

**A gender based analysis of the Amalima Programme in empowering married women
within households in rural Gwanda, Zimbabwe**

by

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Abstract

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have occupied a prominent role in the socio-economic development of rural areas of Zimbabwe since the time of the country's independence in 1980, including a focus on improving the conditions and status of women in communal areas. These NGOs adopt a participatory methodology in their development programmes and projects, as they try to ensure that the active participation of women in rural development facilitates women's access to resources and the realisation of their rights. These initiatives are important given the pronounced system of patriarchy which exists in communal areas. In the context of local patriarchies, NGOs also often claim that they empower women. This thesis focuses on the work of one particular NGO programme, namely the Amalima programme, with a particular focus on three wards in the communal areas in Gwanda, Zimbabwe. From a gendered perspective concerned with questions of women's empowerment, the main objective of the thesis is to provide a critical analysis of the Amalima programme with particular reference to married women in Gwanda. Based on original fieldwork (including interviews with men, women and NGO practitioners), the thesis concludes that the outcomes of the Amalima programme in empowering married women in Gwanda are uneven and that, overall, the local system of patriarchy (including at household level) remains largely intact.

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ACRONYMS

CA Conservation Agriculture

CF Conservation Farming

CHC Community Health Club

CNFA Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture

DRR Disaster Risk Reduction

ESAP Economic Structural Adjustment Programme

FAO Food and Agriculture Organisation

FFA Food for Assets

FGD Focus Group Discussion

FNC Food and Nutrition Council

FTLRP Fast Track Land Reform Programme

HAV Household Asset Vouchers

GEM Gender Empowerment Measure

IGP Income Generating Projects

IMC International Medical Corps

IYCF Infant and Young Child Feeding

LF Lead Fathers

LM Lead Mothers

MoHCC Ministry of Health and Child Care

NGO Non-Governmental Organisation

ORAP Organisation for Rural Progress

Oxfam Oxford Committee for Famine Relief

RBZ Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe

RDC Rural District Council

SL Sustainable Livelihoods

UN United Nations

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

UNIFEM United Nations Fund for Women

USAID United States Agency for International Development

VS&L Village Savings and Lending

WASH Water Sanitation and Hygiene

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Methodology

1.1 Introduction

The period from 1980 saw the proliferation of non-governmental organisation (NGO) activity in trying to enhance the status of poor and marginalised women in Zimbabwe, particularly in the communal areas (Chinake 1997; Julia 1999). NGO involvement with rural women in communal areas in Zimbabwe has entailed a number of participatory development initiatives such as livelihoods and income generating projects. The aim of these interventions has been to empower women socially and economically in local communities and within households.

The thesis is premised on the ongoing problematic status of married women within households in communal areas in Zimbabwe (with specific reference to Gwanda communal areas), despite continued NGO efforts to empower women. In the context of a sociological understanding of gender dynamics as embedded within communal households in Gwanda, this thesis critically examines the involvement of a particular NGO programme in Gwanda, namely the Amalima programme, in empowering married women. The following sections of this introductory chapter provide a discussion of the thesis context as well as the thesis objectives and research methods. It concludes by providing an outline of the ensuing thesis chapters.

1.2 Context of the Thesis

The significance of NGOs in trying to enhance the status of women can be understood in terms of the existence and prevalence of patriarchy, which impedes the empowerment of women. Patriarchy is a term that has been widely used by feminists to understand the oppression of women, but it has been conceptualised differently by various feminists. Eisenstein (1979:67) for example defines patriarchy as a sexual hierarchy, which is manifested in a woman's role as mother, domestic labourer and consumer within the family. Walby (1990:214) defines patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women. Romany (1993) adds that patriarchal domination as a social condition goes beyond material subordination because, as an ideological construction, it becomes internalised within both males and females and strips women of their rights and capacities to resist gender-based oppression.

Despite differences, the common theme in all conceptualisations is that patriarchy ultimately means the domination of women by men (Eisenstein 1979; Beechy 1979; Waters 1989; Walby 1990). In the end, patriarchy involves a range of structures, practices and discourses which

dominate women in society and justify this subordination. All countries globally, including the so-called developing countries, adhere in some way to a patriarchal culture in which norms and practices systematically put women in subordinate positions in society (Dejene 2007). These gender based norms and practices favour men over women in terms of granting access to resources, opportunities, choices, capacities, rights, and decision-making power in both the domestic and public spheres.

Zimbabwe, like other African countries, adheres to cultural and patriarchal beliefs that tend to place women in subordinated positions within homes and society more generally (Chitsike 2000; Kambarami 2006). These beliefs stem from patriarchal values of ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’. Patriarchy in Zimbabwe, like elsewhere, entails the social and political rule of men over women (Jones 2000:77), thus dividing the roles, responsibilities and resources along gender lines within the private and public spheres (Jones 2000; Federici 2012). The public sphere is where political, social and economic activities take place (Mies 1998; Osirim 2003) under male control. The private or domestic sphere is a womanly place where reproductive, emotional and productive activities (sustaining the family) take place (Mies 1998; Tichagwa 1998; Federici 2012), but it remains a space dominated by men. Thus patriarchy manifests itself in both spheres and is characterised by power, which is unequally distributed on the basis of gender. In the case of Zimbabwe, for example, the practice of ‘lobola’/bride-wealth subjugates women (Chitsike 1995; Stewart 1995; Nilsson 2006). Further, women (particularly married women) are not allowed to have unmediated ownership of or control of assets such as land, even though they are allowed to utilise the assets. Under this system of patriarchy, women are oppressed, voiceless and disempowered. In seeking to understand patriarchy, it is crucial to examine the domestic sphere, as this thesis seeks to do.

Broadly speaking, NGOs working within the realm of socio-economic development (or development NGOs) seek to enhance the well-being of poor communities through methodologies of participatory development. Due to the prevalence of systems and practices of patriarchy, NGOs often have a gender focus in seeking to improve in particular the socio-economic status of women and ultimately empower them in doing so. Empowering is critical because the foundation of patriarchy is power relationships. Empowerment is both a process and condition, and this thesis is particularly concerned about empowerment as a process, i.e. how, or if, NGOs empower women through their programmes. Empowering women would enable women to make independent choices and decisions (vis-à-vis men), allow women to have direct access to and control of resources, and to ensure that they fully participate in

political and development spaces. Together, this would entail challenges to patriarchal domination and thus enable women's autonomy and freedom from male domination (UNIFEM 1995).

The possibility of empowerment as the outcome of development NGO initiatives is meant to take place through the deep participation of women in development programmes. This has been particularly evident in the case of development NGOs involved in rural areas of developing nations. On the surface, such NGO programmes might seem to be focused exclusively on improving women's livelihoods, including income-generating projects such as poultry, gardening, cattle breeding, availability and access to land and credit as well as provision of agricultural equipment for sustainable livelihoods. Thus, it might seem that the focus is integrating women more fully into male-controlled productive economies. However, these NGO initiatives are normally rooted in a recognition of patriarchy and they seek to challenge – through participatory development – the subordinated position of women in agrarian societies through capacity-building. Hence, access to and control of resources and incomes by women is regularly seen as the basis for women's empowerment (Moser 1991; Haddad et al. 1997; Kabeer 1999). These NGO programmes have, however, been subjected to significant criticism. For instance, evidence from existing literature indicates that women's empowered activity has at times involved a survivalist strategy mainly in the informal sector with women even undertaking traditionally feminine tasks (Mitter 1986; Sen and Grown 1988; Gordon 1997). Further, NGOs often fail to engage with husband-wife power dynamics within the household as a crucial dimension of patriarchal systems, a point in particular which this thesis examines.

The history of NGO activity in Zimbabwe involves a number of phases. In the period 1980-1990 (post-independence), NGOs were concerned with easing the inequalities created during colonialism, fostering democracy and, at the same time, building the nation by setting up rural development programmes in the educational, agricultural and health arenas (Bornstein 2003). Active NGOs during this period included World Vision and Christian Care (Bornstein 2003). The period between 1990 and 2000, which was the time of a Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), saw a major increase in NGO activity. The Zimbabwean government, like so many African countries, embarked upon an Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in order to pay for its imports and service its debts (Manana 1992; Gordon 1997; Maclean et al. 1997). As a result, reductions in state spending on social services (Gordon 1997) compromised the health and education status of women and girls, and also increased poverty and inflicted unbearable burdens on women (Khoury 1994). This led to considerable development of NGO

work in both urban and rural areas of Zimbabwe. The Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) from the year 2000 marked a new phase, and it entailed an authoritarian land acquisition and redistribution initiative by the government (Raftopoulos and Phimister 2004) without fully integrating marginalised women in relation to enhanced land access (Raftopoulos 2001; Bhatasara 2011; Mutopo 2011). The ESAP and FTLRP periods tended to weaken state capacity, such that NGOs sought to fill certain gaps. Throughout all these phases, since the year 1980, NGOs have been working in the communal areas of Zimbabwe, and sometimes with a specific gender focus. Thus NGOs such as World Vision and Kunzwana Women's Association have been actively involved in the areas of agriculture and civil rights of women in communal areas (Helliker 2012). Others such as Women's Land and Lobby Group (WLLG) pressured the government to consider women's interests in policies related to land reform (Nilsson 2006).

In the context of patriarchy, then, the thesis seeks to examine a particular gender-based NGO programme in the communal areas of Zimbabwe, specifically the Amalima programme and its implementation in Gwanda. Gwanda District consists of twenty-four communal wards and is located in Matabeleland South Province. Gwanda is located in the arid region V, characterised by low annual rainfall, seasonal drought, and dry spells during the rainy season. Women are involved in subsistence activities such as small livestock production, gardening, crop cultivation as well vending and informal trading. NGOs operating in Gwanda have sought to expand livelihoods for women by enabling women to access credit, developing income generating projects and promoting conservation agriculture (Chinake 1997; Mpofu et al. 2013).

Amalima is a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded programme involving a consortium of NGOs. It has been working with over 66,000 households in Matabeleland since 2013 on enhancing livelihoods, and improving health and nutrition among infants below the age of two and pregnant mothers (amongst other projects). The programme is implemented by six NGOs, namely, Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture (CNFA), Organisation for Rural Progress (ORAP), International Medical Corps (IMC), Manoff Group, Africare and Dabane Trust, with CNFA being the lead NGO. Because of its wide range of initiatives and its gender mainstreaming strategy and empowerment focus, the Amalima programme provides a strong basis for understanding and analysing the significance of NGOs in empowering women, and specifically married women within households in rural Gwanda.

1.3 Thesis Objectives

The main objective of the thesis is to critically examine the Amalima programmes with reference to empowering married rural women within the Amalima households in Gwanda, Zimbabwe from the period 2013 when the programme started. In order to achieve this main objective, specific secondary objectives are pursued. These include:

- a) To identify and examine the various projects of the Amalima aimed at empowering women.
- b) To explore gender relations that influence empowerment of married women within the Amalima households.
- c) To understand married women's perceptions of empowerment in relation to their participation and involvement in the Amalima projects.

1.4 Research Methodology

This thesis adopted a qualitative research approach rooted in an interpretive constructivist position on ontology. The major questions of social ontology in sociology refer to the very nature of reality (Tuli 2011; Bryman 2015). Ontology answers questions of whether social entities should be considered as objective with an external reality or whether they should be considered as social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors (Bryman 2015:75). In large part, the interpretive research reflects reality as a human construct (Neuman 2003; Mutch, 2005; Tuli 2011), and a constructivist study depicts how and why participants construct meanings and actions in specific situations (Yin 2003; Charmaz 2006:130). Interpretive constructionism thus realises that there are many interpretations of a social phenomenon and it seeks to understand the multiple values, beliefs and meanings of social phenomena. Because of this, a constructionist epistemology seeks to understand social phenomena rather than to causally explain them.

For this thesis, a broad interpretive constructionist approach is appropriate for examining how women and men in Gwanda, and the NGOs involved in the Amalima, understand patriarchy and empowerment in relationship to their involvement and participation in the programmes and projects of the Amalima. At the same time, the thesis does not adopt an extreme constructionist position which reduces all social phenomena (such as patriarchy and empowerment) to free-floating meaning and human agency. The research methodology thus adopted recognises the importance of structure and power within which men and women are located, but appreciates the ways in which structure and power are interpreted and contested during social processes (Rubin and Rubin 1995; Schwandt 2000; Cohen et al. 2000). The

constructionist approach thus allows the researcher to understand the complexities of local patriarchal systems and practices in Gwanda and NGOs attempts to empower women through the Amalima in a manner which is sensitive to how women, men and NGOs define patriarchy and act out those definitions in struggles around patriarchy. Hence, the meanings of terms like ‘empowerment’, ‘patriarchy’, and ‘gender’ are not inert entities but are constructed and reconstructed through interactions in concrete spatial and temporal circumstances (Neuman 2003; Schwandt, 2007; Bryman 2015).

The research for the thesis utilised a case study design. A case study has been defined by Robson (1993) as a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence. Similarly, (Stake 1995) defines a case study design as the study of particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its inner workings and dynamics (Silverman 2013). The Amalima programme as implemented by a consortium of NGOs in Gwanda is the case study for the thesis. The instrumental purpose for selecting this case study was to gain insights (Robson 1993; Yin 1993; Stake 1995; Denscombe 1998) on gender relations within households and women empowerment by understanding the Amalima programme and its objective of reducing gender inequality. Gwanda was chosen specifically because the researcher was familiar with the area and had access to it. The choice of Gwanda as the case study was based on non-random convenience sampling, and hence there are no claims to the effect that any conclusions arising about the Amalima programme are applicable to development NGOs and gender interventions in communal areas in Zimbabwe more broadly.

The case study paved the way for the use of multiple sources of evidence such as interviews, focus group discussions and primary documents (Stake 1995) as the basis for capturing the complex reality being investigated in Gwanda (Denscombe 1998; Hsieh 2004). With the case study, sub-units were married women in Gwanda along with their spouses, as the thesis objective is particularly concerned with gendered relationships within households and how the Amalima does or does not address these relationships. The research was carried out from the 12th of August to the 15th of September 2017. Access to the field was gained through the high ranked officials of the Amalima programme, who assigned their lower-level district officials to help with necessary arrangements in order to access the participants. The participants were located with the help of a key informant, namely, the Amalima field officer for the Gwanda District.

The actual research participants (primarily married women and spouses involved in the programmes of Amalima) were purposively sampled. In other words, I purposely did not select as research participants unmarried women or women not involved in the Amalima programme. Ten married women and ten spouses were selected using convenience sampling. Hence, in selecting research participants, I relied on available subjects, or those who were close at hand or easily accessible (Mutchnick and Berg 1996; Babbie 1998, 2007). Five of the married men were not the spouses of the women participants although they are involved in the programme. Six women and six men were sampled from ward fourteen, and two each from ward fifteen and thirteen. The research was carried out according to a convenient setting and schedule for all the participants, thereby enabling an understanding of the Amalima activities in relation to enhancing the status of women.

The research was undertaken in accordance with the ethical guidelines which determine research. After giving a verbal description of the research, participants orally consented to take part. Oral consent helped the participants to understand the purpose of the research hence building rapport. As argued by Gordon (2000), participants may be uncomfortable reading and signing consent forms for personal reasons. The respondents particularly women were assured of confidentiality in terms of anonymity and the storage of data (Henn et al. 2005). For this reason, the interviews and focus group discussions were not tape-recorded. Further, this thesis utilises a numbering system to identify particular research subjects and focus group discussions, as the participants have the right to control information relating to them (Guba and Lincoln 1989). All the interviews were conducted in Ndebele and translated into English. The research methods used are as follows.

Interviews with six of the Amalima staff (see Appendix 1, Interviews 2-7). According to Burns (1997: 329), an interview is “a verbal interchange, often face to face, though the telephone may be used, in which an interviewer tries to elicit information, beliefs or opinions from another person”. Two face to face interviews were done with the district field coordinators for the Manoff group and CNFA (the lead NGO) specialising in agriculture and the (Appendix 1, Interview 2, 4). An interview was done with the gender specialist in the programme and the field officer of the district (Appendix 1, Interviews 1, 6). Two team leaders knowledgeable in the issues of livelihoods, nutrition, health and resilience, were also interviewed (Appendix 1, Interviews 3, 5). These four issues are the objectives of the programme which are respectively implemented by ORAP, IMC, Dabane Trust and Africare. The semi-structured interviews involve a series of open ended questions based on the topic areas that were to be covered, and

the semi structured nature of the questions enabled the discussion of some topics in detail because it allowed the researcher to probe (Mack et al 2005). The interview method allowed the researcher to gain insights on the perspectives of the Amalima officers on the role of the programme in achieving empowerment of women at household level. In doing, it also helped to shed light on their experiences in the field.

Interviews with the Amalima programme women beneficiaries (located in the communal areas of Gwanda district). In-depth interviews were conducted with ten married women involved in the Amalima programme. The interviews took place at their garden sites, playing fields where they held their functions, training sites and at homes (see Appendix 1, Interviews 7-16). The interview sites were determined by the women according to what was convenient to them. These in-depth interviews facilitated the gathering of data based on opinions, feelings, emotions and experiences which needed to be explored in depth and in detail (Legard et al. 2003), and they were consistent with the interpretive constructionist research methodology in which knowledge is constructed rather than simply given (Legard et al. 2003; Schwandt 2007; Boyce and Neale 2006). For these reasons, the research was able to explore the factors that underpin women's answers (opinions, feelings and beliefs) concerning empowerment through involvement in the Amalima programmes.

Interviews with women's husbands (five of whom were not married to the ten selected women beneficiaries). The interviews with spouses were semi structured and some of these interviews took place during one of the field days at one of the farmer's homestead and at their homes (Appendix 1, Interviews 17-26). These interviews with spouses were crucial in unravelling the possible changes in the status and position of women within households, what men considered as empowerment from the lens of those in a position of dominance within households.

Focus group discussions (FGDs) with married women. Two focus group discussions (of five women each) were undertaken, and the purpose of these groups was to further stimulate conversation in an interactive small group situation (Berg 2004) to gain deeper insights into gender relations within households and the significance of the Amalima in challenging the unequal man-woman relationships. These FGDs took place at their project garden and the sports field. One group took place at the sports field and included two women were from ward thirteen, one from ward fifteen that were not interviewed and two from ward fourteen that were interviewed. Another took place at the horticulture garden site (ward 14) and comprised of five interviewed women from ward 14 (See Appendix 10, for the focus group guide). In a FGD,

according to Mack et al. (2005), respondents feel safety in numbers and so relax and talk. The women in the groups were stimulated to reveal information which they did not speak about in the interviews, including intricacies of household gender relationships. The FGDs allowed the researcher to gain insights on the women's attitudes and experiences of patriarchy within households as well as their perceptions of the Amalima programme in empowering them.

Primary documentation about the Amalima programme. For the purposes of understanding and contextualising the objectives, processes, principles and methods of the Amalima programme, it was imperative to analyse its primary documentation. The documents included an outline of the work of the consortium behind Amalima, gender strategy guide and gender analysis report, male-champions training guide, USAID gender equality and female empowerment policy, and information on specific projects and activities (Appendix 12, for the list of documents).

Data analysis for the research involved coding the qualitative evidence in a thematic manner. This was achieved by reading and rereading the translated field notes and documents, and coding and categorising the evidence into themes (Braun and Clarke 2006; Flick 2006). In the context of this research, relevant evidence and ideas were identified and given codes while noting recurring patterns and concepts in them and developing these into themes (Bazeley 2013). According to Braun and Clarke (2006: 78) thematic analysis provides a "rich and detailed, yet complex, account of the data". Using a thematic analysis enabled the researcher to expound on the complexities of gender relations within households and the processes of the Amalima programme which sought to empower women in Gwanda.

1.5 Study Challenges and Limitations

There were certain challenges in the fieldwork. First of all, the semi-structured interviews with the Amalima officers and beneficiaries at times led to evidence which seemed to be inconsistent and contradictory. Although a substantive amount of personal insights was gathered, each respondent gave different explanations and meanings of the same objectives and projects of Amalima. However, given the constructionist approach and the importance of capturing diversity in interpretations, this facilitated an understanding of the complexities of the social phenomena under investigation. Secondly, no wider generalisations can be made from the study. Because there is no basis for claiming that Amalima is representative of NGO's gender programmes in communal areas in Zimbabwe, no claims are made to the effect that the results of the study can be generalised to a larger population on any statistical basis. As Hsieh (2004) notes, that the outcome of a single case study is meaningful in-and-of-itself, and the

conclusions reached about Amalima likely have implications for studying other NGOs and their gender-based programmes in rural Zimbabwe (Dzakiria 2012; Biggam 2015).

