attained working class status.
- The curriculum, disciplinary structure and pedagogical practices are not automatic agents in the production of student gender identities but students demonstrate agency in learning gender
- That there are multiple masculinities based on class and ethnicity constructed in relations to each other, schooling and teachers and girls and

> also in relation to an understanding of their 'proper' place in the labor market.

Willis' work is significant in demonstrating that masculinities are socially constructed in specific school contexts. In a context where working class boys are guaranteed a place in the unskilled labor market they construct an anti-school culture that eventually make them academic failures thereby securing their 'rightful' place as working class laborers. But how do working class boys imagine and relate to schooling and construct notions of being male in times when unskilled jobs are no longer guaranteed? Connell (2000) highlights the gendered trajectories of boys and their relations to schooling and others in times when formal employment is not guaranteed. Again, responses of boys are diverse.

In another ethnographic study conducted in an Australian single-sex male high school Walker (1988) provides further penetrating analysis of the interplay of schooling and gender in that setting. Multiple and hierarchical masculinities are identified, that are constructed on class, race, gender and their relationship to schooling. The Aussie, anti-school and footballer are the hegemonic type, whose power is vigorously contested by the academically and professionally oriented Greeks and the handballers, who are positioned at the bottom of the masculinity hierarchy. Walker and Hunt acknowledge the fluidity, temporality and contradictions of these masculine identities. For example the anti-school footballer accepted the immediate dividends of fame garnered through sport at the long term cost of academic failure. Some Greeks played football. Depending on context, the boys exhibit fluctuating identities, there was no one fixed way of being a boy. According to Walker (1988) being a boy is a complicated process that surpasses the classifications of social class, ethnicity and gender. Visualizing the making of masculine identities in

this way disrupts the straight notions that boys are naturally and biologically boys. There is no birthright entitlement to being a man, you are born male but become a man (Walker, 1988). None the less not all men are equal, they have different access to and use of power.

Mac an Ghail (1994) conducted an ethnography that explores the making of men, masculinities, sexualities and schooling in a English Grammar coeducational school setting. While to a large extend Mac an Ghail follows Willis and Walker's perspective of social construction of multiple contradictory masculinities, this study is located in a broad context of a competitive market economy. The school context is depicted as fraught with ambiguities and contradictions. The school legislative policy framework is inconsistent. There is an elevation of normative heterosexuality (Circular, 11/87), a restrictive ban on homosexuality (Local Government Act, 1988/28) and a Reform Education Act that promotes a sex, gender and race blind curricular. In response to a market oriented economic environment teachers` subjectivities are diverse: professionals, old conservatives and new entrepreneurs. In this context, five hierarchical and fluid student identities are identified; the macho lads, the academic achievers, new enterprisers, real Englishmen and the Posse. They are all positioned in different ways in relation to schooling, each other and the broad market structure of vocationalism and managerialism. The Posse was a unique identity made up of girls who exhibited anti-school and anti-social behavior.

Mac an Ghail's study is important because he provides a theoretical shift from sex-role socialization to deconstructing sex/gender identities. He draws the conclusion that teachers and students are not unitary subjects occupying predictable power positions.

Also he shows the inherent gender contradictory policies, discourses and practices within the school.

More recently, Pascoe (2007) conducted an ethnographic study in an American high school in which she explores the intersection of sexuality, gender identities and schooling. Central to this study is how heteronormative and homophobic practices, discourses and interactions produce unequal gender relations and gender identities. At River High school the sponsored annual rituals called Mr Cougar and the Creative and Performing Arts Happening were spaces where masculinities and femininities were produced as direct opposites and unequal identities. What emerged in this study is the fluidity of the 'gay/fag' gender identity and how it was deployed as a marker of not being masculine among adolescent boys. Any kind of behavior that was deemed as not masculine was labeled as fag, for example dancing, caring too much about clothing, being too emotional, expressing interest in other guys and being stupid (p. 57).

Pascoe draws the conclusion that masculinity is not a homogenous category that any boy possessed by virtue of being a boy. Rather it is a configuration of practices and practices that different boys and girls may embody in different ways and to different degrees. At River High school masculinity was understood as dominance, usually expressed in sexualized practices. Being masculine therefore entailed the repeated repudiation of the specter of femininity that was usually associated with being gay. Another important conclusion made by Pascoe is that being masculine is an active process rather than a permanent social identity associated with specific bodies. These conclusions challenge the sociological understanding of masculinity as a property limited to the biological body assumed to be male.

A variant to the above studies is given by Kenway, et al., (2006), who locate their research in 'Out of the way places' and the impact of globalization on gender relations there (p. 2). They conclude that, when local men's world of work changes due to de-industrialization, such changes alter their ideas of place, culture and identities. In terms of masculinities, the hegemonic industrial working class, hard bodies, hard emotions, a mode of embodiment that signifies strength, mobility, autonomy, solidarity and capacity to dominate disintegrates (p. 66-67). The fact that men are redundant in formal employment cast serious doubts on their particular ways of being male. In this particular location men/boys' responses are divergent, constructing different masculine identities and identifications towards school knowledge, work and leisure as threaded through their negotiation of global forces, connections and imaginings (p. 197). Positioning themselves on the 'cartographies' of school knowledge and work, boys with 'aerial vision' are flexible and strategists; the 'grid locks' trust that education translates smoothly into work and the 'haptic tacticians' build their life chances outside school knowledge investing in 'know who' rather than 'know how' (p. 146-160). Dominant student cultures structure their everyday school experiences and relations but are also connected to broader social and cultural flows. The cool logic is hegemonic and articulated through style of walking, talking and wearing brand label clothes- Adidas, Nike, DC, Globe, Reebok- it's a material cultural consumption. The Anglo-Greeks boys are verbally articulate and coolest. The Ferals (local poor) and the Home boys (aboriginals) occupy the lower pack. A global analytic to understanding masculinities in places beyond the metropolis adopted by Kenway, et al., (2006) is a situated analysis that disrupts the overemphasis in globalization literature on universalism, speed and hyper-

mobility. Local life occupies the majority of the time and space and most people stay in one place most of the time. Not all local is displaced in peoples' lives, but it is increasingly hybridized (Tomlinson, 1999).

The theme of contesting multiple masculinities that emerges in these studies rejects sex-role essentialism and biological determination of gender. Also doubts are cast on a top down and deterministic notion of globalization that sweeps and displaces the periphery. Willis (1977), Walker (1988), Mac an Ghail (1994) and Pascoe (2007) have show concretely how various masculinity hierarchies exists in each context. This evidence demonstrates that masculinities vary and are changeable. There exists class, racial and ethnic student masculinities (Walker, 1988) that relate to schooling in different ways. The idea of a typology of masculinities does not suggest fixed identities that might limit the actual gender maneuvering that occurs across gender, sexuality, class and race (Mac an Ghail, 1994; Pascoe, 2007). In this regard masculinity becomes not a permanent attribute that an individual embodies all the time in all contexts but a subject position that students can occupy at particular moments. However, the subject position that one occupies at any time is not freely chosen, there is enormous policing and regulation of masculinity (femininity) with assortments of rewards and punishment attached to particular versions of being male or female. The evidence that masculinities are different depending on a number of factors (Martino and Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003) serves to remind us that research should always try to establish which masculinities are privileged and which ones are marginalized or oppressed. An important pedagogical result of the notion of masculinities has been the insight that not all boys are failing and also that not all girls are succeeding. For example Mills (2001) noted that in Australia, Indigenous girls were more likely to

perform poorly in standardized tests than white middle class boys. This recognition is significant when formulating intervention programs that would target those groups that are really disadvantaged (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998).

The concept of hegemonic masculinity has emerged as central to understanding relations between masculinities. Multiple masculinities do not co-exist peacefully, some are powerful and others are powerless. They constantly struggle for dominance, a process that involves multiple strategies of persuasion, open and subtle violence. Hegemony is also constructed in relation to femininities. When hegemonic masculinity emerges as the most valued norm it becomes difficult to dislodge. In each culture and context there is a form of hegemonic masculinity like the footballer ant-school type (Walker, 1988), the Macho-lads (Mac an Ghai, 1994). Physicality, aggression, rationality and heterosexuality are noted as the markers of a hegemonic, working class white masculinity. At the same time a powerful ant-school-anti-authority, homophobic and misogynistic stance defines working class hegemonic masculinity. Middle class masculinity was seen to be inclined towards academic success and professionalism (Mac an Ghail, 1994)

Another theme that permeates studies of masculinities in school was the idea of active construction of gender. Masculinities are not pre-given but come into existence as people act (Connell, 1996). The construction of masculinities happens within defined institutional structures. Within the school context, the curriculum, forms of division of labor, disciplinary systems constitute the school` s gender regimes (Browne, 1995; Connell, 1996; Lesko, 2000) that affect gender relations in many ways. In Pascoe's (2007) study formalized school rituals were very powerful arenas for making masculinities. These gender regimes are the material resources that students actively

engage with in order to construct different masculinities. However, the school gender regimes are not the only structures that shape students` gender subjectivities. The school context also actively coalesces with family background, workplace labor requirements and what is conveyed as acceptable genders in the media (Connell, 2000). My research builds on the understanding of masculinity as multiple and actively constructed in specific contexts that is demonstrated above. As will be shown below, a lot of research and programs about gender in Zimbabwe have not managed to address the multiple dimensions, contextual location and active construction of masculinities and femininities. This creates a research gap in our knowledge and understanding of the gender practices and discourses that are specific to the rural school context of Zimbabwe.

2.4. Masculinity and education discourse in Africa

An important question to ask is how the above debates broaden and relate to our understanding of the issues of gender and education in the Global South. What path has the discourse of boys, girls and schooling followed in Africa? What does this discourse look like in different parts of Africa? Morrell, Bhana and Pattman (2009) present a number of reasons for attending to boys in the African context, while at the same time acknowledging that girls are basically disadvantaged more than boys. They note that current inequalities prevail where boys are favored to the detriment of girls and the following gender inequality indicators are listed:

- Percentage of boys in the primary and high school is higher than girls
- Dropout rates for girls due to pregnancy are high
- As we move up the educational ladder into higher education the gender gap increases in favor of boys

- Girls portrayed as victims of sexual violence in schools and how this hinders girls' achievement.
- Girls performing not achieving in Science, Math and Technical subjects

The magnitude of the above gender disparity indicators vary across different contexts in Africa. These inequalities are explained as emanating from cultural practices inherent within patriarchy that subordinates women to men. For example when a family has to decide between sending a boy or girl to school, the odds would be that the girls would stay at home while the boy goes to school (Peresuh and Ndawi, 1998; Swaison, 1995; Ansell, 2002).

Other researchers have noted how the curriculum texts negatively represent women as house wives (Gordon, 1995), assigning girls a position of subordination. The same texts also depict boys in powerful roles as leaders in public and private places. But what has not been considered is how these textual discourses really manifest themselves and with what impact in the day to day experiences of boys and girls. How are these representations internalized or challenged? Partly this study attempts to fill this gap by exploring the experiences of boys and girls in a rural high school context in Zimbabwe.

Given the above inequalities, a focus on girls has been central in research about gender and schooling, with a view of trying to find strategies that would improve the fortunes of girls. Consequentially, a focus on boys and the construction of masculinities as a gendered construct has largely been absent from literature on gender. Where the focus has been present the construction of violent a masculinity has received attention (Morrell, 2001). Boys and men have been demonized and seen as potentially dangerous to girls and women. Strict binary notions of gender that distinguish men and women has emerged in

the "girl focus" Commenting on the emphasis on visible boys/men, in the West, Thorne (1994) has labeled this systematic theoretical blind spot, the "Big Man bias" (p. 97). There is an undue focus on the bad boys or the most wildly successful as if they are representative of all males. The ordinary boys, those who are not disruptive or destructive, those who are not scholastic or athletic stars have received little attention (Weaver-Hightower, 2003). Within Africa the "Big Man bias" has been conceived in relation to the dangers they pose for girls with a view to magnify the supposed disadvantage of girls. A legitimate concern may be that most of the boys are not bad but, they have been made invisible in the current gender discourse that overemphasizes domination as underpinning the relations between boys and girls in school. This leaves a huge gap in as far as understanding the gendered lives of the rest of the boys, who most of the time relate peacefully and productively with girls. There is therefore a reasonable justification to examine these salient but silenced boys. However, while many boys/men may not be violent or 'bad' they are still complicit in maintaining the gender order because they benefit from the patriarchal order (Connell, 1995, p. 80).

According to Morrell, et al., (2009), despite the focus on girls, there has not been a crisis of masculinity and we cannot talk of a *boy turn* within the African context. Boys are still treated well and doing well in school. In terms of resources and facilities boys still get preference. On the other hand girls battle to convert improved academic performance into labor market benefits, where women continue to earn less than men in comparative situations. However Morrell, et al., (2009) argue that despite the apparent favorable position of boys there, is a serious need to attend to the issue of boys in developing contexts because of the following reasons:

- High levels of unemployment and crime levels
- Number of boys also dropping out of the school system is high
- Violence, vandalism and gangsterism.
- Drug addiction.

I would also add that there should be a focus on gender rather than boys because this would permit us to simultaneously examine boys and girls in relational terms. The problems that affect boys also impact on the girls and more so in negative ways. A methodological concern that Hightower (2003) pointed out is ….*how might we research and write about boys and girls within the same article or book*? (p. 490). A solution resides in adopting a relational approach to the study of gender, an approach which has been absent in much gender and education work in Africa, particularly in rural Zimbabwe.

As an ongoing issue with the above concerns, Morrell, et al (2009, p. 705), also reports that,

> *….there has not been a clear understanding of the connection between schooling and the world of work…the consequent poor prospect of employment juxtaposed with the enduring expectations that men should be providers.*

Morrell's assertion points to the need for research on gender and schooling to expand beyond school measures of students test scores, drops out due to pregnancy and disciplinary problems, but to examine the way these micro-level-events are connected with other social and structural dynamics outside the school.

2.5. Evidence on masculinity and schooling in the global south

Scholarly literature on gender and schooling in Zimbabwe is scant. The few studies that exist do not focus on high school and gender, but look at masculinity in higher education settings (Pattman, 1998; Eppretch, 2007). Other studies that examine gender and schooling focus on the educational challenges facing girls in Zimbabwe (Swaison, 1995). In terms of a particular focus on rural high schools and gender in Zimbabwe, it can be ascertained that no research has specifically focused on examining the interplay between the gender and schooling. In reviewing literature in the Global South I will extent my focus to other parts of Africa such as South Africa because there has been significant research on gender and schooling in that part of Africa.

It is significant to note that Africa as a geographical region is often treated as a unity. The continent is complex in terms of history, cultural practices and gender relations. Thus research evidence from one country should be cautiously generalized to another. However, some broad themes that permeate these studies are worth discussing.

Bhana (2005) and Morrell (2007) examine how black working class boys in post Apartheid South Africa negotiate notions of masculinity in urban school contexts. These studies demonstrate how masculinities are constructed in times of massive economic and social dislocation, where crime, poverty, violence and unemployment are rampant. Masculinities, as these studies show, are products of specific historical moments. Not only does a violent aggressive hegemonic masculinity prevail, but it is also challenged by peaceful ideas of being male. Positive notions of maleness were based on education success, hard-work, honesty, and deferred gratification. The

persistence of a heterosexual, misogynistic and homophobic masculinity among the non-violent boys demonstrates complicity with the hegemonic violent type. This work is significant in that it brings visibility to the place of boys in gender studies. However, their approach to gender, degenerates into a 'declension narrative' (Bulbeck, 1998) reinventing girls, once again into invisible others. While focusing on rural Zimbabwe, the current research commences from the premise that we cannot meaningfully understand masculinities without examining how femininities are implicated in the gender project. As Kimmel (1999) notes, we know what it means to be a man by setting our definitions in opposition to "other"---racial minorities, sexual minorities and above all women (p. 106).

The intersection of gender practices with traditional culture and Westernization (globalization) in Higher education in Zimbabwe is captured in the works of Pattman (1998, 2005) and Epprecht (2007). The processes through which versions of masculinities are constructed in student life are described. The temporality and contradiction of the discourses and resources that are mobilized in order to construct a heterosexual hegemonic masculinity are highlighted in these studies. For example being a 'real man' is marked by engaging in premarital sex, drinking beer while 'real women' are prohibited from engaging in similar activities. In this case what is viewed as western practice and traditional African culture are used to regulate and subordinate the behavior and bodies of female students. Both violent and non-violent methods were employed to maintain male student power. In a separate account Geisler (2004) notes that female students were beaten and harassed on campus for wearing mini-skirts (The University of Zimbabwe 13th February 1992 Mini-skirt Saga). Appropriate dress codes

for female students signify the *good female* student. At college, Pattman (1998) noted that a more subtle and symbolic, but effective discourse that "culturally disarmed" (Connell, 1995) female students was the desire to be a marriageable women. At this level the hegemonic male ideology defines the parameters of what is culturally permissible and women actively participate and comply. For many women being married becomes a desired and prestigious status because it positions them in a powerful position above those who are not. But ultimately, women are subordinate to men in heterosexual marriage.

What is significant in Pattman and Eppretch's findings is the active construction and negotiation of masculinity and femininity in specific contexts among adult students in Zimbabwe. Gender is an unstable category built on fragile and contradictory discourses of true African culture and pervasive Western culture that are negotiated by male and female student teachers. The same culture confers power on male students. These ideas of male and female were being redefined and challenged at the intersection of local traditional African culture and global (Western) culture.

However, at high and elementary school levels in Zimbabwe we have no similar complex accounts of the construction of gender that simultaneously documents the ways boys and girls construct their gender identities. Swaison (1995) compiled a detailed commissioned report on the addressing gender educational inequalities in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Her work is a desk report in which the author acknowledges that there was a shortage of good quality school-based primary research in all the three countries from the literature that was examined. A review of Swaison's report is set out below.

2.6. Gender and education in Zimbabwe

Swaison's report (commissioned by British Development Division in Central Africa (BDDCA) of the Overseas Development Administration) on gender and education in Zimbabwe describes the challenges that girls face in school. A section of the terms of reference of the report that is relevant to this thesis was to make recommendations on strategies and interventions that could potentially address gender inequalities in education. The findings of this report are the basis of most educational intervention programs designed to improve girls' achievement and participation in education in Zimbabwe. I will outline some of these challenges and strategies for action recommended in this report.

While gender problems related to girls' education are noted in Swaison's report, the strategies suggested lack a gender relations framework.

2.6.1. Returns in girls' education

Rightfully, the report identifies that girls' challenges stem from gender relations in wider society and how the school replicates the values of the community in terms of under-valuing girls' potential and abilities compared to boys. Labor market participation is noted as one of the reasons why girls fail to perform better in school. Unlike boys who have a wider range of choices due to labor market segregation, girls' opportunities in labor force employment were restricted. This lack of job opportunities leads to low monetary returns in girls' education and therefore leads parents to invest more in boys' education as compared to girls. Swaison suggests that, given the low monetary benefits from investing in girls' education and the overall incidence of poverty, only a radical reduction in the overall cost of female education will encourage more parents to send

their daughters to school. One solution to this problem was for the government to reduce and minimize the direct cost of schooling for girls.

2.6.2. Girls' domestic labor contribution

The report also notes that agricultural production, biological and social reproductions are domestic responsibilities that females are heavily involved. These tasks are not remunerated and distract girls from commitment to schooling. This extra labor expended by girls in undertaking domestic chores affects their school work in terms of time lost, concentration levels and time available for homework. Through community and parental involvement the report suggests educating parents on the need to relieve their girls from these extra responsibilities.

2.6.3. Sexuality and sexual harassment

Issues of sexuality were seen to reflect wider issues of power, control and widespread misogyny in school and society. Pregnancy was seen as big issue that contributed to girls being expelled from school. Another major problem cited was teasing, humiliation, verbal bullying and ridicule of girls by boys and teachers (Gordon, 1994). Due to cultural expectations girls are blamed and held responsible for both their pregnancy and any harassment they may encounter in school.

2.6.4. Recommendations

To address girls' gender inequality in education, Swaison (1994) suggests a number of structural interventions that included:

- Educating parents especially mothers because they play a crucial role in decisions concerning their children' schooling. Once parents are educated, they are more willing and able to see the benefits of educating girls (Kelly, 1994)
- Review and enforce penalties against school pupils, teachers and other educational personnel engaging in sexual harassment and making school girls pregnant (Leach, 2001)
- Cultivate girls' awareness of their sexuality and to help them avoid early marriages, teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.
- legislation which will make it a punishable offence for parents and guardians who withdraw their girl children from school prematurely
- Continue to admit girls to secondary school with lower grades than boys.
- Providing gender sensitive textbooks
- Award scholarships and fee waiver programs for girls
- Allowing pregnant girls to be readmitted in the school system
- Influence parents/guardians to release girls from domestic chores in order for them to have time to study
- Employ and promote females teachers in science, math and technical subjects so that they become role models for girls to emulate

Leach (2001) in her report on gender violence and abuse in Zimbabwe, Ghana and Malawi made equally similar recommendations that included;

- Government to initiate media and community based campaigns around abuse that link up with human rights, social exclusion and HIV/AIDS preventions initiatives

- Ministries ensure that professional codes of conduct are enforced and offenders are prosecuted quickly and severely
- Schools to promote a more supportive culture by facilitating the reporting of abuse, curb bullying, corporal punishment, providing effective counseling, and encouraging constructive and equal relationships between pupils and positive role modeling
- Teacher training curricula to provide awareness raising around abuse and gender issues
- Communities and families to work closely with schools, ministries and NGOS to address violence in the home, within communities and in schools (p. 2).

The above recommendations became the basis of many gender equity initiatives that cover a spectrum of national legislative policies, community awareness programs and girl-friendly pedagogy in schools. In terms of school curriculum-pedagogy, a plethora of gender sensitive curriculum texts designed to address gender inequality, particularly the challenges faced by girls were initiated. However, the effectiveness of these approaches remains unclear in the long run. Taking a cue from Lingard, Martino and Mills (2009) this study challenges the structural focus of Swaison's report for its failure to understand and confront issues that deal with the social construction of dominant practices of gender (p. 181). The interventions and reforms are founded on reinforcing gender binaries and rely on treating boys and girls as essentially different. The reforms attend to gender issues at a perfunctory level, without considering the investments that men and boys have in the present gender order. For example when the problem of sexuality, pregnancy and early marriage of girls are discussed, the role of boys in these problems is clearly laid out.

However, when solutions to these problems are proffered boys are completely absent, though some of them are key players in the practices that put girls in danger. Indeed, the review and intensification of penalties against perpetrators of sexual harassment, prosecuting offenders speedily and severely amounts to addressing the symptoms rather than the causes of the problem. There is an assumption that offenders are particular and isolated behavioral renegades who need some kind of correctional rehabilitation. The issues are more complex. As a starting point, Swaison's report alerts us to an array of gender related inequalities and practices that confront girls at school and at home, but fails to explain the complicated gender making and performing processes that are involved in creating the inequalities. As a result, the suggested interventions are also silent about construction of dominant masculinities and femininities which are partly responsible for creating these unequal relations. Thus, there is need to look beyond girls' underrepresentation and poor performance in science math and technical subjects as an issue of lack of female teacher models: Rather the focus needs to be on problematizing the connections between these school subjects and the construction of masculinities and femininities that exist in the labor market. Equally important are the issues of sexuality, marriage and pregnancy that are dominant resources in the construction of desirable masculinities and femininities. How would the cultivation of girls' awareness of their sexuality, avoiding early marriages and pregnancy be effective in circumstances where being a man/boy was constructed in terms of sexual prowess? This study raises some of the above concerns by describing how the construction of dominant notions of masculinity and femininity create unequal power relations that work against many girls and some boys.

2.7. Conclusion

Research on masculinities and schooling in the Global North has generated nuanced understanding of boys' issues. But contesting discourses which posit that boys have a natural and biological propensity which directs their behaviors and learning in schools still inform pedagogical reform agendas within the field of boys' education (Kehler, 2011: Martino & Kehler, 2007). The theme of power relations, multiple masculinities, and the situated construction of masculinities that emerge in the literature help us to understand the negotiation of gender relations in other contexts such as rural Zimbabwe.

In Zimbabwe, foreign Non-Governmental Organizations such as the British Development Division in Central Africa (BDDCA) of the Overseas Development Administration continue to sponsor school-girl related projects and research in rural Zimbabwe. These projects and research have left a gap in our understanding of the complex gender relations that mirror the lives of both boys and girls in school in the current postcolonial and global context. This study therefore seeks to broaden our understanding of gender issues in rural schools in Zimbabwe by adopting and combining a masculinities and global perspectives. This knowledge is important because it is specific, situated and temporal to rural Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0. Introduction

The current field of ethnographic research reveals diversity. In this chapter I discuss the justification for using a 'partial ethnography' as an appropriate research methodology for investigating students` gender relations in a rural school setting in Zimbabwe. As part of ethnographic reflexivity, I locate myself in relation to my context of study, participants and data. I also outline the research design and procedure focusing on my field experience. As part of the research design I describe my entry into the research site, selection of participants and how I collected the data. And lastly I describe the approach to data analysis.

3. 1. Rationale for using ethnography

According to Max van Manen (1990, p. 2)

> *…. a research methodology is only a way of investigating certain kinds of questions…the way one understands the problem and the questions it raises are important staring points not the methods.*

The reason for adopting an ethnographic methodology is based on Connell`s (1995) concept of multiple gender identities. The concept of knowledge and reality in this study is that in any given context gender identities and practices are constructed, multiple and always changing. Reality is constructed. My focus was on understanding and describing in depth the complexities of students' experiences of gender relations at Pagomo High school, especially within the context of postcolonization and globalization. Taking into account the complexity of gender in practice and the often taken-for-granted assumptions that dominate people's understanding of these relations in daily life, a qualitative

ethnography was considered to be a plausible approach to understanding this phenomenon.

Hammersley (2006) recognizes the futility of drawing tight boundaries around the definition and meaning of ethnography (p. 2). However, it is important that I define my own understanding and application of ethnography as a specific form of critical qualitative inquiry in the light of the methodological tensions that exists in literature. Ethnography is a qualitative research methodology with original foundations in the discipline of Anthropology. Historically, ethnography involved researchers travelling to foreign communities and studying cultures different from their own. This traditional notion of ethnography was underpinned by positivist objectivism which had three characteristics; objective observer; valid data produced through testable and standardized techniques and that reality could be accurately represented in text to generate substantive truth about human condition. Currently, such ethnographies are criticized for their claim and ability to provide a realist account of social life and colonizing the "Other". One major contention with the use ethnography arises from indigenous scholars committed to decolonizing Western research approaches in indigenous communities. They are very skeptical about using ethnography because historically, the methodology has been inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonization (Smith, 1999). Reports from ethnographers were incorporated as strategies domination and conquest of `the other`. The major criticism against traditional colonial ethnographers stems from their assumed impartiality, expertise, and power of the researcher over the participants. My relation and position to my research participants and context is complex and does not align with the historical notion of ethnography outlined above. Current ethnographies are

historically, culturally and spatially located, demanding ethnographers to make clear their theoretical and political sympathies and acknowledging their personal presence (Stoller, 1999). Objectivity becomes a matter of the extent these personal implications are brought forward in the final account, thus producing reports that are partial and situated.

In this study I am not an outsider to the research context. I am familiar and have intimate knowledge about the school system and community in Zimbabwe. I was born, grew up studied and worked in this community. My experience and knowledge of the context granted me a privileged status of an insider. However, there were times during the conduct of my fieldwork that I felt like a complete outsider. According to Naples (2003) insider and outsider statuses are not fixed positions. In her study Naples noted how certain women felt like outsiders in a community they had lived for a long time because of their different locations in that community. Similarly, my status at Pagomo could be conceived in the same way. After spending close to three years in Canada and visiting Pagomo community for a specific research purpose, I felt in strange ways that I was not really connected as an insider. Similarly, some participants had a feeling of not belonging to the school because they could not measure up to the requirements of the academic demands and discipline of the school. Others felt excluded in terms of relationships: positioning them as outsiders in their own birth places

In that case, my insider status did not necessarily make the research relationship easier. Bishop (2005) asserts that, essentializing positions suggest that cultural insiders can undertake research in a more sensitive and responsive manner than outsiders. According to Bishop, such understandings assume homogeneity that is far from the reality of the diversity and complexity that characterizer indigenous people's lives (p. 111). Thus in

this study the advantages of my insider's status was to some extent undermined by the differences in age, gender, education between me and the participants.

