



UNIVERSITÄT LEIPZIG

Master Thesis

A History of Debates on Sexuality in Zimbabwe

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Academic degree aspired
Master (MA)

Vienna, 2009

Studienkennzahl: A 067 805

Studienrichtung: Global Studies - A European Perspective

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Sprachen:	Englisch: perfekt in Wort und Schrift (2. Muttersprache) Shona: perfekt in Wort und Schrift (1. Muttersprache) Deutsch: gute Sprachkenntnisse
IT:	fundierte Kenntnisse in Microsoft Office, SPSS, Internet
Sonstiges:	Maschinenschreiben

Abstract

When talking about sexuality in Zimbabwe, the influence of colonialism cannot be ignored as it comes to the forefront of much debate. Sexual orientations such as homosexuality are claimed to have been a colonial invention and not a Zimbabwean phenomenon hence debates on this tend to place blame on colonialism. Prostitution is believed to have increased a lot during colonialism due to the high influx of European settlers into present day Zimbabwe. Gendered sexuality is also said to have been influenced a lot by colonialism in Zimbabwe. This thesis brings the debate on sexuality to not only focus on the colonial aspects of sexuality in Zimbabwe but to bring it closer to home and find out how the government, media, families and religious institutions are debating sexuality. This thesis also looks at how and in what ways these actors have an impact on Zimbabwean society and their sexuality in relation to HIV/AIDS.

Using secondary literature analysis, this thesis looks at comments by main actors in Zimbabwe such as the government, religious institutions as well as the media in order to explain the perceptions on sexuality in Zimbabwe as well as how they have changed or remained the same from pre-colonial to post-colonial Zimbabwe. The issue of sexuality is often ignored and thought to be not within the norms of Zimbabwean culture to talk about it let alone debate about it. This thesis is not deterred by this and finds out what the debates are centred around as well as tracing the history of these debates trying to establish changes that have occurred in this debate over the years.

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Wenn man über Sexualität in Simbabwe spricht, kann man den Einfluss des Kolonialismus nicht ignorieren, da er im Vordergrund vieler Debatten steht. Sexuelle Orientierungen wie Homosexualität gelten als koloniale Erfindung und nicht als Phänomen Simbawwes, weshalb diesbezügliche Diskussionen dazu tendieren, den Kolonialismus dafür verantwortlich zu machen. Prostitution, so eine weitere gängige Meinung, habe während der Kolonialzeit auf Grund der starken Zuwanderung europäischer Siedler ins heutige Simbabwe stark zugenommen. Auch seien sexuelle Geschlechterrollen stark durch den Kolonialismus

beeinflusst. Diese Arbeit wird die Diskussion über Sexualität nicht auf die kolonialen Aspekte von Sexualität in Simbabwe begrenzen, sondern mehr ins hier und jetzt holen und untersuchen, wie Regierung, Medien, Familien und religiöse Institutionen über Sexualität diskutieren. Diese Arbeit wird auch betrachten, wie und in welcher Weise diese Akteure die Gesellschaft Simbawes und ihre Sexualität in Bezug auf HIV/AIDS prägen.

Bei der Analyse der Sekundärliteratur untersucht diese Arbeit Äußerungen der gesellschaftlichen Hauptakteure in Simbabwe, z.B. Regierung, religiöse Institutionen sowie Medien, um die Haltungen zur Sexualität in Simbabwe zu erklären sowie um zu erläutern, wie diese sich vom vorkolonialen bis zum nachkolonialen Simbabwe verändert haben oder gleich geblieben sind. Das Thema Sexualität wird oft ignoriert, und es gilt als der Kultur Simbawes nicht entsprechend darüber zu reden, geschweige denn darüber öffentlich zu diskutieren. Diese Arbeit lässt sich dadurch nicht abschrecken und geht den Diskussion auf den Grund, sie zeigt die Geschichte der Debatten und stellt Veränderungen, die in dem Diskurs im Laufe der Jahre zutage getreten sind, heraus.

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1.0 Introduction

Suzanne Leclerc-Madlala¹ points out that in his 1995 public statement, President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe passed a comment implying that homosexuality was un-African. This view drew a lot of support from several African heads of state. In most African societies, it is considered a taboo to discuss the issues of sexuality. In common with many parts of the developing world, Leclerc-Madlala points out that, issues of sexuality in Africa were and are to varying degrees, often shrouded in customary prescriptions and practices that are seldom discussed openly and directly. Leclerc-Madlala also suggests that the increasing HIV/AIDS pandemic, as well as President Mugabe's controversial statement, have forced scholars to take up studies on sexuality. These are not only studies of same-sex sexual activities but also about many other issues related to sex and sexual behaviour in Africa. Looking into debates on the many facets of the notion of sexuality in Zimbabwe is therefore the aim of my thesis.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines sexuality as “a central aspect of being human throughout life and encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. It further states that “sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. It also states that “while sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, ethical, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors.”²I therefore seek to look at debates on this issue of sexuality by the various actors that influence the conceptions and actualizations of sexuality in Zimbabwean society.

¹Suzanne Leclerc-Madlala, ‘Field of Sexuality Studies. What is it?’ Sexuality in Africa Magazine 1, no.1 (2004): 4-6.

²World Health Organization, “Sexual Health” <http://www.who.int/reproductive-health/gender/sexualhealth.html#2> (accessed April 24, 2008).

Theories of Sexuality³

Several theories have been proposed in the study of sexuality. Some of these theories are explained in more detail below. These theories do not make the basis of my thesis, I however allude to some of their hypothesis in my thesis and sometimes use them to show contradictions between my findings and the claims of these theories. These theories are however important in shedding light on research that has been conducted concerning the issue of sexuality.

