An Investigation into the Egalitarian Assumptions of Aid Providers in Women Empowerment Projects and the Lived Experiences of Women within Patriarchal Societies: the case of Zimbabwe.

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DECLARATION FORM

The work I have submitted is my own effort. I certify that all the material in the Dissertation which is not my own work has been identified and acknowledged. No materials are included for which a degree has been previously conferred upon me.

Signed…………….**Elizabeth Tendai Ushewokunze**…… Date:….**21 May 2012**

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ABSTRACT

Since the launch of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals in 2000, discourse on sustainable development has emphasised the pivotal role of women in the development process. However, development aid channelled through women empowerment interventions has had limited impact than anticipated. This trend has largely been attributed to socio-economic and political dynamics borne of different cultural perspectives and ideologies.

This research investigates discrepancies between the egalitarian assumptions of aid providers in women empowerment and the lived experiences of women in patriarchal Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the research seeks to highlight how culture infiltrates into decision-making and policy formulation structures and reinforce patriarchal attitudes and values. In-depth interviews were conducted with representatives from a sample of government ministries, donor agencies and grassroots non-governmental organisations. A critical analysis of the Eurocentric and Afrocentric ideologies of human rights was conducted in order to establish the cultural discrepancies between the government, donor agencies and grassroots non-governmental organisations in Zimbabwe. Data was analysed using discourse analysis methodology. Although Zimbabwe has policies, institutions and practices that enable women empowerment, it lacks policy coordination and coherence measures that promote the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of these initiatives because the social structures remain largely patriarchal. There is need for resuscitating communication and engagement between the three major stakeholder groups in Zimbabwe to ensure a coordinated support to the implementation of women empowerment interventions. The three stakeholders need to create new partnership modalities and strengthen those that are already in existence by using a human rights prism. The research recommends that stakeholders establish partnerships to help synergise policies so that the implementation processes create an enabling environment for development aid effectiveness in women empowerment projects the country.

[276 words]

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAA	:	Accra Agenda for Action
AU	:	African Union
BBC	:	British Broadcasting Corporation
CDA	:	Critical Discourse Analysis
CEDAW	:	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
DfID	:	Department for International Development
FDA	:	Foucauldian Discourse Analysis
GNU	:	Government of National Unity
GoZ	:	Government of Zimbabwe
IFIs	:	International Financial Institutions
IMF	:	International Monetary Fund
MDC – T	:	Movement for Democratic Change – Tsvangirai
MDGs	:	Millennium Development Goals
MWAGCD	:	Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development
NGOs	:	Non-Governmental Organisations
NGP	:	National Gender Policy
NGWESAP	:	The National Gender and Women's Empowerment Strategy and Action Plan
NORAD	:	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
OCHR	:	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
SADC	:	Southern African Development Community
SIDA	:	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UDHR	:	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	:	United Nations
UNCT	:	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	:	United Nations Development Program
UNRISD	:	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
ZANU (PF)	:	Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front
ZUNDAF	:	Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Research Problem

Women empowerment and development issues have taken centre stage in the rights discourse. Scholars and development aid professionals concur that women empowerment forms the basis to the achievement of sustainable development, peace and progress in both the developed and developing countries, hence the need to channel more development aid towards women empowerment projects. This has not always been the case; before the women in development movement, women were regarded as objects of welfare concerns. As Visvanathan et al argues, "Patriarchy and liberal discourses, at both national and international level left unchallenged the question of gender relations in society, and often made this attendant upon a sexual division of labour and individual negotiations within the family, (2011:28). At the 1995 Fourth United Nations (UN) World Conference on Women in Beijing, the movement for gender equality placed women's rights on the agenda for action, resulting in gender-mainstreaming within the UN, the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and other agencies overseeing development, (Visvanathan et al 2011).

Socio-economic and political dynamics borne of different cultural perspectives and ideologies have had an impact on the effectiveness of development aid. This has seen the world's strategic planners in development and empowerment coming together at different world fora to try and map the way forward in enhancing development aid effectiveness. In 2005, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness was endorsed by countries around the world, followed by the Third High Level Forum in Accra, Ghana (2008), through the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA). The AAA resulted in countries committing to the five core principles of aid effectiveness namely ownership, harmonization, managing for development and mutual accountability, (Visvanathan et.al, 2011). The last international forum on aid effectiveness has been the Busan 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness convened in Busan, Korea in November 2011.

The launch of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000, have seen discourse on sustainable development emphasising the role of women. Nonetheless, women empowerment in patriarchal societies has achieved less progress than expected due "to a deeply entrenched patriarchal system which is slow in transforming itself and unprecedented decline in the socio-economic and political system of the county" (Zimbizi, 2007:3). This has been closely linked to the realisation that, from the onset, development initiatives have been insensitive to the gendered power relations that are based in cultural beliefs and traditions. Alluding to this discrepancy, the Nobel Committee Chairman Thorbjon Jagland while speaking at a Nobel awards remarked, "We cannot achieve democracy and lasting peace in the world unless women achieve the same opportunities as men to influence development at all levels of society" (05/10/2011 on BBC News). These remarks by Jagland are supported by feminist scholars like Boserup (1970) whose pioneering research demonstrated that the invisibility of women in development process led to policy imbalances that led to development aid in women empowerment achieving fewer results than anticipated. Zimbabwean women constitute 52 per cent of the population yet they do not have majority political shareholding either at strategic, decision-making or operational level.

There is the danger of over generalising the status of women in Zimbabwe, however, it should be noted that on the surface Zimbabwean women appear empowered but the reality on the ground tells a different story, and this has necessitated this research. This research investigates the discrepancies between the egalitarian assumptions of aid providers in women empowerment projects and the lived experiences of women in patriarchal societies focusing on Zimbabwe. The research aspires to bring out the role of culture in influencing aid effectiveness as it infiltrates into decision-making and policy formulation through the societal structures that accommodates patriarchal attitudes.

1.2 The Research Problem

Since the Zimbabwean land reform program in 2000, relationships between the Zimbabwean government and the West have not always been cordial. The Zimbabwean government alleged that development agencies were agencies of the imperialist forces that were opposed to the land reform program and therefore their assistance should be denied. The land reform process also witnessed a renewed focus on traditional leadership institutions and their role as the guardians of tradition and custodians of the land, (Mungwini, 2007). As the Zimbabwean

ZANU (PF) government gave up its development partnerships with the international donor community, it directed its focus on traditional leadership institutions.

This coupled with Zimbabwe's failure to service its international debt to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1999, marked a turn of events in Zimbabwe, with some donor agencies withdrawing their funding from projects. Most of these projects focused on women empowerment and development, among them the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) agencies. These two agencies have it on record that their relations with the then Zimbabwean government had influenced their decisions on development aid projects in Zimbabwe. "In the past ten years, it has not been possible to provide development aid through the Zimbabwean government… We give humanitarian help and work through non-government organisations to support democracy and human rights," (SIDA, 17-06-2009).

Since then, there has been a paradigm shift in policies on development aid. For the donor agencies policies that govern their projects funding are driven by the understanding that the most important value of human rights is to protect the individual from powerful oppressive forces within a society. This is a decidedly Western concept which is equally portrayed in their policies for human rights practices in developing countries, (Carey et. al, 2010). This research argues that in response to this position by donor agencies of embedding Western ideologies of human rights in their policies for development and empowerment, non-Western countries in turn, formulate their policies to counter this supposed imperialistic force, disguised as human rights development. Within the African context, "true African development requires an authentic African foundation that can only be found in its unique ideas that formed the basis of life and social organization before the unfortunate encounter of the African world with the European modernity", (Mungwini 2007:126). This context of development also supports the Zimbabwean patriarchal culture which does not fully support women empowerment and development. By revitalising traditional institutions the Zimbabwean government has reawakened the patriarchal values and customs thereby overriding the developments previously achieved in women empowerment as well as creating tensions for future projects implementation. Traditional leaders effect patriarchy at grassroots level while male dominance in strategic and decision making level does the same at policy making level creating a social structure that is patriarchal at all levels.

It is this research's hypothesis that labelling of human rights initiatives as Western and Eurocentric driven has its roots in cultural discrepancies between the West which is Eurocentric and the South which is Afrocentric. Mutua like other scholars who share the Afrocentric view submits that, "what we now know as "human rights" is little more than just another attempt by the West to exert it's control and influence on people and governments in all other parts of the world but done under the guise of universal values" (Carey et. Al 2010:25). Critics of this view of human rights as Western have argued against this submission. They assert that human rights transcends cultural ideologies and provides a common language for an equally shared but contentious conversation of how people are to be treated. According to international human rights law, each and every human being possesses an inherent dignity, (Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) Preamble), and through human rights, this dignity is respected and maintained. As this research will show, women in Zimbabwe have come to realise the role culture and tradition plays in limiting them to exercise their inherent dignity in different social circles and that is the reason why they are now highlighting this as a challenge to the achievement of women empowerment and development.

1.3 Research Question

The research assumes that the impact of cultural discrepancies in development aid effectiveness is underplayed particularly in patriarchal societies like Zimbabwe. Women's voices are implicitly silenced through societal and organisational structures that support male hegemony. To understand the impact of such processes on development aid effectiveness the research will look at the following aspects;

i. How differences in culture between the Zimbabwean patriarchal culture and the Western egalitarian ideology have resulted in women being discriminated against;

ii. What are the areas of convergence and disagreement between development aid providers' egalitarian assumptions and the Zimbabwean government's policy on women empowerment;

iii. How the identified fluid relationships between the Zimbabwean government and donor agencies have impacted on development aid for women empowerment.

1.4 Research Objectives

More specifically this means;

i. To investigate what women empowerment means for the Zimbabwean statutory stakeholders, the donor community and civil society;

ii. To establish the trends in women empowerment funding and how this has affected aid effectiveness;

iii. To establish if there are any specific policies that have been put in place by the government, donor agencies and local non-governmental organisations to ensure women empowerment projects are prioritised in resource allocation;

iv. To investigate how the current legislature impacts on women empowerment and development.

1.5 Justification of the Research

As the world turns to 2015 when all countries will be evaluated according to their progress on the MDGs, gender equality and women empowerment will be central in measuring successes and failures on the implementation of key human rights objectives of the millennium. The goal "to promote gender equality and women empowerment" is goal number 3 on the United Nation's MDGs. It is also one of Zimbabwe's priority MDGs together with goal 1 and 6, (Ministry of Women's Affairs Report 2009:3).