3.2. Ethnography, globalization and masculinity

Is ethnography an appropriate methodology for researching masculinity in the global moment? Connell (2000) argues that traditional ethnography is no longer dexterous enough to sufficiently engage with global issues. He proposes that masculinity research needs to be supplemented by work on a large scale….Ultimately, the large historical context , the big picture is essential for understanding the small picture (p. 9). Connell` s call creates an apparent paradox between ethnography and globalization. For long, ethnographers have concerned themselves with immersion in the natural field, the local in order to capture its essence. The practice of ethnography as Patton (2002, p. 84) noted involves,

> *….intensive fieldwork in which the investigator is immersed in the experiences of those studies, with the purpose of capturing and being to the perspectives of those studied. The idea of "being there" for a long duration, observing events as the happen in real time, participating and talking to participants is the essence of ethnography.*

The presence of the researcher at the research site (field) permits the researcher to elicit, as honestly and vividly as possible the participants` perspectives of a phenomenon. Patton's articulation of ethnography above is rather problematic for researchers concerned with globalization. The scale and scope of globalization disrupts notions of a bounded, natural and local field that an ethnographer can demarcate, enter, immerse and observe and collect valid data. As Kenway, et al., (2006) argue as a result of globalization there is the demise of the local, caught up in transnational conditions. Deterritorialization

means that social life is decreasingly organized around territorial centers because 'social relations are stretched out' and 'the world is on the move' (Giddens, 1999; Appadurai, 1996). How then, can ethnography be configured so that it reflects and responds to the imperatives of globalization while at the same time retaining the dominant features of immersion and locality? The context of ethnography has shifted. As succinctly captured by Gille and O` Riain (2002), "….where is there, where global ethnographers should be?" (p. 272). The challenge for the ethnographic researcher is to connect history, daily life and biography, local everyday realities and the large scale structures of globalization. All these logics that undergird global ethnography should be understood as operating in a reciprocal and uneven relationship.

I subscribe to Kenway, et al., (2006) invitation that in order to construct a comprehensive ethnographic understanding of globalized and globalizing gender order, one must undertake direct immersion in a range of fields or sites of lived cultures and consider global economic forces together with national, transnational connections and cultural imaginaries as they relate to complex power dynamics associated with gender (p. 56). To this call, I consider the conventional location of Pagomo as a research local site but situated and linked to the global, national and other urban places in and outside Zimbabwe. While I was physically present in the school site, I also immersed imaginatively myself in other sites that I considered to have cultural significance in the life of the participants. This was not a mere fictional exploration of other sites but was based on my personal experience and knowledge of some of those places.

According to Tedlock (2000) ethnography combines research design, fieldwork and various methods of inquiry to produce historically, politically, and personally situated accounts, descriptions, interpretations, and representations of human lives (p. 455).

As a result**,** I ensured that my methodology satisfied some of the basic features of an ethnographic methodology-vis-à-vis:

- Being immersed in rural boys` and girls` experiences of gender in relation to schooling at Pagomo High school;
- Being there in the field for period of time collecting data in the natural setting;
- Focusing on one school and a few participants thereby presenting a comprehensive description of the case;
- Analysis of data that involves an explicit interpretation of assumptions and behaviors of participant.

In order to generate a 'true' picture of participants` world view I had to immerse myself in their day to day activities within the school. What kind of 'truths' do these ethnographic accounts generate? According to Willis (2000) ethnographic reflexivity which he has called 'theoretical confession' involves an interrogation of the experience, history, and subjectivity of the researcher. In this sense rigor does not detach the researcher from his/her work but involves the acknowledgment of the researcher` s cultural baggage in the research. Rigor becomes the extent to which the researcher is able to describe how his/her positionality, background and personality impinge on the research process and final report. For me ethnographic immersion was not linear in the sense of an outsider coming into a foreign research context as will be shown below.

3.3.1. A partial ethnography

From the beginning, I was mindful of the impossibility of conducting a full-fledged conventional ethnography. Neither does the concept of local-global ethnography enlisted above considers conventional ethnography possible. I deliberately avoided the paradigm of total commitment of a researcher as a full participant that involved an intensive and prolonged stay in the field. I was coming into a research context that I had background experience and knowledge about. The methodology I used qualifies the label of what Schatzberg (2008) and Hammersley (2006) has referred to as, "….a partial ethnographic perspective" and "part-time ethnography" respectively. The study is a partial or part-time ethnography because of the short duration of stay in the field which was limited to three months. At this point a brief autobiography would shed light on how my social location as a researcher in his own local community informed my adoption of a partial ethnographic methodology.

My position and relation to the participants and study context was multi-layered. I fit both locations of insider and outsider statuses to my participants, making it difficult to define my ethnography as `standard` in the sense of studying a completely foreign culture. As attested by Naples (2003, p. 49) the bipolar construction of insider-outsider sets a false binary that neglects the interactive process through which insiders and outsiders are constructed,

> *……'outsiderness' and 'insiderness' are not fixed or static positions. Rather, they are ever-shifting and permeable social locations that are differentially experienced ……ethnographers are never fully inside or outside the community…the relationship to the community is constantly being negotiated and renegotiated in particular, everyday interactions*

At Pagomo High school I straddled the borders of an insider and outsider. I negotiated an in between space as I was partly, a member of that community with whom I shared the same culture.

Like the majority of inhabitants of Pagomo, I am a Shona speaker, a dominant vernacular language spoken in the area. I was born and raised in a rural peasant Zimbabwean family similar in many respects to students at Pagomo. I attended a rural elementary and community high school. After graduating from University, I got my initial appointment as a teacher and later became principal of a rural High school. The above personal and cultural experience positioned me as an insider to the research context. Within conventional ethnography, researchers are often complete strangers, requiring training in the language and norms of the people they study before they may start conducting fieldwork, I was an insider by birth and upbringing. I did not require that prolonged duration of training to master the language and customs of my participants before I could begin my fieldwork. I had basic knowledge of how rural schools and parents in Zimbabwe view gender. My knowledge of gender in Zimbabwe in both school and home were my lived experiences. However, this knowledge provided me with an informed starting point to think about boys` and girls` experiences of gender within rural school contexts. I was familiar with the local language, beliefs, aspirations, fears and daily struggles of rural peasant families.

I drew on my personal cultural biography as significant sources of knowledge to understand the experiences of my participants (Harding, 1998; Hill-Collins, 1991; Delgado-Bernal, 1998). Being reflexive involves incorporating much more of my personal experience and situated knowledge and this has two advantages. This positions

me as a much less colonial and authoritative researcher, a charge which traditional ethnography has been subjected to, and also it obligates me to embrace my personal indebtedness and responsibility towards the participants (Spark, 2002). By directing my gaze on my experience, I became reflexive about the situated and socially constructed nature of subjectivity and by extension the 'other`. According to Foley (2002, p. 473),

> *…the ethnographic productions of the self and cultural other are always historically and culturally contingent….methodologically this means we are forced to explore the self and other relationships of fieldwork critically if we are to produce more discriminating and defensible interpretations.*

In this vein, I utilize introspection, intuition and personal memories in order to make meaning of the experience of participants. As Behar (1996) has acknowledged a more reflexive ethnography cannot separate theoretical language and the constructs of everyday language and thought. Being a researcher with a personal and cultural history that relates closely to that of the participants provided me a dialogic understanding of their experience. At a more practical level, my insider knowledge of the context made entry and acceptance easy and quicker.

On the other hand I was an outsider to the research context. I was no longer a boy but an adult, an outsider to boys and girls in this rural high school context. However, there were a lot of things they did, that I could easily relate to. Also my position and experience a parent, teacher, principal, and researcher from a North American University accentuated my outsider location. Before going back to Zimbabwe, I had stayed in Canada for three years as an international student. More significantly over the years rural school contexts have evolved in response to the dictates of the broad political and economic context in Zimbabwe. By being away from Zimbabwe for close to three years, I found a lot of

things which surprised me. All those I was able to speak to were quick to tell me that, "… things have been hard for us". I had not lived through that hardship.

Given my insider-outsider status (Naples, 2003) and the evolving nature of my research context, where the school is a smaller part of a larger complex whole, a partial ethnography was a justifiable methodology.

3.3.2 Ethnographic immersion

Not only does ethnography entail participation but involves researcher's "deeper immersion" in participants' world in order to grasp what they experience as meaningful and important (Schatzberg, 2008; Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995). Gender relations are a complex phenomenon, where change occurs but often at such a slow pace that we assume that no change is taking place (Connell, 1995). However, major historical changes have presented challenging opportunities in the gender relations and structure. In the case of Zimbabwe, the historical processes of colonization, decolonization and a volatile postcolonial context provided huge challenges to normative ways of performing gender. For example in Fanon's (1961, p. 36) invocation for change he said that,

> *……decolonization never takes place unnoticed, for it influences individuals and modifies them fundamentally. It transforms spectators crushed with their inessentiality into privileged actors, with the grandiose glare of history` s floodlights upon them. It brings a natural rhythm into existence, introduces the new men, and with it a new language and a new humanity. Decolonization is the veritable creation of new men.*

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Fanon's famous defense of violence as the crucible of a postcolonial society is thus an agenda for constructing a particular kind of masculinity. With specific reference to Zimbabwe, Parpart (2008) and Muchemwa and Muponde (2007) have vividly shown how the military decolonization process of Zimbabwe has created a hegemonic militaristic, nationalist and violent masculinity that claim to protect and provide for women, children

and others but in the process is violent against any form of opposition. In an attempt to understand the process of change in gender relations in Zimbabwe in the context of its unique history and current period of postcoloniality underpinned by globalization, I immersed myself in the routines of student life at Pagomo. The process of immersion permitted me to observe from the perspective of an insider how gender interacted with schooling in the lives of students. Within the school setting, there were explicit gender norms and practices which were easily observable, for example dress code, classroom seating arrangement, assigning classroom tasks, and discipline. Boys and girls could be distinguished along these lines. These explicit practices were powerful signifies of gender difference that passed as shared knowledge that everybody was supposed to know. From the perspective of the participants, such norms were taken for granted and considered not worth mentioning, comment, explanation, or analysis. Ethnographic immersion was a means of accessing this domain of school and student life that was perceived as common. And to discern the hidden gender significance and meanings of these explicit and unstated notions of gender I adopted what Schatzberg (2008) labeled the three core tasks of ethnographic immersion, "...seeing the invisible, hearing silences, and thinking the unthinkable" (p. 3). This approach also allowed me to generate meanings of student`s experiences beyond their locality that, which was conveyed through a global sensibility and indirectly articulated in participants` experiences. The lure of an ethnographic immersion is succinctly presented by Schatz (2009, p. 11):

> *…research conducted at close range invites the researcher to 'see' differently; heterogeneity, causal complexity, dynamism, contingency, and informality. Instead of resting and being contend on broad categories, she searches for subtypes and generates problematizing re-descriptions.*

Being immersed in the lives of the participants enabled me to construct powerful stories of their gendered school experiences and to attach significance to their gendered lives. Penetrating beyond gender symbolism required that I immersed myself in the school` s cultural representations of gender.

3.3.3. Ethnographic constraints

While ethnography permitted me to explore the complexity of gender relations in a situated context, I was aware of its limitations**.** Firstly, participants did not dwell in the same place, neither were their experiences of gender mediated by events in their own locality. Their activities were segmented and diversified and reflected the nature of global complex communities. As demonstrated earlier in Chapter 1, the rural community of Pagomo was not at all a homogenous entity; cross-border migrations exposed Pagomo to global influence. Much of my observations, interviews and participation were confined to the school context. According to Hammersley (2006), this raises the danger of treating people as if their behaviors and identities are merely products of institutions we study them in, rather than what they also do outside those institutions. Thus certain institutions and sites outside the school context exert a significance influence on gender relations. As Connell (2000, p. 150) noted,

> *…schools are not the only institutions which shape masculinity and may not be the most important in that process. The family, media and workplace also convey and exert significant influence on the formation of gender identities. This brings to the fore the ideas that school masculinities are shaped not only within school sites, but by the broad social context in which they are located.*

Bhana (2005, p. 205) also noted that,

> *…..masculine identities in school reach back in time into the family and, in turn, the social location of these families play a major part in the early processes by which masculinities are formed.*

Since there was no observational data about what participants do outside the school context, I gave a detailed theoretical description of the broad context in Zimbabwe. In this process, I described the colonial and post colonial gender contexts in Zimbabwe. Chapter 1 presents the immediate context of the research site. More specifically the chapter elaborates how the Kiyakiya environment impacted on gender practices, in some ways unsettling but in other ways confirming and reinforcing the previously understood gender notions. In chapter 4 I also describe the family backgrounds of the key participants. Such background was important because it provided the context in which participants` experiences of gender in the school setting was anchored. Actually, Schatzberg (2008) views this process as part of ethnographic immersion,

> *…..the researcher immerses herself in ancillary material, written, oral that various research methods produce and continues as one interacts with data, theory and method in various other locales, at home and in the library* (p. 3).

Before I went into the field and when I had returned, I continued to explore literature which informed me about the context of my research site. Certain observational and interview data did not make sense to me until I grasped the broad context in which it was situated. Delineating the macro context of study became an analytic process because my participants did not explicitly indicate the context in which they saw themselves operating.

3.4.0. Research site

The purpose of this study was to explore the interplay of masculinities and schooling among students in a postcolonial rural school Zimbabwe. Because I was interested in gaining knowledge about the latent and manifest relations of gender, I conducted a partial

ethnography, using participant observations and open-ended interviews over a period of three months. Interviews permitted me to gain insights into boys' and girls' perceptions about gender. Participant observations allowed me to understand the nuanced practices of gender which participants were not usually willing or where unable to articulate in the interviews (Patton, 2002). Below I describe how I negotiated my field experience.

3.4.1. Entering the research site

The choice of Pagomo rural high school as a research site was to a lesser extent guided by practical considerations. While the school was not representative of all rural High schools in Zimbabwe, it was located in the centre of a rural community and close to major roads connecting Pagomo with neighboring countries and a thriving Growth Point. In other words it was located at the intersection of African traditionalism and western modernity where new understandings and practices of gender among students were possible. The choice of a rural site such as Pagomo allowed me to explore and at the same time, to explode the contradictory myths of remote places as diehard traditional and uncomplicated in the face of modern change or that globalization culture is unstoppable and obliterates local way of life in remote places (Kenway, et al., 2006).

I had previous knowledge of Pagomo community derived from my experience as a teacher and principal in that community. I was certain that the principal of Pagomo High school would grant me easy access to carry out research in his school. I knew him personally as a workmate and fellow principal.

Getting entry into the school required me to obtain ethical approval from the University of Western Ontario`s Faculty of Education Ethical Review Committee (see Appendix. D). Obtaining ethical approval was a bit difficult than my practical negotiation of entry

into the research site. In Zimbabwe, my first point of contact was the Secretary of the Ministry of Education. From him I got not so much an ethical approval as understood in the Western ethics protocol, but rather "permission and directive" to carry out research at Pagomo High School (see Appendix; F). The fact that the principal, teachers and students would welcome me on the basis of the letter from the Permanent Secretary was certain. However, I realized rapport with the principal, teachers and students had to be re-negotiated at individual level and on a daily basis. I had to negotiate a space in their daily school program, which I always tried not to interrupt. As it turned out they were more willing to suspend some of their programs so that I would be able to do my research among them. Also, I approached and sought the permission of traditional gate-keepers (local chief, councilor and surrounding village heads), keeping in mind Smith's (1999) idea of respecting and acknowledging key people, who although they did not participate in the research, could have created difficult conditions for me in terms interacting with the key informants. Hammersley & Atkinson (2007) define gatekeepers, "……as actors with control over key resources and avenues of opportunity" (p. 38). From my knowledge and experience, I was aware of the indirect power and influence these key people could have in making it either easy or difficult for me to carry out my research.

The principal welcomed me in his school. He was a critical agent in my research, though not a participant. Because of his role and position in the school he could influence the direction of the research. I gave him my letter of information (Appendix: G), letter of permission that I obtained from the Secretary of Education and explained to him the purpose of my research and how I planned to proceed with my research in his school. He

however objected to having participants sign consent forms citing that the permission I got from the Permanent Secretary of Education was all that I needed to do research at the school. In any case I always explained the purpose of my research to each participant and obtained their verbal consent which was equally binding as the written consent. The principal's decision did not surprise me because that is how I understood the bureaucratic power structure in Zimbabwe from my previous experience as an educator there. Research was conceived as an activity done for the good of the community and thus no individual should deny it. Individual rights and privileges were subordinate to community interests. On closer examination, community interests served to propagate patriarchal power. As Morrell & Swart (2005) noted, such a focus on community collectivity masks the exploitation of women and children and reinforces patriarchal discourse. He gave me an `Office` from where I could conduct interviews with participants. I later used this allocated space to write my field-notes during those moments I was not interacting with students and teachers. Much of the time I chose to be in the Staff room with teachers or the inside or outside the classroom with students.

3.4.2. Negotiating cultural barriers

My attempt to immerse myself completely in the gender experiences of boys and girls at Pagomo was mediated and restricted by unwritten codes of conduct that regulate relations between adults and adolescents in this rural community. As a result, the participants` perspectives I presented were rather a partial glimpse into their lives. But at the same time my attention was struck by the desire of the boys and girls to challenge these boundaries, when granted the opportunity. Hama (19), whose gender views and performance I later understood to border between modernism and traditionalism indicated

to me the traditionally acceptable conventions of relations between teachers and students…*students speak appropriate language to our teachers. We consider them our elders or parents, so we are not free to speak as we want to them.* According to Epprecht (1998, p. 636), *"…dominant African culture in Zimbabwe place a strong taboo upon the open discussion of sexual matters except in same-age and same-sex groups".* Those boys I interacted with always positioned me as an adult and teacher cum-researcher. The girls who participated in the research viewed me as a male-adult-teacher-researcher. These statuses I was accorded were important in the researcher-participant relations which followed and impacted on the kinds of data I was able to extract. For example some relations invoked silences while others provoked detailed narratives. No matter how my questions were framed and how closely and penetrating my observations were, I could not break through some of these culturally induced researcher-participant relations. From my knowledge of the community I was aware of their significance. I used that knowledge to negotiate entry into my participants` world. Often, I tried to create a "…least-gendered and least-generational identity" (Pascoe, 2007, p. 181)

Negotiating cultural barriers which constrain and inhibit the research process between the children and elders (Reay, 2001), male and females (Okley, 1981; Schilt & Williams, 2008) was a great challenge in this research. Over and above the known researcher/participant power relations, my task also involved negotiating cultural barriers which were inevitable in this context. I was introduced by the school principal as a former teacher and former principal of a neighboring school and also as a parent from the local community, even though I lived more than twenty kilometers away from the school. Besides my major role as a researcher, it was clear that the students positioned me as an

adult to whom, respect in terms of appropriate speech and conduct was due. During the early days, most student-participants were careful to maintain the hierarchical generational, professional, and gender distance in what they said and did in my presence. Even female teachers took great lengths to cross the gender divide in our conversations and interactions. As the duration in the field increased, productive relations were established as participants gained confidence in me. I assured them that my previous capacity as teacher and principal were not binding and that what they said was going to be treated in confidence. But there were some topics where the language and vocabulary were always pitched to 'acceptable' standards of conduct across gender and age lines. These were topics of sexual relationships. Thanks to my 'insider' status some of the idioms and metaphors used by students and teachers to describe their experiences could have remained an unresolved enigma. For example expressions, such as…..*ndinomuziva*-I know her/him, I *ndakarara naye*-slept with her/him, *vakaita zvakaipa*-they did bad things" were polite substitutes for sexual acts which was never explicitly talked about. I was able to draw on my own cultural intuition, awareness and 'insider status' in order to understand that language (Delgado-Bernal, 1998; Hill-Collins, 1991). Because of this insider status my research as a man among young girls and boys was not a complete impossibility. To understand the participants' experiences, I drew heavily on my lived experience and knowledge of Pagomo rural community. Thus I acknowledge the extent to which my position as an 'insider' in the Pagomo community is implicated in the kinds of data that I generated in this study and in the subsequent analysis.

At times, I was able to establish common ground with students to the extent that they felt comfortable to disclose confidential and sensitive personal experiences. I remember when

in the middle of an interview one participant began to talk about how being a Christian influenced his orientation towards school and sexual relationships and relations with other boys. We delved into which religious denomination he was affiliated to. I mentioned his pastor by name and some popular events held at their church. My knowledge of his pastor church ignited a positive research-participant relationship. *So you know my church and all these people!* he exclaimed. I knew that I had struck a point of connection. It became quite easy to arrange further interview meetings with him. He was very cooperative in answering all the questions I asked. I was able to employ the same strategy with most of the participants. Since I was a local person, I was able to find some kinds of connection with the participants' experiences outside the school. However, I was careful to let the participant introduce the point of connection rather than me initiating it.

3.4.3. Confidentiality

In narrating their experiences of gender, students often gave details of tales of unreported cases of physical abuse and sexual harassment by teachers and guardians. Some students talked about teachers who neglected their teaching roles and having 'improper' relations with female students. Was I supposed to take this up with responsible authorities like the police or the principal? This was information divulged in strict confidence by participants with a clause: *Do not tell anyone* from the informant. I had promised that all information would be treated in strict confidence and I felt obliged to honor my side of contract. At the same time it was an abuse and violation children's rights and I felt that I was acting in complicit with the perpetrators. The most I could do was to advise the students to talk to the school counselor about their unresolved issues.

3.5. Selection of participants

No concrete research design can be formulated before hand when carrying out an ethnographic study. The research activity is a reflexive process that unfolds throughout the research process (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). This was true in my choice of the class of 37 students to work with and selection of 10 key informants among them. In all, there were 18 classes at Pagomo made up as follows: Year 1 – 5 classes; year 2 -5 classes; year 3- 4 classes and year 4 - 4 classes. Out of these 18 classes I chose to concentrate on one class of year 4 students. This was the most senior class at the school made up of 13 girls and 24 boys. After the first round of interviews, interaction and general acquaintance with this class, that lasted for a month I trimmed the number of participants to ten students comprising 3 girls and 7 boys. I did not select these students for their representativeness of students at Pagomo but because their experiences were compelling. Each student purposefully selected in some way had experiences and narratives which challenged and/or re-inscribed notions of being a boy or a girl. Specific justification for the selection of the 10 students is given in detail under each student's profile in Chapter 5.

My study also involved teachers. At first I proposed to work with subject teachers of the class I had selected. But, in the end, I selected 2 practical subject teachers and one administrator (the deputy principal/chairperson of the disciplinary committee). It became evident during my early days at Pagomo that Foods and Nutrition, Fashion and Fabrics Metal Work and Building Studies were highly gendered subjects both in terms of how they were assigned to teachers and also how they were allocated to students. I needed to find out how boys and girls experienced gender in these subjects by also listening to the

perspectives and practices of those who taught them. Corporal punishment as a punitive disciplinary method attracted my attention during the first days. Because of that, I made a decision to explore its impact on gender experiences of boys and girls at Pagomo. The Deputy Headmaster was a key informant especially because of his role as chairman of the disciplinary committee. The selection of the participants was thus purposeful as far as each was chosen because of their perceived capacity to illuminate particular issues that I hoped to pursue.

3.6. Data collection and analysis

The ethnographic methods I used were observation and unstructured interviews. Below I present a table of the interview and observation guides. Issues raised in these guides were explored further with individual participants thereby providing deep insights in varied experiences of gender among different students. These questions were not pursued in any kind of chronology in each interview with each participant. Mostly, they arose as topics that I talked about with each participant during our interactions in different places and times within the school. These same topics were also a guide to what I had to observe during the fieldwork. In the social world events do not occur naturally but are made to happen (Atkinson & Coffey, 2003; Hammersley, 2006). I realized that participating in each student`s daily experience required re-negotiation of their consent. After our first meeting, I did not tell the informants that we were now having an interview. My aim was to make our talk less contrived but more natural. During our first meeting with each participant I explained that all our conversations will be audio-recorded but did not remind them in subsequent conversations that I was recording their speeches. I always moved with my audio recorder concealed in my pocket, where I could easily press the

record function without alerting the participant. I did this so that I would not alert them to the consciousness and uneasiness that interviews normally induce. I also asked the participants whether they were comfortable in talking in English or Shona. All of them preferred to communicate in Shona. However, in the actual interaction, they mixed both Shona and English. Shona was their first language and they could articulate their experiences fluently in that language. Interviewing in Shona language permitted me to have thick descriptions of participants` experiences. While nearly all participants could communicate in English, it was not their first language. English was likely to conceal their deeper ideas, feelings and experiences.

I kept my research diary in the office where I immediately recorded brief notes about what I saw, heard, felt, and smelt. I recorded the mood, the physical setting, my reaction, feelings and those of my informants. I was aware of the fact that, taking notes in the presents if the participants would distract their attention. I expanded these notes later each evening when I was at home.

During my fieldwork I travelled a distance of 50 kilometers by public transport to and from Pagomo each day. This daily journey exposed me to the challenges of "*kukiyakiya"* that many Zimbabweans faced at the time when travelling. Commuter buses with a recommended capacity of 12 people were loaded with as many as 20 passengers. For nearly three months, I was a regular commuter in the crammed public transport which took me to Pagomo every school day. I usually disembarked at the Growth Point and would walk the remaining 500 meters to the school on foot. Very often I caught up with students and teachers who resided in the Growth Point and beyond.

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3.6.1. Table 2: Open-ended interviews & participant observation guides

students	To Describe: • their views and experiences in practical subjects: influences from teachers, family and employment opportunities after school • experiences and understanding of school discipline: how discipline at Pagomo is gendered • how students responded to disciplinary powers when applied by male or female teachers • Describe their experiences of relationships, sexuality and ideas about marriage and how that impacted on their school persistence and success Observation of student-student and student-teacher interactions focusing on discipline, social relations, and practical subjects
teachers	To describe: • their experiences of gender in the teaching of practical-technical subjects • difficulties faced and efforts being made to deconstruct some of these gendered perceptions and practices • How students perceive and respond to disciplinary authority from male and female teachers

	• Their expectations and experiences with student relationships, gender roles, sexuality, and marriage and how that impacted on students' persistence and success in school
administrator	To describe: • Disciplinary problems at the school and how they are resolved in relation to boys and girls. • How boys' and girls' disciplinary problems are related to their gender and role expectations at school and community?

As indicated earlier, I did not maintain a rigid research design. Even the research process was initially not detailed. The whole experience meant revisiting the research focus and the questions. Once at Pagomo High school, I quickly abandoned the idea of looking at how sports was deployed as a gendered space because there was no active sports program during that semester. While participants could often talk about sports, there was no opportunity to observe interactions in actual sessions. Also instead of examining the whole curriculum, I narrowed it to two practical subjects. Other subjects indeed conveyed gender in salient and powerful ways. I chose the practical subjects because they had specific gender mandates as enshrined in education policy documents in terms of challenging stereotypical male and female roles in the school, home and labor market. The idea of discipline and authority which I originally held was later refined to corporal punishment. All other forms of disciplining students were subordinate to corporal.

Ethnographic fieldwork is the method used to understand the other's culture. Students constitute a subculture in the school. The techniques employed in fieldwork are unstructured interviews and participant observation. At Pagomo high school some norms of being a girl or a boy were highly visible. To get an understanding and significance attached to these visible notions of femininity and masculinity I immersed myself in the life of the students and teachers in the school. My purpose was to examine how such notions were constructed, challenged and maintained through practical subjects, discipline and through relationships. Patton (2002) lists five advantages of participant observation which I found relevant in my collection of and analysis of data.

- capturing a holistic context in which participants interact
- to be open and discovery oriented rather than rely on preconceived ideas
- to capture what routinely escapes awareness of the participants
- going beyond perceptions reported in interviews
- the researcher is the key instrument in data collection: thus researcher draws on personal knowledge during interpretation of data

By talking to ten students, three teachers and interacting with them in school activities inside and outside I audio recorded the interviews and wrote elaborate field notes of my experiences with them. The interviews and field notes became the sources of evidence that I analyzed in order to construct students` experiences of gender at Pagomo High school.

3.6.2 Data analysis

Making sense of massive amounts of data was a huge challenge. This involved reducing volumes of raw interview information and observation notes compiled during fieldwork,

identifying significant connections and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data revealed (Patton, 2002, p. 432). When analyzing data I was guided by three things: a) purpose of the study b) the research questions that the study was designed to answer and, c) theoretical framework that informed the study. In analyzing the data my concern was to discern what new insights and unique theoretical contribution this study would bring to the understanding of gender and schooling within this context. Thus I revisited my initial research questions. The research questions served as templates for the analysis of data. However, I did not discard the data that did not align with the research questions. I wanted to see what patterns and themes were evident from the data that were relevant to the research questions. The main questions were: How does the postcolonial context and forces of globalization impact gender relations in rural Zimbabwe?In what ways are students' gender identities influenced by expectations of schooling, demands of labor, and heterosexuality in this particular context? What does it mean to be a boy or a girl in this particular context?