Social constructionist theory assumes that reality and experience are ultimately subjective and perhaps truth is relative too. Social constructionists express scepticism when it comes to claims that sex is subject to universal laws that are rooted in biology and pan-cultural human nature. A lot of social constructionists, though sceptical about the notion that sexuality is rooted in biology are also open to the role biology plays even though they do not place much emphasis on it. For social constructionists, sexual desire and behaviour are a result of one's upbringing, socialization, religion, the media, and political influences.

Feminist Sexology and social constructionist theory are quite compatible. Baumeister, Maner and DeWall suggest that it is possible to be a social constructionist without being a feminist and vice versa. In the practice of theorizing about sex however, the two are said to strongly overlap and very few thinkers embrace one without the other. Feminist Sexologists believe that sexual attitudes and practices are rooted in the gender roles constructed by particular cultures and historical periods. Feminists are primarily concerned with differences between males and females. To feminists, sexuality is one manifestation of gender.

Evolutionary Theory came about in part as a reaction against feminism and constructionist thinking. When the evolutionary approach to sexuality started, many people are said to have been uncomfortable with it. This was the case because it was the belief that it took people's sexual desires and put them in the hands of their genes. Evolutionary theorists however have asserted that taking an evolutionary perspective does not necessarily mean that people's sexual behaviour is entirely determined at birth by their genes. A lot of modern evolutionary theories acknowledge the role of learning and culture and seek to find ways in which genes learning and culture interact dynamically to produce sexual behaviour.

³These theories are taken from: Baumeister Roy F. and DeWall C. Nathan and Maner John K. "Theories of Human Sexuality." In *Sex and Sexuality Volume 1. Sexuality Today: Trends and Controversies.* ed. Burnette Michelle M. and McAnulty Richard D. 17-34. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Perspectives, 2006.

Psychoanalytic Theory has its roots in Sigmund Freud's seminal thinking. This theory influenced sexuality theory a lot in the beginning of the twentieth century. For Freud, the sex drive was one of the two motivations that underlie all human striving. Freud's sex drive was very broad and included desires for love, affiliation and belongingness.

Social Exchange Theory applies economic concepts to behaviour and may be compatible with the evolutionary and constructionist and feminist theories. Sexual exchange theory examines what sex may bring to the table for the potential lovers. This includes rewards such as pleasure, love, status, and attention. It also includes the setbacks such as heartbreak, disease as well as disgrace. Because it is also a product of sex, pregnancy is seen as either a setback or reward depending on the preferences of the individual involved. In social exchange theory, sex is something that can be traded such that in heterosexual interactions, sex is a female resource while men offer women other resources in exchange for sex. Female sexuality therefore is treated as having inherent value while male sexuality is treated as having no value. For the exchange between males and females to be successful there is therefore the need for the males to offer the females something in return for sex. This could be in the form of love, respect, marriage or other commitments. In some cases this can be in the form of cash. In the sexual market place, women are said to operate as sellers and men as the buyers.

The authors address various theories relating to issues of sexuality. These are not the focus of my thesis but rather some of the issues focused on by the actors engaged in the debates I look into in this thesis. Even though Baumeister, Maner and DeWall propose various theories of addressing the issue of sexuality, I do not adopt any single particular theory. I however borrow a lot of ideas from the different theories in my writing on debates on sexuality in Zimbabwe. Even though it contributes a lot to the understanding of sexuality, theorizing – according to Baumeister, Maner and DeWall - is not essential to sexuality research. The modern sexuality research tradition has been heavily influenced by the Kinsey approach. The Kinsey approach is about collecting information without aligning with any particular theoretical perspective and I believe this is the approach I take in this thesis.

Discussions and Themes of Sexuality – a brief history

In 1970 a journal on sex research, the journal 'Sex Roles' became a forum for investigating how sex roles shaped sexual behaviour.⁴ The growth and spread of the social history of sexuality was aided by several movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Several journals arose at the time including the Journal of Homosexuality in 1974 and many of the radical journals published articles on the history of sex roles as well as sexual attitudes and sexual practices. Despite noted progress in the publicizing of sexuality, getting sex to be accepted into the historical world was not an easy feat because it was not so easy to make women, gays and lesbians subjects as well as objects of history because women and gays were heavily oppressed at the time in question.⁵

The topic of sex is the subject of heated debates because values vary across people. In some places, there exist laws for regulating sexuality as well as to indicate what is wrong or right.⁶ If the taboos against discussing or researching on sexuality are done away with, there can be a wide range of theoretical approaches to human behaviour that can offer a lot to the study of sexuality.⁷ The historic roots of contemporary sexuality studies can be found in many diverse fields like anthropology, literary history, and gender studies among others. The term 'sexuality' as a way to define meanings of human eroticism, along with a few prefixes such as 'hetero', 'homo' and 'bi' to describe types of persons embodying particular desires, gained currency from the mid-19th century Victorian Europe and America.⁸

Some researchers on sexuality have attributed evolutionary theories to try and explain the phenomenon. Evolutionary theorists try to understand the sexual desires and behaviours of modern individuals as the result of ancestral patterns that produced more and better offspring. For evolutionary theorists, virtually all aspects of human mating and sexuality – from the excitement of initial romantic attraction, to the day to day maintenance of a long term relationships, to the anger and distress experienced at a relationship's breakup - have been shaped at least in part by evolutionary process. Studies such as those by Kenrick and Keefe in 1992, and by Linsenmeier in 2002, show that men and women differ in their willingness to engage in casual sex. They also show that while men might tend to place

⁴Stephen Garton, *Histories of Sexuality: Antiquity to Sexual Revolution*, (2004): 6

⁵Stephen Garton, *Histories of Sexuality: Antiquity to Sexual Revolution*, (2004): 8

⁶Michael Wiederman, "Sex Research," in *Sex and Sexuality Volume 1. Sexuality Today: Trends and Controversies*, ed. M. Michelle Burnette and Richard D McAnulty (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Perspectives, 2006): 13

⁷Roy F. Baumeister and C. Nathan DeWall and Jon K. Maner, "Theories of Human Sexuality," (2006): 18

⁸Suzanne Leclerc-Madlala, 'Field of Sexuality Studies. What is it?' (2004): 5

emphasis on physical attractiveness and youth in the partners they get involved with, women tend to favour mature partners with high social standing. Clarke and Hatfield in 1989, as well as Simpson and Gangestad in 1992 point out that in general men are more willing to engage in casual sex without any prospect of long term relationships while women on the other hand require some level of commitment before agreeing to have to intercourse. These differences in sexual activity, from an evolutionary perspective are said to reflect the different constraints that influenced the reproductive success of human ancestors.