In the human rights discourse, the concept of "rights" is closely connected to that of "right" and all societies are believed to be having such standards. However, it is often argued that many cultures have no conception of people "having rights"; that the idea of everyone having human rights is said to be especially alien to most cultures, (Freeman 2011:7). Feminist scholars have researched on the role of culture in women's further subjugation; how by not putting a monetary value to women's labour at household level, women's input in the economy is disregarded, (Boserup, 1970). Many conferences have been held where government leaders and the donor community have tried to establish how to improve aid effectiveness, but most have been silent on the role of culture, particularly patriarchy. Through this research, the researcher hopes to contribute to this discourse on aid effectiveness by looking at how different cultural perspectives create discrepancies that find their way up to policy level. What constitutes a right in one society could be perceived to

mean something else in another, with the potential of creating discrepancies when the two societies partner in a project.

1.6 Limitation of the Research

Issues of women empowerment cover a diverse spectrum in economic, social and cultural aspects of life. The study does not claim to exhaustively investigate all these facets of women empowerment but has been limited to studying how the Zimbabwean patriarchal culture limits women's access to development aid through the play of power relations at different levels. While the researcher intends to make recommendations that are applicable to most patriarchal societies in Africa, the scope and focus of this study is limited to Zimbabwe. There are three categories of respondents for this research, these are; permanent secretaries or recommended officials of three government ministries in the first category, two international development aid providers in the second category and one grassroots non-governmental organisation in the third category.

1.7 Research Outline

This research is divided into five chapters. Chapter one is the Introduction, which highlights developments in the women's human rights discourse in empowerment and development by providing background information to the research problem. The research problem is discussed and the objectives of the study are listed. In the second chapter the researcher presents the Literature review and analytical theory. The researcher reviews work by other scholars and discusses the current debates on the women empowerment discourse through the political feminist theory. The third chapter discusses the methodology; here the researcher outlines the methods and techniques used to carry out the study. The fourth chapter presents the main bulk of the research findings. Data analysis is also provided in this chapter together with a discussion on the research observations. In the fifth chapter, the researcher provides the research conclusions and closes off the chapter by making recommendations to the government, donor agencies and the non-governmental organisation working on women empowerment and development.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The field of human rights is ever evolving and is largely influenced by everyday events in society starting with the household up to the international community. As such, if we are to make inroads into an integrated social science study of human rights, we need to somehow make sense of the varying theoretical perspectives that dominate the different disciplines, (O'Byrne, 2003). The Feminist Political Theory as a contemporary research theory is distinguished for its gender sensitive approach and its capacity to expose the theories of gender that are for the most part implicit but often quite explicit in the classical and modern political theoretical texts, (Jackson and Jones, 1998) by combining the feminist and political theories. The feminist political theory provides a pivotal role to present a balanced review of scholarly submissions on how policy formulation and cultural differences impact on development aid effectiveness; using the human rights framework as a drawing board. This chapter shall discuss women's rights as human rights, Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and Women Empowerment, culture and development, the government, women and donor agencies' role in development effectiveness.

2.2 Women's Rights As human Rights

To approach the concept of women empowerment this research uses the human rights framework which is against any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religion or other opinion as espoused in Art 2 of the UDHR.

Contemporary human rights debates on empowerment and development have their roots in the UDHR which scholars concede represents "the conscience of the world – [to be] a synthesis, a profession of faith, a common philosophy of human rights – and ipso facto a part of general international law" (Haksar, p36, cited in Smith 2010:38). It is against this backdrop that most development aid policies are designed. Country performance and human

rights status are also measured using specific articles of the UDHR, specific instruments and international set goals like the MDGs and CEDAW.

The assumption is that the rights articulated in the UDHR and relevant instruments are sufficiently broad and can span across cultures and religions with little difficulty. Smith submits that it is the first example of such a universal document transcending culture and traditions to prescribe a global standard, (2010). The UDHR is scribed in such a way that it bestows upon the society both legal (though not legally binding) and moral responsibilities. However, the document contains some blanket assumptions by the international community of what culture is and its significance to the rights discourse. This has led to challenges in implementation which is why development aid has achieved less than anticipated in issues of women empowerment as this thesis will demonstrate. Rights and policies laid down on paper do not translate into reality; they have had less impact on alleviating the dilemma of social injustice and exercise of power that women endure in reality with culture being one of the most uncomfortable thorns in the flesh.

2.2.1 CEDAW and Women Empowerment

Women empowerment and development have taken centre stage since the last part of the 20th century with scholars arguing that there is an inextricable link between state policies, women and sustainable socio-economic development. Development and women empowerment issues are inter-twinned because of the central role that women play in development and sustainability, however, implicit their input is perceived to be. The former Secretary General of the UN Koffi Annan, noted, "…. there is no effective development strategy in which women do not play a central role. When women are fully involved, the benefits can be seen immediately: families are healthier and better fed; their income, savings and reinvestment go up. And what is true of families is also true of communities and, in the long run, of whole countries", (UNIFEM, 08/03/2003). In furtherance of this paradigm shift in the empowerment and development discourse, all the eight MDGs revolve around Goal number 3 on Women Empowerment and Gender Equality. The feminist political theory seeks to make apparent women's input by proposing gender sensitive perspectives for analysing the nature of the state and state-society relations; a more explicit way of bringing up power relations issues that have been largely dismissed by political scientist as feminist to the political science table.

Therefore, when CEDAW came into force on September 3 1981, it was welcomed as a long awaited bridge to the enjoyment of women's fundamental rights, which until then existed only in principle. The Zimbabwean government ratified the CEDAW, signed the SADC Protocol on Gender, ratified the AU Protocol on Women's Rights among other human rights instruments as its commitment in ensuring that the goal of women empowerment is achieved, Ministry of Women's Affairs Report (2009). Zimbabwe is also commended for its actions by the CEDAW Committee as one of the countries that has motivated and empowered women's groups at the national level in a number of concrete instances, (Bayefsky et al, 2000).

In its preamble, the Convention highlights what discrimination of women does to the overall achievement of equality of all human beings in the political, social, economic cultural development of any nation including reversing the gains of that particular nation, hampering the growth and the nation's prosperity and making it difficult to achieve full development. CEDAW Article 1 further states that discrimination against women, denying or limiting as it does their equality of rights with men, is fundamentally unjust and constitutes an offence against human dignity, Smith (2010:192). The Convention also obliges states to take the responsibility to ensure the development and advancement of women towards a situation of equality of rights by *modifying the social and cultural patterns of conduct of women and men*, (Art 2 part (f) and (g) emphasis added). Encapsulated in this submission were some key conceptual breakthroughs in providing a deeper understanding and interpretation of human rights that the UDHR left the onus of clarifying to the states. The interpretation by the CEDAW Committee through its concluding remarks made it clear that human rights protection were not merely about refraining from doing harm, or negative obligations on the part of the state, but also about positive obligation to realize equality and the enjoyment of equal rights, (Bayefsky et al, 2000). This revelation meant that governments were to fulfil both their prescriptive and descriptive responsibilities to its citizens.

By prescriptive responsibilities of governance, governments are reminded of "their limits to governance, by analysing relevant concepts such as equality, rights, freedoms, obligations and justice- ideals that should be realised, or at least must not be undermined……" descriptive responsibilities on the other hand looks at "what can be done by way of analysis of concepts and phenomena such as authority, power, law, decision-making, judgement" Jackson & Jones (1998:51). CEDAW made clear that state responsibilities extended to inhibiting private actors from interfering with rights. It emphasised that human rights protection requires relief from facially neutral laws and policies which have adverse effects

and discriminatory systematic results, (Bayefsky et al, 2000). This ushered in the discourse of women empowerment and development to the women's rights debate.

By advocating a revisit to policies and laws that inhibited women from exercising their rights and accessing equal opportunities, CEDAW essentially advocated the review of the power relations that govern the discourse of women's rights, thereby questioning the cultural and traditional aspects of human rights in which the descriptive responsibilities of the state lie. The importance of power and the management of power relations to both the feminist and political theorist cannot be over-emphasised. The feminist interests usually lie in understanding the way that gender, race, class and sexuality intersect with power (Allen 2000), while for the state the power to govern is mainly linked with cultural, sexual or traditional power (or inhibited by the lack of these).

Power is the ability to make choices; while empowerment refers to the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such ability; it entails change, Kabeer (2005). The disparities and antagonisms raised by the power discourse between the patriarchal systems and women empowerment is articulated by Arendt in her quest to distinguish between power and violence and how the two work together. Arendt submits that "…power, is an instrument of rule, while rule, we are told, owes its existence to the instinct of domination", (1969:236). As such, by being able to make choices, women would ultimately challenge power relations by challenging the *instinct of domination* that is usually dormant in the cultural or ideological norms of society where they are implicit, part of everyday life but not really spelt out. Therefore the process of women empowerment also entails that women use their newly acquired ability to act on the restrictive aspects of their lives. Hence the tensions and antagonism that follow. Development aid providers are swallowed into the debate because of their agency; by providing the means for women empowerment they are aiding in disrupting the status quo and challenging the authority of the state.

Critics of CEDAW have cited this cultural disruption among other issues as one aspect in which the Convention is rather utopian and does not do much but creates confusion in the rights discourse, particularly the concept of state sovereignty and the fact that compliance with the Human Rights Committee recommendations depends on the political will of the state parties. Denesha Reid submits that the language of the Convention is too vague and fails to define discrimination in practical terms and that it also threatens the sovereignty of the

country on which the UDHR and other treaty bodies were founded on, (Bayefsky 2000). Charlesworth also shares Reid's sentiments on the inadequacy of the language of the Convention and submits that "…the narrow, individualistic language of rights "oversimplifies complex power relations" and cannot articulate women's experiences and concerns" (cited in Hodgson 2002:7). This sweeping overbearing aspect of the Convention has made it difficult for women to argue their rights and entitlements because it portrays women as having more rights than everyone else, making the implementation process challenging. Kathryn Balmforth further argues that rather than acknowledging the fundamental human rights of the individual, the Convention's sweeping language threatens to overrun them and any others standing in its path, (Bayefsky 2000). Balmforth is particularly concerned with how the issues addressed by CEDAW go to the core of culture, family and religious beliefs, defining it as "cultural colonialism", (Bayefsky 2000:203).

Such observations as these by Balmforth and Reid also form the core debate to the investigation in question. The Zimbabwean society is patriarchal and has respect for its culture and tradition. While it supports the women empowerment agenda and has ratified to the key documents, there are aspects of the Zimbabwean legislature that also safeguard this cultural belief through the Customary Law ambit of the Zimbabwean constitution. This has been cited as hampering the women empowerment process in Zimbabwe as evidenced by a number of reports and evaluation documents, among others the report on a research on "The Legal situation of Women in Southern Africa" (1990) by the Women and Law in Southern Africa Research Project.