1.6 Thesis Outline

The following chapter (chapter two) examines the work of NGOs and women's empowerment in the context of patriarchy, including the participatory methodologies pursued by NGOs. In doing so, it also provides the theoretical framing for the thesis. Chapter three expands on this discussion by focusing on particular NGO programmes focusing on women, such as sustainable livelihoods, income generating microcredit schemes, rights advocacy and capacity building activities aimed at empowering women. Chapter four turns more specifically to Zimbabwe by considering women in communal areas and the ways in which NGOs in Zimbabwe have sought to address the status and conditions of women in these areas. Chapters five and six are about the Amalima case study in Gwanda, detailing each sub-programme within the overall Amalima programme and critically examining the effects of these sub-programmes for the empowerment of married women in Gwanda. The last chapter (chapter seven) gives a systematic overview of the thesis and relates the case study back to the theoretical framing of the thesis.

Chapter 2: Patriarchy, NGOs and Women's Empowerment

2.1 Introduction

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are institutional forms which seek to address a variety of social problems including food security, financial instability and general human rights (Choudry and Kapoor 2013: ix). By carrying out participatory development projects such as promoting sustainable livelihoods, facilitating lending schemes, championing social and cultural rights of the marginalised and poor (and building their capacities), NGOs seek to foster and catalyse empowerment. Broadly, NGOs attempt to contribute to the realisation of people's aspirations of a socially, economically, politically and culturally just and humane world (Choudry and Kapoor 2013). This chapter explores the role of NGOs in promoting women empowerment through participatory development initiatives.

2.2 Patriarchy and Empowerment of Women

To understand NGOs' involvement and role in women's empowerment, it is imperative to understand the terms 'patriarchy' and 'empowerment'. Patriarchy broadly is the social and political rule of men over women (Jones 2000:77). According to Millett (1969), patriarchy refers to a social order which is organised according to the principle that males dominate females, ensuring that women occupy subordinate positions (Kambarami 2006). Patriarchal orders have existed globally and over a significant historical period, such that they are marked by both universality and longevity (Charvet 1982). Patriarchy pervades all institutions in society though it takes on different forms spatially and temporally.

Quite often, patriarchy separates the private from the public sphere along gender lines. This has been particularly prevalent under capitalism. The public arena is viewed as an economic and political space designed for men while the private sphere (notably the family) is a womanly space, which however simultaneously benefits men and disempowers women (Mies 1998; Federici 2012). As Romany (1993) notes, the division of the public and private spheres inhibits the participation of women in public spaces as well as their overall human self-determination. In this light, the advent of the separation of spheres during the nineteenth century brought about the notion of the 'cult of true womanhood', which ultimately meant that authentic womanly qualities could only be expressed and realised by women caring for their children and families with the private sphere. This thus justified women's exclusion from the economy (the site of production) and reinforced their dependence upon men (Laslett and Brenner 1989:388). This

consolidated and solidified women's identification with domesticity as site for social reproduction (Laslett and Brenner 1989; Federici 2012).

There are admittedly different versions of feminist thought, such as liberal, radical and socialist feminism. Liberal feminists have tended to focus on the legal and institutional basis for patriarchal orders. Radical feminists have highlighted the deeply personalised character of women's oppression and have claimed that patriarchal domination has its own logic of existence which is not reducible to class domination, as Marxist feminists have sought to argue. Socialist feminists prioritise simultaneously both class and gender as forms of subordination. Patriarchy and empowerment, when invoked by feminists from the South, have been explicitly used to frame and facilitate the struggle for social justice and women's equality, with issues such as the gendered nature of deprivation, subordination and exploitation at the fore (Nagar and Raju 2003). Like their northern counterparts, these feminists have pointed to the multi-layered character of women's oppression and subjection including their location within the family, community, market and state (Nagar and Raju 2003). Additionally, though, there has been a strong emphasis on further disaggregating the notion of 'women' beyond simply class by raising the significance of colour and race.

Despite differences of perspective, all forms of feminism recognise the significance of patriarchal relations within social relations of reproduction (Amos and Parmar 1984: 8), which refer to the activities and responsibilities directly involved in the maintenance of life on a daily basis and across generations (Laslett and Brenner 1989:382). With women confined to the domestic sphere, feminists use this concept of social reproduction in understanding the continuation and reproduction of systems of gender inequality (Laslett and Brenner 1989:383). The private sphere is a space dominated (like the public sphere) by patriarchal values and norms, which in the case of the former sphere concerns family life and is characterised by a normative model of heterosexuality built on a patriarchal family structure (Lyons 2007:39).

Romany (1993:101) adds that love and intimacy are deemed as private and sensitive matters within the domestic sphere, such that the domestic sphere is placed beyond public scrutiny. This means that the private sphere should not be subjected to intrusion and interference from the public sphere, including the state and other public institutions, hence reinforcing the patriarchal domination which exists within it and inhibiting processes of women's empowerment (Gavison 1992; Romany 1993; Lyons 2007). Stivens (1990:103) refers to this as the hands-off approach, meaning that the sphere of social reproduction becomes an

inaccessible space. In this way, women lose their individuality and voice to the extent that the family unit is represented to and in the community through a male head (Romany 1993:103). As a result of this, household resources may remain in the hands of the dominant patriarch and abuse of women is hidden if not justifiable (Romany 1993; Stewart 1995; Nilsson 2006). Because of the centrality of this sphere to patriarchy, empowerment strategies would likely fail if gender relations or man-woman relationships within households are not addressed (Laslett and Brenner 1989; Mies 1998).

The public and private distinction therefore becomes crucial for gender analysis, not only in showing how men dominate the public sphere, but also how they dominate within the private sphere. By questioning the gendered public/private divide as an expression of male privilege, feminism seeks ways of achieving meaningful gender equality (Landes 2003). Undoubtedly, feminism has had far-reaching consequences for not only intellectual analysis but for daily life. The concerns of women in the private life (including gender-based violence) are now being exposed to the public, allowing for public investigations and political interventions vis-à-vis the experiences and rights of women in the domestic sphere. Further, women have increasingly entered into public life, both in politics and the economy, and this is often backed by legislation and the court system (Romany 1993).

However, despite the progressive moves to bring women into the public arena, and to challenge their subordination in the private sphere, their voices continue to be silenced because of the definition of a 'woman' that is linked to her sexuality and femininity, which continues to associate women with caring and domestic duties. Even in the public sphere, women are often slotted into segments of the labour market characterised by feminine work tasks. In many ways, this highlights the long-standing emphasis of radical feminists on 'the personal is political' and how women's oppression is embodied. Batliwala (1994) thus states that any lasting solution to patriarchy lies with freeing men from their socialised heterosexual masculinity and the gendered stereotyping which comes with this ('the personal'), which limits the potential for self-expression and personal development in women. Of course, this would also entail confronting the power structures ('the political') which are built into and sustain patriarchy, a point that both Marxist and socialist feminists bring to the fore. This incorporates a focus on differential access to material resources between men and women, including land in the case for example of rural Africa. Federici (2012) claims that land (or any other material resource) though is only the material basis for women's empowerment and not empowerment per se, with any ensuing empowerment arising as well from restructuring of the domestic sphere.

Nevertheless, the link between material resources and power is crucial to feminists, and this often explains the focus of trying to empower women through poverty alleviation programmes, with access to resources providing a degree of autonomous action for women (Kabeer 2005)

Empowerment entails activating the agency of women. Thus Batliwala (1994) views empowerment as individual and/or collective participation in various activities directed at changing the nature and direction of the systemic forces that marginalise women in all spheres of life. In this regard, Eade and Williams (1995) assert that women first and foremost must be capacitated and become empowered through their own efforts and not by what others do for them. This entails confronting the structures of patriarchal power by redistributing power but also the ways in which patriarchy has been internalised through processes of socialisation. Because of this, Nagar and Raju (2003:256) argue that empowerment is a process involving the “undoing of internalised oppression”, which means changing the embodied sites of social and cultural patriarchy that remain as sources of women’s domination and oppression. By challenging patriarchy externally existing in society and as existing internally within both men and women, women will be able to make choices and exercise power over their own lives (Kabeer 2001; Dejene 2007).

In the context of this research, what happens at household level, or within the domestic sphere, is particularly pertinent. Empowerment in particular thus relates to married women’s involvement in major-decision making at household level, freedom and independence from patriarchal domination within the household, control of income and resources which are generated by married women, expenditure of such income for their own well-being, and a sense of self-worth (UNIFEM 2013). However, the questionable status of married rural women within households in Zimbabwe and elsewhere, despite continued empowerment efforts by various governments and organisations, needs to be understood within the confines of ongoing systems of patriarchy.

2.3 NGOs and Women Empowerment

For years now, NGOs have been seen as crucial to socio-economic development by pursuing alternative development models based on participatory methodologies because of their capacity to reach the ‘grassroots level’ where the ‘real people’ exist (Moser 1993). NGOs in developing countries have demonstrated an interest not only in improving people’s socio-economic status and well-being but also in empowering people to obtain improvements in their lives. Promoting empowerment is a goal of particular interest to many NGOs working on gender issues (Mehra

1997) because of pronounced systems of patriarchy in developing nations and due to the fact that women are simply not benefiting from mainstream development efforts despite the crucial role they play for instance within agriculture. Decades ago, the United Nations (UN) world conference on women held in Mexico in 1975 had already indicated that the status of women had in fact deteriorated in developing countries in all spheres: politics, employment, health and education (Bhoserup 1980). Mehra (1997) adds that this situation is sometimes aggravated by development policies and programmes that tend to view women as less integral to economic development because of their supposed centrality to so-called unproductive work within the domestic sphere.

During the 1950s, development agencies responded to the need to enhance the livelihoods of women by investing in income-generating projects. However, these projects were in large part motivated by welfare rather than development concerns (Maclean et al. 1997), thus for instance offering women temporary employment in traditionally feminine skills such as craftwork. Such initiatives failed to empower women in any significant manner (Mehra 1997:142). These welfare models of development, as pursued by NGOs in the 1950s, regarded women as mere mothers and wives thus making them beneficiaries of specific programmes such as health care, social services and family planning, rather than being seen as economic agents in their own right (Mehra 1997:142). As a result, NGOs missed the opportunity of influencing the lives of poor women. In effect, they reproduced patriarchal discourses of women's place within the realm of social reproduction.

These problems paved the way, in the light of feminist thinking, for the emergence and indeed boom of women-centred NGOs in the late 1970s and 1980s (Cook 1989; Bebbington et al. 2013), which sought to integrate women into mainstream (non-welfare) development programmes. For example, the Self-Employed Women Association (SEWA) in India made some headway in improving women's economic status based on its recognition of women as important to the economic development process (Sen and Grown 1988). Similarly, the Chinmaya Rural Training Centre (CRTC), a rural NGO in India operating in the impoverished village of Sidhbari, had some success in empowering women by drawing them out of the cycle of dependence (Handy et al. 2004:2). The project furthered its success by extending its services to the families of the women beneficiaries, hence positively influencing the norms, values and laws that govern such communities (Page and Czuba 1999). In this way, the organisation nurtured women to overcome traditional barriers (Handy et al. 2004).

Following the World Plan of Action presented at the Mexico conference, which demanded the full integration of women into development programmes, NGOs were more explicitly sought out by governments and donor agencies to respond to the concerns articulated there and to implement women-specific projects (Mehra 1997; Cook 1989). This would include incorporating women into income-generating activities, market-oriented production and sustainable livelihood strategies (Mies 1998; Federici 2012). Subsequent UN conferences at Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985 and Beijing in 1995 were aimed at further addressing issues of gender equality and development. The United Nations Decade for Women (from 1975 to 1985) witnessed a strong NGO dedication to enhancing the advancement and empowerment of women all over the world particularly in developing countries (Chen 1995; UN 1995:7; Friedman 2003). Thus, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, NGOs were engaged in a diverse range of development experiments that attempted to enact the process of empowerment on the ground with various marginalised communities, but most often focused on poor rural and urban women (Batliwala, 2007:560).

Empowerment approaches for women have undergone shifts, from initially Women in Development (WID), to Women and Development (WAD), and then to Gender and Development (GAD). This has entailed a move away from conceptualising the problem strictly in terms of women's position in society to recognising that the problem is gender and hence patriarchy (Gee 2002). It also involved an acknowledgement that women should not simply be seen as victims of society who need the help of external interventions. Rather, women empowerment strategies adopted by NGOs should foreground that women are the primary agents of empowering change. NGOs can only facilitate this process but, ultimately, women have the capacity to organise themselves to confront and transform the social and economic arrangements and cultural systems that subjugate them (Batliwala, 2007). In this sense, a post-GAD approach is evident, as even GAD tended to be apolitical and economistic in terms of its development interventions. Empowerment then is perhaps a more appropriate term than development to designate far-reaching NGO interventions which seek to overcome the prevailing systems of patriarchy.

Thus, during the 1990s, the concept of women empowerment gained prominence amongst NGOs in many social development and social justice arenas, such as education, health care, rural development and workers' rights (Batliwala 2007). Speaking about empowerment, at least in any authentic sense, means realising that power structures in the form of patriarchy inhibit the full flourishing of women's lives. As a social process, the empowering of women is about

shifts in the existing structures of political, social, cultural and economic power. To think otherwise, is to work within the confines of power and not beyond power. The shifting of power in favour of women is achieved by: challenging the ideologies and discourses of patriarchy that justify social inequality; changing prevailing patterns of access to and control over economic resources; confronting patriarchal power in all spheres of society; and transforming the institutions of the family in such a way that the supposedly natural link between women and domesticity is broken (Kabeer 1994). Therefore, overall empowerment for women cannot be achieved by tackling only one of these elements as it must be all-embracing. But each even small effort in shifting power, whether through discursive or material struggles, makes a difference.

Fortunately, NGOs in particular have attempted to shift power within the domestic sphere through initiatives for example that improve women's access to economic resources such as land and income in order to challenge localised forms of patriarchy (Mies 1998; Coote 1996; Millard 1996). Access to material resources, as argued by Argawal (1997), strengthens – at least potentially – the bargaining power of women thus making them able to challenge patriarchy within homes. For example, in the Northern Peruvian highlands, women now as landowners play a greater role in household farm management and are often able to terminate abusive marriages (Deerie 1990).

Clearly, the notion of empowerment (and women's empowerment more specifically) now has been legitimised by international development agencies. But there is still debate in development literature on what actually comprises empowerment and how it is to be measured. The frequently used Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) hinges on three key areas, that is, political participation by women (such as in national legislatures), economic participation by women (focusing on managerial and professional work) and income and wealth distribution amongst men and women resources (Mehra 1997; Handy et al. 2004:9). However, the GEM has limitations in capturing the multi-dimensional character of women's empowerment. Arising from the UN, its main focus is on comparative analysis of gender achievements at national level globally. In so far as it is integrated into the programmatic activities of NGOs in the worldwide development system, it tends to prioritise quantitative measurements of development outcomes. It is unable to capture analytically the complexities of diverse systems of patriarchy. Ultimately, empowerment is a process and not a mere product and, as indicated earlier, this thesis is particularly concerned with processes of empowerment as embedded in the work of NGOs.

In this context, empowerment must be understood personally, culturally, socially, politically and economically because of the multi-dimensional character of patriarchy. All aspects are crucial to this thesis, particularly as focused on the household, as this is crucial to understanding both women disempowerment and empowerment in Zimbabwe. In this light, Amin et al. (1998) split the concept of women's empowerment into three components each measured separately: an inter-spouse consultation index, which seeks to represent the extent to which husbands consult their wives in household affairs; an individual autonomy index which represents women's self-reported autonomy of physical movement outside the house and in matters of spending money; and the authority index, which reports on actual decision-making power (which is traditionally in the hands of the patriarch of the family) (Handy et al. 2004 :10). These indices thus relate to such issues as mobility beyond the house, ability to make small and large household purchases, involvement in key household decisions, and relative freedom and autonomy from domination by husbands and family. Though it might be possible to quantify empowerment in terms of this index, it can also be understood in a processual manner, namely, seeking to identify the what, when, how and why of decision-making activities within the household and the extent to which women have control over these questions in terms of intra-household power differentials and dynamics.

2.4 Empowerment through 'Participation' – Participatory Development Initiatives

NGOs play a leading role in facilitating participatory development initiatives that are meant to empower poor and marginalised communities particularly in developing countries. Hulme (1994:30) notes that NGOs have played a major role in trying to challenge the austerity policies of neoliberalism by highlighting issues of poverty, rights and empowerment through participatory methodologies. This is despite the fact that NGOs ultimately receive funds from multilateral and bilateral donors ingrained in the neoliberal system of global governance. In the main, participatory development emerged out of the recognition of the limitations of top-down development approaches (Cooke and Kothari 2001). It is a bottom-up approach designed at placing people at the centre of development by encouraging beneficiary involvement in interventions that affect them directly (Cooke and Kothari 2001). Participatory approaches are aimed at reducing unequal power relations through giving the marginalised a voice and facilitating their involvement in the design, planning implementation and outcomes of development programmes. According to Chambers (1994, 1997) participatory approaches build people's capacity to analyse and change their lives, thus providing practical means to facilitate empowerment.

To understand the involvement and role of NGOs in the empowerment of women through participatory initiatives, it is important to understand the terms empowerment and participation and the ways in which NGOs engage with them. As both process and outcome, there is a correlation between empowerment and participation (Perkins et al. 1996, Atkinson, 1999; Kabeer 1994). As defined by Karl (1995:370) empowerment is “a process of awareness and capacity building leading to greater participation, to greater decision making power and control, and to transformative action”. According to McGee (2002:98), in the case of the Department for International Development (DFID), participation was promoted in order to bring about empowerment. Empowered people are said to be able to enact agency through fully engaging in a participatory manner in shaping their own lives in economic, political and social spheres (Cooke and Kothari 2001; McGee 2002). There does therefore seem to be an overlap between the notions of participatory and empowering processes.

In a deep process of participation, in which women for instance are involved in all stages of a NGO development project, a process of empowerment should be taking place. As an end-state, empowerment is meant to be the ultimate outcome of participatory processes (Rakodi 1991; Friedman 1996). In this way, according to Guijt (1998) and Cooke and Kothari (2001), the broad aim of participation is to increase the involvement of the socially and economically marginalised in decision-making in and over their lives. Participatory initiatives by NGOs become justified in terms of their relevance for empowerment (Bebbington et al. 2013). For developmental NGOs, ‘participation’ by women in development projects holds out the promise of inclusion and giving a voice and choice to less powerful women (Cornwall 2003:1325). Kesby (2005:2043) adds that participation opens up spaces and opportunities for women in reclaiming their lives and their future. Through participation, women may gain meaningful access to and control over material resources that help strengthen their bargaining position and capabilities (Agrawal 1997) so that they can challenge institutions of power that perpetuate gender inequalities (Sahay 1998).

The problem though is that participation can take on different forms, from very shallow to very deep forms. This means that participation does not necessarily entail engaging in an empowering process. For example, if women are simply involved as participants in the implementation stage of a development programme and are left out of the very conceptualisation of the programme, then empowerment as a process is undermined. Hence, Agrawal (1997) notes that participation may hold little promise for women’s empowerment because ‘voice’ (in the sense for instance of mere agreement to a pre-planned development

project) does not automatically translate into empowerment. Similarly, Cornwall (2000:1325) stresses that participatory initiatives in fact can turn out to be driven by particular gendered even patriarchal interests because of a very minimalist understanding of the sheer depth of patriarchal systems. Cornwall (2000) gives reference to Joint Forest Management (JFM) as an example of participatory development applauded for its prowess with participation. However, feminists note serious shortcomings of JFM in that women are not central to the process (Agarwal 1997). In this regard, Mohanty (2002) questions whether women's real and authentic voices would even be heard if ever they were given space to articulate their concerns.