In the event of pregnancy, women are obliged to carry the pregnancy or nine months while men have never had this obligation in the biological sense. This is said to explain women's lack of desire to engage in casual sex with men who have not proven responsibility and willingness to remain in a monogamous relationship over the generations.⁹ Though the case in many instances, this is not the ultimate explanation because in present day circumstances, there are women who are content with having casual sexual intercourse as well as willing and capable of being single parents.

Sexology, though often times considered to be a study confined to the West, is an international phenomenon. Stacy Leigh Pigg cites Dikötter's 1995 publication¹⁰ as well as Früstück's 2000 publication¹¹ who point out that various works of prominent sexologists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Anglo-European tradition were widely translated. They also allude to the fact that contemporaneous medical/sexological treatises were written by intellectuals in countries that are not in the West.¹² According to Lecelerc-Madlala, "in more recent times, the work of French social theorist Michael Foucault (*The History of Sexuality* 1976-1984) is said to have had a major shaping influence on the development of theoretical approaches and debates in sexuality.¹³ Foucault's¹⁴ first volume is said to have captivated the interest of many historians at the time. Rather than simply accepting sexuality as natural and roles as social, Foucault's belief was that sexuality and sexual identity were historical.¹⁵ Because sex was viewed as a troubling condition that should

⁹Roy F. Baumeister and C. Nathan DeWall and John K. Maner "Theories of Human Sexuality," (2006): 17-34.

¹⁰Frank Dikötter, *Sex, Culture, and Modernity in China: Medical Science and the Construction of Sexual Identities in the Early Republican Period*, (Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1995)

¹¹Sabine Früstück, "Managing the Truth of Sex in Imperial Japan", *Journal of Asian Studies* 59, no. 2: 332-358

¹²Stacy Leigh Pigg, "Globalizing the Facts of Life" in *Sex in Development: Science, Sexuality and Morality in Global Perspective* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press 2005): 41

¹³Suzanne Leclerc-Madlala, 'Field of Sexuality Studies. What is it?' (2004): 5

¹⁴References to Foucault's notions on sexuality are taken from Stephen Garton, *Histories of Sexuality: Antiquity to Sexual Revolution*, London: Equinox Publishing Ltd., 2004: 10-19

¹⁵Stephen Garton, *Histories of Sexuality: Antiquity to Sexual Revolution*, London: Equinox Publishing Ltd., 2004: 10

be contained within the marriage domain, and was often shrouded in mystery and often spoken about in metaphors and abstract scientific terms outside marriage, Foucault saw this as the proliferation of discourses on sexuality rather than see it as a liberation from repression like Freud had suggested when he implied that sexuality was an irresistible natural instinct that had to be tamed or channelled into other activities so as to allow civilization to progress.¹⁶

In Freud's theory of projection, he believed that people avoided acknowledging their own socially or sometimes personally unacceptable desires by perceiving them in other people instead. Taking homosexuality as an example, Baumeister, Maner and DeWall suggest that people with homosexual tendencies but are unwilling to accept them can over interpret others' behaviours as indicating homosexuality and react with strong disapproval. The conscious mind is said to transform the desire into its opposite such that someone who had homosexual desires can claim to despise homosexuality.

According to Freud, people are by nature bisexual and it is through socialization that people gradually maintain one gender role. This is not natural for Freud and he proposed that the conscious tries to fight this socialization. There is a concept of penis envy which according to Brown's 1996 book 'Love's Body' implies people's reluctance to lose half of their bisexual wholeness. The penis envy does not mean that the girl wishes she were a boy but is rather unwilling to lose half of her totality. Girls, according to Freud, realize earlier on in life that they are not complete anatomically and can adjust to it but it takes longer for boys to come to this realization. Little boys are said to tend to equate the vagina with their anus. When boys do get to this realization that they are not complete, they are said to envy females' organs and their reproductive powers.

Freud proposed that children develop strong sexual and emotional attachments initially to their mothers and later on to opposite-gender parent. This is referred to as the Oedipal attachment and is said to create the desire for the child to marry and possess the parent. (The Oedipal attachment, often known as the Oedipus complex, stems from the mythological story of Oedipus the king who killed his father because he fell in love with his mother without knowing she was his mother for he had not been raised by his biological parents. Upon killing his father, he went on to marry his mother). Freud was indeed among the first to suggest that sexual perversions are natural and acceptable patterns of behaviour.

¹⁶Stephen Garton, *Histories of Sexuality: Antiquity to Sexual Revolution*, (2004): 5

Perversions had their roots in childhood experiences including the repression of Oedipal sexuality. For Freud, children are not only bisexual, but open to all forms of physical pleasure which he calls polymorphous perversity. Severe Oedipal repression in young man is said to have paved the way for perversions. The less complete Oedipal repression in women is said to leave women's sexuality more diffused all over their body therefore explaining women's greater desire for foreplay which stimulates sexual arousal by touching parts of the body other than the sex organs. Following Oedipal repression, there is often little evidence of sexuality, the sex drive (which is a main motivation for human striving) returns in full force with the changes that come along with adolescence. The newly developed sexual desires are believed to force the children to find new mates and withdraw from their loving parents.