2.3 Culture and Development

Culture is a diverse all-encompassing term which refers to a people's custom, institutions and achievements. It is a people's way of living. Broad as it is, culture has been defined differently by different scholars depending on the context. Said (1994) cited in Sisask sums up culture as "*a source of identity* and a rather combative one at that, as we see in recent returns to culture and tradition…. In this second sense culture is a sort of theatre where various political and ideological causes engage one another", (2004:58). Patriarchy is one ambit of culture that this paper will focus on and like culture itself, is equally broad covering different levels of society.

Patriarchy is derived from Latin *"paterfamilias"* meaning "rule of the father" or male head of the household, (Peach, 1998). Its meaning and use has evolved over time with radical feminists referring to patriarchy as a social system in which men appropriate all social, political and economic roles, keeping women in subordinate positions. Patriarchy is generally defined as *"a system of social structures, and practices"* in which *"men dominate, oppress and exploit women"*, Walby (1989:214). It is in this context that the Zimbabwean patriarchal culture shall be investigated in this study.

From the above definition, the state becomes a social structure whose impact on gender relations lies in limiting or excluding women from accessing state resources through participation in decision making at political, economic and social circles of the economy. The exclusion is systematic, implicitly accepted as the social norm in most cases because patriarchy as a system is bred through the socialization process which begins in the family and infiltrates into other sectors of society. In Africa, custom is stronger than domination, stronger than the law, stronger than even religion with customary practices being incorporated into religion, (Lightfoot-Klein 1989:47 cited by Okome, 2003). This submission constitutes part of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1986) Art 29 which states that individuals are under an obligation to preserve the harmonious development of the family, serve the community, preserve and strengthen national independence and territorial integrity, preserve and strengthen positive African cultural values. For Africans, a culture which is largely patriarchal is valued and goes deeper than just a way of living, it gives a new meaning and interpretation to Said's "source of identity" as this identity is intimately linked to each nation's sovereignty. Given this, respect and value for culture cascades into the national legislature and the onus lies with the national leaders to safeguard the African culture against any threats. Women empowerment threatens this status quo as it has implications on male domination; when women are empowered they are able to make decisions on their own weakening the traditional male role of decision making on behalf of the family. In turn, policies that have a bearing on women empowerment and development are designed with the cultural respect and value in mind.

In support of Art. 29 of the African Charter, Section 23 of the Zimbabwean Constitution states, "African custom and tradition *shall supersede any rights and entitlements* that women may have been entitled by the constitution as long as those rights and entitlements threaten the hegemony of custom and tradition". This directly contradicts with CEDAW Art. 2 part (f) and (g) and goes to enunciate the importance of culture within the Zimbabwean system. It is

sacrosanct, untouchable and must be guarded and protected even at the expense of women's entitlements in the constitution. Culture is best understood as a heavily contested source of identity (in gendered and ethnic terms) and power (in political and material sense), which is located in the historical struggles against colonialism and racism on the African continent, (Sisask, 2004:59). As such, many third world feminist confront the attitude that their criticism are merely one more incarnation of a colonised consciousness, the views of privileged native women in "whiteface" seeking to attack their "non-western culture" on the basis of western values, Narayan (1997:3), particularly from their governments.

Due to history and limited access to international markets, development projects, particularly women empowerment projects are largely funded by foreign "Western" donor agencies. This makes it even more difficult to argue their empowerment and development agenda on a more level platform. Culturally, Zimbabwean women are regarded as weak and vulnerable and when donor agencies target them with the empowerment doctrine this is perceived as using the weakest link to challenge the state's sovereignty. Dr. Chombo, the Minister of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing once remarked, "Some of these [NGOs] come to you with a packaging that looks good but the contents would be satanic. Do not accept such type of assistance" (15 July 2001). Remarks as these only serve to make the point clear that whatever aid offers come through to Zimbabwe will have to go through microscopic lenses to ensure that they do not threaten the male hegemony status quo. Such utterances as these have their support in the emerging ideology of aid as a new form of colonisation that the government warn against.

2.4 The government, women and donor agencies role in development aid effectiveness.

The main actors in this research share the same appreciation of human rights and the need for individuals to enjoy the fundamental rights that are inherent in each individual as provided for in the UDHR. However, there are discrepancies in the level of appreciation and the extent of individual rights viz-a-viz state control and responsibilities over everyone else. While international discourse provides a unified language and platform for women to reclaim their rights and be empowered, it seems to disregard their lived experiences in realising this goal due to the power relations that are exacerbated by strong cultural traditional beliefs. The ideological linkages between state sovereignty with a patriarchal ideology make it even

harder for women to gain priority when national social, economic and political decisions are made.

The egalitarian theory, which underpins strategies and objectives of aid provision propounds that all human beings are equal in worth or social status and is used as a response to the abuses of statist development. This ideological submission is hinged on the concept of "development as freedom" which follows the argument on empowerment. The Ministry of Women's Affairs cite Section 23 to demonstrate that the Constitution of Zimbabwe still discriminates against women on the basis of customary law, (2009:4). This entails the need to redress the customary law instruments that discriminates against women, and this has become a core objective of development aid. The UN General Assembly concedes with this observation by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and submits that, "… a number of laws have been passed to promote women's rights; however, the implementation of laws can be affected by the primacy of customary law as per Section 23 of the Constitution" (UNCT, 2011:5). This has the total effect of keeping women in a subordinate position which culminates in women's under representation at decision-making levels.

Discrimination constitutes some of the constraints that limit women to access and enjoy social, political and economic opportunities that are available to them because there is a deep complimentary between individual attitudes and social arrangements, to which patriarchal culture and tradition is central in Zimbabwe. Sen posits that "the social opportunities of education and healthcare, which may require public action, compliment individual opportunities of economic and political participation and also help to foster our own initiatives in overcoming our respective deprivations", (1999:xii). This submission by Sen provides a deeper understanding on how the Zimbabwean culture and tradition are submitted as discriminating against women. It explains how culture and tradition cascade from the household where individuals are socialised into their culturally accepted roles down to the decision- making in society.

Development is a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy; it requires the removal of the major sources of un-freedom: poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, Sen (1999). This fundamental principle of development underpins the operations of development aid providers as well as the framework for human rights instruments, particularly the UDHR which from the onset focused on the advancement of women. However, while focusing on development is

preferred as a means to redress the structural factors that cause discrimination rather than focus on symptoms of inequality, (Sisask, 2004) in reality this has created ideological constrains between the receiving states and aid providers.

The Zimbabwean government has signed and ratified international conventions and instruments that confirm its compliance with the international human rights framework. As such, when development aid providers come in they will be under the assumption that they are operating under the same umbrella of egalitarianism. Nonetheless, the reality that governs activities is determined by the national policies and legislature. While development is essential, national security is equally important and in the Zimbabwean context there is a thin line dividing the two. Culture and sovereignty are perceived as inseparable and safeguarding these translates into national security, hence the disparities between egalitarian assumptions of aid providers and cultural ideologies which impact on the effectiveness of development aid in women empowerment projects in Zimbabwe.

The egalitarian theory of development propounds that "…if a traditional way of life has to be sacrificed to escape grinding poverty or minuscule longevity (as many traditional societies have had for thousands of years), then it is the people directly involved who must have the opportunity to participate in deciding what should be chosen", Sen (1999:31). In the Zimbabwean context the contest is presented in public discourses between women empowerment and Zimbabwean culture and tradition. In a research conducted on The Legal Situation of Women in Southern Africa, which also debated the impact of the customary law that is largely prevalent in the region, Stewart and Armstrong (eds.) noted that "*there is a prevalent attitude that if women were given due and proper recognition and status they would take over. Perhaps that is why they are denied them*" (1990:xii emphasis added). This observation further underlines why culture is important in investigating development aid effectiveness in Zimbabwe, and also to examine the discrepancies between the egalitarian assumptions of donor agencies and the lived experiences of women in patriarchal Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER 3

IDEOLOGY, THEORY & METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Critical realism is a specific form of realism whose manifesto is to recognise the reality of the natural order and the events and discourses of the social world and holds that we will only be able to understand and so change the social world if we identify the structures at work that generate those events and discourses, (Bryman 2008). This research examines two main ideologies that influence decisions on policies that govern development aid by donor agencies and the receiving governments.

Donor agencies policies are influenced by the ideology that "development is freedom". Proponents of this ideological framework among others Amartya Sen, are of the view that development requires the removal of major sources of unfreedom: poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation (1999), hence the stance on democracy and human rights by the development agencies. On the other hand, receiving governments' policies to various degrees adhere to the ideological framework of "aid as re-colonisation". This ideology builds on the colonial history between Africa in general and the West and is influenced by the school of thought that critics the paternalism of aid. According to Niyiragira & Abbas (2009:3), "the reality in Africa is that aid to a large extent is synonymous with influence peddling, which is in effect a hidden form of manipulation, control and coercion or colonisation". The nexus of this investigation to these ideologies is the role of culture. The thesis explores how different stakeholders interpret international human rights instruments in relationship to their ideological and cultural beliefs. It will explore the underlying power paradigm between the donor agencies and recipient government as well as between recipient governments and women in women empowerment projects.

3.2 Qualitative Research

3.2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context, allowing the analysts to take an explicit position in understanding, exposing and ultimately resist social inequality, (Tannen et.al 2003). The central concept to CDA is "power" as a central condition in social life; how through texts and discourse social actors fight for dominance. Wodak & Meyer submits that CDA is "fundamentally interested in analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language" (2009:10).

This research raises questions on power relations, highlighting aspects of hegemony in the relationship between donor agencies and receiving governments and hegemony between men and women in patriarchal societies. The research investigates how these different aspects of social and political power impact on development aid effectiveness. Hegemony is an aspect of social power which contributes or constitutes a form of social cohesion not through force or cohesion, nor necessarily through consent, but most effectively by way of practices, techniques, and methods which infiltrate minds and bodies, cultural practices which cultivate behaviours and beliefs, (Couzens Hoy 1986). It is how discourse is used to denote elements of hegemony which CDA is concerned with. In CDA, texts are often sites of struggle in that they show traces of differing discourses and ideologies contending and struggling for dominance, (Wodak & Meyer 2009). The sites for these struggles in society lie in the political institutions of society and at decision making level, areas that this research focuses on, further buttressing the relevance of CDA to this study.