The Kribhco Indo-British Farming Project (KRIBP), a donor-funded programme, gives further critical context to the meaning of participation through showing the processes and dilemmas involved in implementing approaches. Based on participatory approaches, the programme is aimed at improving the livelihoods of poor families through such activities as soil and water conservation, irrigation, livestock development and credit management (Cooke and Kothari 2001). However, as noted by Mosse (1995), the project faced challenges because of relations of power, authority and gender. The knowledge of women was devalued and they were constrained in expressing their opinions. McGee (2001:106) adds that this is also exacerbated by the treatment of communities by NGOs as homogeneous and harmonious, which means that participatory approaches fail to recognise power differences and discern weaker voices among participants, hence thwarting any empowerment project.

In this understanding, it is only if participation is deep, wide-ranging and inclusive that an empowering process can arise. But it is also questionable to what extent empowerment can be delivered so to speak from outside, that is, by NGOs. As highlighted by Kesby (2005:2051), outside interventions potentially only facilitate empowerment, but they can also unintentionally disempower women even further. The very character of NGOs, such as their heavy dependence on donor funding, the need to conclude programmes and projects to justify further funding, and the overall short-term horizon within which they work, tends to go contrary to empowering women insofar as empowerment is a long-term, deep process which simply cannot be planned.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the emergence, development and significance of NGOs with regard to women's empowerment in the context of a broader discussion of patriarchy and empowerment. The chapter explained participatory development and its relation to empowerment with reference to the work of NGOs, and offered critical comments on the

capacity of NGOs to empower women. Particular emphasis was placed on the division between the domestic and public spheres in the context of patriarchy, and on the manner in which women are often trapped in the domestic sphere. This means that their increased involvement in the public sphere, without any transformation in the private sphere, does not necessarily translate into the empowerment of women in the domestic sphere. The patriarchal arrangements within the sphere of social reproduction would need to be addressed more directly. In this context, the following chapter discuss in more detail the participatory development projects that NGOs employ to enhance the status of, and empower, women.

Chapter 3: NGOs, Women and Participatory Initiatives

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of the participatory initiatives and interventions of NGOs with regard to poor and marginalised women is to enhance women's empowerment and development. By promoting sustainable livelihoods, deepening access to microfinance and resources, advocating for social justice and building capacities of women, NGOs seek to establish some degree of self-reliance for women, increase the ability of women to make decisions and strengthen the power over their lives. In pursuing these various initiatives based on participatory methodologies, NGOs seek to empower women. This chapter considers the various types of NGO participatory interventions that seek to enhance the overall status of women, and highlights the successes, challenges and failures of these initiatives.

3.2 Enhancing Livelihoods

Livelihoods refer to activities by which people make a living or a source of living (Ellis 2000). According to the International Institute of Sustainable Development, Sustainable Livelihoods (SL) are therefore concerned with people's capacities to generate and maintain their means of living and enhance their wellbeing across generations, that is, on an intergenerational basis (Balgis et.al. 2005). In pursuing livelihoods, such as through employment, informal trading or agriculture, households make use of available assets, including financial capital, human capital and social capital. A livelihood, at household level, is said to be sustainable when it can cope and recover from stresses and shocks (for example, loss of employment or death in the family) by at least maintaining its socio-economic wellbeing without depleting its asset base (Chambers and Conway 1992: 7).

Enhancing livelihoods is both the goal for participatory development initiatives as well as a specific type of project for development NGOs. Development NGOs seek to promote, develop and consolidate livelihoods to improve the socio-economic status of women. In relationship to women's empowerment, initiatives around sustainable rural (and urban) livelihoods is argued to reduce women's poverty as associated with basic needs deprivation, social isolation and dependency relationships vis-à-vis men (Chambers 1997). Poverty also leads to being voiceless, not heard and without power, and having access to resources and assets not only enables livelihood strategies but also deepens the capacities of women to enact agency in promoting their concerns and rights. (Canon 1999; Cornwall 2000).

Rural livelihood projects promoted by NGOs such as CARE International, Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture (CNFA) and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) often include farming, fishing, craft work, trading. The focus is often on both agricultural/agrarian and non-agricultural/non-agrarian livelihood activities, in recognition of the need for livelihood diversification to manage and spread risk. The focus on agricultural activities is regularly seen as crucial for women, given their major role in agricultural production (for instance, through providing labour) but their often marginal status when it comes to decision-making in agricultural lives (Boserup 1970; FAO 2010). NGOs focusing on enhancing agrarian livelihoods for women do so by promoting improved crop farming and livestock production methods as well as improved access to credit, farming inputs and agricultural assets. Bebbington (1999) highlights that access to assets (as almost engines for action) are crucial in conditioning the very possibility of livelihood strategies, with this being particularly important for women (Lakwo 2006).

Assets, according to Bebbington (1999: 2022), are not simply resources such as land, cattle and farming equipment that people use to build livelihoods, but they enhance people's capacity to be and to act. In other words, as indicated above, possessing assets not only allow for survival, adaptation and poverty alleviation. They also form a basis for agential power, including the power to act, maintain, challenge and even change the rules that govern the ownership, control, possession and use of resources (Giddens, 1979). Livelihoods as future life trajectories are undermined if a household remains unable to use assets as a springboard for further asset-building. However, the notion of a household needs to be disaggregated as there are constituted by gendered relations in which women are subordinate under local systems of patriarchy. In this light, though NGOs make efforts to enhance livelihoods at household level, the existence of patriarchal power may simply mean that ownership and possession of accumulating assets are monopolised by the senior male in the household, such as the husband (Sen 1997). In other words, women are not necessarily capacitated or empowered.

As Kabeer (1997) clearly shows, access to assets is gendered citing for example that married women often have limited asset portfolios as compared to that of their husbands, a problem which emanates from access limitations intertwined within marriage institutions that dictate how claims, rights, needs and obligations are defined and delimited. Furthermore, the pursuit of NGO livelihood programmes often rests on accepting the inscribed gendered division of labour, as they seek to simply reduce the asset and power differentials within the gendered arrangement (Lakwo 2006:56). Hence, enhancing livelihoods as a way of empowering women

remains somewhat problematic given that women have historically-generated and well-entrenched patriarchal constraints on asset portfolio, access qualifications and strategy options (Lakwo 2006:57).

Studies on NGO initiated livelihood interventions in various African countries refer to NGO attempts designed to improve access to agricultural technologies, improve agricultural input supply mechanisms, strengthen community-based groups and self-help capacity, and to promote women's self-help groups in order to improve livelihood security (Toner 2003). For instance, the Magu District Livelihood Security Programme and the Tanzakesho Programme in Mbozi District implemented by CARE International and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Tanzania provides cases of NGO initiatives targeted at improving the general status of women (Tonner 2003:778). However, evidence from Tanzania and other countries such as Nigeria indicate important shortcomings of these livelihoods programmes in empowering women, with Ogunlela and Mukhtar (2009) asserting that livelihoods may be only of significance in improving food production, food security and incomes for women. In other words, these programmes do not seemingly empower women. Thus, for Anyidonyo and Manuh (2010:4), women's empowerment should not merely entail livelihoods support by NGOs, but should also include challenging patriarchal discourses and ideologies which marginalise and discriminate against women so that women are capacitated to defend and exercise their rights both in the domestic and public spheres.

The failure to address the inhibiting power of patriarchal practices is depicted by most NGO-led vocational training programmes which often revolve around upgrading skills such as tailoring weaving, knitting or domestic activities such as hairdressing or cooking instead of raising economic capacities of women in a way that is both equitable and sustainable (Mitter 1986; Gordon 1996; Eade 1997:99). As in the case of NGOs in Rakai district of Uganda that have been rendering technical and financial assistance to handicrafts groups (Smith et al 2001:426). These skills are regarded as traditional roles of women, yet enhancing them does not emancipate women from being defined by oppressive reproductive roles (Federici 2012). Therefore, fostering domestication by privileging reproductive labour over women's other economic activities such as farming has negative implications on empowerment and gender equality (Eade 1997:99). If livelihood projects are authentically participatory, and they often are not, empowerment may be a by-product. But this is insufficient, as patriarchy needs to address more directly and explicitly the inhibiting power of patriarchal practices, as discussed in sections 3.4 and 3.5.

3.3 Micro-Credit Income-Generating Programmes

The growing recognition of the socio-economic disadvantages and poverty of rural women has propelled NGOs to consider interventions that help shift the sources of power (resources like land, labour and money) and, ultimately, transform the institutions and ideologies that justify and perpetuate gender inequality (Kabeer, 1994; Batliwala, 2007). NGOs behind certain interventions attribute the disempowerment of women to the social constructions of womanhood centred on biological and social reproductive roles, which restrict women's access to productive resources such as credit, land, training and education, and to decision-making structures and processes (Kabeer 1994; Anyidonyo and Manuh 2010:3). This is particularly the case with regard to interventions involving microfinancing and income generating activities. In discussing these in some detail, this section in effect illustrates one way in which NGOs seek to enhance the livelihoods of women in particular. They are of significance to this thesis because of the focus on restructuring the domestic sphere.

Women's income generating projects (IGPs) are seen as a major element of many NGO interventions in the domestic economic sphere (Kidder 1996; Millard 1996; Johnson and Rolgay 1997), with a stress often on micro financing. As Schreiner and Colombet (2001) note, micro financing more broadly is an attempt to improve access to small deposits and loans for poor households neglected by banks and other formal financial institutions. Microfinance is defined by Otero (1999) as the provision of financial services to low income poor people, with women being the common beneficiary as access to – and control over – incomes seen as crucial to women's empowerment (Moser 1991). The rationale behind microfinancing in relation to women's empowerment is that “advancement of economic power can facilitate and result in a sense of self-worth brought about by economic self-sufficiency and self-reliance” (Korten 1987:147). It is estimated that women make up close to 75 percent of microfinance customers (Despallier et al. 2009:5; Cull et al. 2007).

The proponents of IGPs argue that IGPs enable women to be economically active and productive while simultaneously continuing to engage in household work. They claim that the income generated by women has the potential to increase women's autonomy vis-à-vis men, change intra-household relationships and enable women to challenge male domestic violence. For example, economic security afforded by an IGP gave Dalit women in southern India the confidence to participate in social and political life (Eade 1997:103). According to Despallier et al. (2009:8), studies of household economics indicate that gender inequalities within households exist in part because of the insignificant contributions that women make towards

household cash flows. This situation leads to weakened bargaining powers of women. Therefore, access to microfinance, as a basis for income-generating projects, would help boost the contributions of women thus leading to an empowered status.

However, Piza-Lopez and March (1991) argue that the significance of IGPs for women is not very pronounced in terms of generated steady income flows. The types of projects pursued are often erratic and unsustainable but, further, they have been based on traditional feminine activities such as knitting. These activities are low risk, labour intensive and gender segregated, mainly geared towards survival rather than growth, profit and empowerment. In this way, NGOs support IGPs as short-term welfare projects and not as long-term development programmes. In addition, Lopez and March (1991) note that women say they fear making any success out of the IGPs, stating that their husbands may demand any profits. In fact, the study by Rahman (1999) of women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh shows that men often use women to access credit themselves (through their wives). Schuler et al. (1998) add that men tend to feel threatened by women's financial independence and thus use violence to ensure this submission. This all speaks to the claim that productive activities for women outside the domestic sphere does not automatically and un-problematically translate into enhanced status and power for women within this sphere.

At the same time, a considerable body of literature on the impact of income generating micro credit programmes has indicated some degree of positive impact both on household outcomes (such as income, wealth and asset accumulation) and on individual outcomes (like employment for women, and health and nutrition for children) (Baden and Green 1994; Pitt and Khandker 1996; Garikipati 2008). The studies reveal that these programmes have substantially encouraged women to engage in economically productive activities, allowed poor women to be more self-reliant and ultimately empowered women by enabling them to make economic decisions at household level (Steele et al. 1998). Though this evidence exists, doubts remain about the significance of these programmes for women's empowerment because empowerment has wide-ranging economic, political, social and cultural indicators (Parvin et al. 2004). It may be that the contradictory findings about programme outcomes for women exists because of the way in which a particular programme is implemented, with some more than others being more sensitive to addressing intra-household dynamics.

This again raises the question of the actual and potential linkages between income-generating projects for women and women's empowerment. Micro-finance impact studies with reference

to the empowerment of women in rural Asia and Africa indicate that credit programmes do not significantly improve women's position within households, if only because men continue to control all household finances (Goetz and Gupta 1996; Garikipati 2008; Kato and Kratzer 2013). For instance, in countries such as Ghana, Kenya and Tanzania, it has been argued that credit by itself cannot overcome patriarchal systems of control at the household and community levels as well as challenge exclusion of women from land ownership by local cultural arrangements (Ahmed et al. 2001:35; Kato and Kratzer 2013). According to Garikipati (2010), studies done in India show similar findings: lending improves household incomes, widens livelihood diversification and enhances labour market activity, but does little by way of empowering women. Other studies, by Goetz and Gupta (1996), Kabeer (2001), Mayoux (2001) and Rahman (1999), confirm that loans taken by women are used and controlled by men within their households, thus creating a new form of dependency and tension for women in which women now need to depend upon the husband or senior male members for loan repayments.

A key weakness, according to a study done by Parvin et al. (2004:50) in examining the performance of income generating projects supported by the Rural Women Employment Creation Project (RWECP) in empowering poor women in Bangladesh, is that these projects simply do not have a pronounced capacity building and empowerment for women approach. In this regard, post-RWECP involvement, women's participation in household decision-making around matters such as children's education and marriage remains the same. Importantly, this study distinguished between women in terms of marital status. The study thus broadly revealed that women living with their husbands become less empowered under RWECP as compared to widows, divorcees and abandoned women who have no male control to govern them within the household (Parvin et al 2004:60). This is important, as this thesis examines specifically married women.

For Baden and Green (1994), any significant outcomes for women from micro finance income generating projects requires a sustained focus on patriarchy in order to undercut and eliminate the socio-cultural constraints associated with systems of patriarchy. If this is not pursued, then there is the chance that they may consolidate existing gender-based power hierarchies as well as create new problems for women, including manipulation and co-option by dominant political interests, growing indebtedness, doubling and tripling of women's workloads and new forms of domestic violence (Cornwall and Goetz 2005; Burra et al. 2005; Fernando 2006). For instance, within rural households of Tanzania, women's unrestricted freedom to spend their

earnings is still a source of resentment on the part of their husbands and this has further increased the problem of wife beating (Bryceson 1999:184).

In this context, Cornwall et al. (2007:758) note some crucial loopholes in the rationale behind microcredit schemes for women. They point out for example that women (compared to men) are argued to be good credit risks because of high rates of repayment, less likely to misuse the loans and more likely to share benefits at household level with others, including caring for children. Women are said to be more conservative and frugal in their investment and are therefore a lower hazard risk than men (World Bank 2007:124; Armendariz and Morduch 2005; Despallier et al. 2011; Edwards and Hulme 1996). One major problem with this is that it feeds into existing conceptions of womanly perceptions and practices, hence reinforcing gendered stereotypes (of both women and men). A further problem, as indicated earlier, is the underlying assumption that increasing the role of women in households' productive activities leads to their empowered status within the household. Addressing both these problems entail a direct focus on patriarchal systems, practices and discourses. Unless challenged, their existence will continue to mediate the relationship between women's income generating activities and the outcomes of these activities in terms of household dynamics. In this light, pursuing advocacy and capacity-building for and by women becomes crucial.

3.4 Advocacy and Capacity-Building

Advocacy as it is practiced by NGOs is a systematic, democratic and organised effort to change, influence or initiate policies, laws, practices and behaviour so that disadvantaged citizens in particular benefit equally (Holloway 1998). Advocacy NGOs, as separate often from development NGOs engaging in sustainable livelihood promotion, seek to improve disadvantaged people's access to services and resources provided by the state (Jordan and Tuijl 2000; Coates and David 2002). This is particularly important for women, considering that in many developing countries they have long faced denial of rights and gender discrimination and indeed oppression. This discrimination is fundamentally driven by societal views, rooted in patriarchal discourses, of what it is to be a woman (Mishra and Sam 2016). Overall, women are economically and socially discriminated against, and they thus experience disadvantages in accessing land, employment, education and health services.

While many NGOs are, strictly speaking either development NGOs or advocacy NGOs, some NGOs seek to incorporate both development and advocacy into their projects. Whether strictly advocacy NGOs or not, they develop various strategies to influence the process of public policy

making and to shape the institutions and mechanisms involved in the implementation of development programmes or projects (Suharko 2007). The Treatment Action Campaign in South Africa is one example of an advocacy and rights based NGO that has been responsible for pressuring the government to make policy changes regarding its response to HIV and AIDS treatment since 1994 (Heywood 2005; Jones 2005). The rationale behind such health interventions for women is that improved health translates into improved participation in economically productive sectors as well as in the ability to negotiate for political and legal rights.

Other NGOs have been involved in influencing policy changes with regard to women's land rights. Although women constitute the majority of the agricultural workforce in developing countries (Boserup 1970; SOFA Team and Doss 2011), they only control about 19 percent of agricultural land holdings (FAO 2010). Greater access to such assets as land gives financial security to women and potentially improves their household bargaining power (Agarwal 1994, 1997; Haddad et al. 1997; Kabeer 1999; Anderson and Eswaran 2009). The improvement in bargaining power in turn reduces gender discrimination by giving women more control over decisions that affect their lives (such as child bearing) (Thomas et al. 2002; Narayan-Parker 2005; Ashraf et al. 2010; Aslam and Kingdon 2012; Doss 2013). Empirical evidence from the Northern Peruvian highlands and Nepal reflects the fact that improved land ownership, in certain cases at least, has allowed married women to terminate abusive marriages, combat discrimination and increase powers of negotiation within the household (Deerie 1990; Mishra and Sam 2016).

The Rural Association for Mutual Support of Mozambique in 1992 and the Uganda Women's Network and Land Alliance are examples of NGOs focusing on land and advocacy for women. The Rural Association for Mutual Support organisation was involved in the formulation of the new Land Act in which women were to be guaranteed that customary law would not be invoked to justify discriminatory practices around land (Kanji and Banga 2002). The Uganda Women's Network and Land Alliance was involved in advocating for the (female and male) co-ownership of land in a bid to address women's lack of land ownership (Asiimwe 2001). The strategies of these NGOs advocating for land rights and ownership for women ranged from public campaigns, legal education, public mourning and public hearings.

The overall claim is that advocacy by NGOs, by necessity confronts patriarchal systems head-on, thereby possibly opening up spaces which facilitate women's status, well-being and power.

However, in the case of land rights, Federici (2012:140) claims that land is only the material basis for women's empowerment and not empowerment per se. In other words, enhanced land access simply sets the conditions for possible empowerment of women, with any ensuing empowerment arising in large part from how women are able to renegotiate gendered relations within the household. Hence, considering and analysing household dynamics becomes crucial. It may be true, as Korten (1987:147) argues, that "advancement of economic power can facilitate and result in a sense of self-worth brought about by economic self-sufficiency and self-reliance". Nevertheless, women's participation in the public sphere (including socio-economic livelihoods based on land) and access to economic resources do not necessarily rescue women from male-dominated relationships prevailing in the domestic sphere (Sahay 1998). This ongoing problem is due to the naturalisation of women's reproductive roles and responsibilities within households through patriarchal discourses and practices (Federici 2012) and the inability to challenge this. Because of this, capacity building for women is seen as crucial.

Capacity building is now seen as central for maximising NGO impact and at making development sustainable and people centred (Eade 1997:1; James 1994). It is premised on the belief that people have the right to be authors of their own development and that denial of such a right gives way to poverty and suffering (Eade 1997). Eade and Williams (1995:9) thus define capacity building as strengthening people's capacity to determine their own values and priorities, to organise themselves and to act on their values and priorities. It is clearly the NGO focus which is most directly related to empowerment. NGO interventions need to identify and animate existing capacities of rural people, to examine blockages inhibiting capacity development and to develop further, long-term capacities. This is seen as particularly significant for women.

Of course, people have their own local capacities which exist independently of NGO interventions. But processes of capacitation need to take place if authentic, people-centred and participatory development is to occur (Eade 1997:15). The work of Sen (1997) has been essential in propagating a capacities approach to development. For women, in the context of patriarchy, this would entail building their capacity to bring positive changes in their personal lives, challenging gender oppression and discrimination, and subsequently transforming communities and societies (Eade and Williams 1995:9). For instance, this may take the form of social education through training session, workshops and other meetings (Kabeer 1997).