The psychoanalytical theory as explained by Baumeister, Maner and DeWall gives a lot of insight into the psychology of sexuality. I however do not deal with the theory of projection in discussing the debates on homosexuality in Zimbabwe but this could very well explain some of the reasons for gay-bashing in Zimbabwe which is however not my focus in this case. Freud's notions of bisexuality as well as Oedipal attachments are also very interesting and could help explain a lot about people's confusion as to their sexuality but this is not what I seek to do and therefore though it is an interesting theory that informs a lot on sexuality, I do not make use of it in my thesis as it does not pertain to my study.¹⁷

Due to a proliferation of discourses on sexuality as insinuated by Foucault, numerous sciences such as medicine, psychoanalysis and pedagogy made sexuality a subject. Foucault's argument was that the discourses that ensued did not repress sexuality but rather provided the repertoire and ideas that allowed for the ability to explain sexuality. For Foucault the varying forms of sexuality such as homosexuality, transsexualism were not considered to be transhistorical but he rather saw them as being the outgrowth of new ways of classifying sexual behaviours.¹⁸ Foucault's claim was that sexuality was a product of disciplinary power in the nineteenth century. The concept of sexuality emerged in the late nineteenth century and this, Garton claims, marked a new way of understanding desire as well as produced new ways of governing sexual acts.¹⁹ Foucault is not unlike Stacy Leigh Pigg. Pigg is also of the opinion that sexual sciences have historically been entangled with

¹⁷Roy F. Baumeister and C. Nathan DeWall and John K. Maner "Theories of Human Sexuality," (2006): 17-34.

¹⁸Stephen Garton, *Histories of Sexuality: Antiquity to Sexual Revolution*, (2004): 11

¹⁹Stephen Garton, *Histories of Sexuality: Antiquity to Sexual Revolution*, (2004):14

social reforms. She elaborates upon this by bringing forth the notion that the complexities of the parallel sexual sciences existing internationally in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was linked to state projects of modernization and in some cases decolonization. The study of sexual sciences, as Pigg points out, was largely limited to the bourgeois elite who engaged in them.²⁰

Laina Y. Bay-Cheng talks about socially constructing sexuality and says “most people believe in the general denominator of an instinctual, deeply seated, and utterly natural sex drive.” Sex she says, is often thought of as simple – a natural process that involves coitus (penal-vaginal intercourse). Upon close inspection, sex is not as simple as people might tend to think it is. Sexuality is rather a “carefully scripted social construct with very narrow boundaries.” Bay-Cheng alludes to people's expectations regarding sexuality and says that we as society expect our sexuality to

1. be aimed at members of the 'opposite' sex who are within a certain age range
2. involve a certain kind of sexual behaviour (penal-vaginal intercourse culminating in male orgasm) in a particular relational context (ideally a monogamous, legally sanctioned marriage)
3. be robust enough to compel people to have (or at least want) sex at a particular rate of frequency

If we over- or under-shoot any of the above mentioned targets or aim for completely different targets, Bay-Cheng says we are labelled either as being impotent, oversexed, frigid, a tease, a pervert, a slut, a fag among other things. Social constructionists do not deny humans' innate capacity for physiological states of arousal such as orgasms, but however are of the line of thought that sexuality is thoroughly social and context dependent. The act of coitus for example might be seen as an expression of intimacy 'making love', an act of instant gratification 'hooking up', violation of body and personal integrity 'rape', or a form of labour performed for resources 'prostitution'. These various interpretations of sexual intercourse not only depend on time, space and situations but also on the participants asked.²¹

In my thesis I allude to this notion of sexuality being socially constructed when I deal with the various facets of sexuality in Zimbabwe such as prostitution and homosexuality.

²⁰Stacy Leigh Pigg, “Globalizing the Facts of Life,” (2005): 41

²¹Laina Y. Bay-Cheng, “The Social Construction of Sexuality: Religion, Medicine, Media, Schools and Families,” in *Sex and Sexuality Volume 1. Sexuality Today: Trends and Controversies*, ed. M. Michelle Burnette and Richard D. McNulty. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Perspectives, 2006: 203-228

These are various names that have been given to the act of sexual intercourse. I do not put my emphasis on the social construction of sexuality but use some of the socially constructed terms on sexuality to take a look at the debates on sexuality in Zimbabwe.

A lot of sexuality studies researchers have limited the study of sexuality to its biological aspect. However, Leonore Tiefer, a feminist, in her 1995 book 'Sex is not a Natural act and other Essays' suggested that sexuality is not solely a product of biology but is socially constructed and often negotiated. Feminist thought is believed to have emphasized the concept of power and patriarchy in explaining gender differences in the sexuality sphere. Baumeister, Maner and DeWall refer to Adrienne Rich's book in 1980, 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence', where she asserted that heterosexuality is not a natural state of affairs. For Rich, heterosexuality came about as a result of the existence of a social structure in which men occupied many of the high positions.²²

Baumeister, Maner and DeWall refer to the 1970s as a time when there was an attempt to deny or minimize gender differences in sexuality. At the time there were also claims that any observed differences were likely a result of patriarchal influences which prohibit women from enjoying sexual activities permitted to men. M.B. Oliver and J.S. Hyde in their 1993 work, 'Gender Differences in Sexuality: A Meta-analysis', found significant gender differences in the occurrence of masturbation and attitudes towards casual sex. Men also expressed more positive attitudes towards sexual intercourse in marriage or committed relationships than women. Women also felt more guilty about sex than men. There therefore appeared to be differences in how men and women expressed their sexuality privately and with relationship partners.²³ Norms such as laws on masturbation and premarital sex and extramarital sex were established by the church during the Enlightenment. Bay-Cheng points out that doctors have taken over from religion as the prescriber of norms regarding sexuality. For the case of Zimbabwe I do not take it for granted that religion has lost its power to influence rules and norms about sexuality. I therefore take a look at religious influences on the debates on sexuality within Zimbabwe. Bay-Cheng does not deny that religion plays a direct role in the construction of sexuality at local and personal levels.²⁴

²²Roy F. Baumeister and C. Nathan DeWall and John K. Maner "Theories of Human Sexuality," (2006): 17-34.