CDA is relevant to this research as it aims to explore the relationship between discursive practices, events and texts, and wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes. CDA explores how texts construct representations of the world, social relationships, and social identities and there is an emphasis on highlighting how such practices and texts are ideologically shaped by relations of power, (Taylor 2004:435). This research aims to bring to the fore the fact that empowerment is not about millions of dollars channelled through for development projects but the ability of the recipients to live an empowered life within and an enabling environment, hence the question on the importance of the reality women in

patriarchal societies go through during the empowerment process. According to Wodak & Meyer, "discourses do not only reflect reality. Rather, discourses also shape and even enable (social) reality. Without discourses, there would be no (social) reality", (2009:36). Social reality is a result of the socialization process in which society's interpretations of their way of life is interpreted as its social reality, the accepted social norms, and their culture. Cultures and sub-cultures can be viewed as repositories of widely shared values and customs into which people are socialized so they can function as good citizens or as full participants, cultures and sub-cultures constrain us because we internalise their beliefs and values, (Bryman 2008). As such, through CDA the researcher would have leverage to seek answers to the reality aspect of this study, how these cultures and sub-cultures infiltrate into the policy formulation discourse and how it is interpreted by the affected social groups? This will be achieved by looking at the equality and legislative policies designed to ensure women empowerment in Zimbabwe.

CDA is particularly appropriate for policy analysis because it allows a detailed investigation of the relationship of language to other social processes, and of how language works with power relations, (Taylor 2004:436). This characteristic of CDA makes it appropriate for the investigation in question as it involves aspects of policy analysis and how power relations influence the key actors in drawing up policies and how they in turn affect women empowerment and development aid effectiveness.

3.2.2 The Foucauldian Discourse Analysis Theory

Foucault is credited for firmly introducing the element of power into discourse analysis in the 1970s, (Molder 2009). In the context of the French Philosopher, "*discours*" in French refers to institutionalised rules that govern the way a certain topic- sexuality, hysteria, romantic love, punishment and imprisonment- can be meaningfully talked about, (Molder 2009), hence Foucault's focus on discourses as constitutive of knowledge and meaning.

Foucault's work has revealed the complex multiple processes from which the strategic constitution of forms of hegemony may emerge, which could be through patriarchy or financial muscle as in the case of donor agencies. From such a perspective, policy making is seen as an arena of struggle over meaning, or as "the politics of discourse" and policies are seen as the outcomes of the struggles "between contenders of competing objectives, where language- or more specifically discourse- is used tactically", (Fulcher 1989:7 in Taylor

2004:435). That said, critical theories, CDA included, want to produce and convey critical knowledge that enables human beings to emancipate themselves from forms of domination; they are aimed at producing "enlightment and emancipation", (Wodak & Meyer 2009:7). Even though CDA does not have a theoretical framework of its own, the Foucauldian Discourse Analysis is highly relevant because it provides a solid base for analysing the power effects of discourse.

According to Molder (2009), the Foucauldian Discourse analysis shares the critically engaged focus of CDA but presents itself as more directly informed by the work of Michael Foucault by highlighting the productive side of language, establishing groups, categories and subjects rather than laying stress on how language conveys meaning. For Foucault, discourse is a constitutive power unto itself. Foucault's theorisation of the constitutive and disciplinary properties of discursive practices within socio-political relations of power is a demonstration of the postmodern concern with how language works to not only produce meaning but also particular kinds of objects and subjects upon whom and through which particular relations of power are realised (Graham, 2005). This theoretical framework is relevant to this investigation. Patriarchy is dominant in the women empowerment discourse and as a system it has its support in the African community as it is accepted as part of the culture and this is where it draws its power from. Until societal structures that support it have been transformed, whatever developments achieved at a higher level in policy formulation will still have limited impact because the women will still have limited space to exercise their empowered lifestyle.

3.3 Data Collection

This research is based on data collected from primary and secondary sources through the triangulation method. Triangulation is a combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon, providing the researcher with multiple or at least two sources of evidence as a way of seeking convergence and corroboration through the use of different data sources, (Bowen, 2009). Triangulation had the merit of limiting biases in the research. Secondary data was collected through a document analysis of policy documents from a sample of government ministries that are involved in women's affairs and development, finance and resource mobilization. Donor agencies reports and evaluation of development projects documents were also analysed. To corroborate this data, primary data was collected through personal and telephone interviews with officials from the sampled organisations.

3.3.1 Secondary Data: Document Analysis

Document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge, (Cobin & Strauss, 2008). In studies such as this, organisational and institutional documents are mostly used. Literature for this research was identified through searching of electronic journals on women empowerment and development aid. Human rights and development aid websites were also accessed through links from full text articles obtained from reviewed articles. Main websites accessed include, UN Women, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) as well as Zimbabwe's universal periodic reviews on women empowerment and development.

Key policy documents analysed include the Ministry of Women's Affairs Report to the UN General Assembly (2009), The National Gender Policy (2004), The National Gender and Women's Empowerment Strategy and Action Plan (NGWESAP), UNIFEM (2008), The Republic of Zimbabwe Combined Report on CEDAW to the UN General Assembly (2009), the Gender Scoping Study Report (2007) and the Constitution of Zimbabwe. Also reviewed for this research were country reports and publications on Zimbabwe by NORAD and the Department for International Development (DfID) on development aid effectiveness.

3.3.2 Primary Data: Interviews

The purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in and on someone else's mind. The purpose of open-ended (semi-structured) interviewing is not to put things in someone's mind but to access the perspective of the one being interviewed, (Patton, 1990). The researcher conducted interviews based on semi-structured questions in order to probe respondents and solicit as much information as she could draw out of them without pre-empting her position while respecting the code on values and ethics in qualitative research. A standard set of interview questions was used, focusing on issues of women empowerment perceptions by the three sampled stakeholders, Zimbabwe's women empowerment policy, traditional and cultural beliefs in women empowerment and trends in funding. The prepared interview questions were used as a template for the key aspects that the researcher wanted to elicit answers for and were slightly edited to suit the different respondents' categories. The interview questions are attached in Appendix 1.

The respondents were sampled to reflect their expertise; therefore, by asking open-ended questions it allowed them room to share their information and knowledge with the researcher. According to Bryman (2008), the researcher has to take cogniscence of the nature of the topic they are investigating. Since the case under investigation is viewed as politically sensitive by most respondents, it was the responsibility of the researcher to be diplomatic with all the respondents as a way of gaining their trust and confidence. A total of seven (7) respondents were interviewed. A Senior Advisor - Gender Team at NORAD and the Education Advisor at DfID were interviewed in face-to-face interviews. Telephone interviews were conducted with the Acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Justice & Legal Affairs, Director of Gender from the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Principal Accountant in the Ministry of Finance, the Gender Officer and an Advocate at Musasa Project.

3.3.3 Sampling

In qualitative research, it is important to ensure the validity, reliability and replication of data used for the research. Debate on the role of culture and policy in women empowerment is not peculiar to Zimbabwe, but an issue in most African countries who are generally patriarchal and are working on achieving the MDG Goal number 3 of women empowerment and gender equality. The South African Deputy President Kgalema Montlante while addressing a National Women's Conference in Pretoria remarked, "just like racism, sexism is an acquired attitude of mind, learned through social agency, and manifests its unequal power relations in varied ways." (03/08/2011). He further alluded to the importance of policy, legislation, a change of attitude and behaviour in pursuing the goal of the emancipation and empowerment of women. Therefore, this research has the potential of providing the missing link in achieving this goal for patriarchal societies. It is hoped that the chosen sample and methodology of research are representative enough of the wider patriarchal community such that the results of the study are replicable.

The goal of purposive sampling is to sample cases or participants in a strategic way, so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed, while capturing the daily life conditions, opinions, values, attitudes and knowledge base of those we study as expressed in their natural habitat (Bryman, 2008). This research focuses on policies regarding development aid in women empowerment; with a keen interest on how power relations by different key actors, influenced by different cultural beliefs and ideologies impact on the

effectiveness of development aid. Therefore, it was important that the sampled respondents were individuals who are knowledgeable on the developments and were strategically positioned to comment on these issues at an official level at all levels, that is, locally, regionally and internationally.

The Permanent Secretaries and recommended officials are officials who work with policies that have a bearing on women empowerment and distribution of resources and their input is assumed to be representative of the Zimbabwe government's position. Further, Zimbabwe formed a Government of National Unity (GNU) in 2009, which is made up of the three main political parties in Zimbabwe. These parties are equally represented in the sampled ministries which provide the researcher with an opportunity to draw from their different positions on development aid. Such data is relevant to the research as it provides an indication on their position in decision making with regards to women empowerment resource allocation.

Representatives from DfID and NORAD were sampled by the researcher because they both acknowledged that their relations with the GoZ have influenced their decisions on development aid projects in Zimbabwe. While NORAD has withdrawn its aid, DfID has continued with its development projects in Zimbabwe, regardless of the public criticism it has received from the GoZ. DfID also sits in the Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework (ZUNDAF), a donor steering committee that has commissioned a study to assess the gender equity sector in Zimbabwe. NORAD was also sampled because of its role in championing the discourse of women empowerment in Zimbabwe through the ZIM-NORAD Foundation where they worked with the Musasa Project in the 1990s.

Musasa Project is a grassroots non-governmental organisation in Zimbabwe that is credited with pioneering the women empowerment discourse in Zimbabwe beginning with domestic violence. The organisation has also conducted research on how patriarchy works within the Zimbabwean societal structures. Musasa Project is also ideal for the research because it is one of the local NGOs that worked with the GoZ and NORAD in the ZIM-NORAD Foundation in the 1990s. This was a project aimed at raising awareness in women's rights through theatre performances and the Women and Law Project. The Women and Law Project is a regional course in Women and Law that brings students of Law from Southern Africa together to study Women's Law and was funded by NORAD in partnership with the GoZ. Above all, unlike other non-governmental organisations who have succumbed to political influence, Musasa Project has publicly remained apolitical.

3.4 Data Analysis

Qualitative data accumulated through document analysis and interviews typically take the form of a large corpus of unstructured textual material. This large body of textual material provides a descriptive record of the research, they are the flesh but do not provide the explanations to the research. Therefore, a good qualitative analysis must be able to document its claim to reflect some of the truth of a phenomenon by reference to systematically gathered data, (Fielding in Gilbert, 1993). Bryman contends and advises that the "researcher must guard against being captivated by the richness of the data collected….., it is crucial to guard against failing to carry out a true analysis", (2008:538). This advice was of great help to the researcher in managing their data and preparing it for data analysis. Transcribed data and notes from the interviews were recorded in a chart by ministry and their relevance to the research questions. These formed the basis of the data analysis while other key aspects that further support the investigation raised by respondents are used as sub topics in the data analysis.