However, there is a seeming tension here. Insofar as being empowered entails building some degree of autonomous forms of capacity and empowerment (Eade 2007:632), NGO capacity-building activities may reinforce existing forms of power and exclusion (Stewart and Taylor 1995) because the NGO is the lead organiser and facilitator. This is most likely to occur in relation to building capacity amongst women, who are already the most marginalised rural grouping. Research on gender in institutions such as NGOs in fact shows that development agencies do not only mirror gender differences existing in wider society but also reproduce the gender differences by their oppressive social structures and everyday practices (Goetz 1996:3; Eade 1997:27). For example, basing capacity-building on formal training sessions and workshops may marginalise women, if only because their domestic and agricultural burdens in rural settings inhibit attendance and participation.

Nevertheless, capacity building in development programmes does not only entail involving marginalised peoples like women in practical capacity building activities for the purposes of meeting concrete needs (such as resources and skills), as it is also meant to provide spaces for people to express their feelings and experiences on a group basis so as to develop common understandings for acting against marginalisation and oppression (Rowlands 1997). It is concerned with motivating and enabling people to address the injustices that derive from discrimination and inequality, so that they can realise their full potential in a society that respects and values diversity (Eade 1997:50). For instance, the *Sempreviva Organizaco Feminista* (SOF) is a Brazilian NGO working around the health of women in poor communities. Like other NGOs, it transcends any simple distinction between development, advocacy and capacity building work. The project's impact is measured in part by the changes that have occurred in the health policies of the region through lobbying work, as well as by the increased ability of women to regulate their own fertility and sexuality for purposes of enhancing their health status (Faure 1994). In terms specifically of capacity building, the NGO seeks to give women a positive image of themselves by challenging gendered values and labels, and encourages their participation in a burgeoning social movement. In this way, the NGO does not reduce capacity building and mobilisation to formalistic and procedural arrangements like training workshops. This is certainly an example of a NGO which is serious about undercutting patriarchal discourses and practices.

A number of challenges exist. First of all, NGOs invariably have to address the question of culture which, in rural Africa, continues to be firmly rooted in patriarchal systems which inhibit women in entering the public sphere. In this sense, women are simply not expected to be in a

condition marked by capacity. Secondly, the very character of NGOs as institutional forms within the worldwide development system tends to undercut capacity building efforts. Because NGO work is marked by short-termism and the need to close projects in order to justify further funding from donors, any long-term capacity building is bound to be undermined. NGOs also have an imperative to control processes, such that allowing beneficiaries to pursue their own destiny through autonomous processes tends to go contrary to the logic of NGOs. Facilitating capacity building hence is an awkward process. NGOs in fact often create their own community-based organisations, including women's groups, which then become dependent upon and subordinate to them. When the NGO for any reason closes shop, often because of funding problems, the supposedly capacitated community organisation may collapse. This problem has been seen recently in the case of the closing of the NGO Masifunde in Grahamstown, which affected detrimentally the rural group it formed, namely, the Rural People's Movement which was largely composed of small-scale women farmers.

3.5 Conclusion

The women focused NGO interventions discussed in this chapter are all seen, by NGOs, as potentially empowering women through participatory methodologies. Participation of women in development projects such as livelihoods and income generating activities as well as in programmes around advocacy and capacity building are, from the NGO perspective, meant to contribute to women's empowerment in developing nations. However, these interventions often fail to achieve the objective of women's empowerment because of a failure to recognise the sheer complexity of systems of patriarchy and the ways in which they permeate all aspects of life, in both domestic and public spheres. To some extent, as argued in this chapter, NGOs undermine their own work by failing to challenge patriarchy in a direct and meaningful way, though this failure is not always intentional. The success of any intervention likely lies in the ability on the part of NGOs to understand the nuances of local systems of patriarchy, and then to strategically challenge these systems by identifying the cracks in the system and opening them up to change. For married women, as central to this thesis, the domestic dimensions of patriarchy are particularly crucial.

Chapter 4: NGOs in Communal Areas of Zimbabwe

4.1 Introduction

Zimbabwe is currently faced with socio-economic challenges, widespread poverty, unemployment and recurrent droughts, which have affected the general well-being of both urban and rural citizens. In the communal areas of Zimbabwe, women have been greatly affected by the prevailing problems of drought, unemployment and poverty which are compounded by other livelihood constraints arising from patriarchy and custom. These conditions provide a backdrop against which NGO activity and significance with reference to women in communal lands can be understood and analysed. This chapter discusses the socio-economic and cultural conditions of women in communal areas. It then analyses women-focused NGO interventions in communal areas, including livelihoods and income-generating programmes and other projects meant to empower women through participatory methodologies. In this way, the chapter provides a link between the preceding chapter on NGOs and women broadly and the next chapters which focus specifically on the Amalima programme in Gwanda.

4.2 Women's positions and conditions in communal areas

After the war of liberation in the 1970s against the Rhodesian regime, and women's active participation in the liberation struggle, it seems that there was a disruption of long-standing gendered relations in the country (Kwinje 1999; Essof 2013). But this was to be just a temporary aberration of the prevalence of patriarchal systems in Zimbabwe. Indeed, women in communal areas of Zimbabwe in particular are deeply affected by the current economic crisis facing Zimbabwe. Women are faced with poverty, unsustainable livelihoods (in part due to unstable rainfall patterns), lack of access to land in their own right (as well as to agricultural assets), and inadequate social services such as health and education. Women in rural Zimbabwe constitute a considerable portion of the Zimbabwean population living below the poverty line (IFAD 2001; Kinsey 2010). Many of the disabling conditions in communal areas also affect men, but the country's adherence to a predominantly patriarchal culture, which recognises women by their reproductive roles (Chitsike 1995; Tichagwa 1998), adds further burdens onto the shoulders of specifically women. This is despite the fact that, under the 1982 Legal Age of Majority Act, women were granted equal rights (Kwinje 1999; Essof 2013). However, in the

infamous Magaya case, the Supreme Court in 1999 ruled that women should be considered as juveniles under Zimbabwean customary law (Kwinjeh 1999:18).

One of the key challenges is that customary law and practices, as formulated under colonial conditions, are deeply patriarchal and these continue to govern and mark communal spaces including in relation to land tenure, access, possession and usage. The chieftainship system thus plays a key role reproducing patriarchal geographies over and above the scale of the male-controlled household (Kesby 1999:38). For example, in practice, traditional chiefly leaders are involved in land allocation although the Rural District Council (RDC) – the local democratic authority (PlanAfric 2000) – is officially tasked with this responsibility.

Under customary law, married women in particular have access to land through their spouses because men have always been culturally viewed as landowners (Chitsike 1995; Kambarami 2006). This is a crucial issue given that land and access to land is an important basis for both agro-based and non-agricultural livelihoods (Nyapokoto 2005). In this light, communal area women – as agricultural labourers – toil on land over which they do not have primary rights and produce what they do not control. In fact, they are often the main household-based agricultural labourers. In addition, based on the patriarchal rules and practices governing communal area spaces, women have extra (gender-defined) roles and responsibilities with reference to the homestead (Meena 1992). Thus, in rural Zimbabwe, women are customarily responsible for household chores and childcare activities, along with labour intensive agricultural tasks such as land preparation, weeding and grain threshing. Typically, alternative livelihood activities in communal areas, such as informal trading, is uncommon for women and may indeed be frowned upon by their husbands. In this sense, it is difficult for married women to acquire independent sources of income beyond the control of husbands (Mazingi and Kamidza 2011).

In effect, men in communal areas control the land as well as all unfixed agricultural assets (for example, ploughs) owned at the household level. They are the unquestioned heads of communal areas, because of this, they almost automatically control the means of production and have authority over decisions around agricultural production, including what to plant, where and when. In instances where women try to challenge the intra-household gender injustice, they are sometimes accused of failing in their womanly duties and going against prevailing marriage norms (Chitsike 1995:19). Women may in fact simply comply with the dictates of the husband, even if abused physically, because they do not have autonomous access

to means of production and livelihoods. The case of unmarried women is often more troublesome. Young single women, widows and divorcees may find it difficult to access any land at all or to maintain what land they had when married. Though communal areas involve a deeply patriarchal setting, there is considerable variation in the types of relationships existing between particular wives and husbands, with some husbands more willing to delegate authority and assets to their wives.

4.3 NGO significance in women empowerment in the communal areas

Communal areas have a deeply entrenched patriarchal system, including chiefs and household patriarchs, which subordinates women within both the domestic and public spheres, with the latter understood in terms of the agricultural way of life. In the case of both the domestic and public spheres, men are elected to positions of authority based on patriarchal norms. In this context, many NGOs working in communal areas now recognise the significance of promoting sustainable development and socio-economic change in a manner which prioritises communal women. Successful interventions to strengthen women's economic activities and political rights are seen to require addressing patriarchal and other constraints. NGOs thus focus on addressing the concerns of women and using comprehensive approaches that seek to address the multiple sources of women's disempowerment (Chinake 1997).

Given the heightened crisis in Zimbabwe, including in communal lands where traditional systems of governance are still in place and underdevelopment is entrenched, development and advocacy NGOs such as the World Vision, Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture (CNFA) and Zimbabwe Women's Resources Centre Network (ZWRCN) have been active over a number of years in trying to bring women's interests to the fore. At the same time, NGOs have been criticised for failing to be significant catalysts in empowerment and development in relation to the socio-economic needs and political rights of communal women living in poverty (Julia 1999:19). Thus, as this thesis does, offering a critical analysis of NGO programmes such as the Amalima (for example, in facilitating access to incomes, strengthening livelihoods as well as improving nutrition and health for women in Matabeleland districts) is important.

Many of the issues addressed by NGOs with regard to women in Zimbabwe relate back to the themes discussed in the previous chapter, including efforts around economic empowerment which prioritise greater access to income for women (Mishi and Kapingura 2012). There is also some emphasis on women's reproductive roles by way of fertility reduction technologies and the promotion of women's welfare through improved health and education (Mehra 1997).

These interventions arise because of the social marginalisation of communal women and ongoing problems for communal women in terms of access to sources of income such as the formal labour market (Mishi and Kapingura 2012), with these challenges rooted in the patriarchal assumption of the public sphere as a man's place (Tichagwa 1998). These and other NGO projects amongst communal women are pursued on the basis of participatory approaches, (Kesby 1999), while also recognising that participatory methodologies do not automatically lead to the empowerment of women (Kabeer 1997). In the following sub-sections, I detail NGO work in communal areas of Zimbabwe in terms of the same themes presented in chapter three.

4.3.1 Participatory livelihoods strategies

In most cases, participatory development initiatives in rural Zimbabwe build on existing community livelihoods. These livelihoods often involve activities such as farming, basketry, livestock production and fishing. In relation to participatory interventions, understanding first how people live in an area makes it easier to learn how people cope under prevailing cultural and socio-economic conditions, which NGOs then use in trying to design participatory techniques conducive to improving the status of women. In participatory livelihoods programmes in Zimbabwe, emphasis is placed (at least officially) on women as the designers and implementers of development activities (Kesby 2005). However, at the operational level within the community, it is often the case that these initiatives tend to be driven by the interests of a powerful men (Kesby 2005). This is seen as part of broader problem amongst NGOs in Zimbabwe, with the already-marginalised often peripheral to their projects. The devolution of Natural Resources Management (NRM) in Zimbabwe is said to provide an example of how development projects tend to exclude the least powerful. In cases where NRM promoted development projects, these were pursued with the more privileged ones in the community (for example, amongst irrigation scheme farmers in the Communal Areas Management for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE)) (Shackleton et al. 2002: 2).

NGOs such as CNFA, ORAP, Dabane Trust, World Vision and Africare endeavour to enhance sustainable livelihoods among communal farmers in Zimbabwe while building upon their strengths and local knowledge. The 'Give a Dam' project of 1995, born from a consortium of NGOs, is an example of the ways in which NGOs seek to build resilience around livelihoods by constructing dams to enable agricultural livelihood activities to continue even during periods of drought (PlanAfric 2000:78). However, questions arise regarding issues of women representation in the recipient committees and the extent to which women fully participated in the NGO dam-related activities, such that patriarchal norms may not have been fully

recognised. A Food Security Project in Chivi was likewise aimed at promoting food security for small-scale farmers in certain drought-prone and arid communal lands (Charman 2008). This particular project has been applauded for the strides taken in facilitating the participation of women in the local farmers' clubs as well as the inclusion of women in key leadership positions within the clubs (Murwira et al. 2000:13). Thus the Chivi project has been celebrated as an example of how sustainable livelihoods can be built through strengthening entitlements of men and especially women. In a study to show how women had benefited from the intervention, Murwira et al. (2000:13) cited that women are now earners and no longer rely on income received from their husbands working in urban areas. However, again doubt is cast on whether women empowerment was actually achieved in this project as the NGO adopted the non-confrontational approach towards existing patriarchal traditions (Charman 2008). Reluctance to confront such local traditions may impede the full participation of women in NGO projects as well as on the benefits that come with participation, and this is also reflected within the CAMPFIRE initiative which has been undertaken in many communal areas (Katerere 2001). These CAMPFIRE projects are designed to allow communal farmers to benefit from the wildlife in their area, through for instance fees charged to hunters, but the extent to which women in particular benefit has been questioned.

Even though participatory livelihoods initiatives posit hope for women's empowerment, livelihood opportunities distributed locally are often influenced by informal structures of social dominance and power within the community. In the case of Zimbabwean communal areas, there are ongoing assumptions about the legitimacy and relevance of patriarchal power (Tichagwa 1995). Therefore, like elsewhere, these participatory livelihoods programmes often fail to challenge male domination within households and the community more broadly (Tichagwa 1995). This is because traditional organisational structures, as constructed under colonialism and still prevailing in post-independence Zimbabwe, are deeply hierarchical and even authoritarian in character, such that ordinary women are used to doing what they are told rather than taking the initiative and challenging those in positions of authority (PlanAfric 2000:83).

4.3.2 Microfinancing income generating initiatives

NGOs in communal areas have been involved in giving financial assistance to individual women and groups of women in promoting income generating projects (IGPs). Development facilitators amongst NGOs in Zimbabwe argue that one of the impediments in the empowerment of women is poverty, due in part to their lack of economic self-sufficiency. In

addition, women in Zimbabwe face constraints in accessing credit as formal microfinance institutions demand collateral in the form of property, yet it is the male head who may be able to offer such collateral for purposes of a loan (Julia 1999:26; Osirim 2001). As a result, women often turn to informal money lenders who charge excessive interest repayment rates. For this reason, a number of NGOs in Zimbabwe have sought to address these challenges by extending financial services to women with the hope of establishing economic self-reliance. Although empowerment in any significant sense has not been achieved, NGOs at times have positively contributed in improving the socio-economic status of women particularly through microfinance (Ziswa and Else 1991; Julia 1999).

The Zimbabwe Women Finance Trust (ZWFT), a micro credit NGO alongside the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) are examples of financial institutions that have sought to provide financial assistance to rural women involved in IGPs (Julia 1999; Mpofu et al. 2013). Projects promoted and micro-financed by these NGOs generally involve small-scale projects like poultry, vegetable plots, piggery, knitting, carpentry, and a range of general crafts such as weaving, jewellery making and pottery. The broad aim is to broaden women's opportunities through the promotion of access to and participation in economic processes. According to Ziswa and Else (1991) and Julia (1999), the ZWFT has positively affected women by developing strategies to reduce women's poverty as part of a process of realising women's empowerment. The organisation has thus facilitated women's efforts to independently, meet their basic needs. The overall rationale behind microfinancing in Zimbabwe is that it has the objectives of financial and social inclusion of the disadvantaged groups in society (RBZ 2011), thereby facilitating the impact of women on larger social structures (Julia 1999).

However, microfinance impact assessments with reference to women's empowerment in Zimbabwe indicate that in fact the loans have not significantly benefited poor rural women as they only enhance overall income and expenditure of the household (Tshuma and Selome 2014; Mpofu et al. 2013). This implies that the income generated by women may not remain in their hands because of the existence of the male-dominated household. Further, even if controlled by the woman, the income generated is often minimal. For instance, the beneficiaries of the Women Development Fund loans cited that the loans received for the projects pursued simply did not provide a strong basis for any accumulation at least that was the conclusion in a study carried out in Umguza District (Tshuma and Selome 2014). Another problem with promoting IGPs, as a way of empowering women, is that the NGOs in Zimbabwe often do not question the gendered division of labour, such that women beneficiaries are channelled into what are

traditionally regarded as 'woman projects'. Such projects tend to reinforce rather than challenge women's identification with reproductive and household roles, which are oppressive in their own right (Osirim 2001).

Chitsike (2000:72) claims that women in Zimbabwe are not expected to be significant sources of household income and that women are socialised to believe that making large amounts of money is undignified for them. Women may be permitted to have small amounts of money and, in cases where they generate significant amounts, they may be inclined to hide it or surrender it to their husband. This is prevalent in communal areas because of marital arrangements in which all that a married woman owns belongs to her husband, because the payment of bride price allows men to in a sense own their wives (Chitsike 2000). Unless such patriarchal practices are questioned by NGOs, then micro-finance schemes and income-generating projects for women are bound to lead to tensions at household level between husband and wife.

4.3.3 Advocacy and Capacity-Building

Ideally, NGO advocacy gives the poor and disadvantaged groups the knowledge and tools to influence public policies and their implementation, and thereby address social injustice issues and structural causes of inequity, and to defend human rights and to promote democracy. In the case of Zimbabwe, a number of NGOs have sought to be advocates specifically for women, including communal women. NGOs such as Zimbabwe Women Resources Centre Network (ZWRCN) have focused on issues that infringe on the general rights of women by gathering information to make women's situation visible, as well as becoming involved in mobilisation and forms of collective resistance to policies and practices that are harmful to women. The ZWRCN founded in 1980 became the umbrella organisation for gender equality in the country (Moghadam 1997:35) and has been responsible for documenting the experiences and status of women in Zimbabwe for advancement and empowerment purposes (Moghadam 1997:35; Osirim 2003; Chinake 1997). For example, the organisation has been active in exposing domestic violence against women and enabling the support and provision of shelter for battered women through the Musasa Project founded in 1988 (Osirim 20003).

The ZWRCN alongside the Zimbabwe Women Rights Lawyers Association (ZWRLA) have raised concerns about the legal status of women (such as access to land, estates and inheritance) and cultural injustices (ZWRCN 1994). Historically, land policies in Zimbabwe have tended to be gender blind, entitling landholdings to men and leaving married women disadvantaged

(Jacobs 2002: 892; Bhatasara 2011). Yet land ownership, or at least possession, is crucial for communal women's empowerment in that it potentially strengthens their decision-making power over production, along with access to an income source, security, credit and other resources (Jacobs 2002). Thus in the 1990s, with pressure from NGOs such as the Women's Lobby Group, the government agreed to set aside portions of land for women although priority was given to unmarried women. Despite the efforts of these NGOs, even under fast track land reform from the year, women remain disadvantaged in terms of land access. Though a certain percentage of fast track land was allocated to women, the vast amount has gone to men. The government introduced a permit system for plots on fast track farms and, in the case of married couples, the permit was typically in the husband's name. Though officially it could be in the names of both the husband and wife, wives often allowed the permit to be issued in their husband's name so as to keep the peace within the household. Many of these couples had moved from communal areas, reflecting the deeply-patriarchal attitudes of men in these areas. To some extent, NGOs in Zimbabwe have been able to bring communal women and their issues into the public sphere, but they have not been able to transcend deeply rooted patriarchal practices within the domestic sphere of social reproduction.

The obstacles associated with NGO projects in ensuring an enhanced status for communal women in Zimbabwe has led, as elsewhere, to attempts at capacity building for women (Ullernbeg 2009). This is based on the claim that when marginalised people particularly women are capacitated they are able to deal with cultural and socio-economic injustices that derive from gender norms or any other form of discrimination, so that they can realise their full potential in the community in which they exist. This though entails directly addressing the household and patriarchal structures in communal areas.