Sub-questions derived from the main questions were:

- In what ways do boys and girls conform to or deviate from expected gender practices as they interact with school structures?
- What messages about being a boy or girl does the school convey?
    a) Through the curriculum
    b) Through discipline
    - How do boys and girls relate to these messages?
    - What messages about gender do boys and girls draw from the local context?

- How are these messages experienced in the daily life of participants in the school?

The postcolonial and masculinities also provided the analytic lenses with which to understand experiences of boys and girls. Masculinities lens permitted me to map out how boys positioned themselves in relation to each other and girls. Hierarchies of power among boys and girls emerged in the data as I noted which notions of being a boy or a girl were dominant and which ones were marginalized. I was able to notice how the legacies of history still impacted on boys' and girls' lives in their present moment. However data revealed that these persisting traditions were being redefined and understood in new ways. In this case the participants` experiences were presented against a detailed description of postcolonial context of Zimbabwe. As Connell (1995) noted, "...evidence is not necessarily easy to use; it takes time and effort to examine the story from different angles and compare it with other evidence" (p. 91). My research questions and theoretical lens became the different angles from which I viewed the evidence.

3.6.3. The analysis process

The first step in analysis of data started while I was in the field as I compiled detailed field-notes about my observations and the initial impressions I got during my interactions with the participants. Field notes were a fundamental resource where the interview narratives of the participants were synthesized with the field experiences of the researcher.

Thus the process of data collection went hand in hand with analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). A joint process of data collection and analysis, where analysis informed the next

step of data collection was used. This initial analysis was not conclusive but directed my focus to what was emerging as significant.

The second stage of analysis involved transcribing interview data. This was an important way of organizing data and presenting it into a form which would be easy to analyze. In the process of transcription, interviews for each participant were grouped together and organized around the research questions. I wanted to get at individual meanings of gender by paying attention to what they said in conversations with me and what I observed them doing. By constant comparison of field notes and interview data for each participant, I was able to construct a gender portrait of each individual. My task in this analysis was to ensure that each narrative was presented in relation to other students, the school structures and her/his position in the wider context of Pagomo. Such a deliberate focus was necessary because I would escape the temptation of pursing vivid stories which might be irrelevant to my research purpose. The same data could be used to construct different stories. I chose stories which illuminated my research questions.

Since all the interviews were audio recorded in Shona, the process of transcribing also involved translating the interviews into English. However I retained certain words and statements which I felt had significant meaning on gender so that readers who understand Shona may make their own interpretations. I did all the transcription and translation manually. This allowed me to have a greater appreciation of the data.

How significant were these individual stories when they are put together? My last phase of analysis was concerned with comparing similarities and differences in participants` gender trajectories. These comparisons were important because, they portrayed relational and institutional gender processes emphasizing how gender happens in groups, how it

intersects with schooling. As I looked at each research question, for example students` experience of discipline within the school, I drew all participants into perspective exploring how their experiences were different or similar. In this way, I was able to discover patterns, themes and categories in the data.

3.7. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the research methodology and the methods of data collection. I highlighted the strength and challenges of using ethnographic method in the context of globalization. I also outlined the research design and procedure focusing on my field experience. In this process, I locate myself in relation to my context of study, participants and data. And lastly I described how the data was analyzed. In the next two chapters I present the research findings.

CHAPTER 4: THE PARTICIPANTS

4.0. Introduction

This section focuses on the family background of the key participants and how it impacts on their ideas and practices of being boys or girls at Pagomo High School. It describes in detail the personal and family lives of participants and how their present context of postcoloniality and their marginal location in the global cultural and economic contexts continue to impact on their gendered lives. Also, significant in exploring student experiences, is how their lives are still impacted by their colonial history. I am not suggesting here that their ideas and practices are pre-given from their backgrounds but that they actively construct and contest new identities and practices of being boys or girls in the school site.

Most stories from the participants show families which had been fragmented and had lost their *traditional* coherence. The factors for the family unit demise were complex. Some were devastated by HIV/Aids and others by regional labor migration. The nuclear family structure of father, mother and children and extended relatives appears to have fallen or broken down. Many participants` backgrounds reflect the realities of *kukiyakiya* within the community and beyond. Some participants live alone or with sisters in the *Growth Point* away from their parents (Jonah and Maida). Others are living with their mothers because their fathers and brothers have migrated to neighboring South Africa or are working the nearest town (Moze and Joel). And yet again others live with their grandparents, either because their parents are dead (Don) or because both parents are away from home (Rod). Death of parents due to HIV/AIDS was prevalent among students at Pagomo. At Pagomo high school, the HIV/AIDS pandemic was figuratively

called *chirwere* (the disease). The dynamism in the stability of family structure due to death and the necessity of work provides the moment for the active reconfiguration of gender practice in the everyday lives of participants. The context of HIV/Aids and imperatives of work created condition whereby boys and girls undertook familial responsibility early in their life. Instead of pushing the participants out of school, such conditions made participants' resolve for schooling much stronger.

In some ways each participant presented here vividly, re-inscribes, reconfigures or challenges the traditional gender norms of being a boy or girl at Pagomo High School in ways which were dictated by the circumstances in his/her family and also mediated within the power structures of the school. Each family background provides the material and cultural resources which each participant use to make sense of his/her being a boy or a girl in relation to schooling and other students and teachers.

Writing about young black school boys in South Africa, Bhana (2005) observed that, masculine identities in school reach back in time into the family and, in turn, the social location of these families plays a major part in the early process by which masculinities are formed (p. 205). In another context Connell (1996) acknowledges the varying extent to which schools, families and the public media play in the construction of masculinities in young boys' lives. Here I present the social backgrounds as some kind of window into the lives of the participants outside the school. I subscribe to Connell and Bhana's argument that schools are not the only and sole agents in shaping school boys' experiences at Pagomo high school. The family and social background data of participants were obtained through formal interviews and observations within the school

setting. I also relied on my insider knowledge and experience of the community to validate the data I collected from the participants. Due to limited time, I could not visit the participants in their own homes. This could have generated very useful and detailed information about the participants. Students at Pagomo came from varied family backgrounds. The homogeneity of their families being peasant and rural collapsed immediately when their lives are considered in relation to the *Kiyakiya* context and their position in the context of globalization. They inhabited multiple familial circumstances ranging from diseased parents, migrant fathers, unemployed parents, professional parents, traditional and Christian religious believers, families headed by grandmothers, led by sisters and working brothers. These families had multiple understandings of the value of schooling for boys and girls. Within the context of *Kiyakiya* these different circumstances created conditions generating new gender ideas and practices. In situations where the biological fathers migrated away from home, the mother or child (mainly boy) had some measure of power to manage the home in the absence of the father.

Most of the participants fell below the World Bank (2008) poverty indicators, as measured in terms of lack of clean water, decent shelter and basically lived at less than a dollar per day. However the community of Pagomo had their own way of defining and describing what it meant to be rich or poor. At times nobody needed a dollar per day because they could use other non-monetary means to get what they wanted. At school students who paid their school fees on time, and could afford a packet of popcorn and a jolly-juice at lunch were considered to be from a well-to-do family. A nice backpack, ironed uniform and a pair of shoes, having an employed brother or sister and possession of a mobile phone increased the social standing of some students among their peers. But

as one participant noted, "…*we could be in better schools if our parents were rich, this is a school for poor parents we are poor here."* By better schools the participant meant those boarding schools where high fees were charged and most poor parents could not afford the school fees. It is important to recognize that the magnitude of material impoverishment that gripped, some of the Pagomo students, during the *Kiyakiya* moment had to do with Zimbabwe's stance in the global economy during that time. The influence of the ideology of a liberal market economy, from the West meant that social service deliveries in health and education were cut in Zimbabwe, significantly affecting the lives of the working class and rural peasants.

Table 3 gives an overview of familial background of the participants and how that background (family size, parents` resources, employment history, education, beliefs, aspirations for their children and who the participant is currently staying with) indirectly impacted on their experiences of being a boy or a girl at Pagomo. The participants presented here are not representative of all students at Pagomo High School. Neither are their narratives exhaustive of all the multiple positions that they lived at school and outside. I decided to focus here in much detail on the experiences of ten participants whose gender experience disrupts or reinforce normative and culturally accepted notions of being a boy or a girl. I deliberately and purposefully selected individual stories and episodes that were compelling tales of how boys and girls `performed gender` at Pagomo high school. Keeping in mind the multiple masculinities and active construction of gender, I was inclined to those moments, experiences and stories of boys and girls at Pagomo which illustrated this perspective.

4.1. Table 3: A summary of participants' profiles

Name	Sex/ Age	No in Family, Parents Alive	Parents` Income and Resources	Some notes on the Participant
1. Hama	M/19	4th/Both Parents professionals and are alive	Father is a teacher and Mother is a nurse. Had a steady income before the *Kiyakiya* crisis but still better placed compared to many other people in the community	Hama struggles to accept that girls can be equal to boys. A struggle which permeates the life of his parents. As professionals the parents are aware of promoting girls' chances in school and life, but they are deeply traditional in keeping their African cultural values. All of Hama`s elder siblings have professional jobs including his sister. The value of education and respect to authority are highly esteemed in Hama` s parents.
2. Joel	M/17	First/both parents are alive	Father is Ex-clerk/driver for the cotton company. Now migrated to South Africa. He visits	Repeating grade: attended other schools. Aware of challenges outside the school, stays in the *Growth Point* with mother, now focused on studies. Can afford minimum lunch at school, good clothes and a mobile phone. Joel has access to television and

			the family during month-end and public holidays.	radio, Watches western movies and songs.
3. Maida	F/18	Third/ parents stay far away from Pagoma.	Unemployed, former casual worker. Not much control and influence over children`s lives.	Used to stay with sister in the *Growth Point*, Sister is a prostitute. Experienced abuse from sister. Now stays with the principal. Focused and hardworking which has developed as a result of dislike of sister` s involvement in prostitution. Stays with parents during school vacations
4. Rod	M/16	First/both parents are alive	Church pastor, Ministry calling demands that he moves around the country away from the family	Stays with grandmother, struggles to negotiate *accepted* boyhood with Christian beliefs. Parents send school fees on time, nice clothes. Derives his moral values mainly from church; obeys school rules and accepts punishment
5. Don	M/16	Fourth/deceased father	Brothers in SA but do not support him	Stays with grandmother. Grandmother sells surplus agricultural food stuff at the *Growth Point* and also brews traditional beer which she sells at home. Very poor background hopes a good education will improve his status, works part-time jobs on holidays and weekends. Focused on his studies

6 Tendai	F/16	First/ both parents are alive	Traditional herbalist.	Not bound by tradition. Parents support her education. Very calculative and balances the contradictions of traditionalism and change by British colonialism.
7.Themba	M/20	Third/ Both parents alive. His experience influences him more than his parents.	Unemployed parents/ His brothers in SA provides for his school needs.	Once dropped out of school, Went to South Africa. Back again in school, his experiences have reconstituted his orientation towards schooling and relations with other students and teachers. Rejects anything which he believes will derail his focus on his schooling like bullying and opposing school authority.
8. Moze	M/17	First/Mother died/ Father remarried	Ex-teacher/ Lands officer. He is a professional. Affords the luxuries of piped water, electricity, television and radio. He drives a company car to his home every weekend.	Stays with step-mother. Father works in town and insists that Moze should get an education. He has very low grades, no career goals set. Always caned for breaking school rules. Resists punishment from most teachers. Affords nice uniform, shoes and a mobile phone. Involved in illicit trade in gas and money exchange. School seems to offer less opportunity of success because he is living a pretty good life.

9. Jonah	Male/ 17	First /both parents alive	Ex-farm manager/ migrated to SA. Father High school certificate ie 11 years of formal schooling. Understands the value of education, thus sent Jonah to Pagomo a better school in the community	Exposed to the life beyond Pagomo, Rents a room close to Pagomo. Believes in being independent and standing up for himself. Cooks, washes dishes and clothes because he stays alone. He constructs his masculine identity of *kukiyakiya*: Exploiting the moment. Aims to finish school with good grades. Very uncertain and confused about what the future holds.
10. Marty	F/18	Third/ both parents are alive	Unemployed poor peasants. They are illiterate but consider education important for girls.	Could not afford the basic necessities, like bath soap, breakfast, fees and decent uniform and shoes. Due to her condition of poverty she struggles to meet the idea of being a smart girl expected at this school context. She struggles to remain in school. Her other brother and sister have not progressed beyond elementary school. She was a bright student and scored good grades.

4.1.1 Hama: Individualizing gender privilege

A male student in his final grade at Pagomo, Hama was 18 years old. His father was a teacher at a local primary school while his mother was a nurse at a clinic in the Growth Point. His three elder brothers had successfully finished high school and were employed. While his professional parents could not be described as rich, they could afford a comfortable life for Hama. They also tried to inspire Hama to work hard in school, though he did not show an impressive performance in school.

Contradictory ideas and behaviors about being a boy were central to Hama's account and lived experience at Pagomo High school. This conflict was understandable given Hama` s background. He was brought up in an 'enlightened' family of professional parents and educated brothers and sister who valued education. It was a family where formal education was valued and where the concept of equal opportunity for boys and girls was highly regarded. But equally significant was the family's admiration of *'tsika'* (traditional African values) which they felt was being overridden by formal Western education. Hama constructed those ideas of being a boy that were conciliatory and lenient towards girls, but he still felt certain privileges were for boys only. His performance in school did not meet the expectations of his parents and yet he was critical of the traditional ideas that undermined girls' potential. He crafted individual ideas of masculinity that tried to reconcile the contradictions imposed by his parents' expectations of success in schooling and the limitations imposed by traditional customs on girls.

At the same time this position was defined largely within the context of patriarchy that tended to curtail female power thus resulting in ambivalence in Hama's ideas of being a boy. At times Hama lacked an expanded appreciation of the potential and rights of girls, defining some of their actions as culturally unacceptable for example going out alone at night. Over all, he believed that girls should be smart and disciplined. There were some spaces which he considered not fit for girls, for example nightclubs, on the grounds that such places affected girls` morals negatively, making them unsuitable for marriage. But he accepted that some girls can perform better than boys in school and that some girls are strong emotionally. His attitude to schooling and authority is closely linked to the assumed value attached to schooling evident in his family.

As much as he could, Hama complied with school power as long as reasonable justification was given for its use, fully aware that any antagonism with teachers' power caused poor performance in school. However, at times he came up against the disciplinary authority of teachers but justified such oppositional behavior in terms of having logical reasons to show that there was injustice in the teachers' decision to use such power. He is very critical of others' irresponsible behaviors which he attributed to a loss of direction and a sign of immaturity. In many ways, Hama's ideas and actions are guided by his future aspirations and thus his schools days and current boyhood status are tied purposefully to realizing that future. Although he works hard in his school work and is also competitive, he fails to score good grades.

The above ideas and practices positioned Hama strategically, thus securing him the favor of most teachers, girls and boys. But that popularity did not distract him from his definite goal beyond school.

4.1.2. Joel: Localizing globalization

At 17 years of age Joel was repeating his last grade at Pagomo. Joel was not inclined to schooling. His grades were low even though he was repeating. However he was aware that education was needed in order for him to have a decent career and future. This was shown by his resolve to repeat his last grade even when his parents gave him little motivation. He negotiated a notion of boyhood that was unique locally, but influenced by his exposure to the outside world.

Joel's father was a former sales clerk-cum-driver with the cotton company stationed at the *Growth Point*. Because of his job Joel's father has travelled and worked at many cotton deports in Zimbabwe taking with him his family. Recently, Joel's father had moved to South Africa where his present occupation was not very clear. At least he can provide for his family back home in Zimbabwe. Joel's mother was involved in vending activities at the local Growth Point to supplement the family resources. The instability in the career history of Joel's father attests to how the family was affected by changes in the labor market.

Compared to many students Joel is well travelled locally, following the employment trajectories of his father. He is also exposed to international and local music and fashion from which he has developed a taste of body image and sense of identity which moves beyond what is normally expected of boys. He relates his previous obsession with

physical appearance as, "*...I can't explain it, but there is another kind of smartness where you are particularly smart….washing and ironing daily, I used to do that last year"*. In this context where most boys and girls could not afford decent clothing, Joel exerted extra effort to be different from others. The range of reading magazines and news papers cuttings that he used to decorate his books implied that Joel was connected to the places beyond Pagomo. Indeed Joel's words encored the way he carried himself around the school.

> *My usual meeting with Joel was an open space within the school where we sat under the shade of the Mango tree. There was a roll of elevated stones that served as sitting benches. Each time we took our seats Joel made sure that he had an old newspaper that he could spread out and sit on. He was very conscious that his pants might get dirty*. (Fieldnotes)

Despite embracing physical smartness which was unusual for boys, Joel believes that girls should be smarter than boys. He acknowledges that his failure to complete his studies last year was a result of concentrating on his physical deportment. He is repeating the last grade at Pagomo.

Joel, more than perhaps any other boys at Pagomo High, crafts a shifting idea of being a boy that incorporates and borders between valorized and subordinate masculinity. Joel's masculinity is constructed around ambivalence to school authority, smartness and a focus on the importance of schooling. He accepts that girls should be basically smart but does not totally exclude boys from attaining that ideal of smartness. At times his smartness challenged school rules, like having a stylish hair cut and wearing nail polish. He is an exemplar of that smartness expressed in terms of the all-round clean uniform, having a stylish hair cut and wearing faded nail polish which he tried to conceal each time I was

talking to him. I was left to wonder whether the nail polish was faded or whether it was just a deceptive color designed to escape the surveillance of other boys and teachers. He accepted the idea that some girls could perform better than boys in class, contrary to some boys who held the view that achieving girls were a challenge to the academic status of boys.

Joel's construction of being a boy represents the identity of most boys at Pagomo High school, that is being present but invisible. He did not inhabit a position of hegemony but framed and reframed his identity by embodying hegemonic masculinity trait and also challenging and subverting it. Like many boys Joel was the complicit type (Connell, 1995), aware of the privileges in being *the boy* but also realizing the limitations and cost that were attached to the privileges. But he was very conscious of his identity and regulated himself accordingly. He knew that it was futile to confront the school power headlong even then he did not totally succumb to its oppressive disciplinary regime.

4.1.3 Maida: Disrupting sex-role socialization

Marty was a girl aged 18 years. She had a small stature and soft voice. Maida could speak the two dominant Zimbabwean vernacular languages and English fluently. She attended elementary school in a town in Zimbabwe where her father once worked as a factory laborer. Her father was retrenched from work and had resettled himself on one of the new farms. She is slim and short and always appeared well groomed. Her deportment reflected her aspirations of joining the hospitality industry, though her parents would prefer her pursuing a career in teaching or nursing. She was doing her final year at Pagomo and in class 4C. At first she stayed with an abusive elder sister but later stayed with the Headmaster. She refused to join her sister in prostitution, preferring to

concentrate on her studies. Her parents were alive but could not support her education because they were poor and unemployed. Maida visits her parents on some weekends and holidays. She was Christian, a factor that might have influenced her moral stance against prostitution. Maida was not an original resident of the Pagomo. Her Christian beliefs reflect some of the dominant values of gender that were inherited from Zimbabwe's past colonial legacy. Under the guardianship of a sister who has opposed views of morality, Maida finds her notions of gender complicated. Two different contextual periods could be defined as impacting on Maida's experience at home. A colonial Christian past and a recent global understanding that brought Maida and her sister to live in the *Growth Point*

Maida's case illustrates the pitfalls of holding pre-given notions of being a boy or girl. Her story unfolds in very difficult circumstances which amount to child abuse. Teachers rank her as one of the intelligent girls in 4C. Her situation is unusual, given that she does not live with her parents, and rarely stays with them except on school vacations. During the school term Maida stays with her elder sister who had moved to Pagomo community *Growth Point* ten years earlier. From Maida's narratives, her sister has had a profound impact on her school and social life. Being a sex-worker in the *Growth Point*, they shared a single room which she rented. The sister would bring different clients each night. Under these conditions Maida could not study during the evening. At times, her sister did not pay her school fees on time. According to Maida her sister did not value education since she had only completed five years of elementary schooling. Relations with her sister soured when she suggested that Maida should also involve herself in prostitution in order to raise money for rent, food and school fees. This suggestion conflicted with Maida's education and career goals and also her Christian values, so she refused. She would be

beaten, denied food or locked out of the room at night if she came home late. Noting the deterioration in her school grades, the school counselor had talked to Maida about her plight. At the time I arrived at Pagomo, an arrangement had been made for Maida to stay with the school Principal and his family. The Principal's home was a very positive environment for her learning.

Maida's social up-bringing, especially the last four years that she stayed with her sister has affected her greatly as she said, "*….eventually all girls should get married to a man, despite any other accomplishment, if you do not get married you will become a prostitute."* These words were partly borne out of her experience with her sister who was a prostitute and also from the hegemonic heterosexual regime existing in the school. However for Maida, unlike many girls and boys, marriage occupied a subordinate and ancillary status as compared to schooling and a professional career. Her idea of a profession, however, appeared to be influenced traditional notions of femininity. Despite her emphasis on securing professional employment, she still held the opinion that eventually a girl should get married.

As she explained:

> *Well, I am not prepared to leave school now and start a family because school is important. My plans of a marriage come later after I finish school….this is important because I will be able to work on my own, independent of my husband. Even when things get hard I will be able to stand by myself. If my husband fails to support me I will be able to look after myself.*

Such notions of independence expressed by Maida of being able*, ….to work on my own, stand by myself when things get hard,* were new ways of defining relationships between

men and women. In that new relationship marriage and husband occupied a second place. By being able to work and support themselves girls were moving into murky and male gendered spaces, where their *standard* femininity would be questioned. This explains Maida's sacrifice to continue with her studies, despite the militating circumstances in which she lived. While her resolve to schooling and marriage is borne out of her experience, it is still conscripted by the broader context and understanding of patriarchy and heterosexism.

4.1.4. Rod: Collusion of Christian faith and gender

Rod was a male student aged 16 years. He lived in the residential part of the Growth Point. However he stayed with his grandmother. He had his goals set on his education but he was aware of the challenges of unemployment that confronted many school leavers.

Rod's identity as a boy at Pagomo high school reflected the struggles inherent in his Christian background and the African traditional values. He struggled delicately to balance his Christian morals and compulsory heterosexuality often succumbing to what he called the temptations of the 'devil'. Rod's father was a Pastor of the Family of God Church (FOG), a Pentecostal Christian church that is very strict on regulating and forbidding sex between partners before marriage. Thus Rod grew up as an active youth member of the local FOG branch. However because of the nature of his parents` pastoral responsibilities, Rod did not live with them. His parents were periodically assigned three to four year appointments in other congregations far away from their homes. Rod had to stay with his grandmother for the rest of his high school years. The intersection of Christian and traditional cultural values of loyalty and obedience to authority governed Rod's construction of his gender identity and practice. Often Rod cited *tsika dzedu* (our

customs) when referring to the church's ethical teachings; thus confounding the *tradition* in traditional African culture when Christian values were quoted as his customs. At the same time the incommensurability of traditional values and church values on the issue of sex made Rod's identity ambiguous. While both church and tradition prohibited girls from sexual intercourse, the church went further to sanction boys' sexual practices. Responding to questions about girls, sex and discipline Rod's ideas were shrouded in male power and subordination of women that typically reflected his Christian orientation.

As Rod indicated:

> *As a Christian like me I believe that you should not touch your girlfriend…what matters is that you have a girlfriend, if you are responsible and self disciplined before your girl then you are a real boy…..but when it comes to breaking the law I might end up sleeping with her but with the full knowledge that I am committing a sin….. at times we are over powered by the devil. Now there are some boys here who think that being boastful,- I beat all, challenging teachers opposing, the principal and those close to such a boy think that, that's being a boy, no! A boy is one who is not boastful, helps the younger boys, respect teachers, even female teachers and treats them like parents. It is a biblical commandment to respect parents. Now if one is equipped intellectually, being good on books, these are the real boys.*

Rod satisfied his heterosexual *normalcy* through a religious guilty conscience which he believed was redeemed through confession and forgiveness of sin. His loyalty and obedience to school authority and even to that of his female teachers presented a different but contesting notion of being a boy compared to many boys at Pagomo.

4.1.5. Don: Poverty, HIV/AIDS and agency

Don was an orphan aged 16. Both parents died of HIV/AIDS when he was fourteen years. His grandmother looked after him, providing him with school fees, food and accommodation. Three of his brothers had moved to South Africa and did not support

their relatives back home in Zimbabwe. Don had a vision beyond his current conditions of being an orphan and poor though they affected him. He was determined that having a good education would improve his present conditions of poverty.

Don's tale was emotionally gripping. With both parents dead, Don stayed with his old aged grandmother. She was a resourceful guardian who was able to keep him in school, though she was not able to provide any luxuries. Don's uniform is torn and patched. He has no shoes and keeps his few exercise books in a plastic bag. He often comes to school without breakfast or lunch like most students. He told me his evening meals usually consist of a thick porridge and traditional vegetables. On a real bad day he eats boiled corn seeds, the basic food hand outs received from humanitarian organizations working in the community. He walked 10 kilometers to and from school each day. His material condition was one of abject poverty, as evidenced from his clothes and physical appearance. Ragged would be a proper description of his status. But his resolve to remain in school was enormous. Thanks to the vibrant market available in the *Growth Point*, at least Don's grandmother was able to sell the few seasonal agricultural products which she had in order to keep Don in school.

Being an orphaned boy and desperately poor Don was completing his final year at Pagomo. Colonizing discourses about the impact of HIV/Aids, poverty, boys and schooling would always make boys like Don invisible, portraying such students as automatic school drop outs. For Don, being an orphaned boy increased his sense of responsibility to study hard and succeed so that he would be able to get out of his condition of poverty. Some boys, girls and teachers at Pagomo understood Don's

condition of material impoverishment. Don and his grandmother understood it too- schooling provides an avenue for Don out of poverty and out of the local community. Often he is misunderstood as breaking the school rule because of not tucking in his shirt.

4.1.6. Tendai: Reimagining tradition in times of change

At 16 years Tendai appeared a bit mature for her age. She was assertive and easy going with teachers and other students. She seemed to lack nothing materially and could afford the luxuries of a hair and face make-up and a decent pair of shoes which were regularly polished. The school forbade hair pleating; Tendai and many other girls concealed their make-up by wearing a sunhat and also adopting natural shades of make-up which were difficult to notice. A global culture of commoditization and material consumption was having an influence on the lives of poor girls, as exemplified by their desire to construct appealing body images.

Tendai could afford these extras because her mother was a "traditional herbalist" (*n`anga*).She told me that her mother's trade was booming especially during this time of crisis when people in Zimbabwe would do anything in order to make ends meet. It is not surprising that her parents supported her. Often traditional healers are presented as the most conservative group in the colonial anthropological writings of Zimbabwe since they invoke the spirits of the dead in order to do their work. However, *n'angas* have shown to be very daring especially in times of crisis (The Sunday Times, 2007). Here a female traditional n`anga led or rather misled the Zimbabwean Government hierarchy into believing in the miraculous "oasis" of refined oil on one of the traditional Religious shrines of the country. The significance of the incident is not its veracity but that n`angas do not retire into ancient folktales in executing their roles but act contemporaneously.

Tendai`s mother represents that complexity of being both traditional but engaging actively with the current events. She made public the services she provided and also clients could make appointments to visit her by contacting her through her mobile phone. She supported her daughter's education and wanted to see her succeed. Like most parents she wanted her daughter to become a *good girl,* smart and not flirting with boys before marriage.

4.1.7. Themba: Masculinity beyond schooling

Themba's registered official age was 20 years, but might have been older than that. He was an adult male student. Often students like Themba with records of dropping out of school got new birth certificates when they returned to school which could position them as younger than their actual age.

Themba's experience differed from that of the most of boys at Pagomo in that he dropped out of school at some point. The wave of migration to South Africa caught up with him. He has two brothers working in South Africa, so it was easy for him to join them. However as a casual employee with no education, life was hard for Themba. Upon the advice of his brothers, he decided to return to Zimbabwe to pursue his education. That experience has shaped Themba's relations to his studies, relations with teachers and other students. His aim was to focus on his studies and succeed in school. He would not tolerate disturbance from other students and at the same time would not like to tarnish his behavior record. He dissociated himself from the bully and aggressive type of boys. As much he tried to minimize conflict with teachers and fellow students. For Themba, schooling opened up doors which he discovered were closed during his initial migration to South Africa.

He lived a comfortable life as a student because he cycled to school and his brothers gave pocket money for "lunch" and had a phone. He lived with his parents but they play an insignificant role in shaping his conduct as a boy and his relation to schooling. Themba had gone through an experience that remained engraved in his imagination of work and schooling. The abortive sojourn into South Africa as an unskilled migrant laborer, led him to embrace a responsible and school oriented masculinity. He avoided conflict with school authorities and other students.