3.5 Ethical Issues

The principle that lies at the heart of the Research Ethics Framework is that research should be designed, reviewed and undertaken in a way that ensures its integrity and quality, (Bryman, 2008). In social research, ethical issues go beyond refraining from doing harm to participants but also include issues of confidentiality, informed consent and avoiding misrepresentation of findings. On approaching the organisations sampled for the research, the researcher presented them with a letter of introduction, presenting the researcher and their research topic.

The research raises some politically sensitive issues and the organisation's trust was of paramount importance so as to increase the credibility of the information provided. Furthermore, in Zimbabwe all policy documents require clearance from the office of the Permanent Secretary, as such, by presenting a letter of introduction, such clearance was equally sought. During the interviews the researcher also advised the respondents that the collected data was for academic research and was going to be used for that only. A recording device was used in some cases while some respondents preferred talking without being recorded but allowed the researcher to take notes. While some respondents would not mind

being mentioned by name, others preferred anonymity, therefore, in the final analysis the researcher deliberately left out the respondents' names but used their official positions.

3.6 Limitations

The topic under investigation was regarded by most respondents as politically sensitive as it focused on issues of government policy making and international relations. Some respondents ended up being evasive in their responses but the researcher had designed the questionnaire in a way that ensured that no bias was built into the process. This was particularly the case with interviewees from the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Musasa Project. This coupled with the call for elections in 2012 and the de-registration of 29 non-governmental organisations in February 2012 made it difficult for non-governmental organisations to be willing to give interviews. Another limitation is that the researcher could not travel to Zimbabwe to conduct interviews in person as initially planned due to economic circumstances, hence the decision to conduct telephone interviews with respondents in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The main objective of advocating women's empowerment is both to raise awareness in developing countries and also to ensure that access to information and resources creates an enabling environment for the empowered to enjoy and exercise their empowered lives. Through presenting the data gathered from the interviews and document analysis this chapter discusses the key themes of the study that are central to women empowerment and development aid effectiveness in patriarchal societies. This research's main argument focuses on how cultural discrepancies permeate into policy formulation and policy interpretation. At country level this is due to loopholes in country legislature that support discriminative cultural and traditional practices. At donor level it emerges as the differences in policies that have been developed in response to socio-economic and political context in recipient countries.

4.2 What does women empowerment mean to the Zimbabwean government, donor community and NGOs?

Perceptions on what constitutes women empowerment provides leverage for investigating the power relations between governments and donor agencies and how they are veiled in policies and decisions made with regards to development aid effectiveness. How women empowerment is perceived by these stakeholders has a bearing on the way women are identified in the development aid discourse and this impact on the actual development aid setting. This "identity" construction and reconstruction also forms the basis of stereotyping due to cultural perceptions culminating into unequal power relations. As Baaz (2005) postulates, development co-operation is characterised not only by an unequal power relationship where the donor sets up the rules of the game, but also by conflicting and competing interests. Therefore, how women empowerment is perceived in the power struggle has an implication on the policies of each concerned actor, where both, the donor agencies and receiving governments will try to downplay their intentions by promulgating policies that

are seemingly pro-women empowerment on the surface but with deep rooted power inequalities controlling from underneath, cultural perceptions and ideological differences being some of them.

4.2.1 What does women empowerment mean to the Zimbabwean government?

Document analysis has established that cultural and patriarchal power relations disempower women from accessing, owning and controlling resources; not having a voice in decision-making results in women not benefiting from national resource allocation and other entitlements, (Women's Affairs Report, 2009). Women empowerment for the Zimbabwean government means the creation and expansion of women's knowledge, skills, decision–making and other power bases giving them the capacity and capability to exercise influence and leadership *on their own*, (National Gender Policy, 2004, emphasis added). A respondent from the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs also remarked that to the Zimbabwean government, *"women empowerment is the promotion and advancement of women into strategic and decision making positions in socio-economic and political spheres of Zimbabwe as encrusted in the National Gender Policy"* (Interview 01/03/2012). The respondent further explained that the government, through the NGP seeks to address four critical areas of women empowerment namely, women in politics and decision-making, education and training of women, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women and women and the economy. The policy confirms the need to eliminate all social, economic and political policies, cultural and religious practices that impede on equality and equity of sexes anchored on the international human rights ideology of the protection and respect for the individual rights, (NGP, 2004).

4.2.2 What does women empowerment mean to the Donor Agencies?

Within the donor community, women empowerment means a lot more than advancement of women as prescribed by the human rights doctrine of protection and respect for individual rights. Women empowerment is concerned with *eradicating economic resource and power inequalities between men and women.* This means dealing with women's strategic as well as their practical needs, with a strong focus on their economic contribution to sustainable

development. Both donor organisations interviewed by the researcher stated that their interests in women empowerment projects were influenced by the special value donor organisations attach to poverty alleviation since poverty is highly synonymous with women's marginalisation. According to a respondent from the DfID,

> *"By ensuring that poverty is eradicated at the household level, there will be enough in the household to send even the youngest girl child to school, something that will not naturally happen if there are limited resources; the male child would get priority. [However], this has a direct link to culture in which women are perceived to be under men because women's empowerment increases women's bargaining power making it possible for them to negotiate economic, social and political changes for themselves"* *(Interview 17/02/2012).*

The donor community considers women empowerment as a human right women are entitled to. They emphasise the central role women empowerment plays in sustainable development and growth and this influences their policies on development aid distribution, partner organisations and implementation strategies. In line with stated policies, empowerment policies are operationalized in the context of human rights programs that target factors of social exclusion and are aimed at the eradication of gender inequality at all levels and in all spheres with the aim of increasing women's bargaining power so they can negotiate economic, social and political changes for themselves, (DfID Working Paper No. 10, 2005).

This view on women empowerment from the donor perspective has created conflicts of interests in the execution of women empowerment projects in Zimbabwe. Such a perception has a direct influence on the society's power base. The human rights framework that donor agencies follow is mainly founded on the need for establishing democratic institutions and systems within receiving states. This has been interpreted by some quarters in the Zimbabwe government as political pluralisation by donor agencies hence the discrepancies in the policies by the two actors. This reaction by the government can be understood in the light of Foucault's theory which posits that in power relations, the marginalized; in this case women, have values that can meaningfully challenge our own and needs that could be plausibly satisfied within our society. Their concerns can, therefore, be the focus of programmes for effective political action, (Gutting, 2005). According to Foucault's theory, contesting political ideologies can capitalise on the vulnerability of the side-lined in society by giving them relevance to the critical issues at hand at the expense of their opponents. Zimbabwean women fall within the group of the marginalised and by playing the trump card of empowerment in socio-economic and political arenas outside forces can garner enough support to push for

their political activities veiled in development assistance. This together with the societal belief that women are "inferior" to man by lacking in the strong will to make sound decisions presents them as a weak link to effect a political agenda, hence the allegation that the former colonizers were using aid to recolonize Zimbabwe.

4.2.3 What does women empowerment mean to the Zimbabwean NGOs?

NGOs negotiate the middle in the field of power and opportunity. On the one hand, they have to speak the language of international human rights preferred by donor agencies to get funds and global media attention. On the other hand, they have to present their initiatives in cultural terms that will be acceptable to at least some of the local community, (Merry, 2006). From the interviews conducted, this assertion was confirmed in the definition of women empowerment provided by a respondent from Musasa Project. The respondent provided that,

> *"Women empowerment refers to the ability of women to speak out, make decisions and take action that will make them live in an environment free from gender based violence or any other form of violence. For holistic empowerment, our organization envisions societies in which all women are free of gender based violence and are able to fully participate in development", (Interview 29/02/2012).*

The emphasis on the violence aspect also reflects the cultural dilemma in women empowerment which usually makes women susceptible to abuse and violence from their male counterparts, particularly at the household level. According to the respondent from NORAD most of the projects she participated in were mainly on agricultural extension programs, water and sanitation, women and law, women and their land rights. These are sensitive areas within patriarchal societies. "*Consulting and co-operating with traditional leaders was key; traditional leaders were always male members of the community who had the power to sanction or discontinue any projects if they felt bypassed",* (Interview 15/02/2012), the respondent explained. This reaction by traditional leaders while it can be explained from a patriarchal point of view as the traditional leaders safeguarding the local culture and tradition, it can equally be explained as insecurities by the men in patriarchal societies defending their male hegemony against women empowerment thereby determining the extent to which donor agencies may continue with women empowerment projects. In patriarchal Zimbabwe the village head, the chief and the council of elders are predominantly male. This as shown from NORAD's experiences, places male members of the society in a position to institute policies

at grassroots level and recommend to women in rural areas behaviour that conforms to their male expectations. Their position to sanction activities also impacts on women empowerment as they are likely not to approve projects that threaten their male dominance.

In the human rights framework, NGOs have assumed the role of translators who translate critical issues up and down the social ladder. "They reframe local grievances up by portraying them as human rights violations. They translate transnational ideas in local terms. At the same time, they interpret local ideas and grievances in the language of national and international human rights", (Merry, 2006:42). This has resulted in constrained relationships between the NGOs implementing grassroots projects and the traditional leaders who consider themselves the custodians and gatekeepers of Zimbabwe's culture and tradition. The position of occupying the middle that NGOs have assumed in the development dialogue has customarily been occupied by the village headmen.

To sum up the above discussion, the highlighted underlying mechanisms of power translate into discrepancies between the government and donor agencies as explained in Foucault's power relations theory. Foucault argues that investigating the mechanisms of power in societal relations helps us explain where and how, between whom and what points, according to what process and with what effects is power applied, because power is not a substance but an intrinsic part of all human relations, which in a circular way is both effect and cause, (Senellart, 2007). In a traditional set up, women are under men and whatever that concerns their well-being should be passed through the male head of the family and where it concerns a whole village as was the case cited by the respondent from NORAD, then the traditional leaders were responsible for decision-making on behalf of the women participants. It is this cultural stereotyping of women that hinders development aid effectiveness in women empowerment projects. Hall (1997) further explain that this kind of stereotyping is used as a reflection of symbolic power that, above all is present in and functions to uphold power inequalities, and not necessarily an expression of a secure identity, (Baaz, 2005). The resuscitation of traditional leadership institutions has given traditional leaders political clout, which together with cultural beliefs on the social roles of women have been used to disrupt women empowerment projects at grassroots level.