²³ Roy F. Baumeister and C. Nathan DeWall and John K. Maner "Theories of Human Sexuality," (2006): 17-34.

²⁴Laina Y. Bay-Cheng, "The Social Construction of Sexuality: Religion, Medicine, Media, Schools and Families," (2006): 203-228

Often times in my thesis, I refer to the notion of patriarchy as I talk about debates about gender and sexuality in Zimbabwe. This issue of patriarchy comes up when the females are reared to be good wives so as to be able to pleasure their husbands. Another issue which I also make reference to in my thesis is that of the response of males and females to sexual intercourse within the marriage institution. I however do not talk about masturbation as I have not found debates centred on that subject matter. I do make reference to casual sex when discussing debates on prostitution and sexuality in Zimbabwe.

In reference to gender, Baumeister, Maner and DeWall make reference to the idea that female virgins are regarded in many cultures as more desirable sex partners than non-virgins and yet those distinctions do not exist for males. I discuss this issue when I discuss debates on society and sexuality in Zimbabwe because this issue of virgins and non-virgins is important regarding the marriage institution in Zimbabwe. Reference is made to Tannahill's 1980 book, 'Sex in History' which says that female infidelity is prohibited and punished more severely than male infidelity. In social exchange theory, this difference between the genders is seen as a result of the view that an unfaithful wife gives away something precious belonging to the couple but if the man is unfaithful he is not considered as giving away something of value unless he spends other resources such as household money on a mistress. Laws regarding statutory rape are often seen as necessary to protect female sexuality from men and not protecting male sexuality from women. This is however not always the case because in recent times there have been cases whereby women were made answerable for violating male sexuality.

In social exchange theory a lot of emphasis is placed on the development of a local sexual marketplace. A principle of social exchange theory is that sellers compete more than buyers. Women therefore advertise their 'wares' with make-up and sexually attractive clothing. There is also the possibility of competing by offering lower prices than other women so as to attract more and sometimes better quality male attention. Social exchange theory proposes that a rational strategy for women would be to work together to restrict the supply for sex available to men so as to drive prices up. 'Cheap' women who therefore offer sex without demanding commitment or other resources in exchange can be punished through ostracism and bad reputations among other disincentives because they undermine the bargaining power of the other women. Though I will look into the sex trade in terms of

prostitution, I will not go much into the minute details of the sex trade as the social exchange theory does.

Pigg alludes to the concept that it is now possible since the late nineteenth century to imagine sex as a discrete and demarcated dimension of human life. Her argument is that the separation of family life from work, of consumption from production and of labour from pleasure was very influential. This separation, is said to have created a sphere of individuality and self development based on material prosperity and this has had important consequences on the specification of sexuality. These changes that have occurred in society, were cause for concern among the people as they were considered to disrupt the 'natural' family forms as well as gender roles. The different ways in which sexuality came to be viewed, in terms of personal behaviour, were considered to be public social problems and these helped “consolidate a distinct mode of attention to the sexual dimensions of people's lives.”²⁵ This thesis therefore tries to take a closer look at the cultural and historical factors in connection to debates on sexuality in Zimbabwe.

²⁵Stacy Leigh Pigg, “Globalizing the Facts of Life,” (2005): 50-51

1.1 Research Questions and Hypotheses

Often times researchers are interested in offering explanations as to the causes and effects of sexuality. Questions often addressed include, what causes someone's sexual orientation, why do some people have more sexual experiences than others.²⁶ The debates on sexuality in Zimbabwe focus on questions such as: did some expressions of sexuality come with colonialism? Were they of more recent origin, possibly products of globalization or foreign media influence? Was it a question of only the labels that were new? Are homosexuality and prostitution something that originated somewhere else and only introduced to Zimbabwe from foreign countries or were they existent in Zimbabwe historically? With these topics of debate in mind, it is important to look at the debates on the various aspects of sexuality in the Zimbabwean, and sometimes, African historical context.

Looking at debates on sexuality in Zimbabwe is an important endeavour particularly in light of HIV/AIDS. It is important to learn what is being discussed about sexuality and how this has an impact on the existing HIV/AIDS phenomenon. Alexander, Gibney, Mbizvo and Olayinka carried out a study to determine generational differences in male sexuality, which could predispose men's female sexual partners to STDs/HIV in Zimbabwe. In their findings, there were a significant number of young men who had two or more sexual partners. Men aged over 40 years were found to not be very keen on using condoms as compared to the younger men. In the event that they contracted HIV, a large proportion of men indicated that they would disclose their HIV status to their wives as well as to girl friends or other sexual partners.²⁷ This serves to show that a substantial number of Zimbabweans are indulging in unprotected sex. Even though a large proportion also indicated that they would disclose their HIV status, it takes at least about three months before the HIV virus can be detected in one's blood. And it is also not that many Zimbabweans who often get tested for HIV/AIDS. This therefore implies that by the time they know they are HIV positive; they might have already infected their sexual partners with HIV. The data shows that there is need for the development of effective targeted interventions to reduce the spread of STDs/HIV in Zimbabwe. The debates on sexuality and sexual activity can therefore shed light as to how the various actors under study address

²⁶Michael Wiederman, "Sex Research," (2006): 9

²⁷L. Alexander and L. Gibney and M.T. Mbizvo and B.A. Olayinka, "Generational Differences in Male Sexuality that may Affect Zimbabwean Women's Risk for Sexually Transmitted Diseases and HIV/AIDS," *East African Medical Journal* 77, no. 2, (2000): 93-97

the issue of sexuality in relation to HIV/AIDS and also bring to attention the influence of these debates on the various actions taken towards the alleviation of the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The AIDS pandemic, Leclerc-Madlala points out in ‘Silence, AIDS and Sexual Culture in Africa,’ has demanded a brutal boldness, a new directness and a de-mystified way of approaching the most intimate aspect of the lives of Africans as well as their sexuality. I therefore seek to look at debates on this issue of sexuality by the various actors that influence the conceptions and actualizations of sexuality in Zimbabwe. These will include debates on prostitution, homosexuality, and sexual freedom in relation to HIV/AIDS.