4.1.8. Jonah: 'Kukiyakiya' masculinity: Exploiting the moment

Jonah was a young boy of 17 years. Compared to most boys at Pagomo Jonah was more exposed to what was happening beyond Pagomo Community. This was evident in his dress, appearance, smart uniform and a backpack and that bore an image of Don Williams the country musician. Closely looking at him I discovered he had a buckle belt with a portrait of Barack Obama. Interestingly, association with Obama derived from the fact that he was of African/Kenyan descent. His range of music taste was varied, which was quite unusual for most boys who were into hip-hop and ragga and African *Sungura* music. "…*country music is cool"* he said "…*and it makes me different from other boys*." During break and lunch periods Jonah would poke his earphones and listen to his favorite songs uploaded onto his mobile phone. Jonah was culturally and globally articulate, resources that he used to forge an identity of a boy that was complicated

Jonah's family lived about 20 kilometers from Pagomo High school. In the hierarchy of rural high schools Pagomo was regarded as a better school in terms of resources and academic results. Because of that record most parents would prefer to have their children at Pagomo. On the advice of his father Jonah had moved to stay alone close to Pagomo

High school. In this sense Jonah rented a single room and lived a sole life as a student. He seemed to like the freedom which this opportunity offered, but was wary of the responsibilities that came with it. "*…I have to do everything for myself."*

It was a very new phenomenon at Pagomo whereby students stayed by themselves. Students in such situations visited their families only during weekends and vacations. The parental need for affordable schooling created this new arrangement. This dynamic was dictated by poverty because these parents could not afford to send their expensive, private and church boarding schools, the only other option available to them. Under the pressures of the Kiyakiya context, Don's father, despite being an ex- farm manager and now working in South Africa, could not afford the high fees charged at boarding schools. Don was very realistic about his future career aspirations. It was an ambition commensurate with the unstable and shifting realities of the kiyakiya context where no one could predict with definite what he/she would do after finishing school. *My focus is just on finishing my high school with good grades, then, I will see from there,* he said with a tone of uncertainty, confusion and despair.

Jonah's father had recently migrated to South Africa. But Jonah was not so sure what job his father was doing. Before, that he had worked as a farm manager. He had a High school qualification and a college diploma in Agriculture and Extension work. By local standards Jonah came from a well-to-do family and his father was his source of inspiration.

Three things undergirded Jonah's experience as a boy at Pagomo and beyond. He was exposed to the world around and beyond Pagomo; living alone and away from his family

during his school days and also his knowledge of the challenges of fulfilling one's ambitions in the unstable context of kiyakiya. Such circumstances influenced his attitude to schooling, relations with teachers and other students. He conformed to the school requirements because he eventually wanted to get better grades. He was calculative and strategically positioned himself in situations, trying more to depend on his wit than direct force and confrontation especially with school authorities. He is ideally a boy of reason, who believed that teachers should at least ask why students do certain things at certain times. Reason and rationality were more important than physical force and violence. But in the end he could rely on force as a last resort. Jonah had a small physical stature and he could not rely on it, hence his tendency to resort to reason in times of conflict.

As he stated,

> *…boys should not use force and power always, first reason and if the case does not involve you directly just back off. However if you are provoked you should stand for yourself.*

4.1.9. Marty: Challenging normative femininities.

Marty was a girl aged 18 years. From her story she delayed attending school because she could not manage to walk a distance of 10 kilometers to the nearest primary school. She started her primary education at the age of nine years. Both her parents were alive but poor and they struggled to earn money to pay for Marty's school fees and educational supplies, clothes and food. She had two elder brothers who had not completed high school. She was determined to complete her high school regardless of her poverty.

The intersection of poverty and being a rural girl confronts Marty at Pagomo High school. But Marty rejects the stereotype that poor girls do not survive in school. Her elder sister succumbed to the pressure of poverty, dropped out of school and now is involved in prostitution in the local *Growth Point*. What made her persist in school considering her difficult circumstances was the belief she and her parents had about the value of education. With no readily available material resources it was not easy for Marty to keep up the impression of body image and attractiveness expected of girl. But that did not deter her from pursuing her educational goals. She subordinated her immediate condition of being a smart and poor girl to her long term aspirations of school success and probably a good job thereafter. However she did not completely disparage the idea of body image and attractiveness. But she ranked physical appearance to a lower status in the hierarchy of what mattered most about being a girl. The contingency of poverty had multiple effects on Marty's conception of her femininity. She subordinated the conscripting colonial discourse of physical appearance and embodied a disposition towards schooling and the future. Unlike many girls, she did not fall prey to the dominant lure of materialism that plunged most girls into sexual relationships, prostitution and early pregnancy.

4.1.10. Moze: The hegemonic patriarchal masculinity

Moze was a male student aged 17 years. He was the first born in his family. In rural Zimbabwe the status of being a first born male child in a family is attached with the privilege to inherit the father's possession upon his death. By tradition as a first born Moze was entitled to inherit his father's wealth. However this custom had been recently successfully contested in the courts through feminist lobbying. Under prevailing

inheritance laws the wife of the deceased inherited the property not the first born. In the event that both parents are dead an estate is appointed to distribute the property among the surviving children. In a context where both customary laws still exist alongside constitutionally legalized laws, Moze's case becomes complex. His conduct as a boy was evidently organized around entitlement to property that made him less keen to pursue his schooling as a possible way to employment. But he was also ambivalent about the certainty of that inheritance which could be contested by his stepmother and young siblings. Morojele (2011) in his study in rural Lesotho established that boys who invested in "heir" masculinity had no interest in schooling because their future was guaranteed through inheritance of their parents' property (p. 3).

Moze stayed with his stepmother. He had a deep voice, was tall and of medium built. He always wore long trousers and a white short sleeved shirt. He was struggling with his grades and scoring below class average. More than perhaps all the boys at Pagomo High school Moze constructed a macho and rebellious male identity. He was always and almost at loggerheads with teachers and vehemently resented punishment and directions from most female teaches except from Ms Mapho. The fact that he perceived himself to be a person in charge of his father's house most of the time positioned him as an adult male who could not take orders from female teachers and even from some male teachers whom he deemed less manly than him.

His home was located only about one kilometer from the school, which was reasonably a walking distance to school but he was rarely punctual. As he reiterated, "…*if they beat me for coming late today, tomorrow I will come late again."* He delighted in flouting school rules because that opened up opportunities to demonstrate that he was a real strong

boy. Together with other boys, Moze rejected some punishment which they viewed as feminine. His father was a former teacher at Pagomo who had resigned to take up a better job as a lands development officer in the Ministry of Agriculture. Among other benefits, he had a government car which his previous job as a teacher did not accord him. He worked in town during the week and drove home every Friday evening. He spent the weekend with his family and left home every Sunday evening or Monday morning. Such was the routine program of most men who worked in nearby urban locations, mines or farms. To the detriment of their children, they had no total control over their children' lives because they did not live with them most of the time. This kind of absentee fatherhood provided children, especially first born sons opportunities to assert their heir ship privileges. Such privileges worked against school ethos.

As the first born child and being a boy for the matter, Moze's mother granted him power and privileges, calling him the "owner or man of the home" when his father is away from home. The universal reach of such male privileges are pointed out by Kandiyoti (1994) in her exploration of masculinity among Muslim societies in the Middle East in what she has described as "Distant husbands and cherished sons" (p. 206). The dynamics of a culture that accorded dominant status to boys over women at home in the absence of fathers conflicted with school authority. In the context of the school Moze had trouble in subordinating himself to the school authority. He chose to respect those whom he felt were more powerful such as the Principal, Deputy Principal, Senior Master and Ms Mapho. Moze's case was true for other first born boys whose fathers had died or had jobs away from home.

4.2. Conclusion

In this chapter I have provided a detailed overview of the students I interviewed. Their profiles provide a degree of insight into the context of Pagomo High School and its impact on their lives. Factors such as poverty, the impact of AIDS, globalization and their experiences of gender clearly have an impact on their lives at school, as will be further demonstrated in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.0. Introduction

The focus of this chapter is on presenting the findings derived from data from in-depth and open-ended interviews and observations of students' experiences at Pagomo High school. The findings are divided into four main themes namely; Solidarity and silence; Possessing *Vunhu*; Male power and Discipline. The study aimed to document the gender experiences and perceptions of boys and girls at Pagomo High school located in rural Zimbabwe. Specifically, it sought to understand how being a boy was negotiated on a daily basis in relation to other boys, girls, teachers and schooling. The various themes emerged which illuminate multiple and competing perceptions and practices of what it meant to be a boy and a girl within this particular school context. The students' experience and understanding of their gender identities was influenced by local and external factors to the school and also by colonial antecedents. While a powerful defense of traditional norms of being a boy were visible, the crisis period in Zimbabwe provided a moment for disrupting the boundaries of normative masculinity and femininity. The study found that notions of gender among boys and girls were not static. Rather, the notions of gender were shifting albeit gradually. In this section, each theme and sub-themes is explained descriptively, using participants' words and observed incidents and then critically analyzed using researcher's knowledge of the context and relevant literature where appropriate.

5.1. Solidarity, silence and masculinity

A dominant value and practice of gender at Pagomo High school ascribed solidarity and silence as inevitable attributes for most boys and even girls. This marker of being a 'real

boy' was constructed in relation to teachers, especially teachers' authority and their desire to control students. If a boy acquiesced to a teacher's authority or disclosed the name of student who had contravened school rules when interrogated by a teacher, he risked being ostracized by his peers and having his masculinity brought to question. Those students who failed to uphold such values of solidarity and silence when confronted by teachers were often socially excluded and risked embarrassment from their peers. This finding contrasts with most conclusions that cast boys and girls as having opposite gender dispositions. Such categorical gender binaries were not easy to define among students at Pagomo as some girls defied the soft, emotional and feminine tags, while not all boys were able to suppress their emotions.

To assign rigid rational-masculine and emotional-feminine dichotomies in the African context like Pagomo was problematic. As noted by Kolawale (2005: 254) a "culture of silence" pervades African women's life. Often this has been misinterpreted by Western researchers as a weakness and inability to stand up for themselves and thus requiring someone to speak on their behalf (Kolawale, 2005). Rather silence was a significant attribute of their strength and led to the sustenance of the family and clan system (Kolawale, 1998). In that context silence was considered as a symbol of the strength to conceal emotions under difficult conditions.

At Pagomo High school, being emotional or rational was understood against a backdrop of pain, harassment and silence. If one cried and reported a case of mistreatment to a teacher that student was viewed as emotional and weak. In this case emotional students were those who complained too much and reported that they had been beaten or harassed

physically. A pervasive regime of toughness concealed the emotional layer of boys' and girls' identities. This was a typical response to the excessive use of the cane and the institution of corporal punishment which were the dominant methods of disciplining in the school.

The rational-masculine and emotional-feminine binary and its associated consequences on boys' and girls' preference of particular school subjects (Martino, 1999; Martino and Meyenn, 2001; Mac an Ghail, 1994), and peer social relationships at school (Smith, 2007; Walker, 1988; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998) has been documented extensively. From these studies notions of being masculine and feminine correspond not only to gender but also to class, race and ethnicity. Working class boys (Willis, 1977; Mac an Ghail; 1994) and Black boys (Murtadha-Watts, 2000) invest more in anti-school, anti-authority and physicality while white middle class boys (Mac an Ghail, 1994) were pro-school. Martino & Meyenn (2001) noted that guys who were really masculine do not like to talk about and show their emotions publicly, "…being a heterosexual male involves an avoidance of emotions" (p. 83).

At a macro political level in Zimbabwe, state authoritarian violence against opposition parties and civilians was widespread. Also the harsh economic crisis which plunged Zimbabwe during the same period (2000 to 2009) made the context unbearable for many people. In response to these conditions people felt disempowered, overwhelmed and a sense of resignation because they could not act to change their world. In the face of the challenges of violence and suffering, civilians developed tough emotional 'cocoons' as a means of survival which also drew them closer together in solidarity.

Both boys and girls had to be tough and not rely on shedding tears as a way of getting sympathy from teachers and others. In an immediate context of uncertainty, marked with fear and mistrust, authoritarian disciplinary tactics employed by teachers, 'going really tough' and keeping it to oneself for most boys was a strategy of survival and an ideal gendered position to embody. Excerpts from interviews below show the ways in which silence and solidarity were constructed among boys.

Rod (age 16),

> *…….even when another boy hits me I do not report the case to the teacher on duty, I keep it to myself*

Jonah (age 17),

> *…. and when we went to the teacher he just said you know each other, you are just playing.*

Hama (Age19),

> *Boys should keep their problems to themselves. When a misunderstanding happens between boys, real boys should not go reporting it. We have boys here who go about reporting everything that happen among boys to the teachers and girls. Usually we avoid playing with such boys. We can`t associate with boys who act quickly on their emotions.*

What the boys indicate here is a situation where the school authority had lost its sense of caring and responsibility to provide a safe and secure environment for learning. It was pointless for students to revert to the school authority in order for their injustices to be redressed. They had to endure a period of mental, physical, and emotional hardships without complaining. This did not apply to boys alone. Some girls did not act on their emotions and developed a tougher stance against school power. In this harsh school context, students displayed both contradictions of a tough masculinity and emotional

vulnerability. At Pagomo, toughness and strength were constructed not in relation to other boys and girls but against teachers. In this case, the findings do not support the dichotomous construction of masculinity as tough and femininity as emotional. At times some boys and girls contested these rigid notions.

Concealing bad behavior of other students from teachers was also an emblem of being masculine. Willis (1977) and Walker (1988) have shown how a culture of 'standing by my peers' governed peer solidarity with fear of consequent exclusion if someone 'grassed'. At Pagomo a pervasive culture of silence was rife. The silence was equated to having a strong heart and an ability to endure difficult times. Such an identity was necessary in the '*kiyakiya*' environment where breaking the rules and norms was the order of the day. It also helped to keep others from knowing how someone was making ends meet. It was always important to keep one's lifeline a secret because it could bring someone into conflict with the law enforcement agencies. Drawing a lot from influences outside the school students learnt that certain things should not be shared or disclosed to anybody. In this case teachers who were adversaries had to be denied all information that would enable them to exercise power over students. Being a boy, implied, the strength of heart to contain secrets. Colonial discourse has often portrayed girls as people who go about disclosing secrets. At Pagomo both boys and girls colluded in keeping secrets from teachers. The necessity of survival in a harsh disciplinary school environment created a tougher attitude among boys and girls.

In an extended interview with Jonah (17 year old boy), the dynamics of remaining silent and how it was understood in student group situations is presented below.

A/M, *Do you not know the pupils who would be making noise in class?*

Jonah,

> *We usually know them, but the thing is pupils develop a certain habit. Like if someone makes a noise in class and the teacher asks who is making noise? No one will stand up and say it's so and so who is making the noise. I do not know whether it is a matter of not wanting to see their colleagues in trouble. Maybe it's a way of protecting each other from the teachers…….Even girls in our class are very resistant. And if you hear that such things have been done by girls you won't believe it.*

A/M,

> *.....if you disclose the student who has done something wrong to teachers, then that student will take up a grudge with you?*

Jonah,

> *….that's not the case, coz even when the student making noise is a girl or a small boy, others will still not disclose his name to the teachers. The whole class would prefer to be beaten so that the small boy is protected. I remember one day when in class, one boy had a phone ringing. You know the rule says we should switch off the phone when in class. But teachers are allowed answer their phones even in the middle of a lecture. The teacher wanted to know whose phone was ringing. But no one came up with a name. As a result the whole class was beaten.*

AM; Is it good to protect someone who has done something wrong?

Jonah;

> *……yes it is good, coz next time it would be me in trouble and I will also need to be protected by other students.*

There is solidarity among students that breaks age and gender hierarchies in the face of abusive, harsh, and bureaucratic school disciplinary authority. What Jonah seemed to suggest was that remaining silent conveyed conflicting and multiple messages. It could

imply a weakness when understood from the perspective of a 'culture of silence' or strength when viewed from the notion of a strong heart and a spirit of not giving in.

What Jonah told me was confirmed through some dramatic moments which I observed while at Pagomo High school. During an afternoon assembly session, the Principal was addressing the students and one student from behind the crowd uttered a comment disputing what the Headmaster had said, "…*you are not serious, we will never accept that"*. All students broke into uncontrollable laughter. The male student was able to mobilize the most inappropriate and 'funniest humor' (Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2005; Pascoe, 2007), as a way of courting the respect of his peers. At Pagomo the jokes were uttered in front of the highest authority. Such jokes were the available avenue to talk back to authority. Sporadic bouts of students' jokes interjecting the Principal's address were viewed with envy by other boys and girls, hence their unwillingness to speak out. There were no girls implicated on this particular occasion, but girls at times took part in these incidents and were also caned. Again, this incident may underline the fact that these students were intimidated and silenced by the hegemonic practices of the school.

The power of the Principal over students was under threat from many directions. Firstly, the flow of his speech was interrupted. Secondly, the students would not disclose to him the exact student who had disrupted his speech even though they knew him. He had to reassert his hegemonic position as the Principal arbitrarily by singling out a group of about ten boys in the direction from which the comment had come and told them to remain behind at the end of his address. When everyone else had gone the Principal never asked who among the boys had made the remark, but went on to cane the ten boys. None

of the boys contested the beating or volunteered to identify the individual who had made the joke, even though they knew who had done it. I learnt later that it was a futile exercise for the Principal to try to find out who had done it, because none of the students would divulge the perpetrator. Such group caning was the order of the day even in the classrooms. "*It is the easiest and quickest way to deal with cases like these…"* the Deputy Principal told me during one of the interviews thus in many ways confirming Morrell's (2001) conclusions on the persistence of corporal punishment in many African schools in South Africa. Having to deal with so many cases of disruptive behavior caning provided the fastest solution as opposed to adopting a more consultative method.

At Pagomo High school [as confirmed in many contexts in Zimbabwe and Africa, sex and sexuality are unspoken, (Arnfred, 2004; Epprecth, 1998)] boys' humorous talk did not include sexual insinuation, exploitation and objectification of girls, which is quite evident in research on boys in the West. There was at Pagomo High school an avoidance of discussing the subject of sex deriving from Christian morality which prohibited casual sex, talk, even thoughts about sexual relationships before marriage (Patman, 1998). Together with the consumption of alcohol, smoking cigarettes and mbanje/marijuana sexual conduct was coded implicitly into the school rules as a punishable offence. While some boys could attest that they had girl-friends, talking about their sexual experience brought a lot of discomfort. Such behavior in terms of boys expressing their desire and fear of girls was made explicit by Walker (1988) when he noted that boys choose to remain with their male peers most of the time rather than being with their girl-friends. At Pagomo, while most of the girls said it was natural to have a boy-friend none of them admitted that they had had sex with their boy-friends. In any case this prohibition and

'official silence' on the subject of sex did not imply the total absence of relationships between boys and girls, with some relationships involving girls and male teachers. But it was not something boys could joke about.

The boys' responses above reflect a very puzzling scene on how to tackle forms of abuse like bullying and dealing with classroom disruptive behavior at Pagomo High school. As most boys did not report such incidences of abuse, it was difficult to know how prevalent it was, let alone how to solve it. More puzzling was the fact that some teachers quickly dismissed such cases as boys' play, with such simple but definitive cynicism as, *you know each other or you were just playing.* There was a thin layer between hurt and play (Thorne, 1994). When some girls complied with being tough and colluded with other boys, an unsafe learning environment was created at Pagomo High school. Resorting to group caning, as with the aforementioned case with the principal, illustrates the extent of 'make do' (Jones, 2008) strategies in the face of crisis. At Pagomo High School having 'a strong heart' or emotional strength was viewed as masculine and worked well to keep student solidarity in the face of a harsh disciplinary regime. It was a survival strategy and some girls had to embody it in order to sustain their stay at Pagomo. In this instance Consultative and democratic methods of discipline would be more beneficial.

Research has shown that some boys display a protest and oppositional masculinity towards hierarchical power structures (Willis, 1977; Walker., 1988; Morrell, 2007). At Pagomo high school the disciplinary regime was overtly oppressive, powerful and dictatorial. In this case students did not confront authority directly. There was little recourse to civil legal justice in cases where there was outright violation of boys' and

girls' rights. Such has been historically the nature of British colonial authority and discipline of most Africans in schools and outside. Such colonial regime suspended the legally sanctioned framework which resulted in authority being dispensed at the whims of the colonial agent as he/she deemed appropriate. Under this authoritarian system Africans adopted group solidarity as a technique of resistance.

While formal schooling offered immediate avenue for social and personal advancement for those who were able to succeed within its defined parameters, it remained a constant symbol of colonial power which had to be defied. From a cultural standpoint, elders` authority and by implication discipline, were unquestionable. All elders in the community were autocratic disciplinarians who could punish any child in the community if she/he were found on the wrong side of the law. In that context, authority of any kind was perceived as constraining the freedom of the subordinate group. The *kiyakiya* moment prevalent in Zimbabwe was another dimension of 'power' inhibiting freedom of the inhabitants of Pagomo. The contextual specificities of colonialism, culture and *kiyakiya* dictated not so much the relevance of individual opposition and protest but called for concerted group solidarity as a means of survival: a solidarity that transcended gender binaries.

5.2. Possessing vunhu and masculinity

The idea of schooling as preparation for boys' and girls' roles in adult life was central to students' social imaginaries at Pagomo. Many of them knew very well that after four years of studying they would be graduating into the adult world of labor (unemployment). In this regard they viewed it as a preparation for adult life. What did this imply in a social and labor context that did not guarantee formal employment? In their study, Kenway,

Kraack & Hickey-Moody (2006) concluded that some boys distrust the singularity and abstraction of school map knowledge and skills, choosing to depend on their ability to read practical possibilities and the "know who" connections and networks, (p. 158-160). In the *Kiyakiya* context, neither formal jobs for school leavers were guaranteed, nor was marriage for many girls. So how did boys and girls experience these expectations within the school in relation to the realities of life after school?

Boys accepted that as they progressed through the school system they would become more mature and responsible, a kind of responsibility which adult life called for. Thus senior boys distinguished themselves from junior boys in lower grades and girls generally. After spending four years of secondary education most boys felt they would be ready to tackle the challenges presented by the *kiyakiya* context. Responsibility and adulthood were constructed against irresponsibility and immaturity. Thus those boys who rejected authority and discipline, caused trouble, and were disrespectful to other students were viewed as not ready to face the real challenges in life after school. While they would still leave school they would face serious problems in negotiating acceptability in community life.

The notion of being a responsible person (boy or girl) runs deep in African epistemology as it connotes humanity *(Ubuntu)* or what makes a person, not just a person but a good person. *Ubuntu* means "peopleness" (humanity) (Broodryk, 1995; Mbigi, 1995). The local and vernacular variation of *Ubuntu* in Pagomo community is *Vunhu*. As Morrell and Swart (2005) note, from this framework gender becomes part of a variety of relational understandings that are subsumed under a general assumption about humanity (p. 98). If

one does not have *vunhu* then he/she ceases to be a person. One becomes a person in relation to others and is understood in terms of their ability to live peacefully with others. Even girls were expected to have *vunhu*; thus *vunhu* becomes not purely associated with a male identity, but is something that women were also expected to possess.

Hama (19), for example, claimed that being irresponsible is a sign of immaturity:

> *……a responsible boy takes charge of his actions. He stands up for what he has done even when it` s bad or good. A true boy should be good at his books. Naughty boys are immature intellectually. There are some girls who are mature who do not act on their emotions. They talk and come to an agreement in the case of understanding. These are the girls who are intelligent, experienced and mature in terms of age. These girls fit boys' qualities—if we talk about school work, they spend more time reading, even more than what some boys do. This is expected of boys but we have girls here who do it. In the world out of school, a real man is not identified by aggressiveness or fighting…fighting is a waste of energy which should be used for other things that are productive. A real man should do big things like developing his home, contributing constructive ideas at community meetings*

Jonah (17) confirmed this view:

> *…..some boys think causing trouble, making noise, disrespect can make them real a boy, in the end it does not pay off, they lose* ***vunhu*** *(being human). For me being a bad boy, a troublesome boy has very negative effects on your academic potential and you will always be canned by the teachers.*

In the two interview extracts above multiple and conflicting ways of being a boy dominate students' experiences at Pagomo. Some of the ways are positive while others are negative. For example, positive ways of being a boy include being responsible for what you do, being devoted to schooling, not resorting to violence or deployment of physical strength in settling conflicts, being productive as an individual and in the community. These positive notions of being a boy were framed in relation to negative

qualities of being naughty, troublesome, aggressive, fighting, making noise, being disrespectful. While most of the positive gender attributes were usually assigned to boys, Hama noted that there were some girls who exuded qualities associated with boys, "….when it comes to school work they spend most of their time reading, even more than some boys."

While masculinities which privileged aggression, violence, domination and power existed at Pagomo, their hegemony was not absolute. As attested by Hama and Jonah above, there were many alternative expressions of being boys that some students displayed.

The idea that senior and mature boys and girls are responsible, obedient and work hard on their studies was confirmed by the Deputy Principal (D/P)

> *……we normally have cases of fighting among boys in their first years of high school and we attribute this to childish behavior*

Being responsible was also seen as accepting the authority of teachers. Accepting teachers' authority meant receiving extra attention in tuition that the teachers usually provided. As Rod noted,

> *…..if you are obedient to teachers, it`s good even if you are not academically gifted, because teachers will try to help you, they will treat you well and give you extra help even during lunch periods or after school. They will give you more exercises and textbooks to revise.*

Rod's statement underscores the value of loyalty to teachers that boys who were aware of the importance of education held. In order to succeed academically certain masculinities that challenged and opposed school authority had to be refuted.

In the upper classes like 4C, most pupils focused on their studies and what they wanted to do after finishing their high school. If someone came to disturb their personal learning programs these boys and girls would not accept it. Their concept of duty, purpose and responsibility was drawn from experience, maturity and a realization of what the future world of work was like. In order to make a meaningful life one had to have a good education and work skills. Boys like Hama drew their inspiration for schooling from their parents and brothers, while Themba learnt the importance of schooling from his experience of dropping out of school.

Themba's experience, as outlined below, illustrates this concern with future participation in the labor market. At twenty years, Themba was already a mature man, having once dropped out of school and having unsuccessfully found work in South Africa. He was completing his final high school year at Pagomo High school. Teachers here considered him an exemplary male student, very focused and hard working. However he was on record as having at one point dropped out of school and having joined the drift of unskilled immigrants to South Africa. When he discovered that life was hard in South Africa without any schooling he decided to return to Zimbabwe and resume his studies. Themba talked about this incident which he shared with me that highlights his difficulties in getting a skilled job after dropping out of school prematurely:

> *As I was busy doing my assignment one day, one boy approached me and said,…why are you some serious with your work Themba, come let's play, you with your books old boy, is it coz Joza didn`t work well for you. [Joza was the figurative any place in South Africa where Zimbabweans worked] " I could have just smashed this boy but I felt it was not the best thing to react on impulse. I just went to report the matter to the teacher. The boy was caned and the teacher told me to kick him if he repeats it next time.*

In every context, there are some masculinities that are more culturally honored than others (Connell, 1995). At Pagomo High School, *Vunhu* was a subordinated masculinity: boys who invested in it risked exclusion from peers and some teachers. Themba's incident mirrors the kind of interlocking and intersecting dynamics of being a boy at Pagomo High school as boys respond to both the demands of schooling and the broader social and economic factors. While he was able to control his emotions as was the expectation for boys, Themba reported the matter to the D/P as some girls would do. He also did not resort to physical violence in order to mete out instant justice to the small boy, as is consistent with what most boys would do, but felt he could have done it if he had wanted to. He had the capacity to do it as the D/P told him later to kick the boy if he repeated it. His assiduous study habits were organized around his experience as an unsuccessful migrant worker in South Africa and also related to future prospects of being a responsible man in society after completing school. However Themba's life as a male student was being realized within the confines of the school's rigid disciplinary regime which was restrictive, and where the D/P had almost accused Themba for not being a `real man.' Themba crossed most of the borders that restricted boys' and girls' conduct at Pagoma High School. His emotional restraint based on experience, maturity, and age was the attribute of a responsible man/boy (Dover, 2005). He exemplified *vunhu* that is the ability to be a good person. Most often, boys and men in Africa are portrayed as excessively violent and aggressive towards women and other men (Fanon, 1963; Morrell and Swart, 2005; Bhana, Morrell and Patman, 2009). Such totalizing and homogenizing representation of African men fails to take into account their divergent histories, cultural

diversity, their specific contexts, and connections with rest of the world (Morrell and Swart, 2005). Themba's case shows a different experience of being a boy at Pagomo. Themba's idea of being a boy; focusing on his studies, not employing violence against young boys who offended him, and seeking teachers' intervention in times of conflict was not the most honored way of being a boy. But it was an alternative masculinity that existed at Pagomo, but in the prevailing hierarchy of masculinities, it was located at the bottom. Some boys' lives revealed contradictions of focusing on schooling, but also lacking discipline. Themba's age and experience of dropping out and then being confronted by what seems to be a dead-end employment motivated him to commit to schooling and shaped his masculinity of *vunhu.* His experience was very different from that of other boys at the school. At Pagomo some boys and girls bought into the idea of *Vunhu* which led them to comply with the school values. As with Themba's experience *vunhu* was living responsibly, purposely and peacefully with others.