This is what local NGOs have to contend with when they execute women empowerment projects. This perception is similar to that of the government because the government is similarly close to the ground through the traditional leadership institutions and also

understands the cultural and policy dynamics at social level. Hence the government's emphasis on eliminating all social, economic and political policies, cultural and religious practices that impede on equality and equity of sexes. How women empowerment is contextualised by the three types of stakeholders interviewed indicates the discrepancies that have a bearing on the execution of women empowerment projects and the centrality of patriarchy to the effectiveness of development aid.

4.3 Zimbabwe's policy on women empowerment

The Zimbabwe government's policy on women empowerment and development, like any other policy is there to act as a principle or a rule that guide decisions on women empowerment, with the objective of achieving rational outcomes that are in line with the international human rights framework and provisions for women's rights as human rights. From the research, the researcher established that although the policy was well formulated there were some areas that were not sufficiently addressed that made the implementation process sporadic.

Research has established that until 2004 when the Zimbabwe National Gender Policy came into force the Zimbabwean government had been silent on local policies to complement their actions at the international level where they had signed and ratified international human rights instruments on women's rights as human rights. A respondent from Musasa Project considered the formation of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, as one strategy that prioritised women empowerment. Although the ministry's strategic implementation framework is gender neutral, the ministry's main objective is women empowerment and development. The respondent from Musasa Project [felt] that the ministry had sound policies on women empowerment among others the 50/50 women representation in parliament, (interview 29/03/2012).

However, from this research, all concerned actors feel there are some grey areas in the government policy on women empowerment which impacts negatively on aid effectiveness, with respondents alluding to patriarchy as the main stumbling block. The UNIFEM Strategy Paper (2008-2011) describes these policies as "paper gains" in women empowerment and expresses the need to turn this into real transformational gains as Zimbabwe is still a long way from achieving a balanced gender equality status.

Research further established that the effects of patriarchy were breeding on the lack of a clear cut description of what constitutes discrimination against women. According to the Zimbabwe's Periodic Country Report 2009, even though the Zimbabwean Constitution prohibits discrimination under the Declaration of Rights, the lack of a specific definition of discrimination against women in legislative instruments has hampered progress in the recognition and redress of discriminatory conduct and practices. This lack of a practical definition of discrimination can be traced back to CEDAW which has been criticised by scholars like Reid and Balmsforth, (Bayefsky, 2000). However, the NGP Implementation and Strategic Plan claims to address issues that lead and translates into discrimination against women, thereby contributing towards the definition of discrimination against women in Zimbabwe, (Zimbabwe Country Periodic Report 2009).

A respondent from the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs emphasised that there were no legal instruments or mechanisms in place to monitor the implementation of the policy to ensure that women empowerment and development happens (Interview, 01/03/2012). He further explained that organisations and institutions relied on a number of policies that encouraged equal opportunities across sectors and not to discriminate on the basis of gender. This reduced the government's policy to a piece-meal offer to women empowerment in Zimbabwe because the implementation of these policies now depended more on morality by individuals and not on policy.

> *"Decision-making positions are flooded by men who tend to overlook some policy aspects that may have an impact on women empowerment and development. While at policy level the equal opportunities policy and non- discrimination on the basis of gender is heralded even in job advertisements, the reality is women continue to be marginalised because of the gender imbalance trend that can be traced back to when boys and girls enrol in schools continuing up to the employment sector where strategic positions have job descriptions that prefer males to females", (Interview 01/03/2012).*

This observation by the interviewee also raised questions on aspects of stereotyping as a stopper to women empowerment and development aid effectiveness. Baaz submits that "stereotyping is part of the maintenance of social order and is often manifest where there are gross inequalities of power", (2005:17). According to the interviewee's response, the Zimbabwean society, be it in the village or in the corporate sector continues to stereotype women as inferior to men and can be easily side-lined even where policies dictates otherwise. Although the Affirmative Action, another policy on women empowerment, provides leverage for the promotion of women, it is laced with connotations of stereotyping. Commenting on

the effects of the Affirmative Action policy on women empowerment, the respondent from the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs said;

"For example in the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs, when they recruit for non-degree law officers, a certain quota is reserved for female applicants regardless of them being less academically qualified than their male counterparts applying for the same position", (Interview 01/03/2012).

This portrayed women as less competent and were promoted on "favour" and not merit. Such a position, though it may have had immediate gains of expediting the empowerment process, it had the long term effect of women's voices being drowned by their male counterparts when they have to make decisions at the same negotiating table.

Further to these observations by respondents, a Gender Scoping Study commissioned to provide a bird's eye-view of the women's movement in Zimbabwe as a sector concluded that co-ordination at "all levels of the sector is limited, weak and ad-hoc due to lack of a common agenda among the key stakeholder", (UNIFEM Strategy Paper 2008-2011). As has been highlighted in Chapter 2 of this research, this is what the feminist political theory seeks to address. As a theory that is gender sensitive, the feminist political theory helps the researcher explain issues raised by respondents. On the surface, the Zimbabwean government has a great policy architecture that is human rights sensitive, a policy that attracts donor agencies to partner with stakeholders in women empowerment projects, yet underneath are strong patriarchal webs that makes women empowerment as a lived reality unattainable. This helps to explain why empowerment projects designed under the banner of human rights practices fail to gel in with the reality on the ground in patriarchal societies thereby limiting the effectiveness of development aid extended to Zimbabwean women.

4.4 The role of legislative policy in women empowerment

Colonial Africa laid the ideological foundation for male preferential policies which contributed to Africa's development crisis, (Charlton et.al, 1989) and this has manifested itself in the women empowerment and development aid effectiveness debate. Zimbabwe has a dual legal system of the Roman-Dutch Law and the Customary Law inherited from the colonial Rhodesian legal system. The Customary Law realm has been widely criticised for its repressive stance on the women's rights. A research on "Cultural Practices and gendered exclusion" conducted by SIDA (2004) highlighted the existence of customary law as impacting negatively on women empowerment. The research cites Section 23 of the

Zimbabwean constitution as an example of such customary legislative provisions that stall progress in women empowerment. The Ministry of Women's Affairs, in its periodic report to the United Nations, also stressed the discriminative effect of Section 23 of the Zimbabwean Constitution. In most reports reviewed and during interviews the researcher noticed that the existence of section 23 of the constitution was still a subject of wide debate in Zimbabwe. Concerns are being raised on its effect of allowing discrimination on matters of personal law and customary law which hinders the full enjoyment of human rights by women.

This aspect of the Zimbabwean legislative policy has emerged in the research as a major difference between the egalitarian assumptions of aid providers and policy provisions that seek to end discrimination against women in Zimbabwe. After almost twenty amendments to the country's supreme law, Section 23 seems to be overriding all efforts in making women empowerment a reality in patriarchal Zimbabwe. Acknowledging the holding effect of this clause on women empowerment projects effectiveness, the Zimbabwean government has stated that it has taken a gradual approach in repealing all legal provisions that perpetuate discrimination against women to avoid societal resistance.

"The Government has considered the need to codify customary law. However, due to the dynamic nature of customs and practices it may not be in the interest of women to codify the law" (Zimbabwe Country Periodic Report 2009:17). This submission by the Zimbabwean government confirms the argument of this thesis that patriarchy does infiltrate cultural and traditional practices that discriminate against women into policy and decision-making discourse. Although this was the government's submission to the OCHR, the main reason for the government's reluctance to repeal section 23 in its entirety has links to the respect and protection of African culture and tradition. Taken in the context of Foucault's power relations theory, this stance by the government is what Foucault presents as an "…effort to allow the errors that marginalize a group to interact creatively with the "truths" of the mainstream society. To the extent that if the effort succeeds, the marginal group will no longer be a specific object of domination, and society as a whole will be transformed and enriched by what it had previously rejected as errors", (Gutting, 2005:89). Since culture is fluid, and has a lot to do with individual attitudes, the government's position allows the customary aspects of its legislature to transform itself and accommodate the changing times thereby successfully integrating the women empowerment process. However, this transformation process has not happened, instead individuals have capitalised on its weakness to further the patriarchal attitudes.

Acknowledging the impact of negative cultural and traditional practices that discriminate women at one level and not implementing "the policy of eliminating all negative economic, social and political policies, cultural and religious practices that impede equality and equity of sexes", (NGP: 2004:4) is presenting women with half-baked answers to the challenge posed by the legislative provision. While urban women may use other policy provision like the equal opportunities policy to negotiate their way in decision-making, Section 23 remains a challenge for rural women (these constitutes 65% of Zimbabwean women), who live under traditional leaders where traditional and cultural beliefs have a strong clutch on society. Highlighting a gap in women empowerment, a respondent from NORAD posited that,

> *"The patriarchy system in Zimbabwe has created different classes of women, i.e. the poor and hungry whose immediate need is food and shelter, the married and comfortable because the husband "provided" for the family through access to land and the widowed or divorced who had experienced discrimination and were willing to challenge the status quo. These classes made the execution of women empowerment projects even more difficult for the donor agency because what was a priority to one group, was a minor to the other", (Interview 15/02/2012)*

This scenario has had the culminating effect of further disintegrating women in urban areas from those in the rural areas further expanding the fissures on empowerment needs for women in rural areas and those in urban areas. As Merry (2006) argues, the above is a typical case in human rights activism where the human rights dialogue faces resistance by elites who fear loss of power, states unwilling to have their activities exposed, and men who want to retain their authority over women. This is not only a challenge to legislative policy but a challenge to the whole women empowerment process.

> *"While the government has done commendable work in policy, there was need to include, in the current legislative reviewing process, legislative instruments that are more women empowerment oriented. Legislative instruments that address women at grassroots level and cascade empowerment upwards, the current policies are focusing on women at a higher level creating groups amongst women. Women in decision-making also need the full support of women in rural areas", (Interview 01/03/2012).*

In addition to the above findings, within the human rights prism, The Zimbabwe Bill of Rights in the Constitution only deal with first generation rights, that is civil and political rights and does not deal with social and cultural rights, making it easy for the cultural rights to be politicised. It is in such instances that development aid agencies and grassroots NGOs have been dragged into the politics of the country which again has led to many donor agencies withdrawing their support to express their protest.