The research questions I seek to explore and answer are:

1. Who is debating sexuality and what are they saying? Who are the actors?
2. How has the discourse on sexuality changed in history? What changed? Which dates are important and were they influential on the topic? What has changed with the coming up of AIDS?

My hypotheses are:

1. Those debating sexuality are the society through the families. Also involved in these debates are the religious institutions – churches in particular. The government as well as the media are also the actors that are involved in debates about sexuality in Zimbabwe.
2. In present day Zimbabwe people can now talk more about sexuality than they did pre- and during colonialism. With the coming of the AIDS phenomenon it has become even more likely that people discuss more on sexuality as this affects their daily lives.

1.2 Personal Approach

It is often the assumption that if someone studies a particular sexuality topic, it is because the person experiences a personal problem or obsession with that topic. An example given by Michael Wiederman elucidates this notion. He says that if someone were to study sexual abuse, some would ascribe the interest to having stemmed from the researcher being sexually abused as a child or that the researcher could in fact be a child abuser.²⁸ My choice to study the debates on sexuality in Zimbabwe does not stem from any particular obsession on my part.²⁹ Be it obsession with homosexuality, prostitution or gender studies. I have chosen to look at this topic on the history of debates on sexuality in Zimbabwe because it is an ignored topic. Not much has been written on the subject matter. Most of these facets of sexuality that I look into are important in the Zimbabwean context, especially in light of the HIV/AIDS phenomenon. Sexuality is a topic that ought not to be ignored if there is to be a better understanding of the HIV/AIDS phenomenon both presently and historically.

I grew up in a family where talking about sex and sexual activity is reserved for when one is about to get married. This is because sexual activity is expected only of those that are married and should therefore not apply to those of us that are unmarried. This could be termed my chance to break away from being the good daughter. The issue of sexuality interests me a lot and perhaps fascinates me even more because of the manner in which it is treated in my home country Zimbabwe.

Sexuality as a field of study is considered to be relatively new. There is not an abundant collection of data and theories about sexuality. There are not enough case studies of sexual lives and sexual cultures of those in the developing world. This does not make it easy to construct a pan-human perspective on sexuality.³⁰ Though I do not conduct primary research which yields data that would be useful for such extensive research, I consider this as a first step towards opening the doors that can lead to further research on sexuality in Zimbabwe if not in the rest of the developing world.

For Wiederman, most sexuality research is conducted by faculty members at colleges and universities. He points out that not much sexuality research is carried out because rather

²⁸ Michael Wiederman, "Sex Research," (2006): 2

²⁹ Michael Wiederman, "Sex Research," (2006): 2.

³⁰ Thomas Gregor, "Sexuality and the Experience of Love," in *Sexual Nature, Sexual Culture*, ed. Paul R. Abramson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995): 330

than being encouraged, sexuality research is in fact discouraged.³¹ As Pavelka points out, students from a very early stage in their career learn that whether or not humans or animals enjoy sex is not a matter that a serious scholar would address.³² Sex researchers are therefore often those known to have studied other non-sexual topics before. They are mainly those who have previously established some form of respectability such that undertaking sexuality research does not jeopardize their lives.³³ I on the other hand, do not have an established carrier in any one particular field of study, undertaking a study on human sexuality might turn out to be a career suicide. I however do hope that the findings of my thesis will be a good contribution to the discourse on sexuality in Zimbabwe and that I will not be stigmatized for my choice of a socially stigmatized topic.

³¹Michael Wiederman, "Sex Research," (2006): 2

³²Mary S. McDonald Pavelka, "Sexual Nature: What Can We Learn from a Cross-Species Perspective," (1995): 25.

³³Michael Wiederman, "Sex Research," (2006): 3

1.3 Methodology

I, as a Zimbabwean am not the only one interested in the historical analysis of debates on sexuality in Zimbabwe. Many Zimbabweans have an interest in the making of their own history. Many claims have been made about sexuality of Zimbabweans and these I will not leave unquestioned. For the realization of this thesis, I carry out secondary literary research. I read articles and books that have been written on issues concerning sexuality in Zimbabwe. In some cases I take a look at texts on issues of sexuality in Africa so as to be able to put the example of Zimbabwe in the African context. From these texts I take out the information that informs on the discourse that is being carried out or has been carried out by government institutions, the media, religious institutions as well as key members of Zimbabwean society as well as those from other African societies that gives me insight into the debates on sexuality in Zimbabwe and Africa. I do not intend to infer situations from other African countries on Zimbabwe. By looking at other African countries and their discourse on sexuality, my knowledge is broadened and I can look at the Zimbabwean scene with more focus as well as other points of view.

My research falls into the qualitative research category. It does not draw its subjects of enquiry from a “large, representative sample of an entire population of interest (Zimbabwe).” I attribute to the fact that this thesis seeks to acquire in-depth and information about a small group of subjects (the actors involved in the debates on Sexuality in Zimbabwe).³⁴ Qualitative research allows me to study conversations that have taken place, as well as written journal, texts and historical documents on the issue of sexuality in Zimbabwe. Qualitative research gives me room to not only rely on field research, but to be able to conduct a text analysis for the gathering of information related to my subject matter.³⁵

Researching on sexuality is not an easy task. This is mainly because sexuality is a very private topic and there is often a lot of stigmatization which does not encourage people to take part in sexuality research. As suggested by Michael Wiederman, there is also stigmatization of those who carry out research on sexuality.³⁶ I have chosen to ignore this

³⁴Anne-Marie Amber and Patricia A. Adler and Peter Adler and Daniel F. Detzner, “Understanding and Evaluation Qualitative Research,” *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 57, no. 4, (November 1995): 880.