For example, in 1996, the NGO called Africa Community Publishing Development Trust (ACPDT), pursued the Leadership Capacity Building Project for Wealth Creation and Development in Simchembu and Nenyunga wards in Gokwe North, Zimbabwe. This capacity building project was designed to facilitate communal people's recognition that they can voice their opinions and influence the local development process (PlanAfric 2000:83). The trainees of this project managed to write petitions to the responsible authorities with regard to a forty-year-old problem of elephants in the areas and the management of the local CAMPFIRE project. They were able to become more self-reliant by raising ZWD 8000 from local resources towards building a multi-purpose community centre at which to hold workshops, run a pre-school, establish a resource centre and set up an art gallery (PlanAfric 2000). Though the

project did not have a specific focus on women, it was reflective of a participatory initiative focused on building community-based capacities.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the role of NGOs in communal lands in Zimbabwe with particular emphasis on a variety of projects which focus on enhancing the wealth, status and power of women. Typically, these projects do not involve deep participatory methodologies. Like NGOs elsewhere, NGOs tend to come to communal areas with pre-conceived development programmes which are almost imposed on local communities. For instance, World Vision Zimbabwe pursues what it calls Area Development Programmes which are applied in a significant number of communal areas, with local communities mainly involved in the implementation stage of these programmes. Most NGOs working in communal areas now engage in gender mainstreaming, in which gender is supposed to be integrated into each and every programme and project. But, given the entrenched character of patriarchal systems in Zimbabwean communal areas, these mainstreaming programmes need to be more forceful. One of the challenges in this regard is that access by NGOs to villages in communal areas requires consultation with, and approval by, local headmen and chiefs. Any attempt to undercut patriarchy ultimately challenges their patriarchal-based power. Thus NGOs continue to experience significant challenges in penetrating and challenging the traditional systems embodying male domination, in trying to improve the overall status of communal women. Meaningful empowerment through participation of women in NGO programmes and projects can be achieved only through overcoming cultural barriers around patriarchy. In this context, the following two chapters provide a critical understanding of the Amalima programme in Gwanda communal area.

Chapter 5: Understanding the Amalima Programme in Empowering Married Women in Rural Gwanda, Zimbabwe

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the work of the Amalima Development Food Assistance Programme, a United States International Development (USAID) funded programme implemented by Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture (CNFA) within the rural households of Gwanda in Matabeleland South Province. The focus is on understanding the significance of the programme in empowering married women within households in rural Gwanda. Gwanda district lies in agro-ecological region five, characterised by low erratic rainfall, high temperatures and long dry spells. Due to this situation, drought is a common phenomenon in the district. The agro-ecological region in which the district lies makes crop cultivation difficult and communal area residents turn to cultivating drought-resistant crops and breeding livestock as their main livelihoods. Women are more actively involved in local economic activities than men. The Amalima programme amongst Gwanda communal households focuses on lessening the burden of women through strengthening their livelihoods, capacity building programmes, promoting nutrition and health practices, and village lending schemes. This thesis sought to investigate this diverse range of NGO interventions in Gwanda in relation to improving the status and power of specifically married women. This chapter gives a brief overview of the socio-economic and cultural context of Gwanda rural district before setting out and examining a certain number of Amalima projects in relation to women, including conservation agriculture and income-generating projects. The following chapter considers other Amalima projects.

5.2 Gwanda Rural District

Gwanda District is located in Matabeleland Province with a total population of 117,523 and it is divided into twenty-four rural wards. Gwanda is located in agro-ecological zone V, with this zone being the most arid one in Zimbabwe (Bhebhe et al 2013). There are low annual rainfalls, seasonal droughts, and dry spells occurring during the rainy season. Food insecurity is high and formal employment is low, with livestock production and 'resistant crop' cultivation constituting the agro-based livelihoods in the area. Activities such as vending in mopane worms (*amacimbi*), eco-stoves (clay stoves), bricks, reed mats and second hand clothes make up the non-agricultural livelihoods, particularly for women (though these are erratic and not very profitable).

Many households are female headed as local men have tended to migrate for work to neighbouring South Africa. This has been a long-term trend, including during the economic structural adjustment programme (ESAP) of the 1990s and the controversial fast track land reform programme (FTLRP) from the year 2000 (Makumbe 2009). The ESAP was adopted by the government in 1991 to ease the economic crisis but it had mainly negative effects including urban retrenchments and undercutting of agricultural support by the state for communal area households (Horn 1994; Osirim 1998a). Fast track also had negative impacts, particularly considering that the state's rural attention was now drawn to the fast track farms and not communal agricultural production. As such, some of the men continue to work outside Gwanda, with married women (as de facto heads) engaging in often survivalist modes of livelihoods to maintain some level of household well-being. However, other men alongside their wives live in Gwanda and engage in agricultural and non-agricultural activities that have been supported by NGOs such as Organisation for Rural Progress (ORAP).

Like any other district in Zimbabwe, the land title in the communal areas in Gwanda are held by the state, and any right to reside and cultivate in the area is conditional on historical presence in the area as confirmed by chiefs and headmen. The Gwanda RDC certainly has the formal power over new land allocations but, in practice, traditional leaders (as men) play an important role in validating land allocations. Like elsewhere, this traditional system rooted in so-called customary authority and practice bestows primary land-holding rights to men, and women only have access to land by virtue of being married or perhaps as an inheritance from their husbands or through their family of origin. Married women in Gwanda communal areas, though playing an active role in crop cultivation, do not have primary rights to land; and, culturally, they are only allowed to own small livestock such as goats and chickens. Cattle tend to be attached to men.

Again, as seen in other parts of communal Zimbabwe, cultural customs (as part of patriarchal arrangements) have tended to legitimise women's secondary status in Gwanda communal lands. The women have been married through lobola or bride price, and this has given men a range of rights and freedoms which lead to the subordination of women (as almost acquired property by men). Married women who appear to display some form of agency are treated with suspicion by men, particularly when they seek to express themselves publicly. However, how this culturally-supported gendered arrangement exists in practice (including possible deviations from it) needs to be unpacked, as I seek to do with relation to my study in Gwanda.

Any NGO which seeks to bring meaningful change to the lives of married women in Gwanda communal lands clearly needs to address the historically-entrenched customary systems based on patriarchy.

5.3 Amalima Programme – An Agenda for Gender Equality

The work of the Amalima programme in Gwanda focuses on strengthening livelihoods through a variety of initiatives such as promoting nutrition and health, Village Savings and Lending schemes (VS&L), capacity-building activities, strengthening resistance through disaster risk reduction methods as well as conservation agriculture and income generating projects. These activities are embodied within three strategic objectives, which are: household access to, and availability of, food (i.e. food security); community resilience to shocks; improved nutrition and health among pregnant and lactating females, boys and girls under two improved (Appendix 12, Document 1). The Amalima programme works under a consortium of six NGOs, including the Manoff Group, Africare, International Medical Corps (IMC), Organisation for Rural Progress (ORAP) and Dabane Trust. But the consortium is led by one NGO, namely CNFA, and together the six NGOs work in cooperation with each other although specialising in different areas (see Appendix 12, Document 4, for the consortium details). The programme also has linkages with government ministries and departments such as Public Service, Labour and Social Services Environment, Health Department and the Nutrition Department of the Ministry of Health and Child Care (MoHCC).

The Amalima programme is funded by USAID and is currently operating in nine wards in rural Gwanda, and it targets more than 80% of the women in these wards (Appendix 12, Document 1, 2 and 4). The programme was started in June of 2013 and is scheduled to close in June of 2018. It draws its name from the Ndebele word for the social contract by which households come together to help each other engage in productive activities such as land cultivation, livestock tending and asset building. The programme builds on existing communal initiatives in order to achieve its three strategic objectives, as noted above. The ultimate goal of the Amalima is to reduce food insecurity and improve household incomes for the purpose of sustainable livelihoods, while at the same time bringing about gender equality. Fostering women's empowerment and gender equality are crosscutting components that underpin all the activities of Amalima (Appendix 12, Document 1). The Amalima programme is one of several NGO initiatives aimed at challenging the prevailing status quo in Gwanda in order to empower women.

Gender mainstreaming is hence a crosscutting component of the entire project which is integrated into all its activities. For the NGOs involved, gender mainstreaming helps in assessing the different implications for women and men of any planned action undertaken within the programme. Mainstreaming aims to ensure that gender perspectives, and attention to the goal of gender equality, are central to the design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all economic and societal spheres to ensure that women and men benefit equally. Consequently, it supposedly helps to empower women and achieve gender equality (Appendix 12, Document 3 and 8).

Despite these commitments and the activities of the Amalima, it is clear that women still suffer from gender role stereotyping at household and community levels, which makes women dependent upon their male counterparts including absent ones (Appendix 1, Interview 1, August 12, 2017). Indeed, it is hard to understand how a five-year NGO programme is expected to make any genuine contribution to the lives of women in Gwanda, given the entrenched patriarchal practices in Gwanda. The presence and challenge of patriarchy is quite insidious (Mungwini 2007:130) and is embedded in the deep structures of Gwanda communal areas generally and households in particular. The key point of this thesis though is to analyse critically the gendered effects and outcomes of the Amalima for married women in Gwanda.

For instance, the Amalima promotes labour saving technologies for women (and for men) in the hope of reducing communal area workloads and enable the rural poor to fully participate in other development activities. It also tries to leverage the pre-existing social capital of collective action (most often found amongst women) in order to build stronger, trust-based relationships between women to promote improved practices, such as breastfeeding, household and community nutrition gardens, conservation agriculture, and village savings and lending (VS&L) groups. Amalima women's groups, including VS&L and Community Health Clubs (CHCs), are meant to bring together their social and financial capital so as to expand their objectives to include income generating or productive activities, including poultry and goat production and horticulture gardens (Appendix 12, Document 1). To support the inclusion of men in the programme, efforts are made to integrate them into health, nutrition and VS&L interventions (which are dominated by women) with the ultimate goal of increasing male support in household and child rearing activities (hence lessening the burden on women). Traditionally, local men have shunned taking part in duties that are regarded as for women-only (such as child minding, fetching wood or water and weeding), so it is hoped that Amalima will restructure the sphere of social reproduction and question the broader gendered division

of labour even within agricultural activities. Through these efforts, the Amalima supports women to have increased decision-making powers and enhanced access to and control over incomes, and encourages men to take increasing responsibilities for both productive and reproductive activities.

5.4 Amalima and Women's Empowerment in Gwanda

The Amalima programme in Gwanda seeks to promote gender equality and women empowerment through the strategic objectives of improved access to and availability of food, strengthening community resilience to shocks, and improved nutrition and health. All this entails capacity-building activities such as social education and trainings, and concerted efforts to help Gwanda communities and households to strengthen their ability to help themselves, or to become more self-reliant. This capacity building has a gendered component as well because, though focusing mainly on women, Amalima seeks male involvement in the projects that are traditionally viewed as 'womanly' or 'feminine'. Capacity building is encouraged among men as a way of transforming their patriarchal notions and values around womanhood and manhood. The rationale is to achieve equality by putting, to some extent, men at the centre of change towards equality, at the same time relieving women of both productive and reproductive role burdens. This would enable women to move beyond short term subsistence activities to engage in long term development programmes that would in turn empower them in the community as well as within their households. In the following sub-sections, I examine some of Amalima's projects.

5.4.1 Conservation Agriculture and Farming

Since 2013, the Amalima has put forward a range of activities to promote conservation agriculture. Conservation agriculture is a broad term, which encompasses activities such as minimum and zero tillage, tractor powered, animal powered and manual tilling methods, integrated pest management, and integrated soil and water management. Conservation agriculture (CA) tends to be used interchangeably with conservation farming (CF) in the programme, though at times the latter is issued to refer more specifically to the practice of using small farm implements such as the hand hoe to create planting basins. Overall, then, CA is considered as any tillage sequence that minimises or reduces the loss of soil and water and achieves at least 30% soil cover using crop residues (Mazvimavi and Twomlow 2009).

The Amalima programme is particularly interested in what is called 'bund' farming technology which seeks to maximise water retention. This involves the construction of contours and pits,

with pits being constructed as water infiltration points. Grass is placed around the pits to reduce surface runoff and stones are put along the contours. Terracing along the contours are also accompanied by the planting of multi-purpose trees, and mulching is undertaken using crop residue (stalks), grass and mopane leaves. The process is quite repetitive and definitely labour intensive, but it is meant to bring about higher crop yields in semi-arid Gwanda (Appendix 12, Document 6). The Amalima encourages the use of local hand tools for crop production, basing this on the notion of using available resources and knowledge, and reducing the costs of purchasing farm implements on the part of communal households. It does however also at times promote mechanised agriculture, particularly for women by facilitating access to labour saving agricultural technologies such as threshing machines and jab planters, in order to relieve women from manual labour, since women provide the main labour for agricultural activities. Typically, such assets are considered as male assets.

As a way of building capacities amongst beneficiary households and encouraging other households, the programme facilitators together with household farmers hold CA field days once every calendar month. These field days are marked with training sessions, where one of the most successful lead farmers within the Amalima households is chosen by community members to present his field of crops to the surrounding community. Local farmers are thus openly invited to come and hear the success stories of their peers, with the aim of inspiring them to take up the successful conservation agriculture methods and also become more productive. Successful farmers are, as well, given farming inputs by the programme to motivate them further (Appendix 1, Interview 6, August 25, 2017).

Three of the male interviewees mentioned that CA and CF more specifically has changed their lives positively in the sense that they have learnt new farming techniques and improved their grain storage techniques without any major capital expenses. As a result, they always have sufficient food for own consumption and for selling, in which they claim that the wives attain the profit for their own usage (Appendix 1, interview 20, 24 and 25, August 31, September 15 2017). They added that this has, to the better, changed their relations at home. For example, one of them mentioned that when there is food there is peace and joy at home; further, he and his wife now work as a team such that, when his wife provides input into the household decision-making process, he listens (Appendix 1, Interview 20, August 31, 2017). One of the wives to the husbands interviewed who is also a conservation agriculture farmer applauded the way in which the Amalima field officers trained – and demonstrated CF to – them, to the extent that there has been a great improvement in their livelihoods as a household: “*The incredible*

and affordable 'Amalima kind of CF' has empowered me to the point that I made a decision to resign from my job at Telone where I worked for fifteen years as a finance officer to focus on livestock breeding, gardening and crop cultivation", she said (Appendix 1, Interview 9, August 28, 2017). She added that this is because she now has accurate information about existing crop markets, proper technical and physical support, and finance for pursuing her chosen initiatives.

It seems then that CF has established household food security among Amalima households. One of the lead mothers interviewed expressed joy with this new kind of CA, in which hoes are used to make planting basins, for a number of reasons:

I am very pleased with this new way of farming because our area is very dry, and we do not have farming equipment. All these years I have had to wait for my neighbours to finish ploughing and borrow their ox drawn plough and oxen. We start making basins and weeding in July [under CF]. This type of farming does not disrupt the soil structure, or composition of natural biodiversity. The trainings I get from Amalima covers even land preparation methods, fertiliser application, planting, pest management and post-harvest handling.

She further expressed how this had dramatically changed her life: *"Honestly since I started implementing this I have enough food to feed the whole ward; as we talk, I've already prepared my planting basins and seedlings. The way I relate with my husband has since changed; our relationship is now based on respect and mutual understanding because I am a wise woman"* (Appendix 1, Interview 15, September 15, 2017).

Although such positive outcomes are articulated in Gwanda, some interviewees seemed to be less satisfied with CF, citing the cumbersome, labour intensive and lengthy character of the planting process as compared to their previous planting activities. One of the women argued that the recommended dimensions of 15cm for the width, length and depth of pits, the application of manure as fertiliser among other procedures was simply too much for her on top of her duties as a wife, mother, cook and cleaner at home (Appendix 1, Interview 11, September 9, 2017). Two of the women stated that, although the practice is cost effective, it also involves a number of practices, measurements and routines that are difficult to be grasped by those with low educational attainment (Appendix 1, Interview 11 and 16, September 9 and 15, 2017). They indicated that they could not therefore talk of any empowerment when they are failing to yield the desired results from CF. In doing so, they seem to be comparing themselves to the experiences of other women who have obtained higher crop yields, food security and consequently more sustainable livelihoods, given them a sense of being empowered. It appears

that the married women who have yielded positive results from CF have moved away from being wholly dependent on their husbands for economic support. For these women, their success under CF comes with economic self-sufficiency and independence, as they sometimes make their own money by teaching and helping others to implement CA.

Despite the fact that CF at least potentially increases yields, the actual results vary across households as not all households implement CF practices fully because of, for instance, its labour intensity or the failure to understand the intricacies fully. Failure to pursue CA in its entirety means that some households, and women in these households, revert back to the long-established ways of planting and cropping in Gwanda, even if this means reduced yields. The claim is made by some women that food secure households may hold out the promise of emancipating women from being harassed for being lazy and unproductive by their husbands at home. As one of the lead female farmers stated: *“I hear other couples fighting over food; fights increase with drought. Maybe if CF was not yielding results, I would also be quarrelling with my husband.as they say a hungry man is an angry man which means a well fed man is a happy man”* (Appendix 1, Interview 15, September 15, 2017). In unpacking this quotation further, it is clear that this argument simply reproduces the association between women and social reproduction, with the women in the domestic sphere there to serve the male patriarch. Increased food security at household level alone does not necessarily shift intra-household relations.

For the Amalima in Gwanda, CA also incorporates livestock production and management since livestock is a major livelihood in Gwanda. Farmers in the arid region of Matabeleland often face challenges in accessing water and grazing land to maintain and nourish their livestock. Other activities are also required to maintain the health of the herd, such as dehorning, castration, vaccination, dosing and other treatments. One of the male lead farmers interviewed said that, prior to the Amalima, they relied upon the services of the agricultural extension office of the government for these livestock services. Doing so was costly but also time-consuming in that they would travel long distances at times to seek for such services (Appendix 1, Interview 20, August 31, 2017). To address this challenge, the Amalima programme trains lead farmers and others as para-veterinarians (animal health workers) to provide the much needed veterinary services to local communities in Gwanda. This is also meant to increase local knowledge about effective livestock management practices in three major areas: disease prevention, supplementary feeding and improved breeding. In addition to the training, the programme has constructed and rehabilitated dip tanks in a bid to curb tick borne diseases from

affecting livestock (Appendix 1, Interview 6, August 25, 2017). It has also embarked on an artificial insemination programme in an effort to improve the local breed, even though this part of the programme has failed to yield its targeted results (Appendix 12, Document 11).

According to the interviewees (men and women) who had committed themselves to putting into practice all they had learned about livestock management, there has been an improvement in both the social and economic aspects of their lives arising from this. In relation to a husband and wife who were interviewed separately, the following point was made; *“Since we started implementing the teachings we got from Amalima, our cattle and goats are no longer dying during and after pregnancy as was the case before; in fact, our livestock has increased by ten percent”*. The couple said they are both aware of livestock disease prevention and cure, and work closely together on this. They believed that knowledge and expertise was important for emancipating communities socially and economically. Their intra-household relations have also improved, such that they speak of mutual understanding, joint decision-making, and co-ownership of high valued assets. As the husband said: *“The fact that my wife is also doing a commendable job ... makes her even more respectable at home. I even keep quiet when she speaks. I give her space and I understand when she says she is tired, because I am pleased with her contribution to both the community and our home”*. In the words of the couple, *“those not involved with these trainings are missing honey [sweet things] because the results are transforming”* (Appendix 1, Interview 9 and 20, August 28 and 31, 2017).

Again, this reference to cordial relations between husband and wife simply means improved relations between husband and wife within patriarchal arrangements rather than an undermining of patriarchy. Certainly, with the greater respect women receive from their husbands because of the Amalima, CA interventions may enhance their negotiating and bargaining power in the future. This very limited notion of empowerment is expressed by another woman. She has also been adhering to the livestock management training and gave an example of one of the ways to reduce the risk of cows dying:

I sell the cow after it gives birth; it's a disaster risk reduction measure because the famine attacks old cows more than the middle aged. I learnt that from being a student and beneficiary of Amalima. I would not get that from the streets really. Such knowledge has been self-developing and now I can simply say I am empowered because I am knowledgeable, even at home my husband consults me for information” (Appendix 1, Interview 8, August 26, 2017).

The beneficiaries, including women, generally have shown a strong interest in conservation agriculture, in large part because of enhanced food security, and citing for example the improvements in terms of both the quality and quantity of livestock. For these households, farm crops and livestock (and especially livestock) are the backbone of most household livelihoods families, with cattle in particular having cultural significance: *“In this district and others, livestock especially cattle are a symbol of economic, social as well as cultural status”* said one of the lead women farmers (Appendix 1, Interview 15, September 15, 2017). The Amalima interviewees consistently listed a number of farming techniques that they learnt from the Amalima CA trainings. These include reducing soil erosion, water harvesting, crop rotation, dosing pregnant cows, using ash in the gardens and conserving seedlings. They commented on how they have been managing to secure grain, healthy seedlings and improve livestock to the extent that they feel that they are prepared to cope with any drought related disaster.