4.5 Trends analysis in women empowerment projects funding

Within the framework of this study, for the research to establish how the discrepancies discussed above have had an effect on development aid effectiveness there is need to analyse the development aid trends in Zimbabwe within the stipulated period of the study. The Ministry of Women's Affairs, was formed in 2005 and before then it was combined with the Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation. During this period there were no specific budgetary allocations from the government, but this is not to say there were no women empowerment activities happening on the ground. During this period most of the women empowerment projects were implemented by donor agencies through project partnerships with the government and civil society organisations.

Through this research it has been established that since the ministry's inception, the implementation of the ministry's gender equality laws and policies has been hampered by both inadequate funding which has paralysed government operating arms and half-hearted commitment by policy implementing patriarchs, (UNIFEM Strategy Paper, 2008). This has been attributed to the fact that the creation of the ministry coincided with the global economic crisis and the country's failure to service its international debt resulting in many donor agencies moving from bilateral to multilateral funded projects. The cut of financial injection from donor agencies to the government created fiscal constraints that made it difficult for the government to allocate any funds to the ministry for women empowerment projects. *"Although policies and procedures for the women empowerment initiative were designed beginning 2005, the government has been facing huge liquidity problems [and] nothing has been provided from the government yet. In the 2011 fiscal year, only UD$5 million had been disbursed to the ministry",* (Ministry of Finance respondent, Interview 20/02/2012).

According to research interviews with ministry representatives, the lack of financial injections was influenced by differing ideological understandings on what development aid was aimed at. As was presented in the previous chapters, development agencies targeted their empowerment projects at aspects that would help women establish themselves and claim a voice for themselves in a patriarchal set up. This coincided not only with a breakdown in Zimbabwe's financial system and galloping inflation, but also with the rise of a strong opposition party in Zimbabwean politics. This together with the "traditional western-donors" reluctance to support reform policies, particularly the land reform policy by the Zimbabwean government exacerbated an already dire financial situation. During this period, the Zimbabwe political landscape became highly volatile, thereby influencing donor agencies' position to

withdraw from most of the projects which negatively impacted on development aid effectiveness. The international financial crisis of 2008 was also highlighted as the reason why donors were moving away from bilateral aid to multilateral aid where funds would be pooled together rather than disbursed to specific projects.

Interviewees from NORAD and DfID concurred that, *"The decision to continue with projects in any particular country is also influenced by the political situation in the receiving country, the security concerns of our partners and how human rights issues are perceived", (Interview 17/02/2012).* Concerns on the operating environment and government policies were also mentioned by the NORAD respondent in an interview on 15/02/2011 who emphasised that their organisation had to withdraw most of their activities from Zimbabwe, among them, the Women and Law Project because the economic and political environment made it difficult to channel funds and maintain projects. She further explained that, this did not only stop progress in women empowerment but also had the effect of reversing the gains of development aid that had been channelled towards women empowerment because the organisation also had to make redundant employees involved in the affected projects adding to the already high unemployment rate.

Confirming the researcher's argument on differing ideological perspectives by key actors, a respondent from the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs said, *"Government and donor agencies focus on sensitive issues and not women empowerment", (Interview 01/03/2012).* Sensitive issues highlighted here were on political debates and incidences of partisan funding by donor agencies. It was established during the data collection process that, although resource constraints have been a major stumbling block, officials had expected a positive development on ministry funding and allocations of funds since the formation of the inclusive government and the establishment of committees like ZUNDAF. Trends in funding allocation have indicated that,

> *"There is a lack of funding in ZANU (PF) led ministries and the Ministry of Women's Affairs is one of the ZANU (PF) headed ministries. For example, in the 2011 fiscal year, the Ministry of Education (MDC-T) led, received a lot of funding from donor communities and in the 2012 fiscal year the Ministry of Health (MDC-T) has received USD 120 million from donors, an amount way higher than what the Ministry of Women's Affairs received in the last financial year", (Ministry of Finance respondent, Interview 20/02/2012).*

The term "partisan-funding" is used by GoZ to imply that funding goes to support sections of the GNU and society that are "more in tune" with human rights and egalitarian ideologies. In

practical terms this means support to the MDC-T. The policy decision by donor agencies to move away from bilateral aid has had a negative impact on the effectiveness of development aid on women empowerment. Initially it was easier for government to partner with local NGOs to execute projects at grassroots level in women empowerment projects which served as a good stop gap measure in the absence of a ministry that directly dealt with women's affairs. The establishment of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, was well received as a good policy development which grassroots NGOs anticipated would increase the rate of women empowerment and development. According to a respondent from Musasa Project,

> *"Since funding for projects is now accessed through international organisations, it is now challenging to access funding because of increased competition. National governments rely on international funding and expect NGOs to compete on the international aid market. For instance, UNIFEM, Global Fund for Women and specific funding for Girls are not easily accessed. This had created a gap unlike before where local NGOs would access funding from local governments as implementing partners in government to donor agreed projects", (Interview29/02/2012)*

Confirming the changes in donor support to the Zimbabwean government, a NORAD Country Analysis Report states that,

> "The Zimbabwe situation is very special since donor support to the nation state and government is virtually on hold (from the traditional western donors). The international support to Zimbabwe in real terms has been reduced since 2002 but for civil society it has been increased both in real and relative terms since donors now spend a lot of their funds on civil society in one form or another (the UN system is the other big recipient)", (2007:5).

Even though funding has been increased for the civil society sector, the move has not translated into tangible gains for the women empowerment projects that had before benefited from the same international donor agencies. Funds channelled to recipients through multilateral channels have had less impact as a huge chunk of the money is swallowed by administrative and transfer costs and what eventually gets to grassroots recipients is the smallest unit of the bigger chunk.

Further in a politically volatile environment like Zimbabwe, by withdrawing support to the government and opting for the civil society donor organisations created tensions between the government and the grassroots organisations that once partnered for development and empowerment into competitors. Even though at international level grassroots organisations have been commended for their leading role in development and empowerment activities in Africa as a whole, governments have reacted with scepticism on the agenda of their funders,

particularly in instances where funding donor agencies and governments differ in policy and ideology as is in the case of Zimbabwe. Their position has been largely politicised impacting on their operations. Where NGOs are perceived to be working with donor agencies at the expense of the government NGO operations are discontinued by the GoZ. On the other hand, where NGOs are perceived to be supporting the ZANU (PF) section of the GNU their funding applications for projects are not approved leaving NGOs financially strapped. This explains the dilemma that local NGOs now face in accessing aid and implementing projects in communities. While donor organisation's intentions were to continue providing funding for Zimbabwe by by-passing the government, the intended recipients have been prejudiced the most.

4.6 Discussion: Development aid effectiveness challenges and achievements

When the researcher embarked on the study, the assumption was that the role of cultural and ideological differences on how to achieve development aid effectiveness is underplayed particularly in patriarchal societies like Zimbabwe. Policies and legislative inadequacies provide conducive environment for the manipulation of and access to development aid for women empowerment mainly due to the limited representation of women at strategic and decision-making levels. Women play a pivotal role to the success of the development aid effectiveness. However, they are constantly reminded of their cultural and traditional roles and positions through legislature, the most conspicuous case being Section 23 of the Zimbabwean Constitution. Whatever policies they come up with will be weighed in cognisance of what their legislative rights entails.

Basically, the government's definition of women empowerment is in itself patriarchal. The whole process of women empowerment is seen as a process of "weaning off" women so that they begin to make decisions "on their own". This perception of women empowerment alludes to some element of hand holding by their male counterparts which continues to give men leverage on deciding on which projects are relevant and at what level. As is the scenario when one is being "weaned off" their custodian determines the pace they go and in this case, the patriarchal society determines who helps women achieve this objective, through which means and most importantly how much of culture and tradition should be maintained as this has strong ties to a nation's identity. While the three key groups of informants in this research

concur on the need to empower women as their point of convergence, cultural perceptions and ideological differences on what constitutes empowerment and how it is achieved has had an impact on the effectiveness of development aid initiatives by donor communities.

From the research finding, it is apparent that culture has its presence in every aspect of a society's sustainable development and can be easily translated into policy that has the total effect of limiting or derailing development aid effectiveness. It is not sufficient to be having smart policy documents and strategies. Lack of coordination in policy execution may have a detrimental effect on the whole initiative as is the case with women empowerment projects in Zimbabwe. Although governments have a responsibility to safeguard and protect national interest, donor agencies also have their fundamental principles to adhere to, they both have to establish middle ground that does not only ensure that their end of the bargain is met but also ensures maximum benefit for the recipient communities

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This is the final chapter to the research and will focus on the researcher's observations during the interviews and document analysis leading to her conclusions. Recommendations shall be presented drawing from the researcher's observations and conclusions on research findings. Recommendations will be made to the three key stakeholders in the research, that is, the government, donor agencies and non-governmental organisations in Zimbabwe.

5.1 Conclusions

The role of culture and how it gains access into policy and decision making by influencing different ideologies in national and international co-operation has been the main topic. Patriarchy as a culture is fluid because it is a socialised attitude; it has a way of influencing policies thus shaping development aid effectiveness in women empowerment. In Zimbabwe traditional and cultural beliefs largely curtail women empowerment and development. While at the surface, governments, donor agencies and grassroots non-governmental organisations share the same objective of women empowerment and ensuring sustainable development as well as the respect and protection of human rights, there continues to be other socio-economic and political factors that are closely linked to the implementation strategies thereby impacting on development aid effectiveness.

There are tensions and disparities between the global setting where human rights are codified and the local communities where the holders of these rights live and work. Although it is not explicitly spelt out, government policies on issues of women empowerment are largely influenced by cultural beliefs and tradition. Governments face the dilemma of having to live up to the egalitarian expectations of the international community and to have the best human rights records while they have to be culturally sensitive. They are obliged by tradition to show respect for cultural beliefs and tradition as a way of being exemplary. We can draw on Merry (2006) for a conclusion drawn from extensive comparison of development effort to see

how human rights ideas are embedded in cultural assumptions about the nature of the person, the community, and the state and do not translate easily from one setting to another. There is need to locate a middle ground acceptable for governments and donor agencies from a policy and operational point of view. The human rights framework alone has not been able to bridge this gap. It is this realization that has drawn major players in international development into integrating cultural differences into the development aid effectiveness agenda, (Merry, 2006).