5.3. Practical subjects and masculinity

Gendered subject preference and experience were more visible in practical subjects than the academic subjects. Despite a school policy which stated that both boys and girls will have equal access to all practical subjects, Metal Work, Building, Fashion and Fabrics and Foods and Nutrition remained largely gendered. The practical subject curriculum policy was largely designed to alter the colonial curriculum that was basically designed to keep women in the house (Summers, 2002) and to educate African men to become industrial laborers under the colonial white master (Mungazi, 1991). The colonial curriculum clearly created unequal gender division of labor that gave power to boys because they were entitled to wage- employment and consequently breadwinner status.

At Pagomo providing equal opportunity in all subjects for both boys and girls was meant to correct the colonial subject gender division. It was hoped that such changes in curriculum offering would translate into equal gender opportunities in the labor market as well. But three decades of a postcolonial practical curriculum at Pagomo seemed to have left no major observable alteration on inherited colonial curriculum divisions based on gender.

What were the experiences of boys and girls of the practical curriculum at Pagomo? How did this curriculum convey and construct certain notions of being male and female? When I talked to the Metal Work subject teacher about what future his pupils saw in metal work, his answer suggested contrasting opinion of students. Girls thought Metal Work was irrelevant for their future roles as married wives, with common statements such as, "…*I won`t use this in future I will be married anywhere!"* Boys viewed Metal work as a marketable subject in South Africa, "...*while here in Zimbabwe jobs are frozen, boys have their prospect of jobs set abroad"*.

As the data from observation and interview below portrayed, there was ample evidence that most parents, teachers and students vehemently believed that the present curriculum still channeled girls into the domestic and private sphere and boys into the public world of formal employment and hence a total rejection of F/F and F/N by many boys. Thus a boy pursuing F/F and F/N reduced his chances of entering the public world of work. But with the girls still showing a strong inclination towards marriage, F/F and F/N were still relevant subjects for their roles as house wives.

The advent of colonial capitalism and education in Zimbabwe created new roles and responsibilities for African men and women. Some authors have reasonably concluded

that what we currently view as traditional gender binaries in domestic labor today is a product of the colonial antecedent. More often, the argument is that before Western colonization, gender roles were much more fluid allowing women to work in the fields and forests just as men did (Amadiume, 1997; Oyewumi, 1997). Specific to Zimbabwe, colonial and indigenous structures of male domination reinforced each other. African women` status was undermined by loss of religious, professional and political roles which were denigrated and at times outlawed by the colonial constitution (Jacobs, 1995). In pre-colonial times women had opportunities to become powerful public figures in their communities. Further erosion of rights together with increased subordination of women were achieved by the codification of the Customary Law under which women were defined as minors, unable to enter into contracts, represent themselves in court, marry without the consent of a male guardian and have custody of children. The Customary law was legislated by the colonial officials, but with the active participation and connivance of African elders and chiefs (Jacobs, 1995). Thus the colonial customary law promoted and created racial and gender hierarchies, where African men, although racially subordinate to the whites, enjoyed certain privileges over their African women.

The practical curriculum policy at Pagomo as in many schools in Zimbabwe was set against the above legal framework. While the policy existed and attempts were made to implement it, gender views and practices at Pagomo acted strongly against this policy. Particular practices and discourses at home and school led to entrenched subject preference on the basis of gender.

These practices seemed to contradict the actual outside school experiences of some boys and girls. The contradictions were particularly evident when considering what happened in domestic house-holds as compared to what occurred in the labor market. Especially, when some boys I talked to stayed alone at home and performed all the household chores considered to be girls' work. This reflected the reality of their situation in which they had to move away from their parents in order to seek a better education at Pagomo. A brief visit to the world of work presents a completely contradictory picture. Each time I passed through the *Growth Point*, I was amazed to see men on shop verandas busy working on their sewing machines mending torn clothes. It appeared to be a profitable business but no woman was involved in it. A tacit process of re-signifying labor was taking place. Thus when F/F (tailoring) and F/N (cooking) was being undertaken in the home with no monetary rewards it was confined to women's work. However, when that same work was done outside the house in factories or self-contained backyard industries with monetary value attached to it, it became men's work. At Pagomo, during the last two years of high school few boys appeared to be interested in taking F/F. They defined F/N as a feminine subject.

As the interview with Ms Mapho below reveals, at Pagomo gendering the practical curriculum was a messy and long process and also fraught with contradictions. During the first two years in high school students studied the practical subjects without much thought as to whether they were boys or girls. There was equal representation of boys and girls in the subjects. But as they progressed into third year, through interaction with peers, parents and teachers boys were channeled into Metal Work and Building Studies, while girls were inclined to take F/F. In one vivid narration, Ms Mapho recounted an

incident in which one boy opted out of F/F, a subject he had done for two years. The boy argued that he would not do F/F any longer because, "*…this subject does not help me in my future career plans, I know the subjects that will guide me to achieve my career goals."*

Summers (2002) noted that African men in colonial Zimbabwe considered house chores a taboo and not masculine when performed in their homes but voluntarily took up similar work in white men's homes as paid domestic servants. It is not surprising that men did that women's work when working for the white master. Firstly the African men where subordinate to the white employer and secondly they received a wage which they used to assert their authority over the wives. Such contradictions confirm Connell's (1995) statement that not all men embody hegemonic masculinity and those who do may not do it in every context.

Two extracts from interviews with practical subject teachers below illustrate the pressure that boys and girls experience from parents and peers to drop either F/N/F/F or Metal work/ Building studies.

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> *In their third year at high school boys are made to realize that they are boys and most quit F/N they have been studying for two years. There is both pressure from parents and peers. Some common statements which boys make to disparage those who pursue F/N are: you will hit your wife with these pots…..hahahaha (extended laugh): you will fail to live with your wife when you get married: and where have you ever seen a man cooking?*
> *A few parents understand the value of F/N for boys and I do not understand why because if you enter in a hotel most employees are men and in the tailoring industry most tailors are men, just go out at the GP you will see all men with sewing machines outside the shops doing work, earning a living. But some parents come here and request their children to change from F/N to Building and girls switching from Building to F/N. They say it is better for my son to do Building because he will build*

> *a fowl-run for me rather than teaching my son to prepare nice dishes here at school which he will never afford to taste in real life. Where will he get the cheese and macaroni from? It is better you were teaching them how to cook 'derere' and 'muchacha' (these were traditional vegetables which people grow in their gardens) after all no one needs any recipe to prepare traditional food, you just boil and eat.*
>
> *Mothers also come to withdraw their children from studying Building and Metal Work citing, "…how can a girl climb a ladder in the presence of boys" With such notions even girls who continue to do Building will be less motivated and will be inclined towards failing the subject.*

Mr Haga confirms the existence of such gender regimes:

> *…. here metal work is open to both boys and girls. The school assigns two practical subjects to a whole class which has boys and girls like 4C is a Metal work and F/N class and students are distributed into these subjects without looking at their gender. However students can move across classes to take a practical of her/his choice if is not happy with the one offered in the class she is currently in. However a lot has to do with influence from home. Parents tell their girls that metal work is for boys so go and change. It seems at home parents do not have the knowledge that boys and girls should do the same subjects. If it is there it has not managed to supersede the traditional belief that girls are different from boys. Once girls decide to change from Metal work their performance in the subject also begins to deteriorate.*

Boys and girls were constantly policed by peers and parents to study subjects that would channel them into traditionally acceptable gender roles. Studying Fashion and Fabrics and Food and Nutrition was considered being feminine and was vehemently disparaged by some boys through such phrases as; "…*where have you seen a man cooking? You will fail to live with your wife peacefully*." In the case of girls, studying Building or Metal Work was conceived as non-feminine, "…*how can a girl climb a ladder in the presence of boys*?" These perceptions were built on traditional beliefs which constructed girls as different from boys. But there was also an understanding of the material conditions of poverty that intersected with these traditional beliefs. An allusion to the fact that the

recipes that were taught in school (cheese and macaroni) did not constitute children's food at home demonstrates this point. Instrumentally learning to build a fowl-run was more relevant to boys' lives than learning to cook exotic foods. It was relevant for girls because they might be married to a man who could afford those luxuries. The pedagogical effect conveyed in these statements was the reluctance of students to pursue those practical subjects that were deemed not appropriate to their gender. For those who persisted studying, there was no motivation and evident deterioration in their performance in these subjects.

An examination of what passed as "our traditional gender beliefs" in the Pagomo community reveals how these beliefs were a product of a Western Colonization. Also it shows how men's hegemony was sustained. From the parents` perspective derived from teachers` testimonies, it appeared that it was not traditional or customary for boys to cook and for girls to climb the ladder and build. But these appear to be cultural invocations implored to maintain differences and inequality between boys and girls at school and in the wider society. As Pattman (1998; 2005) noted in his studies of college and university students in Zimbabwe and Botswana respectively, a discourse of 'our culture and tradition' was used only to exclude girls, while privileging boys. However, some customs which were exalted as traditional and immutable have been noted to be inventions of modern and colonial times (Cheater, 1986; Ranger, 1983; Oyewumi, 1997). But they were kept alive because they served to reinforce male domination of women. At Pagomo, what was viewed and accepted as traditional became effective in conferring power on boys after they finished their schooling. What is significant here is how customs purported to be from the past are redefined and made sense of within the context of the

school and life outside the school. Some of the boys and girls I talked to were aware of these cultural contradictions also prevalent in their lives. Also boys like Jonah (boy, 16) noted,

> *If you stay alone like what most us of do here at Pagomo, you should know how to cook, make a fire, wash dishes, and really all chores usually meant for girls. You can't wait for your sisters or mother to come and cook for you, "Unofa nezhara"- (you will starve to death).*

Jonah's reality above negates sex-role socialization. His unique condition in which he lived alone close to the school, with no sisters required that he perform most of the roles expected of girls.

At times being a boy at Pagomo challenged and disrupted some traditional and customary understandings of being. Some boys whose homes were not located in close proximity to the school had to move away from their original parental homes and find dwellings in locations close to the school. Such boys and girls could visit their parents over weekends or when their food supplies needed replenishing.

Hama whose parents were educated and had formal jobs as a teacher (father) and nurse (mother) talked about competing discourses of being a boy in his family. In his family when girls were away, his mother would allow the boys to do house chores, but would not allow them to do the same work when the girls were present.

While some parents were responsible for their boys dropping out of F/N and F/F, the school also tended to enforce hierarchies in the choice of practical subjects among boys and girls. I was amazed by the prevalence of gender binaries in some of the discourses which were used in the classes I attended and observed. Mostly, the practices defined boys'/girls' societal roles, responsibilities and expectations. Never were these dichotomies questioned by either teachers or students. And in other ways teachers re-

inscribed most parents' perceptions that certain subjects were feminine and others were masculine. For example, a practical lesson in Metal Work studies always started with moving materials and equipment from the storeroom to the classroom metal workshop. Part of this equipment was really heavy and boys were requested to carry it to the workshop and return it after the lesson. More often girls were excluded from duties of transporting the equipment because it was believed that the equipment was too heavy for their *fragile bodies*. My attention could not escape how the humor of being a strong boy was exemplified by some boys during that exercise, which involved them tensing their biceps before lifting the equipment. Actually the task of lifting the equipment provided boys with an opportunity to show that they were physically strong and that girls were weak. Even when it came to cutting the material those who had carried the equipment had the first opportunity to use it. Thus during the practical lesson girls were basically excluded from most if not all the activities which required the demonstration of physical.

When I asked Mr Haga about girls' participation in Metal Work he stated that:

> *…girls put boys forward, while they take a backstage. In the practical subject like cutting metal using a hacksaw girls stay away, they rarely initiate the activities and skills required in Metal Work. It is a subject that at times requires physical strength and effort. However students require certain skills to do certain procedures so that they do not use a lot of energy. Lack of skills frightens girls who do not have much power.*

The day to day experiences of boys and girls at Pagomo in the practical subjects were moments filled with endorsing normative gender expectations. However, these practices were very much consciously and imaginatively constructed with a focus on possible futures, either for girls as married house wives or for boys as family breadwinners. In this sense men's power and women's subordination were being re-inscribed at Pagomo through the practical curriculum.

The challenge remains for parents and teachers to broaden the options for girls besides marriage and similarly, to encourage boys to accept or embrace other ways of being and forms of work. There are no easy solutions, especially where issues of power are invested, but from my field data there were opportunities for possible entry. I shall describe one case of that possibility that I recorded in an interview with Mr Hagga who talked about a girl (former student of Pagomo) who had successfully 'disrupted' the stereotypical dichotomous gender thinking that informed many students` experiences. Such a story vividly depicts a glimpse of hope in this context where gender binaries appear to be immutable and fixed.

5.3.1. Subverting dominant narratives of masculinity

Mr Haga, the Metal Studies teacher, recounted a case of a former female student who had studied Metal Work. She was a bright student, who insisted on doing Metal Work despite pressure from other girls and boys. But much of her inspiration to continue came from her family. They were educated and supported her in studying Metal Work. It was not easy though for her in a context where few girls take Metal Work for the duration of their schooling. She eventually wrote and successfully completed her final examinations. She is currently, doing apprenticeship in mechanics at the local Delta Company where she is the only female apprentice.

While the above story was unique, it definitely points to the practical possibility of challenging dominant versions of being a boy or girl.

5.4.0. Securing male power

In what Kuypers (1999, p. 27) has called the power imperative, relations that govern men's behaviors and more importantly relations between men and women are predicted on the power drive i.e. men's desire to control and dominate. The theme of male power was one of the organizing defining principles of relations between boys and girls, particularly in defining their experience of schooling and future career aspirations at Pagomo. In this study, as will be described in subsequent sections, romantic heterosexual relationships, the practical curriculum and even corporal punishment became sites for contesting hegemonic masculinity.

5.4.1. Marriage and masculinity

The idea that girls' places were private and defined by their participation in the domestic sphere, while boys were considered and expected to be active in the public domain was a common theme expressed by boys in their interviews and everyday interaction at Pagomo High school. An examination of colonial Christian education history in Africa can help to understand the origins of the present domestic African female identify and the public male figure. According to Leach (2008), colonial missionaries in Africa sought and successfully constructed a new identity for young African women, through the model of schooling that was to persist remarkably unchanged to the present day (p. 41). Drawing from the white middle class Victorian Era that promoted separate gender role ideology in Britain, missionaries imported this ideology unmodified in the colonies. At the core of that female role ideology was a spiritual, moral and sexual purity that imposed unfamiliar and rigid boundaries on girls' daily lives. Girls had to be protected from the vices of

African polygamy and female circumcision, and also from the unspoken dangers lurking in the outside world, including the penchant of some European men for young boys and girls and the practice of homosexuality. Given such supposed pervasions, the careful monitoring of girls' sexuality was essential to the missionaries (Leach, 2008). Christian missionary femininity that valorized the sanctity of marriage did much to personify girls as sexualized beings servicing the gratification of men.

The above missionary colonial context is critical in understanding some of the practices and discourses about marriage and female purity that still construct boundaries of exclusion of girls in certain places. Such socially constructed boundaries help maintain male power and need to be understood as antecedents of colonial regimes of patriarchy. In many ways the interaction of girls, boys and teachers at Pagomo High school supported Mac an Ghail (1994) and Carlen's (1992) observations that troublesome behavior exhibited by girls was stigmatized as being evidence of a distorted sexuality. Such assumptions worked in many ways to control girls' behavior and to regulate them into 'appropriate femininity' (Gilbert & Taylor, 1991).

At Pagomo High school the expectations of appropriate femininity were linked to the "marriageable type" of girl (Pattman, 1998; 2005). Thus girls who behaved in ways that deviated from that acceptable kind of femininity were labeled as not fit for marriage. Compelling restrictions imposed on girls' conduct were part and parcel of the oppressive hegemonic heterosexual masculinity at Pagomo, which was also evident in boys' and girls' descriptions of their experiences at home. For example, girls were prohibited from coming to the school to study at night even though that was the only place where they

could access electricity which provided them with light to read in the evening. The basis of that prohibition was that it was dangerous for girls to walk at night alone. Morojele (2011) also notes that girls were subject to strict control and surveillance, while large football playgrounds allocated to boys extended the territorial bounds of boys' freedom (p. 10). Many girls bought into the virtue of marriage, without reflecting on its impact on their freedom to pursue their schooling. The idea that male hegemony and female subordination under patriarchy need not be always violent (Connell, 1995) was apparent in girls' investment in future marriage as they accepted the subordinate roles marriage imposed on them.

While a substantive account of the institution of marriage in Zimbabwean tradition is beyond the scope of this research, it is important to note that heterosexual marriages and the sanctifying *rovora* (bride wealth) transaction were both a productive and reproductive structure upon which the subordination of women was perpetuated (Barnes, 1999). Production is understood in the sense that men were the recipients of the *rovora* prize and reproduction in the sense that through marriage the 'male name' was perpetuated (Morojele, 2011). Under African custom women could not receive the *rovora*, as it was considered that they did not own the child given in marriage. The child belonged to the husband. Patriarchy as a privileging institution for men was also beginning to impact on boys and girls when the institution of marriage was invoked in their conduct at Pagomo High school. There was a lot of pressure for girls to satisfy what was considered to be the marriageable type of girl even at school.

The Principal's weekly assembly charades were a strategic platform where such regulatory heterosexual tirades were reinforced. One morning during my visits at the

school the assembly session was taken by the principal to emphasize the importance of deferring all the pleasures until later. His sermon took the form of an example of a girl who had attended at Pagomo High school. "*This is no secret, but an example of success achieved by some girls like you who passed through this school,"* he ploughed his hand into his shirt pocket and pulled out a post card which turned out to be an wedding invitation card. After looking at the card momentarily, he proceeded, "…*some of you might know (name given) who was our student here some years ago."* He recounted the girl's educational life after leaving Pagomo High school. "*Now I am holding this wedding invitation card to which she has invited me."* There were responses of mixed feelings and murmuring from some boys and girls. The brief message from the principal was that girls should wait until they finish school and college. A conspicuous silence regarding what boys should do was also evident in the Principal's sermon. The principal` s message ignored the fact that boys were also implicated in this gender regime. By and large, the school socialized girls to regulate and control their sexual desires. As noted by Amadiume (1987) in her work on West Africa, "….the socialization of girls stressed sexual restraint and preparation for their future role as wives and mothers. ……on the other hand the socialization of boys stressed masculinity which was equated to virility, violence, valor and authority" (p. 94). Similar notions of socialization of boys and girls existed at Pagomo high school, albeit within a context which was struggling to institute gender equity practices through the curriculum.

At Pagomo the school authority emphasized compulsory heterosexuality as the dominant expression of being a boy or girl. Even for those girls who had successful professions, being in a heterosexual relationship was considered the ultimate achievement.

Hama (19) distinguishes between culturally acceptable girls and those who are not when he reiterated:

> *…..good girls are not expected to go out with boys at night, get drunk, but boys are allowed to do that. It is known that going out and getting drunk are boys` activities. If a girl does bad things done by boys it is very bad for the girl` s image. If a boy does a bad thing it is normal and acceptable.*

A contradictory discourse and double standard, which drew on the imperatives of 'our tradition and customs' dominated boys' and girls' understanding of what was appropriately male and female conduct. What boys could do freely with moral impunity, could position many girls as bad and not acceptable for marriage a tag that many girls struggled to avoid.

Some of the things that were not sanctioned at the school, but which boys were involved in included taking alcohol, smoking tobacco, *mbanje* (marijuana) and having sexual relations. These four practices were among a list of behaviors viewed as serious acts of misconduct at the school, which were punishable by suspension for second offenders and expulsion for third offenders. However these acts did not convey similar sexualized and moral stigma for boys as they did for girls. For boys, such behaviors symbolized being a man that was tested through the rigors of caning or the tenacity to refuse the cane. For girls such behaviors were denigrated and deplored as culturally unacceptable. The punctuating heterosexist stigma was that such girls were not suitable for marriage. This notion of *a marriageable girl* and its social-cultural power to control and curtail girls' school experiences was evident in the girls' future aspirations beyond school. As some girls would say in the interviews:

> *…. eventually I would want to settle down, have my own home, children, husband and a happy marriage.*

Teachers often evaluated most of what girls did against their roles and potential as future wives. From as simple an omission as untidy work to unspeakable misconduct the recrimination was always framed along a disciplining discourse of a good wife in marriage. For example one teacher addressed a particular student with this question which highlights the moral and regulatory function in maintaining category boundary maintenance work as it relates to defining the limits of what it means to be a *good girl*:

> *…..how do you think you can be a good wife with the ability to manage your marriage when you can't present tidy work?*

Tendai (girl, 16), for example, confirms the imposition of such gender norms for girls:

> *Girls have to follow particular ways of behaving at school and may be considered to be bad girls if they depart from those expectations, like how we speak with other people especially teachers, how we handle our work at school, being respectful to seniors, should not act like rolling the tongue, and sexy gestures like looking into the teacher` s eye. She should not be shy, looking down or scratching. These are seductive actions which are meant to draw the attention of the teacher into 'improper relationship' with her.*

What Tendai outlined above as the expectations for being a *good girl* at Pagomo reflects in many ways the attributes of a traditional idealized respectable African girl, but one who has appropriated a foreign image by adopting stylish hair and make-up, which few girls could live up to. Such girls negotiate such norms of respectability and acceptance within the narrow margins of modernity and tradition (Haram, 2004; Barnes, 1999). Contradictions are discernable practicing this kind of femininity. For example the expectation that girls should not look straight into the male teacher's eyes, while at the

same time they should not be shy or look to the side and down or divert their attention by scratching sent conflicting messages. These expectations were confusing, and negatively impacted on girls' participation in school. What sort of eye-contact with a male teacher was appropriate for female student?

The policing of girls' sexuality and femininity presented above portrays a girl who is sexually appealing, but who should not demonstrate her physical attractiveness to men. It stifles girls' assertiveness and ascribes them a position of subordination in relation to male power. All is sacrificed on the whims of being the marriageable kind of girl, in ways that tended to stifle girls' participation and achievement in school. For example certain cultural discourses positioned girls' bodily actions in ways that opposed school expectations. For example, gazing into the teachers' or boys' eyes was viewed as sexually seductive and unacceptable.

5.4.2. Ultimate Heterosexuality

One of the questions this study investigated was the expression of being a boy/male among students. In my interviews I probed into the existence of homosexuality or same sex relations in students' lives. The responses I got implied that there should not be any talk about it; it does not exist here at Pagomo! I was afraid of pursuing further questions about same-sex relations for fear of being misconstrued as having personal interest in the matter. I am a married, heterosexual, African, Zimbabwean male. The same discourses which conscripted most Zimbabwean students at Pagomo also affected me. There was an ultimate and definitive privileging of heterosexuality. Homophobia, the fear of homosexual attachment was expressed through a denial of its existence. If it did not exist then it did not warrant discussion.

The avoidance of discussion about homosexuality amounted to fear of homosexuals (Kimmel, 1996). There was normalization of heterosexuality as the dominant, ultimate, natural, single, and acceptable sexual identity, which excluded any other expression of sexuality. In order to demonstrate that one was not homosexually inclined, one had to have a partner of the opposite sex. At Pagomo, the emphasis attached to heterosexual marriage was indicative of it being normalized. The Principal emphasized it, the boys admired it, and girls hoped that it would be an ultimate accomplishment in their lives. But did same-sex relations exist in this community? Why was there such a huge silence and fear surrounding any discussion of same-sex relations? Were there no same-sex relations in rural Zimbabwe? If they existed why were they so invisible?

There is evidence that same-sex relations existed in Zimbabwe among the Shona since time immemorial (Epprecht, 1998; Phllips, 1997). Pre-colonial rock paintings, oral traditions, and colonial court records all point to the prevalence of same-sex practices among the Shona. A Shona vocabulary conceals same-sex relations, but it does show that it exists. For example, such terms as, *Sahwira* (intimate male-friend) and svimborume (single, mature man who has nowhere to insert his phallus) illustrate the subtle acknowledgement of the prevalence of same-sex relations. There are historical records showing prevalence of same-sex relations in the colonial cities and mining compounds in Zimbabwe (Phimister, 1988; Van Onselen, 1976). Most recently (1995), the then President of Zimbabwe, Canaan Banana, was alleged, prosecuted and convicted of sodomy charges, for which he served a jail term. The legislation of sodomy as a crime in the Zimbabwean judiciary system serves to show that it is a law that is designed to combat a particular practice that exists. Also the establishment of an association of Gays

and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ) provides further evidence. My own personal memoir is testimony to the existence of same-sex desires and sexual practices whose existence is "unspoken". To answer these questions, I reflect on my childhood memories and extracts of my field notes, since I could not get data from the participants.

> *My present fear of same-sex attachment is not natural, neither is heterosexual inclination. These sexual expressions that I experience are socially constructed. I remember I was about 8 years old. It was a hot day. It had rained the previous day and the natural pools in the nearby river were full. We decided with a group of same-age/same-sex boys to go to the pool to swim. No swimming costumes, complete nudity, we plunged into the cool waters. Part of the swimming practices involved carrying another on your back and swim to the other side of the pool. Bodily gyrations, insinuating sexual activity were part of the fun. Up to now I do not know who reported this to my mother. "Don't say, don't tell" is the heterosexual matrix, (Epprecht, 1998). I do not even know what the other mothers did to their boys who were involved in this. When I got home, my mother dragged me into her bedroom, and locked the door. "What were you doing at the river?" my mother asked. It was not a question which begged an answer. This was the only beating I remember receiving from her. It was intensely thorough. "Promise you will never do it again", she said. I promised her. She wiped my tears, applied body cream to the swollen parts, clothed me with long pants and long sleeved shirt reserved for Sundays and special occasions, so that the visible marks from caning would be concealed. "Be a <u>good boy</u>" she said, serving a plate full of rice and chicken. I had a treat. We never talked about it again. My father, I guess never discovered it. It was not to be said. Twenty years later, I was committed in a heterosexual marriage. At the marriage ceremony my mother was one of the happiest people, as she realized that her "lesson" had been successful, and that I had kept my promise.* (Author's childhood memories)

Is this not homophobic violence and harassment?

As part of African courtesy, funeral attendance is kind of compulsory. I had to suspend my field work at Pagomo for a total of five days as I attended local funerals. It was not all a waste of time, after all, I realized. For a global ethnographer, the research site is not territorially demarcated, (Kenway, et al., 2006). At this funeral I got to appreciate the

ways through which local heterosexual masculinity was constructed against homosexuality in the lives of the residents of the community and students.

> *Reverend B. Isaiah, from the Church of Christ, stood up to give a final word of condolence to the bereaved. "…..This is the only opportunity I have found to address you", and continued, The Rev Isaiah presented a imaginary scenario in which prospective homosexual partners went through the formalities of a traditional African marriage ceremony. "The son in-law and his relatives have come. They want to pay the bride prize for Ezekiel, your son." Rev Isaiah went on to explore the contradictions and impossibilities of an African marriage procedure when it involves homosexual partners. The different parts of bride-prize did not add up; who gets what? The roles of particular people at the ceremony did not make sense; should there be an uncle-in-law instead of an aunt-in-law? Could, Ezekiel perform the roles that a female bride would perform on such an occasion?* ***Panozvarwa vana here pawanano iyi?*** *(Are there going to be any children in this marriage?). All answers pointed to the negative. "……The angels of God in heaven are busy intensifying the flames of purgatory, which awaits all those involved in such morally decadent acts", he concluded. "….Amen, Amen, Amen", the audience affirmed. His whole speech missed the focus of the funeral, but received the most laudable applause*. (Field- notes, 2010).

What social and cultural imperatives constructed a heterosexual marriage as the only acceptable sexual preference in this particular community? Why was a heterosexual marriage so tied to bride-prize and having children? A number of issues related to intolerance of same-sex relations are evident from the above stories. At an early age children are taught to expunge same-sex feeling in their psychic. Visible expressions of same-sex feelings are not allowed; they are disgraceful, shameful and are feared. *Good people* do not do express same-sex feelings. If there is no reproduction/child the marriage is void. Physical violence and supernatural powers are invoked to maintain the heterosexual gender regime.

An examination of some of the cultural and colonial, historical antecedents, impact of globalization and present context of postcoloniality explain this privileging of

heterosexuality over same-sex relationships in this particular community. Through this examination the unique manifestations of homophobia in this particular community will be explained. Students' failure to acknowledge the existence of homosexuality was part and parcel of a broader gender regime organized around compulsory heterosexuality which prevailed in Zimbabwe.