The impact on women and their status though is questionable. Some women for instance spoke of the increased labour required on their part in CA, while others spoke of the ways which CA has decreased their labour inputs, for instance by enabling households to purchase jojo tanks to help her conserve water thereby simultaneously reducing the burden of fetching water every day (Appendix 1,Interview 9, August 28, 2017). But, as indicated in the section so far, how CA has altered gendered relations within households in Gwanda is not easy to assess. Even the reduced labour for women through the installation of water tanks implies that water collection, as in the past, is still a womanly duty. At best, it is possible to argue that food security at household level has improved and that this might allow some women at least to open up space for their enhanced status within household decision-making processes. In the end, though, this likely depends upon the willingness of husbands to grant wives this space.

5.4.2 Income Generating, Microcredit and Asset Building Initiatives

The rationale behind lending credit to women in rural Gwanda, as an initiative of the Amalima programme, is because of the low education levels amongst communal residents and particularly women, which makes women to dread the process of trying to apply for credit or even to engage with banks. Further, even if women could apply for credit from formal banks, their limited time given demands placed on their lives and their restricted mobility hinders this possibility. Furthermore, the long-term financial dependence of married women on men, as rooted in patriarchy, forms a key reason for promoting village savings and lending schemes (VS&L) (Appendix 12, Document 3). A VS&L group is a group of people who save together and take small loans from those savings, or receive funding from the Amalima, to start some

income generating projects. These schemes provide an alternative for women to the formal banking system and are meant to facilitate income generating projects and savings which help build household resilience, strengthen livelihoods, enhance food security and enhance women's incomes as a means for empowering women.

According to the NGO staff interviewed, the savings would ultimately help women in particular to have control of high valued assets that are particularly important for their agro-based livelihoods (Appendix 1, Interview 1-6, August 12, 14 19, 21 and 25 August 2017). Evidence in the district however indicates that access by married women to assets and resources does not mean that they control them. Nevertheless, the Amalima Gwanda district coordinator in an interview gave an example of a group of eight women in ward twenty-four which managed to buy cattle from their savings: *"There are various activities that women do with their savings, for example some have built houses, bought livestock and others have been lending to other vulnerable households"* (Appendix 1, Interview 4, August 19, 2017). It is believed that investments through savings would bridge gender inequalities within households in Gwanda because the weak bargaining power of women within households is due to their traditional minimal contributions towards household cash flows (Appendix 1, Interview 1 and 3, August 12 and 19, 2017). Therefore, if women were to gain actual control over assets acquired, then they could be in a stronger position to be more fully involved in household-based agricultural activity decisions.

For the interviewed women, the group savings were important in addressing short-term needs such as food, school stationery and uniforms. The long-term objective is to start income-generating projects such as poultry and small livestock production, which often takes time because of the limited contributions made. As highlighted by the DRR committee member: *"It might take us two years to save money that would be sufficient to buy cattle. Even if we did, we are always faced with day to day household needs because our involvement in the Amalima projects has also dramatically reduced the support we used to get from our husbands and extended family members"* (Appendix 1, Interview 8, August 26, 2017). This woman, along with five other women, had convened to form a VS&L group under the Amalima programme. Evidently, the savings are simply too limited to enable the group of women to save for the acquisition of important assets either for the household or agricultural activities. Also, as indicated in the quotation, the involvement of these women in the savings scheme led to the withdrawal of support from husbands for the reason that their wives now had access to their own financial resources (Appendix 1, Interview 11, 12 and 13, September 1 and 9, 2017).

To add to this, three women in a focus group discussion carried out at the garden site revealed that their husbands even asked if the programme was offering any loans. In referring to her involvement in the VS&L and horticultural garden, one of the women said: *“My husband even asks if there are any programmes offering loans so that I can go and get [the loan]. As if that is not enough, he even calculates my VS&L contributions towards the savings, and seems to know my dates of sharing the savings”*. In directing her comments to me, she then declared: *“You will also see that when you get married”* (Appendix 2, focus group discussion 2, September 15, 2017). This quotation indicates that most of the loans or savings taken by women in Gwanda like elsewhere are used and controlled by their husbands. This is deeply problematic for the women, as they channel whatever savings they obtain back into the household for basic consumption needs including for children. This is not what the Amalima envisions as the outcome, which is mainly about asset accumulation. The fact that men simply withdraw finances for basic household expenditures implies that women as wives remain subordinate to the dictates of their husbands.

Microcredit schemes as implemented by the Amalima programme are associated with group lending and village savings. The programme leverages on the long-established social capital or networks of women built on trust, in promoting and supporting VS&L. These trust-based groups thus are expected to enable women to combine their social and financial capital to expand their objectives by investing their savings in group enterprises (Appendix 12, Document 1 and 2). According to the interviewed women, the VS&L methodology and training programmes from Amalima included group formation, constitution development, group fund development, loans and loan appraisal, and record keeping. Based on these trainings, women have been able to engage in income generating activities such as poultry and goat production, eco-stove/clay stoves making, and horticulture/nutrition gardens (Appendix 1, Interview 7-16, August 26, 28 and 31, September 1, 9 and 15, 2017).

The *Sokuseka* nutrition garden is one example of a project that was started by a group of six women from different households in 2011 but was subsequently rehabilitated through the Amalima programme. The garden was rehabilitated using the loans that were taken from the VS&L. With the help of the programme, the garden has improved in terms of the variety of vegetables grown, and innovative ways of nurturing the garden have taken place. The garden now grows a variety of vegetables such as carrots beetroot, onions, spinach, cabbage and lettuce. Women are trained to use available resources to maintain the garden, such as kraal manure and grass for mulching. The project has also involved practical guidelines on planting,

spacing, watering and pruning, and proper harvesting. During interviews done at the site, the interviewed women indicated some positive changes in terms of their incomes and improved diet at home, and highlighted that it would be more beneficial if the garden was done on a larger scale and incorporated other marketable vegetables. In fact, they saw the garden project as important in the sense that it has reduced financial dependence on husbands.

One woman said that, before the project, she would depend on the income of her husband even on something as little as salt (Appendix 1, Interview 10 and 16, August 31 and September 15, 2017). However, she raised concerns about the minimal profit margins of the mainstream vegetables sold locally. Another woman interviewed had ten vegetable beds which she watered using a watering bucket that she carried by head, fetching water from a borehole that seemed to be faulty and involved considerable physical labour. The woman complained of the cumbersome character of maintaining the garden, particularly given the other duties that she did at home and the low profit margins (Appendix 1, Interview 12, September 1, 2017). The female conservation agriculture farmer expressed concern with regards to the profitability of the horticulture garden which she sought to pursue after resigning from her employment. For her, the Amalima initiated horticulture gardens are simple ways of enabling women to have a dollar in the pocket for emergency purposes but do not allow for accumulation of assets and, further, do not have an effect on enhancing the choices and decisions that women make in and outside of the homes. She added that *“real cash comes from large-scale livestock production and crop cultivation, an area dominated by our husbands not from backyard gardens”* (Appendix 1, Interview 9, August 28, 2017). In fact, traditionally, it is usual for communal homesteads to have a nearby vegetable garden (mainly for vegetables) for which the wife is responsible. Hence, the Amalima gardens may be simply reproducing the gendered agricultural division of labour.

For the two women beneficiaries of the Amalima interviewed at Sokuseka nutrition garden who had drinking husbands, they highlighted that their husbands often ask for a dollar for a ‘scud’ (a commercial form of traditional beer). One of them said: *“X’s father would ask for a dollar if he sees me sell a bundle of vegetables and would argue that it’s just a dollar you can’t be stingy with a dollar. Sometimes he doesn’t buy food arguing that I have money or we can eat vegetables until our intestines get green as long as we won’t die”* (Appendix 1, Interview 11, September 1, 2017). This strategy to put cash in the hands of women through ‘feminised’ income generating projects such as gardens is not always taken seriously by men, such that men may take this as an excuse (as indicated earlier) to draw upon women’s income without

ceding them any significant decision-making powers at household level. This tends to undermine the whole objective of reducing the labour burden of women and empowering them, perhaps even leading to unjustified demands placed upon them by husbands to support household expenses.

The asset building initiatives of the Amalima programme involves matching grants, Household Asset Vouchers (HAV) and Food for Assets (FFA). The matching grants arrangement has allowed women to have access to high valued assets. In this project, upon making a business proposal, women receive a 1:1 match grant averaging 2,500US\$ in the form of a particular asset. For example, if a woman was to desire to embark on a cattle project, she would state the number of cows needed and she is in turn given the equivalent cash. What are called upgrading grants are also given to enable the producers to package their products hence fetching higher prices on the market. This initiative enables women to increase their income with the hope that they will control usage of their generated income (Appendix 12, Document 1). According to one of the staff interviewed, there were some women involved in a pen fattening project in ward thirteen (Appendix 1, Interview 4, August 19, 2017). One interviewed woman noted how, previously, the household cattle was under the complete control of the husband including decisions about selling cattle. Now, under the matching grant scheme and with cattle of her own, there is a more cooperative form of decision-making emerging between husband and wife. (Appendix 1, Interview 7, August 26, 2017). Undoubtedly, this has arisen not simply because of her cattle ownership but because of processes of negotiation taking place between her and husband, as resource ownership does not translate in any unmediated way into power in the context of deeply patriarchal systems.

Through the HAV launched in 2015, Amalima households receive a voucher exchangeable for commodities such as small livestock (for example, goats), farm implements like drip irrigation schemes, small grain seeds and fertilisers. This has been one of the ways of addressing the marginalisation and discrimination experienced by women in terms of accessing farm implements and other assets. From the interviews 80% of the women within the Amalima households bought goats from the HAV (Appendix 1, Interview 3, 19, 2017). Under this scheme, the recipients go through a three to six months' financial literacy training course as well as being taught about improved agricultural production practices. A voucher valued at 150US\$ is redeemed in the process (Appendix 1, Interview 3, August 19, 25, 2017). In the context of Gwanda, assets of high value would include cattle, land and farm implements. From a gender analysis, it is clear that men in Gwanda have access to these high valued assets, which

translates into higher status and power at both community and household levels. Historically, women lack these resources and they become confined to carrying the burden of domestic work along with undertaking demanding agricultural activities (Appendix 12, Document 3). Ensuring availability, access and control of these assets for women is thus seen as an empowering intervention under the Amalima programme. Three of the interviewed women had received assets such as a plough, fence and wheelbarrow from this household asset voucher scheme. According to their responses, this project has long-term benefits that go beyond just having assets but knowledge as well: *“At the end of the day it’s nothing to just have assets and not have the knowledge to use the assets and manage the profits”*, as expressed by the community based facilitator interviewed. (Appendix 1, Interview 10, September 9, 2017). Whether this results in any changes in intra-households is not entirely clear.

Finally, in the food for assets (FFA) scheme, food is exchanged for labour to produce and maintain community-shared assets such as dip tanks, grazing land, irrigation schemes and dams. Within the year 2015, a number of community assets were constructed and rehabilitated by both men and women in the community with the help of funding from USAID. The selected communities are populations that are particularly vulnerable. On average, the Amalima programme enrolls 150 individuals for 60 days through FFA employment (Appendix 1, Interview 4, August 19, 2017). According to the interviewees, the FFA scheme (unlike other Amalima projects) has been critical in addressing the immediate food consumption needs among the Amalima households but it is not seen as reducing gender inequalities and burdens on women. Its effect therefore is at disaggregated household level, perhaps ensuring some sort of community resilience in times of severe drought (for example, through irrigation schemes). One of the Amalima staff interviewed highlighted that the FFA was simply a way of trying to bring local communities together in a spirit of cooperation, while at the same time engaging in constructive development projects which may have long-term implications for household livelihoods, and improved gender equality. During famine, women are often the most affected, so Amalima staff (in terms of justifying this programme in gender terms) highlight the importance of disaster preparedness in reducing the negative impacts of disaster on women in Gwanda (Appendix 1, Interview 6, August 25, 2017).

5.5 Conclusion

There seems no doubt that the Amalima programme is playing a significant role in enhancing livelihoods in Gwanda, though it remains unclear if these are simply short- and medium-term interventions with no authentic long-term development implications. In the case of women

more specifically, the many targeted interventions focusing on women have some beneficial effects in terms of their increased access to income, food security and assets, which may enable them to more fully participate in the public life of Gwanda communal communities. Through these projects, the Amalima programme aims at facilitating financial and material independence, self-sufficiency and self-reliance for women, and ultimately women's empowerment. However, from what has been discussed so far, it appears that any increased economic status for women in Gwanda, in-and-of-itself, does not imply empowerment, certainly with reference to the position of married women. This status has the potential to empower women, but it is not inevitable. The following chapter discusses this more fully by referring to further Amalima projects.

Chapter 6: Capacity-Building Activities for Women in Gwanda

6.1 Introduction

The work of the Amalima programme in Gwanda also involves capacitating both men and women around issues of nutrition, health and hygiene as well as through ways of developing resistance to disaster through a variety of disaster risk reduction (DRR) measures. These activities broadly involve training programmes initiated by Amalima staff, as well as other trained members of the community. The aim of DRR is to educate the community on disaster preparedness. The nutrition and health programmes seek to enable the community particularly women to take part in health and nutrition practices that help reduce malnutrition and consequently infant mortality. Due to traditional (patriarchal) beliefs, such as men should not be involved in child rearing practices, the Amalima programme encourages the inclusion and participation of men in both reproductive and productive roles of women through a variety of initiatives. The overall goal of the capacity building programmes around health and resilience is to empower women in both productive and reproductive sectors.

6.2 Disaster Risk Reduction Measures

Strengthening community resilience to shocks is targeted at building resilience to anticipated hazards through strong community-managed disaster risk reduction systems as well as by building and strengthening DRR committees. Preparedness is a critical element of DRR. The DRR committees are trained and prepared for dealing with hazards such as climate change and drought. According to the Amalima's gender analysis, DRR committees – when initially formed –were male dominated and Amalima has since facilitated the inclusion, participation and representation of women in these committees for the purposes of ensuring that issues affecting women are given adequate attention. Through these committees, women are capacitated through training workshops in order to enhance the articulation of their issues at community meetings. For the programme, capacity building is mainly about training and educating people rather than giving resources (Appendix 12, Document 3). According to the DRR officer of the Amalima: *“The trainings are essential in equipping the communities; ... In training the community, we encourage group trainings because it is difficult for information to cascade to other people if we train individuals”* ((Appendix 1, Interview 3, August 19, 2017). In addition, community training fosters unity between men and women who might be divided otherwise because of certain patriarchal beliefs and practices. However, according to the

women representatives in the DRR committees, there is considerable evidence that women are involved in a peripheral manner, such that their participation in terms of raising their voices and chairing meetings is limited (Appendix 1, Interview 10, August 31, 2017). The DRR secretary, who was interviewed on the roles that she plays within the committees said: *“Usually I attend the meetings and listen, then go and teach other women during our informal meetings maybe at the garden”*. When asked the reasons for just being a listener, she added: *“It is better to allow men to speak because they know better and since there are more men in the DRR, they prefer to listen to other men. Us women we also speak in our clubs and other projects that are designed specifically for us”* (Appendix 1, Interview 7, August 26, 2017). Yet, for the Amalima staff, capacity training and female representation in the DRR committees broadly enables women to acquire knowledge that enables them to raise their concerns and argue for their rights.

In this context, and with help of the Amalima fieldworkers, the Amalima households also hold DRR functions where they train each other on a number of DRR methods such as filling gullies, water and soil conservation and water harvesting. Where there is need for demonstrations, these functions take place at one of the farmer’s fields, usually one who may be lagging behind in relation to these practices. The households also take the opportunity to strengthen the Amalima groups by coming together to go and work on each other’s fields, applying the concepts learnt from the DRR trainings. By working together, the households save time and are able to share, discuss and utilise both physical and mental resources of others, which means that the time taken to finish the project becomes less because it is a cooperative venture.

While this is a beneficial and efficient work-based methodology, one of the Amalima staff expressed concern about the relative lack of participation of women owing to their responsibilities at home (Appendix 1, Interview 1, August 12, 2017). During my fieldwork, I visited one of the DRR trainings in ward fourteen that took about two hours. Women were complaining, mentioning that domestic duties awaited them at their homesteads. As a result, they had to leave before the training was finished. Thus, these women do not only miss out on building resilience around their livelihoods based on information provided about DRR, but also on the material benefits that may arise out of such initiatives. For instance, the trainings often included the promotion of disaster reduction measures such as drought resistant maize and drought tolerant cattle-breeds, which are potentially important for improved agriculture thereby facilitating increased yields in the agricultural activities undertaken by women. This is important because some women interviewed highlighted that with greater yields comes

avenues to challenge patriarchal control within households (Appendix 1, Interview 15, September 15, 2017).

Some of the Amalima's DRR initiatives include rehabilitation of irrigation schemes, dip tanks, dams and reclaimed land. For instance, the programme had constructed three new dams in the district and rehabilitated five dams. Additionally, four new irrigation schemes were established, and these were solarised with a full drip system which included filters, drip lines and 10,000 litre jojo tanks on areas between 0.5 hectare to 1 hectare; as well, one irrigation scheme was rehabilitated. Other initiatives included refurbished dip tanks, and new and rehabilitated nutrition gardens. Ongoing DRR projects include creating fodder banks and fodder seed distribution (such as mukuna, sunhemp, and dolichos) as well as training on grazing land management and natural resources management (Appendix 1, Interview 5, August 21, 2017). All of these projects are meant to ensure that Gwanda livelihoods can be sustained in the face of possible disasters.

For the Amalima Programme, these DRR initiatives are considered as gender sensitive in their aim to address challenges that affect the sustainability of livelihoods in which women are also involved. For instance, initiatives such as irrigation schemes tend to reduce the burden of fetching water from a distance, and may have a positive impact on nutrition, livelihoods, food production and incomes for women. Although this may be the case, these initiatives often fail to reduce the burden on women as are they (women) are involved in providing the labour needed, for example at the irrigation sites (Chazovachi 2012). Furthermore, because women are merely involved in making use of for example an irrigation scheme, and not in the actual construction or rehabilitation of such a scheme, women often go incapacitated in terms of how to maintain and rebuild infrastructural and other projects in the event that the projects collapse.

6.3 Nutrition and Health

Questions around nutrition and health are central to the Amalima and thus it is very active in the areas of improving health, hygiene, nutrition and sanitation among both men and women in Gwanda. The Amalima programme runs a number of activities under health and nutrition. It covers a number of projects that mainly target women but, at the same time, increasing male involvement. These projects include making clay stoves, preparing healthy plates, infant and young child feeding (IYFC), and water, sanitation and hygiene training. These projects also involve capacitation training workshops and demonstrations done through the Community Health Clubs (CHCs). The CHCs involve members of the community who have demonstrated

interest in health and nutrition practices and then convened to form clubs. In these clubs, women educate each other as well as the community on proper health and nutrition practices with the help of the Amalima staff. The motive behind these interventions is that healthy community members are able to participate more fully in sustainable development programmes without limitations emanating from ill-health. In doing so, it is believed that certain local myths about health would be dispelled. According to the gender specialist and the Amalima Gwanda district field coordinator for the behaviour change, these myths include that “*it is taboo to put breast milk in a bottle*”, “*infants are not supposed to eat eggs as they will acquire epilepsy*”, and “*women should not breastfeed in public*” (Appendix 1, Interview 1 and 2, August 12 and 14 2017).

Since the programme is utilising a gender sensitive approach, it was careful to incorporate men into the health and nutrition practices (Appendix 1, Interview 1, August 12, 2017). In this regard, some of the trainings and activities under the projects were conducted at the homesteads. Men in the district often shun associating with household duties or being involved in projects that are regarded as ‘female projects’, and hence the importance of integrating men into the health and nutrition programme. Such initiatives, such as grinding dried carpenters ‘amatemba’ or ‘mopane worms’ to mix with mealie meal porridge for infants, were meant to incorporate all the necessary nutrients in the diet of young children. Men though tended to resist becoming directly involved in this. Though the programme tended to imply that women should be the main ‘target’, thus seemingly reinforcing the notion of women’s place in the domestic sphere, it did clearly seek to challenge the mainstream masculinity existing in Gwanda by involving men in traditionally feminine tasks (Batliwala, 1994). Increased male involvement in household and child rearing activities was meant to help foster women’s empowerment and achieve gender equality. In the sub-sections below, I discuss a number of the specific projects under Amalima’s health and nutrition initiative.