Although it has been adopted as a means to guaranteeing sustainable development, women empowerment is a pertinent human right. In order for human rights to be effective, they need to be translated into local terms and situated within local contexts of power and meaning; they need to be remade in the vernacular, (Merry, 2006). However, the approach by the GoZ of starting at the international level cascading this translation of women's rights into the local contexts has created discrepancies in patriarchal societies where women are marginalised through custom and tradition. While policies may be human rights compliant in theory; practically the patriarchal practices remain part of the social fibre. This is not to dismiss culture and tradition as harmful practices that hinder women empowerment but to highlight the need to mainstream those positive aspects of culture and tradition that serve to protect women's interests, through practical policy coherence measures that supports stakeholder integration at all levels. However, as this study has argued, structures at local level do not sufficiently support the women empowerment discourse and are susceptible to manipulation and disregard by male individuals who sit at the negotiating table where women are statistically marginalised, thereby ultimately impacting on women's access to resource for their empowerment projects.

Differences in cultural beliefs, in this thesis summarised as "Afrocentric" versus "Eurocentric" have further negatively impacted on the effectiveness of development aid as these ideologies also influence decisions and perceptions of the involved actors on the implementation process of women empowerment projects. These discrepancies have been compounded by the fact that developing countries have until recently emphasised economic, social and cultural rights and marginalised civil and political rights, whereas western governments, who in this research are represented by donor agencies, have defended the importance of civil and political rights, (Freeman, 2011). This has created tensions between the two with the developing world governments criticizing the political rights stance in the voice of democracy as underlined by colonial intents and the need to push for regime change

as is argued by ZANU (PF), one of the implementers of the global political agreement in the Zimbabwean GNU.

Funding that favour one political party in the inclusive government by donor agencies and their emphasis on democracy and human rights protection has further strained relations impacting on development aid effectiveness in women empowerment projects being implemented in Zimbabwe. This has created power dynamics in the women empowerment discourse, creating distrust and lack of cooperation between donor agencies, governments and grassroots organisations or line ministries. In global politics, aid is often flaunted as a golden carrot to African states by established and emerging powers alike. Lofty pledges are pronounced during crises or when political clout is being wielded, (Abbas and Niyiragira, 2009). As established in the research, the gap between financial pledges made by donor agencies to Zimbabwe during the negotiation and implementation of the GNU and the actual amount received may confirm this assertion by Abbas and Niyiragira. This compounded by the fact that powerful countries who are also the world's major donor countries sit on the international committees that decide on policies that affect developing countries may have leverage on deciding on financial policies that have ramifications on development projects in developing countries than have the recipient countries. Wielding financial muscle through partisan funding in a politically volatile society like Zimbabwe culminates in the exclusion of those that are vulnerable and not equally represented at the decision making level. Zimbabwean women as has been established in this study fall within this category. This has the total effect of further discriminating women who are not equally represented at decision level but are also marginalised by socio and cultural beliefs in society.

Grassroots non-governmental organisations play an indispensable role in the development and empowerment discourse, be it at national or international level. At national level they are strategically positioned to bridge the gap between grassroots and governments, as well as between governments and donor agencies. At international level, non-governmental organisations are preferred for their strategic position and their ability to liaise with host governments at policy level on one hand, and on the other hand, their proximity to people in the locality at grassroots level on the other. This gives NGOs leverage in providing a balanced report on human rights issues on the ground. Managing aid is a complicated business, be it at government or donor agency level, the aid systems are complex, involving many institutions inside and outside government, and managing them to address all the challenges is a difficult task, (OECD, 2009). These are areas non-governmental organisations

can more easily straddle as long as they have their partners' confidence and support. NGOs play a vital role as intermediaries who are there to provide a critical role of interpreting the cultural world of transnational modernity for local claimants, (Merry, 2006). They translate, appropriate and remake transnational discourses into the vernacular thereby bridging the ideological gaps that negatively impact on development aid effectiveness particularly within socially, culturally and economically marginalised groups like women.

However, this position can be easily complicated when small, grassroots based NGOs have to compete on equal terms with their host governments and other established international NGOS for funding and support from donor agencies. Using financial muscle to support development projects creates antagonism between governments and grassroots non-governmental organisations. The tensions are even stronger when donor agencies prefer working with grassroots non-governmental organisations rather than with the host governments. As this research has established the perceived role of NGOs at international level as intermediaries is different from their real experiences as evidenced by their almost silent voice in this research. The NGOs position has been largely politicised impacting on their operations.

5.2 Recommendations

"Human rights promote ideas of individual autonomy, equality, choice and secularism even when these ideas differ from prevailing cultural norms and practices. Human rights ideas displace alternative visions of social justice that are less individualistic and more focussed on communities… " (Merry, 2006:4). This understanding of human rights and stakeholder interaction in the development aid discourse provide a ground for governments, donor agencies and NGOs to create synergies in policy formulation, partnerships in projects implementation and monitoring thereby increasing the effectiveness of development aid. In view of respect of state sovereignty and territorial integrity and the current global financial crisis, it is imperative for governments and donor agencies to move from aid funding to foreign direct investments that are based on partnerships. "In partnerships, development cooperation does not try to do things for developing countries and their people, but with them. It must be seen as a collaborative effort to help them increase their capacities to do things for themselves", (Crewe and Harrison in Baaz, 2005:3). Partnerships, in the context of this study allow donor agencies to synergise their policies in line with locally constructed

development policies. This way the paternalistic approaches are dispelled as concerned actors interact with each other from a very elementary stage of the development process. This provides a basis for a balanced coordination amongst the key stakeholders. While ZUNDAF is a good start in the current scenario, there is need for involving grassroots and civil society organisations representation to ensure that development discourse cascades to the grassroots level at all decision making levels. For the partnerships to be effective, they have to be implemented together with the stakeholder recommendations below.

5.2.1 Recommendations for the Zimbabwean Government

The government of Zimbabwe needs to implement the highlighted legislative deficiencies and design a policy coherence framework to implement and monitor policies and practices that support grassroots women empowerment organisations. Capacity building support needs to be identified and provided to these women empowerment interventions to enable them to compete with established mainstream NGOs. Capacity building through the Ministry of Women's Affairs, a unified monitoring and evaluation process and protocol should be established to enable unified and coherent reporting to donor agencies. The government should establish a human rights framework to guide development aid in general but particularly focussing on women empowerment and capacity strengthening.

5.2.2 Recommendations to the Donor Agencies

Donor agencies have different and often complicated reporting styles, monitoring and evaluation systems, at times conflicting funding criteria and intervention focus. A formalised coordination mechanism focused on women empowerment support and led by the relevant ministry should be established and its terms of reference developed and agreed by all donor agencies providing support to women empowerment projects in Zimbabwe. These forums and structures need to be replicated at provincial, district and village level. Currently, the coordination mechanism is broadly multisectoral and women empowerment issues get diluted and lost in the intricacies of broader donor funding issues. The criteria for inclusion into these forums should be clearly defined and legislated but as a minimum should also include representation from smaller, grassroots-focussed women empowerment projects. At an international level, harmonisation and alignment of women empowerment aid and support

should be prioritised with a view to establish consensus at a higher level and easing implementation of interventions at recipient level.

5.2.3 Recommendations to the grassroots non-governmental organisations

Women empowerment organisations should be proactive and innovative in engaging cultural structures and processes. The interventions need to be documented and success stories and challenges shared with community gate-keepers and policy makers as a means of encouraging attitude change in the patriarchy. If grassroots-oriented women empowerment interventions are to attain scale, achieve their objectives and change entrenched traditional mind sets, then organisations need to invest more in their governance and accountability mechanisms and processes. Furthermore, women empowerment interventions need technical support and capacity building input for staff, board of trustees and volunteers and this support and mentorship has to be balanced with quality interventions and demonstrable sustainable outcomes.

[16 642 words, this is within the acceptable 17000 word limit.]

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S AFFAIRS, GENDER & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, MINISTRY OF JUSTICE & LEGAL AFFAIRS AND MUSASA PROJECT

1. What does women empowerment mean to your ministry/ organisation?
2. Are there trends that you have observed in national and international funding and aid provision for women empowerment over the last five years?
3. What has changed in the way aid targeting women empowerment is provided and has it affected the operations of your ministry/ organisation in anyway?
4. What challenges do you encounter in trying to access funding for your ministry/ organisation?
5. What specific policies and strategies have been put in place by the government to ensure that women empowerment is prioritised when it comes to funding decisions?
6. What specific policies and strategies have been put in place by the donors to ensure that women empowerment is prioritised when it comes to funding decisions?
7. Whom do you see as the main actors supporting/preventing women empowerment advancement?
8. May you suggest ways by which funding targeting women empowerment could be made more effective? By recipients? Donor? Government?
9. Do you have a comment on the status of the current legislative environment as it relates to women empowerment?
10. How do you normally fundraise for women empowerment programmes?
11. In your opinion is sufficient funding allocated by donor/government for women empowerment projects?
12. Where do you see the gaps? And how can these gaps be rectified?

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

1. How much money is allocated in the budget for women empowerment focussed project activities annually?
2. Are there process and procedures involved in deciding the amount of funds/resources allocated for women empowerment and development? Any committees?
3. And how is this money allocated (per province, ministry, age groups, and thematic areas)
4. Is there a national policy framework that guides the amount of funds allocated for projects targeting women empowerment and development? How can I get a copy of the policy framework?

5. Over the last five years has the amount of money provided by international agencies increased, decreased or remained constant? Do you have any reports that you can provide me to use for my research?

6. What challenges has the ministry experienced in allocating resources for women empowerment projects? Any criteria used to allocate these resources- may you kindly send me a copy etc.

7. Has the ministry designed/put in place monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure that funds allocated for women empowerment projects are accounted for?

8. As a ministry whom do you see as key stakeholders when it comes to women empowerment and women development? What are your experiences working with these stakeholders? Any multi agency working group focussing on women empowerment and development?

9. What challenges, if any does the ministry experience in raising funds for women empowerment projects?

DONOR AGENCIES

1. What influences your development aid policies, implementation strategies and evaluation?

2. How different perceptions of aid has affected your work on women empowerment projects in Zimbabwe

3. What have been your experiences in executing women empowerment projects in largely patriarchal societies

4. What policy coherence measures would you recommend to ensure smooth relations and implementation of political commitment and policy statements that affect women empowerment projects in Zimbabwe?

5. What has been the impact of moving from bilateral aid to multilateral aid on the effectiveness of development aid?

6. What policy or legislative reforms would you recommend to improve on the effectiveness of aid in Zimbabwe?

7. What do you think of the development aid effectiveness reforms? Do you think Zimbabwe would have benefited more from aid agencies by signing the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness?

8. What effect has the Zimbabwean political climate had on the distribution of aid to Zimbabwe and how has this affected the women empowerment projects at grassroots level?