Epprecht (1998) indentifies factor that gradually led to the current denial of the existence of homosexuality (which he has called a blind spot in an African masculinity). Firstly, a heterosexual arrangement in Zimbabwe is not purely for sexual pleasure. It has both a social and economic value attached to it. Marriage and having children are significant economic transactions. In a society whose economic survival is based on land, human labor is an essential capital. Heterosexual marriages, therefore, provide the basis for the supply of that labor capital. In this sense, same-sex relations pose a threat to that arrangement and, hence, to the existence of the community. Connell, (1995) has alluded to this complex intersection of production, reproduction and cathexis, which undergirds gender relationships. To this end, all measures were instituted to ensure that all suspicion of same-sex relations were dealt with in a manner that kept heterosexual relations secure. For, example, if a man proved impotent, he arranged with a friend (sahwira) to impregnate his wife. Such, arrangements could also be made with relatives. Secrecy shrouded these arrangements. If the wife was impotent, the man would marry another wife. This also explains why multiple heterosexual relations are tolerated, if not accepted. Same-sex relations where explained as being caused by either evil spirits, for which cleansing ceremonies were conducted. According to Epprecht (1998), the economic forces of heterosexuality have made Zimbabwean black gays and lesbians also

heterosexual. They maintain a public appearance of heterosexuality while engaging in private same-sex practices. They are caught between the social instrumental role of heterosexuality and their private sexual desires and pleasures. The dichotomous identity of homo-hetero does not hold for such people.

When we look at current discourses on same-sex and heterosexual practices in the context of postcoloniality and globalization, we can understand why there is increased fear and invisibility of same-sex relations in Zimbabwe. In the Kiyakiya context, with its massive unemployment and government cut in social welfare services, there has been a tendency to resort to traditional and subsistence means of survival that are based on land. This period was also marked by land reform, in which previously white owned farms were reallocated to the African population. The major capital input, as I noted earlier, was having many wives and many children. In this scenario, both colonial biblical homophobic sermons are accepted even by non-believers, to denounce the possibility of homosexual expressions. Also, Sodomy as colonial Roman-Dutch Law statute, which still applies in postcolonial Zimbabwe, blocks the fight for recognition of equal rights for Gays and Lesbians by associations such as GALZ. Originally, it was caused by evils spirits, later it was a white man's disease and, now it is being imported by unpatriotic Zimbabweans who fled the country when it was under Western economic sanctions; these are the political reasons given to explain why same-sex relations exist in Zimbabwe. The issue remains that, same-sex relations exist in Zimbabwe, and ultimate heterosexuality is economically functional.

Students at Pagomo are caught up in this homophobic discourse of denial and silence.

5.4.3. Regulating girls' bodies and desires

Given the prevailing gender system in which girls were positioned as particular sorts of desiring and desired subjects vis-à-vis the requirement to defer engaging in sexual activity, what possibilities exist for girls to negotiate such a position in a modern but still rural school context? For example could they finish high school, go to college and secure for themselves an independent future without having to rely on being in a marriageable relationship with a man? Could girls` sexual desires be deferred? Such questions beg a consideration of the sexual pressure faced by girls at Pagomo High school from boys whose sexual exploits were deemed necessary for ascertaining their heterosexual masculinity. The ideal of a *real girl* who waited and abstained from sex occupied a central place at Pagomo high school. From the onset the circumstances that structure gender relations and desire for sexual gratification (for boys) and restraint (for girls) were highly contradictory. The instability of the "relations of cathexis" (Connell, 1995) was evident at Pagomo. As Connell notes when changes occur in the labor market, politics and global relations, such changes trigger contradictions in attachments, pleasures and emotions in heterosexual relationships (p.85). At the centre of these conflicting expectations on boys and girls was the issue of Christian morality that defined sex outside marriage as a sin. In this community, people confess to diverse patriarchal religious beliefs, which entail male power.

Talking about sexual practices with boys and girls was not an easy and comfortable subject. We could easily discuss other topics I brought up but sexual experience was not easily navigated. All girls I talked to maintained that they had never had sex, while all the boys claimed that they had. What became evident was that the issue of being a 'real' girl

and 'real' boy framed in regulatory ways the participants' discourses about desire and sexuality. For girls to admit that they were having sex implied that they were not *good girls.* On the other hand, for boys to accept that they had had sex with girls boosted their hetero-masculine image and status among peers.

As one enters the 4C classroom, one is met by a poster on the far end of the wall right across the door, of a professional woman rejecting an offer of a velvet-colored parcel with a pink ribbon, from an enticing gentleman. This image depicts a successful woman by modern standards, a slim, tall young woman, with straight hair, expensive jewelry, beaming face colored in chocolate eye shadows, exquisite dress and high heeled shoes. Two messages are conveyed about being a boy and a girl: the innocence, passivity, attractiveness of girls and the assertive and predatory nature of boys in a heterosexual relationship. (Field notes).

The idea of waiting also indicated the powerful position allotted to marriage as a marker of being a *real girl*. Education and work for some girls came as subsidiaries in a flourishing marriage.

> *Eventually all girls should get married to a man, despite any other accomplishments. If you do not get married you become a prostitute* (Maida).

While there were these forces of socialization at play in the school, there were significant contradictions in gender relations. In the Kiyakiya context, where many men were not guaranteed employment, their capacity to marry was also undermined. For some girls marriage becomes an attractive option. However, some girls resisted and were not merely passive recipients of such gender socialization.

The teachers I talked to lamented the erosion of moral values of a *real woman*, while this was also confirmed by what some girls and boys said. Summarily, some girls could not wait to have sexual relations, but did this mean that they were not considered to be *real girls*? Constructing the idea of *good girls* on the basis of their ability to abstain from sex before marriage rejects the factors that were impacting girls' experiences in postcolonial Zimbabwe. For example when I asked Tendai (girl, aged16) the following question: Does having sex before marriage affect your reputation as a *good girl*? She replied:

> *It all depends on your age, each person has feelings of love, and so when one gets to a certain age with no boyfriend it is difficult to accept that as normal. Usually that is caused by evil spirits. Everything has rehearsals, to see how it works. It might have happened that you had one lover and end up marrying that person, but I think it used to happen to people of the past, who waited until they were mature enough. But with our generation, many boys are crooks: it is difficult to trust them*

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Tenadi disrupts most expectations of being a *good girl.* For her, it was not *normal* for a girl not to fall in love. Those girls who had no boyfriends were not *real girls* but were possessed by evil spirits which scared boys away from them. She draws this understanding of the influence of the spirit of the dead on the living people from her mother who is a traditional healer. But Tendai's notions of a girl are not exclusively steeped in the past. She is calculative about the malevolent intentions of modern rural boys- *many boys are crooks*. She maintains that girls should experiment in their relationships with boys to see how these relationships work before they commit themselves to marriage. For Tendai, the fact that girls would eventually get married could never be taken for granted as she reiterated, "…with our generation many boys are crooks, it is difficult trust them".

5.4.4. Academic competition and masculinity

At Pagomo some boys employed various methods to exclude and marginalize girls. The fact that boys are considered and consider themselves to be more intellectually gifted than girls was socially constructed in the day to day interaction among boys and girls and teachers. Intelligent girls are deliberately frustrated academically as their sexuality was exploited by boys to divert their focus from schooling to romantic relationships. However, boys still acknowledged that there were some girls who performed better than most boys.

As Maida noted, there was usually a problem for girls who were brilliant at Pagomo. Brilliant girls did not get the same respect from many boys and male teachers. Their achievement was attributed to their bodies, attractiveness and sexuality.

> *There is a problem for bright girls here, boys can allege that teachers favor* girls or *you are in love with the teacher who gives you good grades. They will mock you and try to lower your status and concentration so that they can do better than you. Boys at times date bright girls as a way of distracting them from their studies.*

While in this study some boys claimed to be more intellectually gifted than girls, that position of academic hegemony was never guaranteed. Some boys and most girls contested it. It was not a status which came without hard work. In order to succeed these boys had to work assiduously. This construction of boys as hard-working, contrasts with Gilbert and Gilbert's (1998) observation that concluded that some boys considered it feminine to study hard. For Gilbert and Gilbert *real boys*' academic success had to be projected as effortless, while girls had to put in extra effort to succeed. For most boys at Pagomo success in school was not just tied to their immediate manifestation of being

intelligent boys in school. Success had broader implications for their future positions as males in the labor market and status as family bread winners. In this instance some boys were aware of their future position of power and control over women whose foundation had to be laid through success in schooling. Failing to do well in school implied a loss of male hegemony in the labor market and consequently compromised their capacity to act responsibly as family providers. Some boys drew on traditional customs, Christian beliefs and the logic of future formal employment which created a competitive academic regime that privileged many boys. As Hama confirmed:

> *….according to African tradition men are superior than women, they look after women (are responsible for women`s upkeep), they want to do well in school because that can lead them to a better job and income*

Some boys deploy heterosexuality as a means by which to assert their domination and power over girls in terms of ensuring their intellectual superiority over their female counterparts. As indicated below, they find ways of jeopardizing girls` academic achievement and engagement. In very subtle but powerful ways some smart girls` focus on schooling was diverted once they got lured into romantic relationships with boys. Boys' intellectual superiority over girls did not naturally take place, but was constructed in their interaction with girls.

Most teachers agreed that as soon as girls started to become involved in romantic relationships with boys their performance in school deteriorated. As one teacher noted,

> *…. girls do quite well than boys during the first two years of high school but their performance deteriorate when they begin to engage in romantic relationships with boys, this reduces their study time*

When girls became involved in romantic relationships with boys at school, this was viewed as a girl's problem. At Pagomo, the teachers tried to make sure that girls did not enter into those kinds of relationships.

As reported by, Tendai,

> *…..teachers have been calling me to the staffroom these days because they have seen my performance in school going down, they think I am having an affair, I have been playing around a lot these days.*

At the time of this research, Tendai's performance was declining. Teachers suspected that she was involved in a romantic relationship.

Maida, whose views about romantic relationships seemed to have been influenced by her interaction with her sister who engaged in prostitution and also her Christian morality commented:

> *Sex here is viewed as an act of disobedience, but it is happening, we grew up when it was there and we can't change it, but we also know that the body is the temple of the Lord (God) and we should not do bad things that devalue our bodies, sex is a sin to God when done outside of marriage.*

The colonial antecedents of the moralizing and regulatory power, epitomized by a conservative, Christian attitude towards sex, were visible in Maida` beliefs about sex, marriage and sin as intertwined. However, while these dominant norms existed and were institutionalized in many respects, it would be limiting to present students at Pagomo as merely passive recipients of gender socialization. For example, as already illustrated, not all girls held the same views as Maida and were actively resisting such conservative positions and policing of their sexualities.

The school's stance on the issue of romantic relations in some ways helped to bolster the dominant position of boys, as girls were selectively punished. But the school authority could not systematically solve the 'problem' because they viewed it as a girls' problem

without looking at how boys were also implicated. Instead they increased the burden on the girls by instituting rules that prohibit romantic relationships between students, victimizing girls and punishing and ridiculing them as misguided and promiscuous. The school's institutional strategies designed to control girls show that gender socialization was not a peaceful process. The existence and use of these tactics implied that girls were resisting and that hegemonic masculinities are maintained through violence (Connell, 1995). For example, routine checks could be made to find out which girls were in romantic relationships with boys. But no such checks were done on boys. A more appropriate approach would be first to understand the various ways that boys employ or assert their hegemony over girls and then attempt to educate girls on how to handle their romantic relationships with boys. Also interventions are needed to help girls set priorities that would not put romantic relationships in the forefront.

The following excerpts from some boys and girls demonstrate ways in which romance, intelligence and masculinity were constructed at Pagomo high school:

Jonah (boy, 17*)*

> *…..a boy should reject being outclassed by a girl. He may accept being outclassed by other boys. However there are some girls who perform better than boys in class. It really boggles me to know that there are some girls who can perform better than me in class. I really work hard to make sure that I do better than most girls in my class*

A/M. Do you think if a girl is dated then that will lower her performance in class?

> Maida,….*mostly she is affected academically, if the guy is at the same school, the girl will dodge class and the boy will set meeting times which interfere with your lessons, then for fear of being dumped you miss lessons in order to meet the boy*

At times such romantic relationships resulted in pregnancy, thus compelling these girls to prematurely terminate their studies.

AM, "Do girls put a lot of effort in their studies?"

Hama,

> *….many of them do not put much effort in their studies, those who do well are naturally intelligent. However boys really put a lot of effort in their studies. Boys usually have strong competition. When boys compete, the aim is to do better than other boys. We do not compete with girls, because it is embarrassing when they beat you in that competition. When a girl does better than boys in test/exam, boys usually say they had not prepared for the test*

From the above data, different sorts of reasons were given by boys to explain their views about competition and being boys in school. The boys wanted to maintain a status of domination over girls in the present moment, and also in their relationships with girls post-school. This practice seemed to come from their beliefs about what they were expected to be and do as men in future. Their expectations of being male were derived from culture and religious beliefs. Rod a Christian boy reiterated that:

> *….. there is a policy that men should be the head and ruler of the family, when it happens that the women is the ruler, people say the husband has been bewitched* [love concoction] *by the wife. From the beginning when God created people, he said women should be helpers not leaders of men in the home. Even when both husband and wife work, the wife has rights but the man should be the head.*

In Rod's narrative, traditional cultural values and Christian beliefs were invoked in a complimentary manner to reinforce the hegemonic position of boys. This lend support to Epprecht's (2007) conclusion that among male students at the University of Zimbabwe, *"….opposition to exploring issues around gender tended to come from Christian fundamentalists quoting US Bible-belt translations"* (p. 72). That position of male dominance, based on traditional culture and Christian beliefs, was gradually being eroded on two fronts. Firstly, the prospect of both wife and husband working meant a

renegotiation of the cultural and Christian beliefs. This is evident when Rod talks about the women also working and buying property. Secondly, the notion of human rights was being vigorously advocated by local human rights activists with the support of International Organizations such as *Amnesty International*. In Zimbabwe, the issue of human rights gained global attention in the light of politically motivated violence against opposition parties and civilians, instigated by the Mugabe Government. However, the influence of a global discourse of human rights was not confined to just challenging authority at the level of the state. Within the locality of Pagomo such a discourse of human rights also permeated students' and women's rights, thus invoking a challenge to school authority and male power as attested by Rod's remark above.

Such narratives, as presented by Rod, reflect the complicated and diverse ways in which globalization impacts discourses on human rights and how these are reconfigured locally in terms of students' experiences and understanding of gender relations at the school level. Rod's idea of the intersection of culture, religious beliefs and human rights in redefining gender relations encores Escobar's (2001) postulation that diverse people and places, engage with various aspects of globalization as they intersect with their lives and identities.

5.5.0. Physical appearance as a marker of masculinity

5.5.1. Poverty, deportment and gender

At Pagomo there were different expectations in terms of personal deportment for boys and girls. Appearing smartly dressed was a dominant attribute of being a girl. It did not matter very much for boys to do so. But for girls, having an attractive body image was an issue that incited some preoccupation. However there were some girls who transgressed

the narrow boundaries of neatness and dirtiness because of their inability to acquire the material accessories needed to maintain the image of being smartly groomed. The school authorities enforced certain Western middle-class values of personal deportment, a relic from the colonial past. However, with cultural consumption of global flows at Pagomo, personal deportment became understood in other ways by students, particularly in their own circumstances that were dictated by lack of material resources.

Hama (19)

> *If you see a boy with a dirty uniform and unkempt hair it never rings a bell in your head that he is not smart. It seems as if it is not important. But as for girls it really matters that they are smartly dressed…. so if you see her in a dirty uniform, it is unusual.*

While it was the ideal norm at this school, that girls should be smartly dressed, which did not necessarily apply to boys, this concept of being a boy and being girl tended to be contradicted by a gender prevailing logics and politics at this school. For example, teachers insisted that all students, boys and girls should be properly and smartly dressed. For boys their hair had to be properly kept and shirts tucked in. A memo addressed to teachers from the Deputy Principal read in part:

> *…….next week is going to be operation "pfenyedzera" (tuck in your shirt)….if you see a student with a shirt not tucked in log him and let him be punished" (that meant corporal punishment.*

For Don (16) tucking in the shirt meant something completely different:

> *I hate "kupfenyedzera" and no one here seems to be concerned with my plight. You see, my trousers are torn all the back part, how then can I tuck in and expose the rest of my flesh out*

I could tell from the tone of Don's voice that he was really troubled. The only pants he wore daily were torn and revealed more of his body than it could conceal. He went on:

> *If it means I be punished for not tucking in then let it be, I cannot humiliate myself in the presence of other boys and girls by revealing my body. Some teachers know my plight and they do not usually enforce the rule of tucking in on me*

Don was a poor orphan, a condition that brought him into conflict with the school dress code. However, he accepted the immediate embarrassment as a poor boy at school, as he was aware of the future rewards that success in school would bring him. His old and tattered pants, which were now outgrowing his body, had been secured as a donation he later told me. For most boys it was just ridiculous to insist on tucking in shirts for students who come to school bare-footed. In other ways, being smartly dressed was equivalent to being feminine and most girls took every effort to appear well groomed, while most boys resented it.

Maida (girl, aged 18), for example, had this to say:

> *It does not matter how you look like because you did not make yourself. But you should maintain yourself; that is no dirt; it is not good for girls. But for boys, they normally have no problem with being smartly dressed, until they start dating, that's when they start to be concerned with their physical appearance. For girls it does not matter your age you have to be smartly dressed.*

There were some boys who really cared about being neat and smartly dressed. Joel (boy, aged17), Unusual for most boys, Joel had faded nail polish on his fingers but was not keen to reveal or talk about it:

> *I like to be smartly, I may fail but I want, even more than some girls. However, most boys do not care about being smartly dressed. But we expect girls to be smartly dressed. If I see a girl who is dirty, I feel like she*

> *is not fit to be a girl. Other boys never think or say that I am behaving like a girl because I do many things which boys do, like playing soccer. I also have my girl friend here.*

The same was true of one girl who could not keep up the impression of being smartly dressed, as expected of most girls, because she did not have the material and economic resources to do so. Maty (girl, aged 18), for example stated that:

> *I need to wash my uniform three times a week, but I cannot do it because it's the only dress I have, it would mean coming to school with a wet dress because it cannot dry up especially in winter.*

In this instance Maty had to appear in the same dress for the whole week. On the fifth day of the week, few people could tell the actual color of Maty's dress, with an accumulated stench of sweat which was visible from her armpits, meshed with various shades of red, grey and black soil that she had attracted on her way to and from school. If anything, both Don and Maty exuded traits of a boy and a girl that were not expected at this school and which were dictated by their social backgrounds of extreme poverty and lack.

While Maida was herself a well-dressed girl and took care of her appearance, she felt the pressure to maintain such an appearance among girls was too much. She actually felt pity for some girls who could not afford the resources needed for maintaining standards of dress:

> *It is unfair to expect all girls to be well dressed because some girls come from poor families, some are orphans and stay with guardians who are old and can't even afford to buy washing powder and bath soup. So these girls might come to school wearing unclean uniforms. You, see the texture and color of our dresses here you can't wash it with no washing soap*

Their position of abject poverty and impoverishment dictated the extent to which some boys and girls maintain the requirement of being smartly dressed.

5.5.2. Practical subjects, physical appearance and gender

The compulsion polarities of *smartly dressed girls* and *dirty boys* were visible even in the practical subjects with some girls refusing to study Metal Work and Building Studies because these subjects involved exposure to dirt, while some boys rejected Foods and Nutrition because of the high standards of neatness demanded there.

As Ms Mapho claimed:

> *……the main problem for boys is dressing up and cleaning the dishes in F/N. It's not because they do not want to, but as boys, maybe God created them that way that they behave like that. It's not within them to wash dishes. Girls only supersede boys in tidying up but everything else no. Boys are intelligent and usually help girls on the academic part of F/N while girls help in the practical part*

In accounting for boys' and girls' gender differences in their participation in practical subjects, Ms Mapho appealed to both the assumed natural biological gender differences and Christian biblical exhortations, that is, "God created them that way"

Mr Haga, the Metal Work subject teacher also reiterated the natural disposition of boys to tidiness:

> *…..girls think metal work is a dirty subject. They hate handling metals and equipment. On the other hand boys do not worry about being dirty. They actually run away from F/N and F/F because of the excessive requirements for being neat….like washing hands each time one handles food. It's something naturally inherent, boys love dirty while girls like to be smart. I remember one of my college mates who would rolled over his dirty work-suit with all the greases and dust. A girl can`t do that.*

In many other respects, boys preferred Metal Work and Building subjects because the activities in these subjects required physical strength, muddling in dirt, cutting, lifting heavy equipment and also some amount of exposure to greater risk, activities which

bolstered the heterosexual masculinity. As for girls, the demands of neatness in Foods and Nutrition and Fashion and Fabrics offered them immediate opportunities to shore up how smartly dressed they could be. But there was a long term gendered significance attached to investment in these subjects that was connected to broader structural division of labor.

The fact that boys were more inclined to embrace schooling for its utilitarian value rather than for its own sake as girls normally would do, has been established in the literature (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; Mac an Ghail, 1994). Working class boys (Willis, 1977; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998) adopted an anti-school attitude because schooling did not help them in their future unskilled factory jobs. In contrast the "Real English men" presented by Mac an Ghail (1994), were very much aware of their future white color jobs and the prerequisite academic grades those jobs required and, hence, their immediate commitment to, and investment in schooling.

At Pagomo High school the boys' deployed Metal Work and Building subjects as immediate resources to construct a male identity based on a rugged physical strength. At the same time they were very much aware of the *kukiyakiya* context in which they were going to enter after school. In the absence of formal paid waged labor, Metal and Building Studies opened avenues for 'self employment' for those who had basic skills. The same skills were also very much valued in South Africa or Botswana, which some boys imagined would be their final employment destinations. Girls' chances of success in the *Kiyakiya* labor market were limited to feminine tasks of the food service industry, while their school lives excluded them from Metal Work and Building. Practical subjects

at Pagomo were indeed institutional arrangements where gender was embedded (Connell, 1996). In this case, the practical curriculum at Pagomo was implicated in a particular gender regime, which Kessler, (1985, p. 42) defined in these terms:

> The *pattern of practices that construct various kinds of masculinity and femininity among staff and students, ordering them in terms of prestige and power, and constructing a sexual division of labor within the institution. The gender regime is a state of play rather than a permanent condition. It can be changed, deliberately or otherwise, but it is less no powerful in its effects on the pupils for that. It confronts them as a social fact, which they have to come to terms with somehow.*

What is particular about the practical curriculum at Pagomo was that its relevance to the workplace for boys and family for girls was equally more important. This evidence challenges Skelton's (2001) conclusion that such places had less immediate relevance to boys' and girls' lives at school.

5.6.0. Discipline and Masculinity at Pagomo High school

5.6.1. Corporal punishment and the construction of gender

Corporal punishment was rife at Pagomo High. There were broadly two types of corporal punishment: the formalized caning that involved a record of the case, number of strokes administered and a student's signature. This kind of punishment had to be authorized by the Principal. There was also illegal non-formalized caning, kicking, clapping, and poking that appeared to be rampant at the school. In both instances caning was gendered in as far as who applied it, its intensity and the part of the body where it was inflicted.

When applied to girls canning was restricted to certain parts of their bodies and not buttocks. Most boys thought hard caning was suitable and appropriate for them but not

for girls. Hama, for example, claimed that he would not want to be caned on the palms. He thought that to be caned on the palm would lead him to be considered or treated like a girl, so he would take his beatings on the buttocks. Like most boys expressed informally to me, *"….Magaro avasikana ndeye kutaba kwete kurova"* meaning girls` buttocks are for fondling not beating". It was common to hear comments such as, *'She is loaded'* referring to a passing girl who had big breasts and buttocks and *'she has a flat base,'* referring to a girl with none. Such a discourse which positions girls as sexual objects has been noted to strongly police girls' bodies (Pascoe, 2007, Walker, 1988). Under this regulatory regime, some girls at Pagomo struggled to ensure that they were sexually desirable to boys in terms of body image. Those who failed to attain that image were ridiculed (Connell, 1995).

The overall context was authoritarian, oppressive and excessively violent. Schools were caught up in this dilemma. From 2000 through to 2009 the wider political context in Zimbabwe was marred by political violence before, during and after Parliamentary elections. There was increased opposition to ruling authority as a result of falling standards in social services like health, education. Government's response took the form of violent suppression of all types of civil protest. At times the protests erupted into violent episodes as well. The contradiction was that violence and repression occurred in a purportedly free and democratic state. At times emergence bills or presidential decrees were enacted in order to legalize government violence against opposition, like the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) passed in 2002 and amended in 2007. This piece of legislation forbade public gathering and gave the police powers to arrest and detain civilians without trial. The oppressive laws attracted global scrutiny. Working closely

with local human rights activists, international organizations such as *Amnesty International* lobbied for the repeal these laws. What is significant here is the manner in which the notion of human rights unsettles taken for granted norms that percolate gender relations in the school and wider context of Pagomo.

Also the Zimbabwean constitution sanctioned corporal punishment in its institutions of justice, schools and home. Section 241 of the Criminal Law [Codification and reform] Act (2004) granted a parent or guardian authority to administer moderate corporal punishment for disciplinary purposes upon his or her minor child. The same section (241) empowered teachers to administer moderate corporal punishment for disciplinary purposes. Surprisingly, Pagomo High school was still guided by an outdated colonial Government directive on corporal punishment; Education (disciplinary powers) and Regulations of 1979, contained in Rhodesia Government Notice 95 of 1979 (Appendix, A).

From my experience working in a context such as Pagomo, some parents and educators regarded the school's administration of corporal punishment as minor and justified discipline in instilling work ethics and in terms of its correctional capacity within an overall context state instituted and sanctioned violence. Especially when dealing with many disruptive students caning was viewed as the quickest disciplinary method. As Morrell (2001, p. 141) noted in the case of South Africa corporal punishment persisted in schools because of lack specific alternative mechanism of discipline, assumed rebelliousness of students and a belief among teachers in the efficacy of authoritarian teaching and management styles, and very large classes that make it difficult to deploy

alternative forms of discipline. Thus at Pagomo there was a collusion of interest in the use of corporal punishment between the State legislation, teachers and parents.

In examining masculinities at Pagomo High school what become significant about the regime of corporal punishment was the broad context of political violence and collapse of democratic institutions in which it operated and how it was applied, and with what consequences for gender reconstruction. Central to these questions was the gendered character of corporal punishment.

I did not initially plan to examine corporal punishment per ser. My original focus was on examining the interplay of masculinities in a rural school context in Zimbabwe. Among other issues, such as how the curriculum and informal interactions between boys and girls within the school helped to construct or deconstruct their practices of masculinity, I also wanted to examine how the school disciplinary regime impacted on boys' lives at school.

Caning at Pagomo was the dominant disciplinary regime, and at times, it turned into violent physical abuse of boys, and even girls. However, my focus and interest in examining caning closely developed from the very first day of my visit to Pagomo High school, when I saw a boy being caned in the office of Deputy Principal. All the briefing we were doing had to be suspended as the Deputy Headmaster said, …*very sorry Mr Masinire, there is a small issue which I have to do right away, I will be with you after this.* It appeared not to be a small issue altogether, as I later observed caning was the order of the day at Pagomo High school. The boy received his share of the cane and from the look of things it was not the first or second time he had come to the Deputy Principal's office for that purpose. It was given as the last stern warning: the next time he

would be expelled. The boy stoically endured the five strong strokes and the Senior Master who was standing in as the witness remarked...*uyu murume chaiye akashinga*, translating into "he is a real man he is strong". Literally translating this sentence into an English version loses its original meaning. "Strong" in English means physical bodily strength, but in Shona it means that inner moral disposition of determination or rather courage. For this reason I have interviewed my participants in Shona with the full knowledge that English language will conceal most of their ideas, feelings and experiences. I am not in any way insinuating that the English language is short of expressive terms but that it is a language the participants do not use to experience their reality. It is a problem which arises in translation. While nearly all participants could communicate in English, it was not their first language.

This typical incident, which captured the general tone of the disciplinary regime at Pagomo corresponds to Morrell's (2001) writing on the use of corporal punishment in black schools in Durban that, "….the core values of masculinity include toughness and ability to endure the use of physical force by someone in authority". At Pagomo High school caning fortified these values need to be understood historically as a mutation from colonial administration and African patriarchy. While corporal punishment was intensified with the introduction of colonialism, it had existed within the pre-colonial African context. But it signified different things about power and masculinity in each context. Corporal punishment when applied to Blacks by Whites in the colonial context was racialized. It was designed to discipline and emasculate the Africans. On the other hand, when it was applied by African elder on the young boys it was intended to develop a physically strong person. These masculine values were circulating with force in the

current Zimbabwean political arena, and also in the *Kukiyakiya* context. At Pagomo High school a particular male authority was exercised through enacting corporal punishment.