6.3.1 Healthy Plate

One of the ways in which the programme seeks to enhance the status of women within the household is by promoting and encouraging a healthy diet. By utilising CHCs, the programme reinstates Zimbabwe’s Food and Nutrition Council strategy of a *Healthy Harvest*. A healthy harvest is a nutritional strategy with four themes: the principles of nutrition; growing nutritious foods; nutritious family meals; and harvesting, preparing and preserving food. The Amalima encourages women to utilise nutrition gardens, by growing a variety of vegetables in order to have healthy harvests (Appendix 12, Document 4). Under this project, the women in Amalima

households are trained to make what is known as a ‘healthy plate’ or ‘colour plate’, the term commonly used by the women. This is a meal plate that constitutes foodstuffs with all the nutrients for a healthy diet, which uses locally available ingredients that come from healthy harvests. As noted, infants are often given mealie meal porridge that is mixed with protein sources such as dried and grinded caterpillars or mopane worms or other edible insects as well as eggs. The women are also trained on the preservation of natural food nutrients through drying and storage, focusing particularly on dried seeds, tomatoes, nuts and dark leafy vegetables (Appendix 2, focus group discussion 1, September 9, 2017). The use of healthy harvests and nutrition gardens enables women to reduce the spending of incomes on food while preservation methods allow for future food security. The strategy is tailored to the Zimbabwean context and offers seemingly promising approaches for improving dietary diversity and quality diet rations on a sustainable basis. The ultimate goal is to help women to deal with malnutrition. The programme also holds monthly practical trainings, which transcend the small groups to include all the nine wards of the Amalima programme. The Amalima female beneficiaries call these the ‘big days’.

In interviews I conducted on the sports day, where all the Amalima women from the sampled wards in the district came together to compete in netball while also making a healthy plate, women expressed great satisfaction with the project. The winning nutrition and health club teams received prizes ranging from pots, soap, plates and cups courtesy of Amalima. The interviewed women reported that the nutrition and health club was a huge relief for many reasons. They cited that the healthy plate has reduced cases of malnutrition to such an extent that much of the time they used to spend at the clinics with sick children is now spent at their gardens and fields; further, they are now able to participate in leisure activities such as sport (Appendix 1, Interview 13, 14, September 9, 2017; Appendix 2, focus group discussion 2, September 15, 2017). One of the Lead Mothers (LMs) interviewed also gave confirmation about the reduction in the number of women with malnutrition at the local clinic in the ward. A lead mother is a woman involved with the Amalima who volunteers to train other women on health, nutrition and hygiene as well as teach them on making and preparing colour plates. She said:

I have been empowered to empower other women to be the champions of their own health as well as that of their children. As I was taught, I encourage my students to cultivate nutritious crops such as orange-fleshed sweet potato and protein crops

such as groundnuts, cowpeas and earthnuts, which provide protein and essential micronutrients and are more moisture stress tolerant than maize or soya.

The LM added that the results of these clubs have been tremendous, as most women have improved their daily meals with indigenous foods that are high in essential nutrients and which are critical to the daily diets of women of reproductive age (Appendix 1, Interview 15, September 15).

6.3.2 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

In collaboration with the Environment Health Department of the MoHCC, the Amalima programme also encourages improved Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) practices such as the promotion of water purification technologies, proper hand washing, rehabilitation of water points at primary health clinics, and creation and training of community health clubs. Gwanda (among other districts targeted by the programme) has had a high prevalence of diarrhoea as a result of insufficient access to clean water and sanitation, the prevalence of parasites, unsafe food preparation and storage, and poor knowledge of hygiene (see Appendix 11). During the time of the research, the programme with the help of Dabane Trust had rehabilitated three water points at local clinics in the three wards of the district. Through the CHCs, the programme promotes increased awareness of WASH practices through the completion of a 20 module Participatory Health and Hygiene Education (PHHE) training project. Upon completion of the PHHE training, the CHCs select a number of community based facilitators (CBFs) who in turn teach the members of the community on how to promote improvements in WASH practices at the household level and change to a more hygienic environment. These WASH practices include using a 2-cup water system, and building a tippy-tap hand washing station, a private bathing area, a rubbish pit and a rack for drying dishes (Appendix 12, Document 4).

All these initiatives, according to both the Amalima staff and women, utilised available resources within the community. The interviewed women highlighted that improved hygiene gave them a sense of recognition within the local community. They argued that unhygienic wives and sickly children were disgusting to husbands, with the men looking favourably on the cleanliness of their wives. For most of these women, their husbands thus encouraged them to actively take part in CHCs because there were so many perceived and real benefits including that they saved household resources (Appendix 2, focus group discussion 1, September 9, 2017). However, it appears that whatever the married women did, the goal was to please their

husbands as wives, perhaps thus reproducing the gendered division of labour within the domestic sphere and the long-standing image of the hard-working domesticated wife.

At the same time, it appears that the WASH project had influenced the interviewed households of Amalima positively including it came to the demands placed on women. For instance, the women had shifted from fetching drinking water from the river and accessed it near the homestead. For both men and women, in terms of hygiene, they were no longer using the same cup all the time for drinking, and each house had a toilet with a homemade ‘tippy tap’ for washing hands. One woman who had won a prize for being the most hygienic said that adhering to the call for hygiene practices has had a positive impact on her life as well in the way in which she is being treated by her husband. Thus she spoke about a dual impact on her life: *“I can count the number of times that I have taken my child to the clinic because of dirt-related sicknesses, and even my husband gives me so much respect”*. The woman pointed out that implementing new hygiene and sanitation methods meant she no longer had to ask her husband for cash for the clinic and that a new-found respect for her emerged from her husband (Appendix 1, Interview 13, and September 9, 2017). Whether this respect meant increased bargaining power for her within the household is unclear.

However, these projects are not exclusive to women because one of the aims of the programme is to increase male involvement in highly feminised tasks. The programme trains men to identify health challenges facing both men and women in the district and to develop action to address these challenges (Appendix 1, Interview 5, August 21, 2017). According to two of the men that received training under the programme, one of the challenges they identified was in fact the burdens that patriarchy places upon women. One of them who had assumed the role of a Lead Father (LF) stated that being a LF was the first step towards reversing gender relationships in the district. LFs have the same responsibilities as that of LMs. This LF said: *“I have taken up women’s work in order to break gender barriers by volunteering to facilitate CGs usually run by women. In summary I share health and nutrition messages, keep track of peers and take note of behaviour changes”* (Appendix 1, Interview 23, September 13, 2017). This is at least in part a recognition that the most labour intensive agricultural tasks as well as domestic chores are placed on the shoulders of women because of a patriarchal culture. By assuming feminine tasks, this husband is seeking to bring about some kind of gender equality. He added that his wife is no longer the ‘super woman’ burdened with all the agricultural and domestic responsibilities, because of Amalima. This is clearly a step in the right direction, but

it still needs to be more widely propagated and embedded in the thoughts and practices of Gwanda husbands.

6.3.3 Eco stoves

Eco stoves are also part of the overall health and nutrition initiative. The women interviewed indicated that using eco-stoves saves on firewood while, at the same time, reducing the time spent by women in searching for firewood which is becoming increasingly scarce. The eco-stove is a caricature of an electric stove that is built using clay and utilises minimal firewood. In 2013, the programme trained a selected number of women on how to build eco-stoves. Some of the stoves are portable with a single plate while others are immovable consisting of two plates (Appendix 1, Interview 15, September 15, 2017). The trained women have been involved in training others and helping them build eco-stoves. One of the women trained to make eco stoves said that she has become a champion in making stoves to the extent that she went to exhibit her work at the Gwanda agricultural show in 2014, with an allowance from the Amalima. She also indicated that she has travelled to other districts and as far as Masvingo for the purpose of training other women. For her, this project has become a major milestone in terms of her status within her household and in the community more broadly. She added that, whenever people meet her husband, they tell him about the good works that she is doing for the community. She additionally claimed that this has made her the main decision maker in her household.

Another woman who is also the community based facilitator added that the eco stove allows her to cook while she is seated and this relieves her from constant backaches:

The Eco stove project of the Amalima has helped us in the sense that we are no longer obliged to cook while kneeling down or standing (something which has been a challenge considering that I am already suffering from backaches). We no longer worry about going to fetch firewood from a distance using our heads or the wheelbarrow because the Eco stove is a fuel saver as compared to making the fire on those traditional fireplaces which consume more firewood.

The woman mentioned that eco stoves reduced a wide range of burdens that include chopping firewood, travelling long distances searching for increasingly scarce firewood, carrying the firewood on her head (or using a wheelbarrow) and cooking while kneeling down or standing. She thus concluded that the traditional form of a cooking place was firewood-consuming and tedious. Since reducing burdens on women is one of the programme's objective, the environmentally friendly and fuel-efficient eco-stove project plays a key role in easing the

above-mentioned burdens on women (Appendix 1, interview 14, September 9, 2017). Again, then, there is a reduced labour burden for women even though they might remain responsible for the domestic chores related to cooking. Simultaneously, at least in the case of one woman, her involvement in making eco stoves has enhanced her status and, according to her, her power as well.

6.3.4 Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF), Breastfeeding and Supplements

A variety of challenges including patriarchal barriers has been influencing the nutrient intake and breastfeeding among lactating, pregnant women in rural Gwanda. According to the Zimbabwe National Nutrition Survey (2010), only 5.8 percent of all Zimbabwean infants are exclusively breastfed during the first six months. In Gwanda, only a small minority of the children are fed in accordance with such Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices. The fieldwork indicates that lack of knowledge, underlying beliefs, and patriarchal constraints and attitudes contribute to the limited adoption of IYCF (Appendix 12, Document 3). According to the two breast feeding women interviewed, their husbands had been the major reason for their poor breastfeeding practices. One of them expressed that she has been labelled lazy by her husband because of taking more time breastfeeding her baby. The other added, *“so it’s either we breastfeed quickly or breastfeed while doing our daily chores because we end up being harassed, but the first choice is always best”* (Appendix 1 interview 12, September 1, 2017). This has resulted in malnourished and sickly children, thus increasing the care-giving duties of women and their identification with the private sphere, at the same time utilising household income for acquiring medication and milk supplements. The programme’s responses in this regard has been two-fold.

The first response of the Amalima has been to facilitate involvement of men in community health clubs dominated by women, with the health and nutrition activities initially targeted at women. However, for the purposes of behaviour change, which is an objective of the Manoff group, the programme had to educate men. This is facilitated through an initiative called *indoda emadodeni* (or male champions), which is a term used in Amalima to describe a male member of the community who is engaged by the Amalima project on a voluntary basis to discuss with and educate other men in the community about the value of IYCF practices to them; and, as a result, to take advantage of opportunities to promote key behaviours amongst men which are in support of enhanced IYCF (Appendix 12, Document 7). The male champions programme is thus a deliberate and conscious move towards male involvement in health and nutrition practices. It takes the form of a health forum in which men are trained and capacitated on health,

hygiene and childcare practices. In these, men are taught and trained to be involved in their household's health activities such as building tippy taps, fetching water, digging rubbish pits, making eco stoves and child-minding. In other instances, men are presented with statements such as: 'men must make all decisions in the household'; 'it's the man's responsibility to provide for the family'; 'it's the women's duty to do all the household chores'; 'men can cook dinner for the family'; and 'infant and young child feeding is a woman's responsibility' (Appendix 12, Document 5). These are then subject to wide-ranging discussions.

With the help of the Amalima facilitators men thus engage in discussions in such a manner that they deliberate on possible changes they want to see in their communities. From these deliberations, men learn about the importance shared responsibility within the domestic sphere of households (Appendix 1, Interview 2, August 14, 2017). One of the men interviewed, who referred to himself as a 'male champion' (with regard to training other men about IYCF and WASH) and had begun to share domestic responsibilities with his wife, highlighted that the Amalima initiative has helped wives more than husbands. According to this male champion, sharing household responsibilities with wives is viewed locally as foreign (Western) concept that has no relevance in African communities. But he went on to stress that "*through the Amalima we have learned that it is actually a way of improving the life expectancy of our partners because people die from overworking*" (Appendix 1, Interview 24, September 15, 2017). One of the women interviewed attested to have seen changes in the behaviour of her husband towards her breastfeeding time and practices in general: "*Following the encouragement that my husband got ..., my husband no longer shouts at me for taking time breastfeeding and he sometimes reminds me to breastfeed,*" she reported (Appendix 1, Interview 13, September 9, 2017).

According to the Amalima staff, programmes such as the male champion one have been critical in altering gender relations in the homes as well as in the community (Appendix I, Interview 1, 2 and 5, August 12, 14 and 21, 2017). They highlighted that there has been requests from men in the district for more trainings that target men in particular. One male beneficiary interviewed also spoke about behavioural change on the part of men involved in the Amalima programme, at least when judged against the indices provided by the male champion's official guide. The guide focuses on behaviour changes in three major areas, namely: cooking and caring for children including taking them to the clinic; working hand in hand with lead mothers; and reducing women's workload such as by men fetching water and firewood (Appendix 12, Document 7). One man noted that initiatives targeting both men and women are important in

that they challenge male beliefs on gender relationships, roles and responsibilities (Appendix 1, Interview 26, September 15, 2017). The significance of equal sharing of child care, by both husband and wife, was emphasised for instance by the claim that *“a child who gets attention from both parents is cognitively better off. ... We have promised to encourage best IYCF practices among our wives”* (Appendix 1, Interview 25, September 15, 2017). Therefore, by actively involving themselves in domestic activities, men are in a sense transferring and sharing power with their spouses (Appendix 1, Interview 24-26, September 15, 2017).

Challenges continue to exist though. The men in fact raised issues about the unwillingness on the part of women to allow men to be seen doing household chores, seemingly because it might de-masculinise their husbands. And, according to the interviewed Amalima Gwanda district field coordinator for the behaviour change programme, fostering new attitudes and practices amongst women is just as difficult as it is with men. Overall, only *“a minority of the men have been able to informally take the concept of reversed gender roles to other male companions”* (Appendix 1, Interview 2, August 14, 2017). Further, for some women, the extent to which husbands and men generally are encouraging IYFC and sharing in household tasks is dubious, such that they fall short of the male champion guide indices. According to some married women, their husbands are reluctant to take part in these other domestic initiatives as they feel it is stripping them of their manly head of household title.

The married women in the two focus group discussions expressed deep concerns about the character of the involvement of their husbands in the Amalima-initiated behaviour change programmes. These women said that they behave in a certain way not because they choose to, but because their husbands coerce them to act in a particular manner. As one woman, a member of the DRR committee, said: *“It is not that we do not want to take leadership positions. People do not know the realities of what happens behind closed doors. My husband made it clear that he did not marry another man who should be talking and being a leader in the community. A woman should be reserved”* (Appendix 2, Focus group discussion 2, September 15, 2017). Other women argued that their husbands did not even contribute to WASH practices (such as making tippy taps), highlighting that their husbands tend to behave in a certain way in the presence of NGOs. The Amalima Team Leader for Health and Nutrition Programmes also seemed to indicate this: *“Men shunning these tasks think that their wives are now powerful. They feel its competition yet the whole initiative is complementary”* (Appendix 1, Interview 5, August 21, 2017). The fear of competition and disempowerment on the part of the married men

in Gwanda, like elsewhere, may compel men to devise means of maintaining their domination within the household.

The second approach of the Amalima programme with regard to child-care and breastfeeding has been to provide supplements for pregnant and lactating women. In collaboration with the Food and Nutrition Council (FNC) of the MoHCC, the Amalima focuses on improving the nutrition of pregnant, lactating women and children under the age of two. The programme improves the dietary diversity and micro-nutrient intake by distributing monthly supplementary feeding rations of a corn-soy blend (CSB+) and fortified vegetable oil as well as promoting breast-feeding exclusively. This involves the use of the first 1000 days-approach emphasised by the International Medical Corps (IMC), which leads the WASH promotion and nutrition education to actively supplement the dietary intake of children (Appendix 12, Document 4). It targets the days between a woman's pregnancy and her child's second birthday as a way of shaping a healthier future. It also promotes male involvement through male champions, encouraging men to accompany their wives to food distribution points so that they can equally benefit from health and nutrition messaging as well as promoting their inclusion in food distribution committees (Appendix I, Interview 2 and 5, August 14 and 21, 2017).

The overall objective is to reduce malnutrition and stunting rates amongst children, which increase the caring roles of women. On the one hand, the interviews with women showed that their husbands shunned being part of the processes of food distribution, even though they encouraged their wives to be always available to collect their rations. On the other hand, interviews with the Amalima gender specialist indicate that, before the inclusion of men in food distribution programmes, *"we would have quite a number of 'defaulters' – women not coming to collect their rations for two or three months because there was no one to come and collect the food"*. In this respect, men are increasingly involved in the collections, with women clearly seeing the level of male involvement as still inadequate. Overall, this nutrition and health project has had impacts on the reduction of time and resources spent at home by women caring for sick children since they are still regarded as primary caregivers (Appendix 1, Interview 5, August 21, 2017).

In addition to providing supplements, the programme enhances nutrition care practices through a combination of capacity building trainings, mentoring, and community-based messaging delivered through care groups and community health clubs. The nutrition messaging focuses on eight core IYCF indicators: early initiation of breastfeeding; exclusive breastfeeding under

6 months; continued breastfeeding at 1 year; timely introduction of solid, semi-solid or soft foods; minimum acceptable diet; minimum dietary diversity; minimum meal frequency; and consumption of iron-rich or iron-fortified foods. Health messaging is meant to promote improved birth spacing, the prevention and treatment of childhood illnesses, increased clinic visits, and adoption of other care-seeking behaviours (Appendix 12, Document 7). The Amalima promotes health clubs as the basis for maximising the opportunities for both nutrition and health messaging that target women. The married women interviewed felt empowered through such messaging, or at least it altered their understanding of what it meant to be empowered. Previously, they had tended to associate an ‘empowered women’ with access to material resources (particularly acquired independently of the husband), but now they link empowerment more closely to the acquisition of knowledge

This seemed to be a general trend amongst the married women of Amalima, to recognise how the knowledge obtained through Amalima enhanced their capacity, given that knowledge leads to new ways of seeing the world and new practices. Thus, one of the DRR female committee members exclaimed: *“Now I know how to prepare a healthy meal without having to buy the food. I do not need a hand sanitizer but I can utilize my ashes and tippy tap”* (Appendix 1, Interview 8, August 26, 2017). The Amalima programme was only able to facilitate this capacity because of its gender sensitive approach which tailored women’s participation to the realities of women’s existing knowledge and skills as well as to their gendered position in households, including their domestic workloads (Appendix 12, Document 8). However, the two focus group discussions (FGD) done with women indicate that the programme’s gender sensitive approach has limitations in penetrating through and undoing the complexities of patriarchal power deeply entrenched within households in Gwanda. Despite the visible behavioural changes that husbands at times display, women still feel invisible, voiceless and devoid of power in the public sphere. Additionally, in general, their participation in Amalima projects (including around health and nutrition) has failed to fundamentally alter their subordinate position vis-à-vis men when it comes to intra-household dynamics (Appendix 2, focus group discussions 1 and 2, September 9 and 15, 2017).