³⁵Anne-Marie Amber and Patricia A. Adler and Peter Adler and Daniel F. Detzner, “Understanding and Evaluation Qualitative Research,” *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 57, no. 4, (November 1995): 881.

³⁶Michael Wiederman, “Sex Research,” (2006): 3

threat of possible stigmatization and carry through with my research on sexuality in Zimbabwe.

I do not seek to prove or disprove what many have claimed to be the basis of sexuality in Zimbabwe. I do not claim to discover all there is to know about sexuality and the discourse on what sexuality in Zimbabwe is, neither do I seek to draw general conclusions about the history of debates on sexuality in Zimbabwe. Generalization would require me to undertake a much more intensive study of the subject matter and as well as a broader sample that matches those debating sexuality in Zimbabwe over the years. In forming my conclusions on the subject matter, I keep it in mind that my research findings are not to be generalized. This is because the sample under study does not match the population in general very well and is not very representative of the government, the media, society or the religious institutions in Zimbabwe. The findings only give insight into some of the debates and not necessarily all possible debates. I do not think that because my sample is not very representative necessarily means my results are inaccurate. This can be considered a stepping stone towards taking a closer look at issues surrounding sexuality in Zimbabwe as I believe this is a very important topic for Zimbabweans who are keen on knowing much more about various means of dealing with the HIV/AIDS pandemic that has crippled the country's health system for several years.

1.4 Constraints

Not much is known about sex. This is a seemingly strange phenomenon considering that sex is very important for procreation. Sex is also “the basis of kinship, the source of much joy and pain, and, universally, a subject of interest and even obsession” and yet very little is known about it.³⁷ This makes it much harder for me to gain access to sources that can provide a better understanding of the subject matter particularly in relation to Zimbabwe as it is not a very popular academic topic.

In my thesis, I subscribe to Wiederman’s notion that the topic of sexuality is a taboo.³⁸ And I approach this topic with that idea at the back of my mind. Not much information is available for this study because the subjects under study are not so keen on debating sexuality. As a result of space and time constraints my findings will not be on-the-ground findings. I cannot be in Zimbabwe due to financial constraints hence I could not get my hands on more materials. Primary research could have helped my research because it would have given me a chance to gather more information as well as to get better explanations as to the various positions taken on issues of sexuality in Zimbabwe.

It should however be noted that primary research might not be such an easy thing to conduct in Zimbabwe at the moment considering the volatile political situation as well as a lot of privacy matters and concerns. Not many Zimbabweans would portray a willingness to partake in a study on sexuality as this a topic not openly discusses especially among strangers. As the issue of discussing sexuality is often considered taboo, it also is not easy to find much material on who is actually debating this issue of sexuality as well as what exactly their stance is on this subject matter. I will make do with the material I have but this could be a hindrance in providing a better of understanding of the debates on sexuality in Zimbabwe.

The library at the university does not have a lot of material on Zimbabwe. It also does not have a lot of material on sexuality in Zimbabwe. I have had to rely on a lot of books and texts on sexuality in a more general sense. This might hinder my ability of portraying a broader and clearer picture of issues of sexuality as well the debates on sexuality in Zimbabwe. Many inferences I have to make are based on texts that have been written for other purposes than merely sexuality discourse in Zimbabwe.

³⁷Thomas Gregor, “Sexuality and the Experience of Love,” (1995): 330

³⁸Michael Wiederman, “Sex Research,” (2006): 1

Being a Shona, most of my writings will subscribe more to the Shona culture and Shona teachings as I am not overly familiar with the Ndebele culture in Zimbabwe. This might also limit my ability to provide a full and complete overview of the scene in Zimbabwe regarding debates on sexuality. This should however not be too much of a problem as most of the information on Zimbabwe is often available in English and is mostly relevant to both cultures.

When I write about religion and its influences on sexuality, I omit the Islamic religion because this is a very minority religious group in Zimbabwe and only about 1% of Zimbabweans are Muslim. The other reason is I do not know much about Islamic beliefs in the Zimbabwean context as well as in relation to sexuality and I have not found material on Islamic discourse on sexuality specific to Zimbabwe.

In discussing sexuality, there are some topics that have been left out due to time constraints. I could not possibly address all the relevant sexuality topics. One of these is rape. Rape is an important factor in studying sexuality particularly for feminist sexologists.³⁹ Seeing as I am not a sexologist, I feel I can comfortably leave it out for future studies on sexuality in Zimbabwe as Zimbabwe is not immune to the notion of rape in relation to sexuality. When I talk about prostitution, I omit the issue of child prostitution. This is an important topic when dealing with the topic of prostitution but because prostitution is not the main focus of this thesis, several aspects of this topic will be left out to maintain coherence with the aim of the thesis.

Baumeister, Maner and DeWall say there is a battle between the two major theoretical perspectives – constructive feminism and evolutionary theory. This battle between the two major theories on sexuality does not allow much room for the development of other theories for sexuality research. Younger theorists are therefore expected to align themselves with either of the two. Because of these very dominant theories, a lot of researchers who do not want to align themselves with either of them, conduct research that has little or no theoretical context. This is a major constraint in the writing of this thesis as no one theory can serve the purposes of my research and I also am not writing a theoretical paper.