Deducing from the Senior Master's comment, boys do not flinch when they are being caned and, by implication, girls squirm when they are being canned. This confirms Connell (1989. p. 294) postulation that,

> *….a violent disciplinary system invites competition in machismo… and the authority structure of the school becomes the antagonist against which one's masculinity is cut.*

Research on disciplinary regimes in schools (Wolpe, 1988; Mac an Ghail, 1994; Kenway & Firtclarence, 1997) demonstrates that particular disciplinary approaches are implicated in a particular gender regime. Aggressive and violent masculinities arise in schools with harsh and authoritarian disciplinary structures. Morrell (1994, 2001 & 2007) argues that understanding the context of corporal punishment in schools is significant. He shows how corporal punishment in racially white boarding schools in South Africa fashioned a "frontier masculinity" aimed at conquest. Morrell also shows how violent masculinities among black school boys were constructed in colonial and post-apartheid South Africa.

Teachers, girls and boys had different views, with most students and teachers expressing conflicting opinions about corporal punishment, depending on nature of the offense committed by the student. Through the use of corporal punishment the dichotomy of the vulnerability and weakness of girls' bodies, as opposed to the strength and endurance of boys' bodies was emphasized.

For example, contradictory opinions were expressed by both boys and girls in informal conversations which I had with them at different times during the period of my research at Pagomo High school. In a way this showed how boys and girls experienced, responded and understood the gendered reality of punishment and more specifically caning.

Marty, for example, commented:

> *…. girls are afraid of the cane, but boys do not care, they actually enjoy it. When they confront teachers and disobey, they will be just inviting the cane. And there is this kind of beating which makes some students stubborn. When you are used to the cane, you will not be afraid of it.*

Boys derived a kind of heroism and bravery from the experience of caning. It was simultaneously both a pleasurable risk and a painful experience.

Hama, for example, indicates:

> *……it depends on which teacher is on duty, last week when Mr (name given) was on duty no one came late. But this week there is Mr (name given) on duty and nearly all students come late. Mr (name) beats hard and students really take him serious. At times it is better for teachers at least to ask a student why he/she is late for class rather than just start beating us.*

The cane through its widespread use at Pagomo was a popular metaphor. Teachers used it discreetly and without restraint. However, there was also an underlining and undeniable fear of the cane even among the boys. January through to April, are fairly hot months with temperatures in the regions of over 20 degrees at Pagomo. But you would find most boys wearing more than one pair of trousers. Putting on more than one pair was infused with fashion, poverty and fear of the cane. With more than one layer of clothing the

painful impact of the cane would not be so severe, one boy confirmed to me. It was fashionable when you have your other pants floating half way down your hips, another one said. But some of the boys' outer pants had outlived their usefulness; they were torn and revealed a greater proportion of their flesh. A second or third coat of pants helped to cover the body parts missed by the outer garment. In no way were the boys trying to provide adequate warmth to their bodies because the temperature was unbearably hot.

The desire to display an attitude of less fear of the cane, which was viewed as a marker of being a *real boy,* was negotiated in the context of abject poverty and school dress code. For example, Moze (Boy, aged 17) stated that:

> *If they beat me today for coming to school late tomorrow I will arrive in the afternoon. A cane does not work on me I can't change. I have been beaten so many times. I had more than one beating even today. Girls are afraid of the cane, so they follow orders quickly, boys are not afraid they actually challenge teachers. If a teacher uses a fist, kick, clap to heat me I resist, I can tolerate a cane on the back. Clapping humiliates, kids are clapped not big boys like me. Here at school I accept to be canned by the Principal, Deputy Principal and most male teachers. Among the lady teachers there is Ms Mapho, that one you can't take chances, she beats you whether you like it or not, big boy or small. What I do not like is to be humiliated in public before girls and other boys. If any teacher takes me to the office or the staffroom, and beat me up there I will accept because none of my friends will know that I have been beaten*

Types and forms of corporal punishment were ranked hierarchically. Caning hard on the buttocks topped the hierarchy and was viewed as a punishment suitable for boys, while clapping on the cheek and caning on the palm were seen as corporal punishment that was suited for girls.

When I asked Moze why he accepted caning at the hands of these teachers, he just said, "I respect them, and some of them are really powerful." He respected them because of

their power, but he did not respect or accept caning from those male teachers he felt were less powerful and from most female teachers.

On numerous occasions I sat in the staffroom, where teacher-talk revolved around discipline. But frequently staffroom talk was disrupted by teachers bringing boys to the staffroom for caning. In no single case did the boys refuse to be beaten here. And at times it had to do with the strength of numbers because all teachers present would seem to support the one who was dispensing the 'discipline', while the boys stood defenseless. When I closely looked at the execution of caning at Pagomo latent features of this practice as a masculine making device, emerge. In this case boys who fidgeted tended to be caned more, while those who did not flinch were quickly dismissed and told, *"….uri murume"* (you are a real man) as they strolled gracefully out of the staffroom. It looked as though boys had to be beaten hard until they were able to demonstrate this kind of attitude- that they were no longer afraid of the cane. At the same time I do not remember seeing a girl coming into the staffroom to be caned. Girls might have humbly accepted being caned in the classroom or in the presence of other girls and boys because it was expected of girls to be obedient even when being caned. The disciplinary apparatus at Pagomo and the associated practices of caning that were available in the story lines of students and teachers illustrate how corporal punishment was implicated as a gender regime (Connell, 1996; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; Morrell, 2001; Swain, 2005). The manner in which caning was understood and taken up at Pagomo reflects its unique specificity of gender relations that were influenced simultaneously by the antecedents of colonialism and the postcolonial context of state authoritarianism.

This gendered differential and discriminatory treatment of boys and girls in punishing procedures clearly illustrates how a hard, stubborn masculinity of vindictiveness, and soft femininity were being peddled by the school staff. A more humane and gentle correctional approach to student lack of discipline needs to be sought. In the mean-time such an alternative at Pagomo High school lacks currency not because boys cannot change but because the teachers lack the will to transform their practice. The effectiveness of the corporal punishment was indeed doubtful, despite its widespread use.

In response to the question of whether the use of the cane improved student discipline, one male student stated:

> *I think the cane worsens discipline, because those caned rarely reform to do good things. Instead such students continue to do worse in terms of discipline than before. If you consider the way the Deputy Principal administers corporal punishment, if it were really effective all students would be well behaved here. For example if a student does not do homework, next thing he knows is that he will be caned, so he avoids that teacher, absconds that subject, so it becomes a chain…..*

On the other hand, teachers seemed to believe that the answer to students' lack of discipline was the cane. As the Deputy Principal, remarked:

> *…In most cases teachers end up 'patting' kids without following the proper disciplinary procedures of administering corporal punishment. When I joined this school twenty-one years ago there was very tight discipline at this school and the pass rate was very high.*

"Tight discipline" implied intensified caning. "Patting" here it was used figuratively because the sound of the cane could be heard two or three blocks away from where it was taking place, occasionally accompanied by whimpering of someone in serious pain.

As Ms Mapho also attested in the interview:

> *…. They know with me they can`t do what they want. Like last week when I was on duty, boys knew they were in for it, whenever I met them doing wrong, I actually wanted to beat them.*

In such an authoritarian gender regime of enforced hegemonic masculinity some female teachers adapted their teacher identities by relinquishing 'naturalized' feminine images and taking on attributes of 'hard' masculinity (Smith, 2007). Another teacher expressed such a view, succinctly in this way, …*where there is a cane, discipline improves,* echoing a sentiment which filtered through the responses of many teacher-participants in Morrell's research (2001, p. 146)

5.6.2. Differentiated gender disciplinary practices

The school enforced and maintained rigid boundaries related to forms of punishment applicable to boys and girls on the understanding that the later had weak and delicate bodies while the former were viewed as physically strong, hard and tough. The school's unequal treatment of boys and girls seemed not to reflect the actual experiences of boys and girls at Pagomo High school. Marty, despite coming from a poor background, does not allow this to pull her down. She persisted on the daily 10 km distance to and from school, which was a sign of enormous strength. Also, Hama was raised in a family that treats boys and girls on equal terms, granting them equal opportunities in schooling. Both boys and girls were subjected to a difficult life outside the school and they tended to bring that mentality to school.

It was a tough life, and girls such as Marty had learnt to survive under those circumstances. However, they often enjoyed the temporary reprieve from the difficult moments which the school's disciplinary system offered them.

Ms Mapho (F/F Teacher) confirms such accounts:

> *…….we consider different types of punishment even if their cases of misconduct are the same. A girl can't dig a pit of three meters dip, but she can weed the school grounds or water the flowers. Girls are also canned but we do not encourage it here. Rather girls are given other forms of punishment and not canning but for minor cases like not doing home work, girls.*

The Deputy Principal also reiterated Ms Mapho's sentiments:

> *We normally do not assign heavy punishment to girls. For girls we assign them to polish the floor shine the windows, sweep the yard, or mopping the classroom floors. You can not assign a girl to dig a pit. We may assign girls to slash grass; it is usually light slashing of small pieces of ground. We consider their sex and also that their hands are weak. Slashing and digging we leave it to the boys-heavy stuff you know*

The idea that a girl could not dig a pit was emphasized. Ms Mapho and the Deputy Principal both acknowledged that girls were less powerful than boys and, therefore, should receive lighter punishment, lighter caning and physical work which was less strenuous. Some boys took up that discourse and rejected punishment which they felt was feminine. Moze recounted how he and other boys refused to clean the toilets until their punishment was converted to what they thought was a more masculine punishment, such as slashing grass. The status of power that he enjoyed at home as the head of the house in the absence of his father seemed to guide Moze's conduct.

Some boys resented less strenuous punishment like cleaning windows, toilets and sweeping, because it was not physically demanding.

Tendai (girl, aged 16), for example claimed that:

> *If a girl commits an offense similar to a boy she should receive the same punishment that the boy gets. Girls also commit similar crimes like absconding and not doing homework. But it is not okay for male teachers to stretch ladies dresses and hit them on the buttocks, its child abuse. I have no problem if girls are caned on the palms, hands, legs.*

Girls such as Tendai believed that the concept of equality between boys and girls should be applied to discipline and punishment too. She believed that for a similar offense committed, a girl should receive the same punishment as that administered to a boy.

Gender as the organizing discourse dominated the regime of punishment at Pagomo High. The power of those in authority to punish was accepted by some students and teachers consider as it was considered their right to do so. That power was derived from education codes, state law and also from orally circulated traditions which were influenced by a patriarchal system of gender relations and also the influence of colonialism in Zimbabwe. Because boys were considered to be strong and tough, they were also caned hard and assigned manual tasks that were physically demanding. On the other hand, girls received lighter punishment, less heavy caning and also designated parts of their bodies such as their buttocks were deemed not suitable for caning. Hama who was brought up in a modest professional home still accepts corporal punishment, but would rather prefer a more rational and a less physical approach from teachers. *"….At least they should understand why I am late, because I may have a valid reason for being late"* If he was late for a valid reason, Hama would dispute the teacher's authority to cane him. Thus not all boys accepted caning always.

5.7. Constructing gendered spaces

The idea that double standards and contradictory practices apply in upholding cultural moral values among college students in Zimbabwe was confirmed by Pattman (1998).

According to Pattman (1998, 2005) both male students and staff viewed it as a breach of African culture and a travesty of feminine norms if female students entered beer halls and enjoyed themselves at night or even during the day. Ironically, it was a mark of being a man if a male student did just that. This study confirms Patman's findings about moral double standards governing the conduct of boys and girls at both school and home. Such contradictory codes of conduct construct enabling conditions for boys while at the same time creating hindering contexts for girls. Definitions of misconduct at Pagomo High school were rather problematic when applied to boys and girls. What constituted unacceptable conduct for girls did not apply to boys? Girls' conduct was defined by rigid sets of prohibitions which reduced their freedom to be at certain places at particular times of the day or night. *Normal girls* were not allowed in most public places where boys reveled. If they did, they were accused of immorality and violating their traditional customs.

As the Deputy Principal said during one interview:

> *…..when girls abscond, it is mainly because they are going into the Growth Point to meet their lovers. The presents of a flourishing Growth Point with a cotton depot here at the Growth Point and the construction of the Tokwe-Murkosi dam nearby have really affected the morals of our girls. A lot of money is spun here and our senior girls have their eyes on it*

The Cotton depot and Tokwe-Murkosi Dam signified the contradictory impact of economic globalization as it was understood locally in terms of negatively affecting girls' morality and also boast boys' dominant masculine possibilities. The dam and cotton depot were visible symbols of globalization. The Dam project was contracted to an Italian mogul 'Salini Impregilio' which subcontracted other local and International companies. Originally (in 1998), funding for constructing the Dam was from the World Bank but has

since devolved into a Government funded initiative following soaring international relations between Zimbabwe and the West. The Dam was expected to be the largest inland water body in Zimbabwe. On the other hand, cotton production is geared for foreign export with Cotton Company of Zimbabwe, renowned as leading producer, processing and marketer of cotton in Southern Africa. As a result of the Dam and Cotton depot, Pagomo community is linked to the world beyond its immediate locality. A top-down idea of globalization (Scholte, 2000) presents a homogenizing dominant Western culture displacing inferior local ones in the periphery. Diverse people, with no local roots in Pagomo found new routes here as employees. Joel's father came to Pagomo as a Clerk-cum-driver for the Cotton Company. Maida's sister is an example of a person who relocated to Pagomo community so that she could exploit the opportunities that arose there. This was viewed as posing a moral danger to school girls and local girls. The words of the Deputy Principal echoed the moral, sexual and material vulnerability of rural school girls when they encountered employed men who had money. Because some of these girls are poor, they were tempted to enter into sexual relationships, trading their bodies for money. This vulnerability becomes more real when powerful men employed by such companies hang around with them at the *Growth Point*. Consequently, within the school and beyond, girls' activities and movements were closely regulated and sexualized imposing on them rigid boundaries, which curtailed their freedom.

What was surprising is the Deputy Principal's assertion, that only girls' morals are affected badly. He was silent about the impact of the Cotton and Dam construction on the boys' moral behaviors. Just because they were boys, they were beyond moral reproach.

Rather these developments were taken as an opportunity for boys to show that they were *real boys*.

For example, while the *Growth Point* was designated as a restricted space for girls, boys could go there at night and do illicit business (*kukiyakiya)*, thereby enhancing their status among their peers and girls. As the Deputy Principal indicted later during the interview,

> *…..these boys do all sorts of activities to get money. As you remember gas was really a problem during the past years, it could be obtained by illicit means at night from haulage truck drivers at the G/P or along the road. Some of our school boys were involved and at times they dealt in very good money and brought it to school, they bought phones, good ones that most of us teachers could not afford.*

These economic ventures by boys correspond to Kenway, et al's (2006) observation of *tacticians* who grasped the complexities of 'below' in response to a lack of other viable options. Girls could not be granted that freedom to travel at night and engage in illicit fuel business. Their movements and activities at the *Growth Point* and at night were severely curtailed, in a bid to exclude them from anything associated with avenues of male power. As noted earlier, this sanctioning of girls' spaces and times of movement also included prohibition from studying at the school in the evening. Considering that some pupils stayed in homes which had no electricity, they could benefit from studying in the evening at school where there was electricity. Only boys could come for night study periods.

Only boys enjoyed this privilege because they were boys. They had no restrictions which barred them from traveling during the night. Girls were "protected." They were vulnerable, weak and defenseless. At Pagomo, the exclusion of girls amounted to what

Connell (1995. p. 83) referred to as "cultural disarmament of women" where verbal terror and intimidation were deployed as a means of drawing boundaries and exclusion, thereby maintaining the hegemony of men and gender inequality. In the process boys' power and privilege at Pagomo high school was upheld while girls' position of subordination was entrenched. However boys' hegemony was subject to challenge. Marking boundaries of exclusion and inclusion (Connell, 1995) as those that prohibited girls to be at certain places and certain times presents a sense of coherence on a very fragile gender order. Such gender coherence was constructed through violence and persuasion. Gender is performed actively (Butler, 1990) according it a sense of natural coherence. As noted by Douglas (1969, p. 4)

> *Bodily margins are thought to be specifically invested with power and danger…..ideas about separating, purifying, demarcating, and punishing transgression have their main function to impose system on an inherently untidy experience. It is only by exaggerating the difference between, within and without, above and below, male and female, with and against that a semblance of order is created.*

It was not always the case that girls maintained the defined spaces of their conduct. As the Deputy Principal recounted the story of a girl who had left his office before I entered:

> *…..this girl you met on the door, she met Miss (name of female teacher provided) in the G/P during school time yesterday, she was in school uniform but wearing make-up and ear rings. When the teacher asked her why she was like that during school period she told the teacher to mind her own business, since her authority did not extend to the Growth Point.*

Real girls were defined by staying in defined spaces, and being obedient while in most cases *real boys* were defined by going out at night. In this case being a boy was understood in terms of rejecting most of the things which girls do.

5.8. Conclusion

There are multiple accounts that can be told about students' experiences of gender and schooling at Pagomo. In this chapter, I focus on describing those stories that challenge, reconstitute and re-inscribe gender norms. It is indeed easy to construct gender in terms of its apparent coherence rather than to investigate it as an unstable and fluid phenomenon. My analytic approach to investigate gender relations at Pagomo is more in line with what Connell (1995) and Kenway et al., (2006) who highlight the extent to which *gender* needs to be understood as reflexive self-construction that is historical, temporal and spatial. I have attempted to illustrate in this chapter how students' experiences of gender reflect the multiplicity of factors that bear on their individual lives. At Pagomo, the pre-colonial traditional cultural notions of gender, and biblical Christian notions of morality intersect in complex and particular ways and the need to be understood within a context of economic and political crisis in Zimbabwe and the influence of globalization. Such analytic focus enables gender relations within the school and how they are embedded in school culture, curriculum, and disciplinary regimes, to be unraveled in all their contradictoriness and complexity.

Students' solidarity and disclosure against a harsh disciplinary school regime construct a survival masculinity that cuts across the male and female binary. In this study the concept of responsibility/*vunhu* emerged as a positive cultural masculine value that some boys and girls deploy. The responsibility/*vunhu* entailed good relations with teachers, other students and also led many students embracing a positive attitude towards school work.

My analysis of data also revealed that a deep and intense investment in sexism and heterosexuality maintains exclusion of girls from academic competition. Practical subjects were extremely gendered in terms of the ideals of personal deportment and physicality and also their association with future marriage (F/F/ and F/N) for girls and masculine labor (Metal and Building Studies) for boys. However, I also illustrated that beneath the surface of a constructed order of gender coherence there were circulating currents of gender disruption. Marriage was a subsidiary pursuit for some girls who envisioned the opportunities afforded by pursuing professional careers. However, the data revealed that with no guarantee for employment in the labor market, uncertainty and confusion surrounds notions of the male stable breadwinner, who exploited any opportunity that comes his way. Overall, the research confirms theoretical insights into gender regimes and relations in schools which point to the political significance of gender dissonance and context in making sense of the messiness of gender relations in institutional settings.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0. Introduction

In this chapter, the research findings are summarized and synthesized. I also present the significance and implications of the results for the field of schooling and gender, while addressing the limitations of the study, and finally proposing opportunities and directions for future research.

In the developing African context including rural Zimbabwe, gender work and justice in schools has been synonymous with reducing the challenges faced by girls, especially attending to issues of opportunity and access, sexual violence, and harassment. The above challenges have been noted to affect girls` participation and success (Leach, et al., 2003; Gordon, 1994, 1998; Swaison, 1995). Such work has been silent about the inclusion of boys, thereby creating a blind spot in the implication of the relational construction of masculinities and femininities. Where boys are mentioned, an impression of their enmeshment in a hierarchical and abusive structure of gender relations is reinforced. Within the African context, there are few academic texts that explicitly contest or reframe this characterization of the continent, in terms of its construction of men and boys (Bhana, 2005; Morrell, 2007; Morojele, 2009). While acknowledging that men are implicated in the comparative inequality of women because of their complicity in the patriarchal dividend, it might be inadequate to reduce gender inequality wholly to the level of patriarchal benefits and loses. Within rural Zimbabwe, the intersection of history of Western colonization and the present moment of postcoloniality (Epprecht, 2007); the local and global (Connell, 2009, Kenway, et al., 2006) have often been excluded in understanding the current practices and discourses of gender and gender relations.

This study is timely and significant in as far as it tries to relate the experiences of rural school boys and girls in Zimbabwe to the realities of their present context of postcolonization to their marginal location in the global flows (economic and cultural) that continue to impact on their gender lives in many ways.

6.1. The research questions

My thesis aimed, a) deconstructing colonial narratives on gender by presenting an alternative formulation of gender relations that is contextually specific to a rural high school in Zimbabwe; b) to contribute knowledge to ongoing theoretical discussions on plurality and context specificity of masculinities, femininities and schooling by bringing in specific knowledge and experiences from the global south. Using Connell` s multiple masculinities theoretical conceptual framework, within the postcolonial context of rural Zimbabwe, I drew attention to the hierarchical gender relations that continue to confront students in this particular location. I attempted to demonstrate how these gender relations in a specific school need to be positioned and understood within the local global postcolonial context of rural Zimbabwe. The following research questions allowed me to probe and gain an insight into the gender experiences of students in rural Zimbabwe.

- What are the different notions of being a boy or a girl in rural school context of Zimbabwe?
- What are the school's *gender regimes*?
- How do these *gender regimes* reinforce or challenge students` ideas and practices of gender?

- How do students express their gender identities in relation to the expectations of schooling, demands of labor, local gender norms and the broader economic conditions of globalization and postcoloniality?
- What are the emerging gender notions that challenge normative gender understanding at Pagomo School due to the changing context?
- Are there positive notions of being a boy or girl and are they accepted and encouraged by the school?

By engaging in a partial ethnographic methodology, I immersed myself in the daily school life of the students at Pagomo, where I conducted interviews, observations and collected documentary data that reflected the contextualized gendered experiences of boys and girls. From the analysis and discussion of findings using Connell's multiple masculinities conceptual lens and other relevant literature, it was evident that the school` s gender regimes of a practical curriculum and the use of corporal punishment defined most students` experiences and notions of being a boy or a girl. But these school gender regimes also intersected actively with the institution of marriage and labor market. These experiences entailed gender power relations that privileged many boys as compared to girls at school and beyond.

6.2.0. Summary of findings

6.2.1. Solidarity, silence and masculinity

A common social value that emerged and dominated most boys` and girls` experiences at Pagomo High was solidarity and a refusal to disclose or 'rat' on students who infringed school rules. Solidarity was a resource of survival in the face of a harsh disciplinary school regime. As Jonah, one male student noted, it was necessary to protect each other

by not reporting on students who refuse to abide by the school rules because one would also need others` protection in future. Such solidarity, which was expressed in the form of 'silence', cut across age and gender boundaries. Having 'a strong heart' or emotional strength was viewed as masculine, and was not limited to boys alone; girls too had to embody it in order to live peacefully with boys at Pagomo. Western literature on gender that examines concepts such as weakness, silence and emotions as feminine attributes was not very useful in understanding students` experiences in this context. Among other factors impacting on gender relations within African contexts, Kolawale (2002) mentions culture, history, modernity and globalization. At Pagomo, notions of solidarity and silence were informed by norms and values derived from traditional and cultural perspectives within a changing '*kiyakiya'* postcolonial context.

6.2.2. Possessing vunhu and masculinity

Another notion closely related to issues of solidarity that emerged from students` experiences was *Vunhu*, a Shona philosophical world view that ensured membership and belonging of an individual to his fellow members. Some students considered that being a *real boy* enshrined a sense of responsibility. Such responsibility was defined in relation having positive relations with others, and also involved fulfilling one's academic obligations.

In relation to students who deployed *Vunhu,* those boys and girls who opposed authority and were disrespectful to other students were viewed as not occupying a subordinate status. This idea of vunhu/responsibility as a marker of being a boy was contested by those boys who invested in opposing, school's authority such as Moze. The overall gender framework at Pagomo was complex. As Morrell (2007a) asserts, "Engagement

with gender need to acknowledge and grapple with their structural locations and how men create meaning out of their lives, new values need to be created which men can invest in" (p. 12). *Vunhu*/Responsibility, though not really a new value within the postcolonial context of Zimbabwe, needs to be appreciated and validated as an alternative way of becoming a boy or girl.

6.2.3. Securing male power

6.2.3.1. Practical subjects and masculinity

The practical curriculum at Pagomo High school was a powerful gender regime impacting on pupils' experiences and aspirations. These practical subjects were Fashion and Fabrics, Metal work and Building studies. At policy level, teachers considered these subjects as offering possibilities of breaking down student gender differences at school and in the world of work. But at a practical level, the curriculum worked in ways that constructed different and unequal relations between boys and girls. Most girls considered Metal Work and Building studies to be irrelevant for their future roles as married women. Also most parents still believed that practical subjects for girls should prepare them for domestic work. As with most boys, Metal Work and Building studies were viewed as male subjects that provided them with opportunities to enter and compete in the labor market in Zimbabwe and neighboring South Africa and Botswana. As a result of economic globalization, the local labor market had collapsed, causing many people to migrate to neighboring countries such as South Africa. Such labor market transformation impacted on practices in heterosexual relationships. Leach (2008) lend support, Summers' (2002) conclusion that colonial missionary education successfully created a new identity for the young African women and men, through a model of schooling that

was to persist remarkably unchanged in the postcolonial context. Practical school curriculum continued to construct that colonial gender ideology "closely associated with the British Victorian Era" (Leach, 2008, p. 41).

There were also immediate gender dividends imbedded in the practical subjects that were different for many boys and girls. Metal work and Building at Pagomo were constructed as subjects of physical strength suitable for boys. The equipment was heavy; tasks were power intensive and physical danger due to exposure was always looming. On the other hand the requirements for neatness, diligence and care called upon in Fashion and Fabrics and Foods and Nutrition appealed more to girls than boys. Few girls, such as the one recounted by Mr Hagga (the Metal work teacher) were able to subvert the narrow limits that defined most boys' and girls' conception of a being a boy or girl that they derived by engaging in the practical subjects.

6.2. 3.2. Academic competition and masculinity

Academic competition was one way intellectually gifted girls were excluded and frustrated. Intelligent girls received less respect from male teachers and boys. In an earlier study on boys' perception of girls' academic intelligence in Zimbabwe, Gordon (1998) established that boys believed that girls were naturally less gifted than boys in subjects such as Science, Math and Technology. Findings also revealed that girls' poor performance was related to deliberate techniques of being lured into romantic relationships which meant that they devout less time to their studies. Those girls who were able to escape the trap of romantic relationships had their academic success attributed to their sexuality, in ways that lowered their self concept and worth. Most participants agreed that as soon as girls started to be involved in romantic relationships,

their academic performance also deteriorated. At Pagomo, teachers defined romantic relations for girls as acts of misconduct and a problem for girls. This increased the burdens on girls because teachers instituted restrictions that prohibited romantic relationships between boys and girls.

6.2.4. Discipline and masculinity

6.2.4. 1. Corporal punishment

The use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary method of corporal at Pagomo high school was rife. It was gendered in as far as who could administer it, where it was applied and also its intensity. Male teachers employed caning more often than female teachers. Few female teachers like Ms Mapho could apply corporal punishment as equally as most male teachers. Some boys such as Moze resisted caning in public, preferring private beating in the staff room or teachers' offices. In the staffroom no student could refuse to be caned. Boys' acceptance or rejection of canning depended on the context. Boys were caned more frequently than girls. Certain parts of girls' bodies such as the buttocks were normally not caned. Boys could be canned anyhow and anywhere. Most students confirmed that girls were afraid of the cane than boys. Teachers confirmed that boys did not flinch when they were caned and that girls screamed and squirmed when subjected to such forms of corporal punishment. Boys who fidgeted a lot when being caned tended to be caned more, while those who did not flinch were quickly dismissed and told….*uri murume* (you are a man).

Most boys confronted teachers, disobeyed and therefore *invited the cane*. I concluded that for some boys corporal punishment conveyed a kind of heroism and bravery, a combination of pain and pleasure. However, there were some students such as Hama,

who believed that corporal punishment had to be used with discretion and not indiscriminately as it prevailed at Pagomo. As he said,…..*at times it is better for teachers at least to ask a student why he/she is late for class rather than just start beating us.* An initial dialogue, seeking to understand why a student did what he/she did could open up possibilities of resolving the issue that might not necessarily be corporal punishment. Overall, students indicated that corporal punishment was not effective in changing student behavior. On the contrary teachers said that corporal punishment was effective.