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on capacity-building of women by the Amalima programme with regard to disaster risk reduction and, in greater depth, health and nutrition. It would appear that training and practical demonstrations around the promotion of health, hygiene and nutrition potentially reduce household spending and resources in caring for the sick, particularly

children. A healthy diet, and a safe and clean environment reduces the possible outbreak of hygiene related illnesses and consequently the caring burdens of women. By fostering male inclusion in notably the reproductive and domestic duties of women, the programme endeavours to reduce the labour burden on women. Resilience programmes hold out the promise of securing the livelihoods of women during and after disasters such as drought, thereby allowing women to focus on more productive projects which will sustain them and their households over time. The actual effects of these Amalima initiatives with regard to the capacity-building and empowering of women are ambiguous. Certainly, there is some evidence that some men are taking on domestic care duties in a serious manner, though many are not. Further, some women have become so used to receiving instructions from their husband, that downplaying the headship role of the man means that the woman becomes masculine and the man feminised, a situation about which they are uncomfortable. The fact that Amalima recognises that the problem of patriarchy is not simply a woman's question but a gender question (and hence also a man's question) has led to the targeting of men as well (as seen in the chapter), and this seems to be an important contribution of the programme in hopefully empowering women. This is particularly the case in trying to ensure that men are involved in domestic care duties, thus trying to delink the seemingly naturalised relationship between women and the domestic sphere. However, the meaningful empowerment of women remains difficult due to dominant social norms and practices embedded in a deeply-entrenched patriarchal system resting on the power of men, and this is bound to require long-term and sustained effort if it is to be overcome. The last chapter discusses the impediments and opportunities for the empowerment of women in the light of this study of married women in Gwanda communal area.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The main objective of this thesis was to critically examine the work of the Amalima programme with particular emphasis on empowerment of married women in Gwanda District in Zimbabwe. The three key subsidiary objectives were as follows: a) to identify and examine the various projects of the Amalima aimed at empowering women; b) to explore gender relations that influence empowerment of married women within the Amalima households; and c) to understand married women's perceptions of empowerment in relation to their participation and involvement in the Amalima projects. The main objective and the subsidiary objectives were pursued specifically in chapters five and six. But I also contextualised this case study of Amalima as an NGO intervention and married women and empowerment in Gwanda by way of examining the work of, first of all, NGOs generally and secondly of NGOs specifically in Zimbabwe. This was done in chapters two and three respectively, in both cases with regard to NGO participatory methodologies and women's empowerment. In chapter four, I examined the history and status of women in communal areas in Zimbabwe, given that the case study of Gwanda entailed a contemporary communal area. In this concluding chapter, I tie the thesis together and provide an overarching analysis of the results of the study with reference to the theoretical framing and literature review.

7.2 The Amalima Programme and Women's Empowerment

It is clear that patriarchy is deeply embedded in communal areas of Zimbabwe and this is certainly the case with regard to Gwanda District. If NGOs are going to bring about any meaningful change with regard to women's empowerment, then the discourses and practices (and the very systems) of patriarchy need to be overtly and strenuously addressed, particularly when it comes to gendered relations within the households of married couples.

From this thesis, the following conclusions can be drawn from the Amalima programme. First of all, through gender mainstreaming, the Amalima involves the pursuit of initiatives which seek the involvement and participation of men in household activities, while women are also incorporated into male dominated activities within the public sphere. The aim is to facilitate attitudinal and behavioural changes particularly on the part of married men but also on the part of married women. The strategy is meant to draw both material and non-material resources (such as status) away from men to women and thereby empower women.

Secondly, while the strategy appears to be having some positive effects, it is clear that the participatory methodologies adopted by the NGOs involved in the Amalima programme are mainly top-down. In other words, the various sub-programmes of Amalima (as detailed in chapters five and six) emerge from with the NGOs (and their donors) and are simply imposed upon households in Gwanda District. This is not an argument against the content and objectives of the sub-programmes, as they definitely have an anti-patriarchal thrust. But it is questionable how deeply, widely and sustainable any anti-patriarchal changes will occur if they do not arise more organically from the communal area communities themselves.

Thirdly, there is no doubt that Amalima has sought to target the domestic sphere (or site of social reproduction), from where men's power is often based and springs from. To question the naturalised link between women and the domestic sphere is critical to empowering women, both in the domestic sphere and the public sphere. There is some evidence that men are starting to recognise that the domestic sphere should be a shared space. It also seems that the domestic care duties placed upon women are being reduced, often though because of labour-saving devices introduced by the Amalima programme rather than because of greater male involvement in domestic chores. Less time and effort in the domestic sphere may allow women to engage more fully in the public sphere, though this depends quite significantly on the stance taken by local patriarchs at household and community levels.

Fourthly, there are clear weaknesses with regard to the Amalima programme. The Amalima fails to transform the mind-sets of the targeted women such that they sometimes resist anti-patriarchal changes even when their husbands may be sympathetic to such changes. This is in part because of the deeply-embedded character of patriarchy in rural Zimbabwe and the acceptance to some degree by married women of the basic tenets of patriarchal rule at household level. Even when patriarchal reforms do occur, as they have through the benefits of Amalima, they do not necessarily lead to an enhanced status for women. They may simply entail confirmation of the position of the patriarch in the domestic sphere. For instance, practicing better hygiene is done to please husbands more than as a sign of personal well-being for women.

Fifthly, married women in Gwanda do at times recognise the importance of undercutting the prevalence of patriarchy. They see empowerment in terms of both wealth and power, including co-ownership of high value assets, and equal reproductive and household responsibilities along with joint decision making. However, because of ongoing power differentials, they still tend to

seek the consent of their husbands and this continues to reinforce patriarchy. This leaves women disempowered despite the efforts of programmes such as Amalima.

7.3 NGOs, Patriarchy, Empowerment and Women's Participation in the Amalima Programme

In this section, I consider the overall objective of the thesis. As the academic literature on patriarchy and feminism indicate, gender relationships as they occur in domestic sphere are complex and dynamic. This means that, through their programmes, NGOs need to directly challenge the practices of patriarchy within this sphere through the deep participation of women as well as the involvement of men as household patriarchs.

The programmes of Amalima certainly have endeavoured to facilitate the participation of women in a range of activities often beyond their standard womanly practices, and of men in traditionally 'feminine' activities. However, as is often the case with NGO programmes, the participation has been shallow or even misdirected, with women becoming recipients of the Amalima-administered livelihoods programmes which often revolve around reinforcing the domestication of women. Amalima, like other NGO programmes, has tended to pursue a non-confrontational approach to prevailing patriarchal practices, such that the position of married women remains vulnerable. Despite the Amalima sub-programmes which seek correctly to facilitate access and control of resources and incomes for women, it was expressed by one of the male beneficiaries of the Amalima that in fact "*independence can never exist when there are two people in the home*" (Appendix 1, Interview 18, August 26, 2017). This puts across the point that married women should never expect to be free from their husband's control and domination. Because of this, in instances where women gain access to high valued assets, they may be stripped of the right and responsibility to make independent decisions concerning the utilisation of those resources, by their husbands.

The study shows that empowerment implies a shift in gender-based power differentials, with men for instance assuming household responsibilities and allowing their wives greater access to the public sphere. However, women themselves seem to have internalised certain gender stereotypes, as indicated earlier. This is so because patriarchy undercuts the freedom, independence and capacity of women in making their own choices, in part because they see themselves through the lens of their husbands. As Foucault (1978:92–102) asserts, "power is not a commodity to be held, seized, divided, or distributed by individuals. It is a much more decentred and ubiquitous force acting everywhere because it comes from everywhere". Power is not invariably centralised in the hands of patriarchs and simply imposed on women (or

‘power-over’). Women have ‘power-to’, but Foucault highlights the significance of discourses, such as patriarchal discourses, which are embedded in de-centralised power relations. This means that women internalise patriarchal discourses and regularly act out their lives, and the relationships with their husbands, on this basis.

This is despite the efforts of the Amalima NGOs in trying to break down patriarchal barriers through participatory methodologies. Empowerment through participation of women in NGO programmes holds out the promise of enhancing the status of women. The involvement of women in Amalima projects has, to some degree, allowed them to: have access to incomes and assets, to be involved in decision making within the household, and to acquire a sense of self-worth. However, this has not rescued women from patriarchal control and domination. As the quote from Foucault highlights, power is not a zero-sum concept. Empowering women may simply entail reforming the existing patriarchal system rather than transforming it because, after all, patriarchy is a dynamic form of social domination subject to historical and spatial variation. Married women in Gwanda thus end up rendering their material benefits to their husbands including non-material benefits like self-status and worth.

In instances where married women in Gwanda are able to use their incomes from livelihoods projects without interference from their husbands, it has been to the benefit of the entire household including children. This is regularly seen as a crucial advantage in women controlling household income and clearly it is of importance for the well-being and future of children. But it implies that women are to be recognised as domestically-responsible caregivers, which tends to reinforce the feminine image of women. Further consideration needs to be given by Amalima NGOs to breaking the assumed natural link between women and domesticity. The solution lies it seems in the willingness and ability of NGOs to delink the entrenched patriarchal connections between women and the domestic sphere, and men and the public sphere.

This is related to the fact that the domestic sphere remains as a very private sphere, so that the operation of patriarchy within this sphere remains invisible and insidious. This makes it difficult at times for concerned NGOs to identify and address the sheer complexities of domestic patriarchy, including the NGOs involved in Amalima. In this regard, the participation of men in the (domestic-sphere related) Amalima projects conceals rather than reveals the actual character of gender relationships as they exist in homes, outside the vision of Amalima. In the homes, it is likely that women are still subordinate partners even though both men and women

may articulate a different story for public consumption. The programme's emphasis on gender equality or shared responsibilities, with men taking on domestic chores, reduces some of the burdens of domestic work carried out by women, but it does not necessarily imply a power balance between wife and husband, as the latter can still act as a patriarch.

The discussions with married women in Gwanda indeed revealed the relevance of the patriarchal family structure when it comes to empowering women, a point that is well recognised in the literature (Romany 1993). The family, as a social institution seemingly separate from economics and politics, is crucial in instilling patriarchal discourses through socialisation, and in forming and reinforcing patriarchal practices (Chitsike 1995, 2000; Kambarami 2006). It is within the family, as a primary socialisation agent, that sexually differentiated roles and obligations are propagated (and typically unintentionally and unknowingly), including female submissiveness and the treatment of women as sexual beings and not as human beings (Charvet 1982). The womanly qualities taught include gentleness, passivity and striving to please men always (Kambarami 2006). Therefore, with a patriarchal family structure like the one that exists in Gwanda, women's empowerment will continue to be a challenge unless NGOs also address the socialisation process which currently reproduces patriarchal thoughts and practices.

7.4 Conclusion

This thesis clearly shows that empowerment as a process, and any possibility of this process taking place, lies in the critical understanding of how patriarchy operates within and beyond households. Participation of both men and women in NGO projects like those proposed and pursued through Amalima certainly holds out the promise of equality, but does not guarantee empowerment. Empowerment efforts need to challenge existing systems of patriarchy at a much deeper level, including undoing the ways in which men continue to be internally oppressed (Nagar and Raju 2003) while simultaneously re-socialising women so that they are better able to see how patriarchal culture imprisons them. Socialisation has made women accept the status quo to the extent of submissiveness to male domination. Re-socialisation of women will enable married women in particular to challenge their subordinate statuses within the domestic sphere, hence paving the way for further empowerment. However, participatory methodologies enacted by NGOs are often shallow and narrow, with NGOs often imposing themselves on communities. When this is done in relation to women, with women simply implementing projects designed by NGOs, then it might simply reinforce the subordination of women and inscribe them in a new set of relations of domination with NGOs at the helm.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: List and Details of Interviews

1. Interview with the Amalima gender specialist (Interview 1): in-person interview, August 12, 2017
2. Interview with the Amalima Gwanda district field coordinator for the behaviour change programme (Interview 2): in-person interview, August 14, 2017
3. Interview with the Amalima Team Leader for Food Security, Livelihoods and DRR Programmes (Interview 3): in –person, August 19, 2017
4. Interview with the Amalima Gwanda district coordinator (Interview 4): in-person interview, August 19, 2017
5. Interview with the Amalima Team Leader for Health and Nutrition Programmes (Interview 5): in-person interview August 21, 2017
6. Interview with the Amalima Gwanda district field officer (Interview 5): in-person interview, August 25, 2017
7. Interview with female Beneficiary 1: DRR Secretary, DRR training site (ward 13), August 26, 2017
8. Interview with female Beneficiary 2: DRR committee member. DRR raining site (ward 14), August 26, 2017
9. Interview with female Beneficiary 3: conservation agriculture farmer at her homestead (ward 13), August 28, 2017
10. Interview with female Beneficiary 4: at her homestead (ward 14), August 31, 2017
11. Interview with female Beneficiary 6: horticulture garden site (ward 14), September 1, 2017
12. Interview with female Beneficiary 7: horticulture garden site (ward 14), September 1, 2017
13. Interview with female Beneficiary 9: health and nutrition student sports field (ward 14), September 9, 2017
14. Interview with female Beneficiary 10: community based facilitator sports field (ward 15), September 9, 2017
15. Interview with female Beneficiary 5: lead mother at fields (ward 14), September 15, 2017
16. Interview with female Beneficiary 8: health and nutrition student at fields (ward 15), September 15, 2017

17. Interview with male Beneficiary 3 DRR chairperson training site (ward 14) August 26, 2017
18. Interview with male Beneficiary 4 DRR training site (ward 15), August 26, 2017
19. Interview with male Beneficiary 8 DRR training site (ward 13), August 26, 2017
20. Interview with male Beneficiary 1 Conservation agriculture farmer homestead (ward 13), August 31, 2017
21. Interview with male Beneficiary 6 homestead (ward 14), September 10, 2017
22. Interview with male Beneficiary 9 homestead (ward 14), September 12, 2017
23. Interview with male Beneficiary 2 Lead father homestead (ward 14), September 13, 2017
24. Interview with male Beneficiary 5 male champion fields (ward 15), September 15, 2017
25. Interview with male Beneficiary 7 Lead farmer at fields (ward 14), September 15, 2017
26. Interview with male Beneficiary 10 at fields (ward 14), September 15, 2017

Appendix 2: List and Details of Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussion 1 (Sports field), 3 comprised of interviewed women beneficiaries from ward 13, 14 and 15, September 9, 2017

Focus group discussion 2 (Horticulture garden site), comprised of interviewed women from ward 14, September 15, 2017

Appendix 3: Guiding Questions for Interviews with the Amalima gender specialist

1. What is the Amalima programme about?
2. Who are the sole beneficiaries of the programme?
3. How did you carry out the needs assessments? Please describe the approaches that were used in the gender mainstreaming.
4. How were the beneficiaries selected?
5. How are women involved in the programme?
6. What is your understanding of empowerment?
7. What has been the impact of the programme on women, gender relations and in relation to the objective of achieving equality? Do you think the programmes are sustainable?
8. Did you encounter any challenges in implementing the programme? Please describe them.
9. How have you been dealing with these problems?

Appendix 4: Guiding Questions for Interviews with the Amalima district field coordinator for the behaviour change programme

1. How are men involved in these programmes?
2. How has involving men in these programmes helped women?
3. What are the tools, strategies that you use to get men involved in the male champions programmes?
4. What has been the response to this initiative? Explain the challenges and successes that you encountered.
5. What action have men taken to gender the existing gender relations?
6. How have you managed to judge that from the perspectives of women?

Appendix 5: Guiding Questions for Interviews with the Amalima Team Leader for Food Security, Livelihoods and DRR Programmes

1. Describe these programmes
2. Describe the nature of participation of women in the highlighted programmes and projects.
3. Have women been able to get access and control of incomes? If yes explain if no explain.
4. Has the programme managed to achieve the goal of enabling women to access and control resources?
5. Any challenges and successes that you have encountered in the field?

Appendix 6: Guiding Questions for Interviews with the Amalima District Coordinator

1. What projects are implemented by the Amalima in Gwanda District?
2. Would you describe these programmes and projects? Are they sustainable? Please explain.
3. How are they funded and implemented?
4. What are the objectives of the Amalima?
5. Which is the NGO behind the Amalima Programme?
6. Is the project achieving its goals?
7. How is the programme relevant to both men and women in the district?

Appendix 7: Guiding Questions for Interviews with the Amalima Team Leader for Health and Nutrition Programmes

1. Could you tell me in detail about the health and nutrition programme?
2. How does involving men in these programmes help achieve equality?
3. What has been the changes in the relations between women and men?
4. Has there been cases of reduced visits to the clinics because of improved health and nutrition?
5. How has this programme benefited men and women as well as the community?

Appendix 8: Guiding Questions for Interviews with the Amalima Gwanda District Field Officer

1. Which are the finished projects in the district and the ongoing ones?
2. Please describe the programmes and how both men and women are involved.
3. How are these programmes beneficial to women?
4. I understand one of the aims is to reduce the burden on women. Has this objective been met? Please elaborate.
5. Any reported challenges from women?
6. How sustainable are these projects?
8. Describe the nature of participation of women in these projects.

Appendix 9: Guiding Questions for Interviews with the Amalima married women beneficiaries located in ward 13, 14, 15

1. For how long have you been involved with the Amalima Programme? Describe how you came to be involved in the project
2. How are you involved in Amalima programmes/What are the activities being implemented by Amalima. Please describe the project
3. Have you had any challenges in trying to implement these projects?
4. What have been the benefits of being involved in these Programmes?
5. How has the project helped you?
6. Besides the programme facilitators who has been supporting you?
7. Has there been any benefits or disadvantages of being involved in the same programmes with your husband?
8. Of these activities which ones directly impact your relationship with your husband at home/which alter gender relations?
9. How have these activities impacted on these relations?
10. What do you understand by women empowerment?
11. What do you understand by the term empowerment with regards to your involvement in the Amalima programmes?
12. Has there been a change in the household relations since you started being involved with Amalima
13. What are these changes?
14. How have been these relations prior to being involved with Amalima programmes?
15. Can you say Amalima programmes have empowered you in terms of being able to make independent choices and decisions and exercising power over your lives? Please evaluate the programme.
16. How do you spend the resources and incomes generated from Amalima programmes?
17. Do you occupy any position within the Amalima programme? If yes, please describe it, if No kindly tell me why you do not hold any position?
18. Elaborate on the nature and level of participation

Appendix 10: Focus Group Discussion Guide

1. For how long have you been involved with the Amalima Programme? Describe how you came to be involved in the project
2. How are you involved in Amalima programmes/What are the activities being implemented by Amalima. Please describe the project
3. Have you had any challenges in trying to implement these projects?
4. What have been the benefits of being involved in these Programmes?
5. How has the project helped you?
6. Besides the programme facilitators who has been supporting you?
7. Has there been any benefits or disadvantages of being involved in the same programmes with your husband?
8. Of these activities which ones directly impact your relationship with your husband at home/which alter gender relations?
9. How have these activities impacted on these relations?
10. What do you understand by women empowerment?
11. What do you understand by the term empowerment with regards to your involvement in the Amalima programmes?
12. Has there been a change in the household relations since you started being involved with Amalima
13. What are these changes?
14. How have been these relations prior to being involved with Amalima programmes?
15. Can you say Amalima programmes have empowered you in terms of being able to make independent choices and decisions and exercising power over your lives? Please evaluate the programme.
16. How do you spend the resources and incomes generated from Amalima programmes?
17. Do you occupy any position within the Amalima programme? If yes, please describe it, if No kindly tell me why you do not hold any position?

Appendix 11: Guiding Questions for Interviews with the Amalima married men beneficiaries located in ward 13, 14, 15

1. What is the Amalima programme?
2. How are you involved with the Amalima programmes?
3. Who introduced you to the programme?
4. How is your wife involved in the Amalima?
5. How has the programme helped you and your wife?
6. Any challenges that you have encountered? Describe them.
7. Do you understand the objectives of the programme?
8. Do you think the programme is meeting its objectives?
9. How does your involvement in the programme influence the relationship between you and your wife?
10. What do you understand by women empowerment in general?
11. What do u understand by women empowerment with regards to your wife's involvement in the Amalima programmes?
11. Can you say that your wife has been empowered from and by being involved with Amalima programmes? If yes .What makes you say they have been empowered? What are the changes that u have noticed? If No explain.
12. Has Amalima programme altered the ways in which you and your wife live or relate within the households? If yes explain how. If no explain the reasons for the deemed failures?

Appendix 12: Documents

1. Amalima Development Food Assistance Programme in Zimbabwe, CNFA 2013.
www.cnfa.org
2. Amalima gender strategy
3. Amalima Gender Analysis Report (for Tsholotsho, Bulilima, Mangwe & Gwanda Districts of Zimbabwe), 2014
4. Amalima Development Food Assistance Program for Zimbabwe, Revised Technical Proposal, 2013
5. Gender discussion guide booklet
6. Male champions IE commitment
7. Male champions training guide 24116: Using Male Champions to Increase male Support of good Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices
8. United States Agency International Development: gender equality and female empowerment policy, 2012
9. <https://zw.usembassy.gov/usaids-activity-improves-food-security-rural-zimbabwe/>
10. <https://www.msn.com/en-za/news/other/usaids-fights-child-malnutrition-in-matabeleland-newsday-zimbabwe/ar-AAAskFvz>
11. 'Amalima programme fails to yield desired results'. *Sunday News Online*. 28 February 2016 <http://www.sundaynews.co.zw/amalima-programme-fails-to-yield-desired-results/>