Research on disciplinary regimes in schools (Wolpe, 1988; Mac an Ghail, 1994; Kenway & Firtclarence, 1997) demonstrated that particular disciplinary approaches are implicated in some kinds of gender relations. There is evidence that aggressive and violent masculinities arise in schools with harsh and authoritarian disciplinary structures. Morrell's (2001) writing on the use of corporal punishment on black schools in Durban that, "….the core values of masculinity include toughness and ability to endure the use of physical force by someone in authority. Connell (1989: 294) also concluded that, ….*a violent discipline system invites competition in machismo… and the authority structure of the school becomes the antagonist against which one` s masculinity is cut.* The findings in this research on corporal punishment confirm these earlier conclusions. This gendered differential and discriminatory caning of boys and girls clearly manifests how a hard, stubborn masculinity of vindictiveness was being peddled by the school staff.

6.2.4.2. Other gendered disciplinary methods

Other gendered forms of punishment included manual labor such as slashing grass, digging compost pits, sweeping classroom, toilets. These methods of punishing were applied differently for boys and girls. Some female teachers believed that even if the case of misconduct was the same for a boy and a girl different punishment had to be applied based on gender. For example, girls could not be assigned to dig a pit that was three meters dip but they could weed the grounds, water the flowers polish the floor shine the windows, sweep the yard, or mop the classroom. They could not do heavy punishment. Some boys refused to perform punishment duties they felt were feminine. A notion of gender difference organized around normalized hierarchies of physically strong boys` bodies and naturally weak girls` bodies dominated teachers` disciplinary approaches. Also notions of gender division of labor permeated disciplinary tasks, as some duties were defined as masculine and others as feminine. Such a dominant disciplinary regime created a learning context that inhibited and constrained imaginations of alternative ways of being a boy or a girl.

6.3. Significance, implications and recommendations

The findings of this study are significant in two respects. Firstly, as demonstrated in chapter two, the unique rural, third world geo-political and postcolonial context of Zimbabwe contribute to our knowledge on the subject of schooling and gender. This does not suggest that nothing is known about gender and schooling in Zimbabwe. Rather, the findings also deconstruct essentialist portrayal of boys and girls that continue to pervade research and gender programs in schools in Zimbabwe. Using Connell` s (1995) multiple masculinities framework, the study shade more light on the educational, social, cultural,

economic and even global contradictions and complexity at play in the gender realities and experiences of students. In the light of these findings, the following implications arise in terms of the interplay of gender and schooling in rural Zimbabwe.

Solidarity and being silent among students, regardless of gender, in the face of an institutionalized violent school regime that prevails at Pagomo presents a troubling scenario. As most boys and girls did not report such incidences of abuse, it was difficult to know how prevalent it was, let alone how to solve it. Leach (2001) and Swaison (1995) suggest that perpetrators should be punished in courts, and schools enforce disciplinary measures. Conceptualization of gender violence and abuse remains muddled, resulting in sketchy understanding of what can be done (Leach & Mitchell, 2006). At Pagomo High School, silence implied, 'a strong heart' not a weakness, was viewed as masculine and worked well to keep student solidarity against a harsh disciplinary regime. It was a survival strategy that some girls had to embody. In this instance, not only are consultative and democratic methods of discipline beneficial but such approaches should take into account a relational gender perspective.

Responsibility/vunhu, a traditional cultural African value emerged as an attribute useful in both students` academic success and positive interpersonal relations. Considering that a lot of research has focused on documenting pervasive and harmful hegemonic masculinities, it is crucial that when positive enactments such as these, arise, they need to be appreciated and validated. Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli (2005) alert us about importance of foregrounding the voices of students who resist practices of normalization through commitment to respectful and caring relationships and empowered learning

(p.173). Validating similar masculine practices within school contexts such as rural Zimbabwe becomes pedagogically significant.

Practical subjects at Pagomo High school serve to support rather than disrupt the legitimacy of an oppressive and unequal gender structure that granted power to more boys than they did to girls. The inevitable parental pressure and expectations of other students and teachers reconstituted the normative gender structure that the espoused practical curriculum policy seeks to undo. A significant allusion of this study is that it highlights the rhetoric that often shrouds the supposedly transformative gender work, especially that which does not take into account the implication of the construction of masculinities and femininities in everyday life of students. An understanding of how gender regimes are connected to the broader gender order and broader economic relations and culture is important as a way forward. The challenge remains for parents and teachers to broaden the options for girls besides marriage and similarly, to encourage boys into embracing other ways of being and forms of work. Whether the current breed of teachers is capable of executing such a task and what kinds of support they require need to be investigated.

In this study, it emerged that boys repeatedly took up romantic relationships as hegemonic and destructive practices that stifle and sexualize girls` academic success. As discussed earlier, the manner in which the teachers handled romantic relationships was problematic. Inconsistent and implicit victim-blaming practices employed by some male and female teachers were complicit in further eroding the already position of powerlessness of girls. In order to effectively disrupt gender dilemmas that privilege dominant hegemonic cultural patterns and emphasizing socially equitable and peaceful

gender practices, Davies (2003) suggests that we should deal simultaneously and in multi-faceted way with individual psyches, with social structures and patterns and with discursive practices with which these psyches and structures are constituted (p. 200).

Within the context of Pagomo High school these simultaneous and multi-faceted approaches could entail inducting girls to handle romantic relations in ways that do not put their studies in danger. Part of the induction might be on setting priorities that would not put in the forefront romantic relations. As for the teachers, gender and romantic relationships should be taught explicitly rather than being subsumed in the dominant discourses of *good girls* so that power relations that circulate in these discourses can be made visible. What other recognizable non-heterosexual ways of enacting masculinity that do not involve dominating and controlling girls in romantic relationships could be available to boys?

Participants in this study the gendered nature of corporal punishment and other forms of discipline. Gender hierarchies as to who could be caned most created a chilly atmosphere that exacerbated male and female differences in ways that position most boys and male teachers as powerful. Enacting masculine values of strength and canning harder portrayed by Ms Mapho, momentarily suspended some boys` power without altering the dominant gender structure. Despite its contested effectiveness in behavioral change from teachers and students, canning was significant in constructing male and female student gender hierarchies and identities. A persistent dilemma prevails in contexts such as Zimbabwe where corporal punishment is legally sanctioned. How may the gendered consequences be handled? Humphrey (2006) in an ethnographic study on corporal punishment in Botswana concluded that strategies which are couched in genderless human rights terms

but which lack a gender perspective have less positive impact (p. 69). While ensuring democratic decision making, student self-discipline and educating teachers on non-violent approaches and restorative justice practices are useful strategies, they need to originate from a gender perspective. The success of any attempt to reduce and eventually eliminate corporal punishment depends largely on a fundamental re-conceptualization of what it means to be female or male a working towards broadening the range of masculine and feminine identities available in schools.

6.3.1. Limitations of the study

This study has two main limitations. Firstly, the curriculum permeates students` experiences of gender in overt and sometimes in rather subtle ways. One important aspect of this study was to examine the practical subjects and student gender identities. My focus was driven by the presence of a policy framework on gender equality that sought to redress gender inequality through the practical curriculum. An examination of other components may also provide significant data that can illuminate the effects of the curriculum regime on gender experiences and relations.

Secondly, Kenway, et al., (2006), discuss the challenge that befalls ethnographers who grapple with issues of globalization, culture and identity. The challenge involves attempting to reconcile the contradictions at the heart of traditional notions of ethnographic methodology as dealing with the local and situated contexts and the idea of globalization as a deterritorialization of national borders and spaces. How do we ensure that the experiences of a 'global' student participant are adequately captured in a research that is situated in a bounded school context? Keeping in mind the conventional concept of a bounded ethnographic local site, I attempted to broaden my ethnographic field to those

other incidences and experiences that where outside the school, but which impacted on students' ultimate notions of being male and female. These links of the local and global were not readily present.

6.3.2. Suggestions for further research

Possible areas of future research are drawn from the above implications, limitations, and research gaps noted in literature in chapter 2. Gender research is political work (Messner, 1996). It involves challenging existing dominant power structures. It involves working from a particular position to achieve particular objectives (Mesner, 1997). In Zimbabwe, much of the debates and programs on gender and schooling have adopted an essentialist female-victim approach. There has been no systematic research that attends simultaneously to the construction of gender and its impact on boys and girls. This study opens research in this direction. In order to build a knowledge based that could provide deeper insights and understanding for dealing with the complex issues of masculinity and femininity within contexts that are grappling with postcolonization and the impact of globalization more concrete studies are needed.

Rather than mere elicitation perceptions, beliefs, habits and relying on popularized journalist information which have been the basis of many programs of gender intervention, future research should have a greater grasp of the social context that structure boys' and girls' relations. Such concrete studies should be able to illuminate the heterogeneity of boys' and girls' gender experiences. This will be useful knowledge, in the light of earlier *colonizing* reports that have treated all boys as potentially harmful and al girls as benevolent. The challenge for future research in this context is to bring to the

surface some of positive notions of doing gender that arise within a fluid local context and how they can be integrated into the school culture.

This research has pointed to the potential and strategic role of teachers in implementing some of anticipated changes relating to gender issues that confront boys and girls at school. For example, as noted in this research, teachers' uptake and ideas about corporal punishment and their general approach to students` romantic relationships cast a lot of doubt on their ability to lead the way in any proposed changes on these issues. As noted by Weaver-Hightower (2003), teachers may be responsible for masculinity-based problems and yet most research has treated them as a kind of "shadowy other" peeking through only to react to or to witness the acts of disruptive boys and then fading away again (p. 488). As a result, research needs to explore teachers` gender subjectivities as well as the kind of pre-service teacher preparation on gender they receive at colleges and Universities in Zimbabwe. My training as teacher in Zimbabwe had no aspects of gender that would equip me to handle effectively some of the issues I raised in this research. Patman (1998) provides a glimpse into the challenges faced in altering teachers` college trainees` traditional notions of gender. If these are the kind of teachers whom we entrust with the responsibility of transforming and instituting healthy notions of gender, then need to understand their own perceptions, beliefs and practices of gender.

In this research, the practical curriculum emerged as a powerful resource for constructing masculinity and femininity in ways that re-inscribed unequal gender relations at school and perpetuated a gender division of labor post-school. This was the case despite the policy statement that underlined its implementation. An examination and rethinking of the gender education policies in this context may also be a priority. What are the subtle

and overt gender scripts that are on offer? How best should the practical curriculum materials be presented in school? In what ways can they be employed to meet the simultaneous needs of boys and girls without jeopardizing the interests of the other?

However, it is important to emphasize that such questions cannot be adequately addressed without due consideration being given to the significance of knowledge about the colonial history, context and the impact of globalization on students, teachers and families, and the education system in rural Zimbabwe.

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APPENDIX A: DEPUTY PRINCIPAL'S NOTE

OPERATION 1	WANGAURIPI
OPERATION 2	PFENYEDZAI

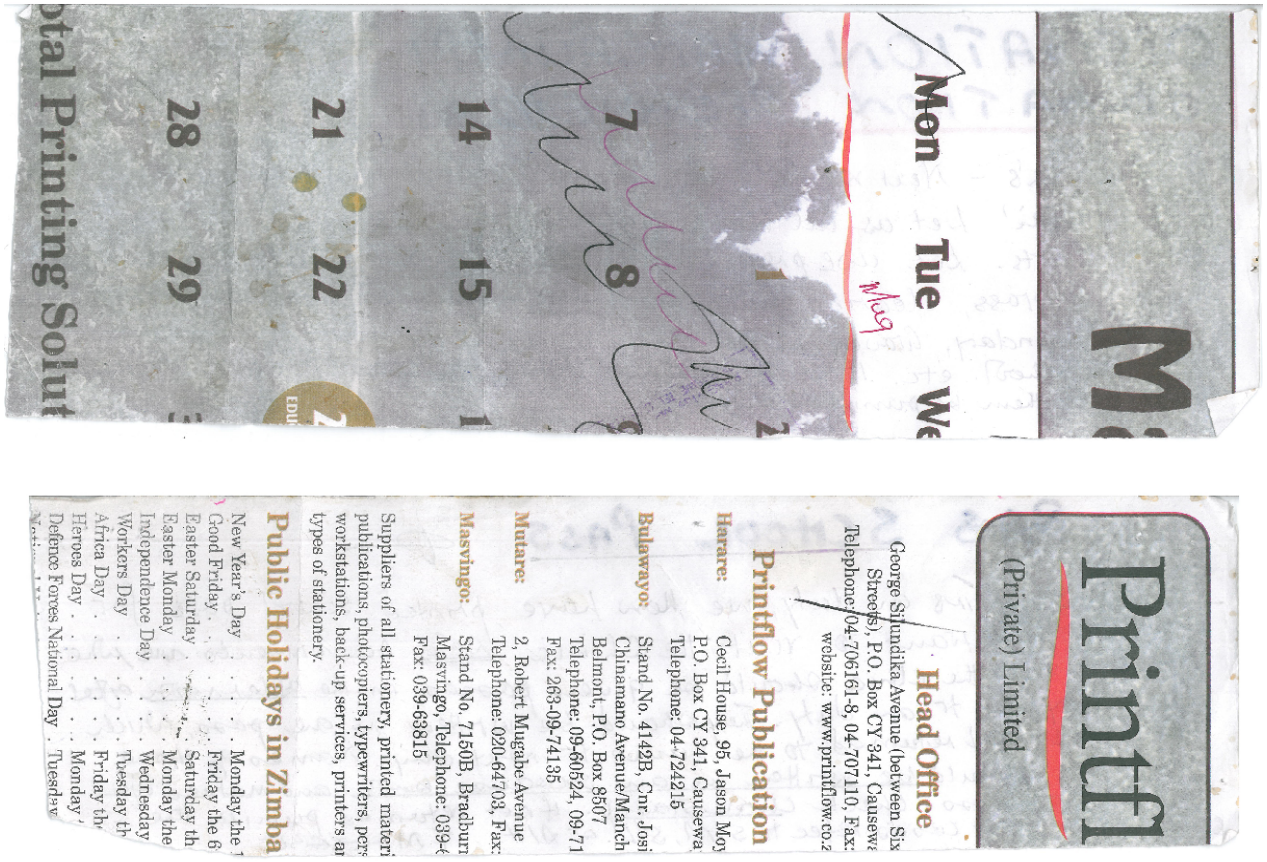
WK-ENDING 01/02/10 – 05/02/10

DEPUTY HEAD NGUNDU HALT SECONDARY ... 22 JAN 2010 ... MASVINGO ... TEL 034-214

TO ALL IR's – Next wk is going to be operation 'Wangauripi' and 'Pfenyedzai' Let us all work together to fight dodging and tucking
[redacted]

APPENDIX B: SCRAP PAPER USED FOR WRITING MEMOS BY THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

An example of dire shortage of educational resources during the Kiyakiya period



APPENDIX C: DIRECTIVE ON CORPORAL PUNISHMNET

DIRECTIVE ON CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Education (Disciplinary Powers) Regulations, 1979, contained in Rhodesia Government Notice 95 of 1979, set out the circumstances and manner in which corporal punishment may be inflicted at a Government school and the particulars to be recorded.

The relevant sections are repeated below for easy reference:

3. Corporal punishment at a Government school may be inflicted only in cases of continued or grave neglect of work, of lying, bullying, insubordination, indecency, truancy or other offences of like gravity.

4. No girl attending a Government school shall be subjected to corporal punishment.

5. Corporal punishment shall be inflicted only by—

   (a) the head of a Government school; or

   (b) a teacher to whom authority has been delegated by the head; or

   (c) a teacher in the presence of the head, after due inquiry; or

   (d) superintendents and housemasters in their own hostels when authority has been delegated to them by the head.

6. Corporal punishment at Government schools shall be inflicted on the buttocks with a suitable strap, cane or smooth light switch.

7.1. The head shall keep a register of all cases of corporal punishment inflicted at a Government school and a similar register shall be kept by the superintendent or housemaster of cases of corporal punishment inflicted at a hostel.

7.2. The register shall show—

   (a) the name of the pupil who is given corporal punishment; and

   (b) the date and nature of the offence; and

   (c) the date and nature of the punishment inflicted; and

   (d) the name of the person inflicting the punishment.

For further guidance of those teachers permitted to administer corporal punishment, it is directed that—

(a) Any delegation of authority by a head to a teacher, superintendent or housemaster shall be in writing signed by the head and a copy shall be kept in the log-book.

(b) A witness, being a senior member of the staff, shall be present when corporal punishment is administered.

(c) Corporal punishment shall not be administered to a pupil suffering from deformity or illness or any physical (or mental) defect.

(d) Corporal punishment must be moderate and reasonable, and responsibility in all cases rests with the head of the school.

(e) No form of corporal punishment, other than that prescribed in section 6 of the before-mentioned Regulations, shall, in any circumstances, be administered, and in no case shall it be administered in the presence of other pupils.

APPENDIX D: ETHICS APPROVAL

Western
Education

January 5, 2010

Ministry of Education, Sport & Culture - Head Office
Union Avenue
P.O. Box CY 121
Causeway
Harare, Zimbabwe

Attention: Secretary of Education

This is to confirm that Alfred Masinire is currently registered as a full time student in the PhD in Education Studies program in the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Ontario, located in London Canada.

Mr. Masinire is undertaking research entitled "Interplay of masculinities in a rural high school in Zimbabwe" and has received ethical approval according to university regulations to conduct this research.

Please feel free to contact us should you require further information.

Kind regards,

, Graduate & Research Assistant
Graduate Programs & Research Office
Faculty of Education

c. Provincial Education Director – Masvingo
District Education Officer – Chivi
Head Master, Chidyamakono Secondary School

The University *of* Western Ontario
Faculty of Education • Graduate Education Office
1137 Western Road • London, Ontario • CANADA – N6G 1G7
Phone: Fax: Web: www.edu.uwo.ca

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Western
Education

January 5, 2010

Ministry of Education, Sport & Culture - Head Office
Union Avenue
P.O. Box CY 121
Causeway
Harare, Zimbabwe

Attention: Secretary of Education

This is to confirm that Alfred Masinire is currently registered as a full time student in the PhD in Education Studies program in the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Ontario, located in London Canada.

Mr. Masinire is undertaking research entitled "Interplay of masculinities in a rural high school in Zimbabwe" and has received ethical approval according to university regulations to conduct this research.

Please feel free to contact us should you require further information.

Kind regards,

, Graduate & Research Assistant
Graduate Programs & Research Office
Faculty of Education

c. Provincial Education Director – Masvingo
District Education Officer – Chivi
Head Master, Chidyamakono Secondary School

The University *of* Western Ontario
Faculty of Education • Graduate Education Office
1137 Western Road • London, Ontario • CANADA – N6G 1G7
Phone: Fax: 5 Web: www.edu.uwo.ca

APPENDIX F: LETTER OF PERMISSION

all communications should be addressed to
"The Secretary for Education Sport and Culture"
Telephone: 734051/59 and 734071
Telegraphic address : "EDUCATION"
Fax: 794505/705289/734075

ZIMBABWE

Ref: C/426/3
Ministry of Education, Sport,
Arts and Culture
P.O Box CY 121
Causeway
Zimbabwe

MR ALFRED MASINIRE
The University of Western Ontario
Faculty of Education
1137 Western Road
London, ON
N6G 1G7, Canada

RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH

Reference is made to your application to carry out research in the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture institutions on the title:

The interplay of gender and schooling in rural Zimbabwe

Permission is hereby granted. However, you are required to liaise with the Provincial Education Director responsible for the schools you want to involve in your research.

You are also required to provide a copy of your final report to the Ministry since it is instrumental in the development of education in Zimbabwe.

I. Gweme
FOR: SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION SPORT AD CULTURE

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
PLANNING
PO BOX ... CAUSEWAY
ZIMBABWE

APPENDIX G: LETTERS OF INFORMATION

Letter of information to parents and guardians of participating students

Dear parent/guardian:

Re: Interplay of masculinity and schooling in rural Zimbabwe

My name is Alfred Masinire and I am PhD candidate at the Faculty of Education at The University of Western Ontario. I am currently conducting research into boys, girls and schooling in Rural Zimbabwe and would like to invite your child to participate in this study.

The aims of this study are to describe students` experiences of schooling in rural Zimbabwe.
If your child agrees to participate in this study he/she will be asked to participate in at most three interview sessions each lasting 45 minutes between February and April 2010 and she/he might be observed in and outside the class during the same period. During the second interview we will review interview data from the first interview and pursue issues raised in the first interview and observations. The same process will be done in the third session of the interview

The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your child` s name nor information which could identify him/her will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. Should anything she/he says during the interviews be published, his/her identity and the identity of his/her school will not be revealed. False names will be used in order to protect the privacy of your child and that of his/her school, as well as to maintain confidentiality of the information he/she provides. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. The data collected during our interviews and observation will be used for my research purposes only. The audio-taped information and transcripts will be kept in a secure place and will be accessed by myself only during this study. After the study, all audio tapes and transcripts will be kept securely for two years after which they will be destroyed.

There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Participation in this study is voluntary. He/she may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any of the questions and withdraw from the study at any time he/she wants.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me by telephone at (Number, Zimbabwe) and or contact my thesis supervisor, Dr Wayne Martino at (Phone number).

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Alfred Masinire, PhD Candidate

Letter of information to teachers

Dear Teacher

Re: Interplay of masculinity and schooling in rural Zimbabwe

My name is Alfred Masinire and I am PhD candidate at the Faculty of Education at The University of Western Ontario. I am currently conducting research into boys, girls and schooling in Rural Zimbabwe and would like to invite you to participate in this study.

The aim of this study is to describe the experiences of boys and girls in school. If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to participate in one interview sessions each lasting 45 minutes initially. You may be requested to take part in two further interviews lasting 45 minutes each April 2010 and you will be observed in and outside the class during the same period. During the second interview we will review interview data from the first interview and pursue issues raised in the first interview and observations. The same process will be done in the third session of the interview

The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor information which could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. Should anything you say during the interviews be published, your identity and the identity of your school will not be revealed. False names will be used in order to protect your privacy and that of your school, as well as to maintain confidentiality of the information you provide. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. The data collected during our interviews and observation will be used for my research purpose only. The audio-taped information and transcripts will be kept in a secure place and will be accessed by myself only during this study. After the study, all audio tapes and transcripts will be kept securely for two years after which they will be destroyed.

There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any of the questions and withdraw from the study at any time you want and this will not have any effect on your academic standing (for students) or your professional status (for teachers)
If you have any questions about this study, please contact me by telephone at (number) or contact my thesis supervisor, Dr Wayne Martino at (phone number).

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Alfred Masinire, PhD Candidate

Letter of information to students

Dear Student

Re: Interplay of masculinity and schooling in rural Zimbabwe

My name is Alfred Masinire and I am PhD candidate at the Faculty of Education at The University of Western Ontario. I am currently conducting research into boys, girls and schooling in Rural Zimbabwe and would like to invite you to participate in this study.

The aim of this study is to describe the experiences of boys and girls in school. If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to participate in one interview sessions each lasting 45 minutes initially. You may be requested to take part in two further interviews lasting 45 minutes each April 2010 and you will be observed in and outside the class during the same period. During the second interview we will review interview data from the first interview and pursue issues raised in the first interview and observations. The same process will be done in the third session of the interview

The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor information which could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. Should anything you say during the interviews be published, your identity and the identity of your school will not be revealed. False names will be used in order to protect your privacy and that of your school, as well as to maintain confidentiality of the information you provide. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. The data collected during our interviews and observation will be used for my research purpose only. The audio-taped information and transcripts will be kept in a secure place and will be accessed by myself only during this study. After the study, all audio tapes and transcripts will be kept securely for two years after which they will be destroyed.

There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any of the questions and withdraw from the study at any time you want and this will not have any effect on your academic standing (for students) or your professional status (for teachers)
If you have any questions about this study, please contact me by telephone at (number) or contact my thesis supervisor, Dr Wayne Martino at (phone number).

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Alfred Masinire, PhD Candidate

APPENDIX H: CONSENT FORMS

Interplay of masculinities and schooling in rural Zimbabwe

Alfred Masinire, PhD Candidate, University of Western Ontario, Canada

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent: .....

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent: .....

Date: .....

Interplay of masculinity and schooling in rural Zimbabwe

Alfred Masinire, PhD Candidate,
Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada

CONSENT FORM

I have read the letter of information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree that my child may participate in the study. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name of Student: .....

Student's Signature: ..... Date: .....

Printed Name of Parent/Guardian: .....

Parent/Guardian's Signature: ..... Date: .....

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The following open-ended questions guided the interviews with the participants. The questions did not constitute a rigid guide. Questions were modified, depending on each participant's response the initial questions and subsequent interviews.

The interplay of gender and schooling in a rural High School in Zimbabwe

Questions for students

1. Tell me about your experiences of with other boys/girls
2. What are your ideas and expectations about schooling, marriage and work in relation to being a boy/girl?
3. How do these ideas and expectations impacted on your school experiences/success/persistence?
4. What has been your experience in practical subjects?
5. In what ways do practical subjects differentiate boys and girls?
6. Can you explain what kind of support you get from teachers parents in studying practical subjects
7. As a boy or girl where do you think the practical subject will lead you in terms of careers?
8. What are you experiences and understanding of school discipline?
9. How different is discipline applied to boys and girls?
10. Do you accept discipline in the same way from a male and female teacher?

Questions for teachers

- Share with me your experiences in teaching practical subjects as a male/female teacher?
- How do boys/girls relate to particular practical subjects and to each other in practical subjects?
- What kind of treatment do boys/girls who show interest in some of these subjects receive from other students/teachers/parents?
- Can you share any case of a girl/boy who excelled in the 'other' practical subject? Where has this taken this particular student?
- How do male/female students perceive and respond to male/female teachers` disciplinary authority?
- How are different forms of discipline applied to boys/girls?
- Are there particular forms of punishment that boys/girls prefer? Why?
- Are there particular forms of punishment that male/female teachers prefer to use? Why?
- What do you think is the effect of these different applications of punishment on boys/girls' notions of being boys/girls?

APPENDIX J: CURRICULUM VITAE

Education

PhD., **Gender Equity and Social Justice,** University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada, 2011.

Dissertation: *The interplay of gender and schooling in Rural Zimbabwe.*

M.Ed., Curriculum Studies, University of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe, 2001

Thesis: *An Investigation into the causes of high school drop outs in rural Zimbabwe.*

Dip.Ed., Curriculum Studies, University of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe, 1996

GradCE., Educational Foundations, University of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe, 1992.

BA., Economic History and Religious Studies, University of Zimbabwe, 1989.

Awards

International Development Research Centre (IDRC) :Doctoral Research Award, 2010.

Western Graduate Research Scholarship, University of Western Ontario: 2007-2011.

University Book Prize: University of Zimbabwe, 2001.

Work Experience

Research assistant, University of Western Ontario, 2007-2011

Assistant Registrar, University of Zimbabwe, 2005-2007

School Principal, Zimbabwe, 1996-2004

Teacher, Zimbabwe, 1990-1995.

Conference Presentations

Masinire, A. *Satisfaction and joy of school leadership: Experience of a Zimbabwean school leader***:** Association of Northern Territory School Educational Leaders: ANSTEL Video Online Conference, Australia, 2008.

Masinire, A. & Sanchez-Cruz, E. *Student voice and leadership key to student engagement: Reframing the concept and practice in schools in Zimbabwe and Mexico***:** Association of Northern Territory Secondary Educational Leaders, ANSTEL Video Online Conference, Australia, 2009.

Masinire, A. *International perspectives on masculinities and schooling: Situating a research study in rural Zimbabwe in the global context*: Western Research Forum, London, Ontario, Canada, 2009.

Masinire, A. *Moving beyond colonizing discourse and practice: Names and naming the contribution of rural peasant women in making change in Zimbabwe: Estere Zongomegwa, Women Making Change:* Conference: Brescia, London, Ontario, Canada, 2009.

Masinire, A. *Rural Zimbabwe 2000-2007: Secondary education funding and access in the crisis period*: Canadian Association of African Studies, Kingston, Queens University, Ontario, Canada, 2009.

Masinire, A. *Interplay of masculinities and school authority in rural Zimbabwe:* Canadian Association of Studies in Education, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada, 2010.

Masinire, A. *Boys` culture and globalization in a rural high school in Zimbabwe: Pedagogical challenges and possibilities*: Canadian Association of African Studies, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, 2010

Masinire, A. *Thinking about gender from a masculinities perspective: Implications for practices and policies in Higher Education*, Mexico City, 2011

Tarc, P, Sanchez-Cruz, E, Masinire, A. & Cruz-Cortes, N. *Mexican women in science and engineering: the impact of gender equity policies in education: Ideas and strategies for gender equity*, Mexico-City, 2011.