Because my research is based on what other people have said about sexuality in Zimbabwe and not based on those exactly partaking in sexual activities, my thesis is not

³⁹ F. Baumeister and C. Nathan DeWall and Jon K. Maner, “Theories of Human Sexuality,” (2006): 20-21

based on experiments. Therefore I cannot explain causes and effects of several sexual activities. Though I also take a look into debates on sexuality in Zimbabwe in relation to HIV/AIDS, I cannot make conclusions about cause and effect in this case because experiments have not been conducted that could lead me to draw such conclusions. It is important to keep this constraint in mind “even if [...] only, so that [I] can remain appropriately critical.”⁴⁰

⁴⁰Michael Wiederman, “Sex Research,” (2006): 2

1.5 Literature Review

1. “Sexual Nature: What Can We Learn from a Cross-Species Perspective”⁴¹

In “Sexual Nature: What Can We Learn from a Cross-Species Perspective”, Pavelka, an Associate Professor of Primatology in the Department of Anthropology of the University of Calgary, tries to find correlations between humans and animals as she looks at both as primates. She makes use of some aspects of the evolutionary approach to understanding primate sexuality. She proposes that sexuality “spans the gap between what is normally perceived as biology and what is regarded as cultural”⁴² She suggests that evolved biological and behavioural potentials, as well as constraints and hormonal regulators are at the core of human beliefs and behaviours in the area of sex and sexuality. For Pavelka, though humans have evolved to be unique in relation to other primates (in this instance, animals), humans are not so unique. Therefore, in order to understand human sexuality, it is necessary that humans know something about their basic primate sexuality. Pavelka deals with different aspects of primate sexuality that are relevant to issues regarding human sexuality.

Loss of Estrus in humans: estrus refers to the period during which the female animals are at their sexual peak and are ready for mating. This happens in female animals about two to three months a year. While female animals experience a period of estrus, human females exhibit no obvious period of estrus. This period of no clearly defined estrus periods in female humans is known as continual receptivity. This term does not mean that women are continually sexually receptive. This difference between female humans and female animals has led to several speculations as to when or how the change between humans took place in the course of human evolution.. There are several explanations put forth to explain this loss of estrus. Some popular explanations interpret this loss of estrus as being the heart of male-female pair bond. Some of them assuming that females need males and therefore will use sex to get them at their most sexually prime stage. Non-human primates are not unlike humans in that they engage in sexual activities a lot more than is

⁴¹Mary S. McDonald Pavelka, “Sexual Nature: What Can We Learn from a Cross-Species Perspective,” in ed. Abramson Paul R. and Pinkerton Steven D. *Sexual Nature, Sexual Culture*, 17- 36, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995.

⁴²Mary S. McDonald Pavelka, “Sexual Nature: What Can We Learn from a Cross-Species Perspective,” (1995): 17.

necessary from a reproductive point of view, hence much of their sexuality being non-reproductive.⁴³

Nonreproductive sexuality such as sexual interactions with same-sex others: in most animals it appears as though it is normal behaviour for there to be same-sex sexual interactions. It could be argued that the difference between humans and non-human primates is that while same-sex interactions in non-human primates do not reflect the lifetime orientation of an individual, in humans they do. However it could also be argued that humans are able to experience erotic fulfilment with both sexes and need not only be identified as either homo- or heterosexual. Sexual interactions between same-sex individuals appear to be as enduring as those between opposite sexes. Research on homosexual behaviour has led to the thesis that homosexual behaviour is best understood within the context of the social organisation of the group or species in which it is present.⁴⁴

The question of whether sex is pleasurable in non-human primates: sexual is pleasure is said to be the obvious mechanism that could explain the huge amount of sexual activity (reproductive and non-reproductive) both in human and in non-human primates. Pavelka makes reference to the fact that it is often taken for granted that only human primates experience sexual pleasure. Pleasure is nonetheless said to be important if the motivations of human and non-human primate sexuality is to be understood. Pleasure is of course not easy to measure to ascertain particularly in non-human female primates as it is an internal experience and sensation.⁴⁵

The association between sex and aggression: in the association between sex and aggression, the sex-pleasure perspective is considered to be remote. Feminist perspectives on this subject matter try to disassociate sex and violence. Their explanation for sexual aggression is that it is mainly an expression of men's desire to dominate and control women as well as their sexuality. Rape for instance is not considered to be a sexual act but rather an act that is aggressive and has much more in common with non-sexual acts than it does with consensual sex. Forced copulation though noted in human primates, has however not been

⁴³Mary S. McDonald Pavelka, "Sexual Nature: What Can We Learn from a Cross-Species Perspective," (1995): 17-22

⁴⁴Mary S. McDonald Pavelka, "Sexual Nature: What Can We Learn from a Cross-Species Perspective," (1995): 22-23.

⁴⁵Mary S. McDonald Pavelka, "Sexual Nature: What Can We Learn from a Cross-Species Perspective," (1995): 25-27.

noticed in non-human primates except for a few cases such as orangatuns, chimpanzees and spider monkeys just to name a few.⁴⁶

Pavelka's treatise on a cross-species perspective is highly enlightening. Especially in light of the fact that in most instances, humans tend to distance themselves from animals as being different and unique. She has managed to give insight into the similarities and differences in the sexualities of humans and animals. This is a very interesting topic regarding sexuality. Though I appreciate this gateway into the depths of the biology of sexuality, I do not equate humans to animals merely because they exhibit similar sexual traits in some cases. My research differs from that of Pavelka in that it takes a more social approach to sexuality rather than a biological one.

Pavelka also touches upon the issue of homosexuality, which is a part of my thesis. I however am not looking into the biological explanations of homosexuality nor am I trying to explain why it might or might not occur in Zimbabwe. I hope that my analysis of debates on homosexuality within Zimbabwean society can help shed light on a less biological outlet of looking at the issue of homosexuality. My research on homosexuality is not a new phenomenon, several researches have been conducted on this topic. In my thesis on debates on sexuality in Zimbabwe I would like to add another dimension to looking at sexuality instead of only focussing on its biological or reproductive aspects.

Very often when sex is discussed, too much emphasis is placed on the pleasure gained from sexual activity. Not much is known about the underlying fundamentals that govern the act of sex as well as the historical and evolutionary developments that have helped form sexual activity as we know and experience it today. Pavelka does not ignore the social and cultural explanations for certain sexual behaviour nor does she undermine it. She on the other hand acknowledges it but goes even further than the social understanding and looks at the basis of various connections in sexuality. Now that anthropologists such as Pavelka have set the groundwork for studies on the underlying fundamentals of sexuality, I can take it from there and build upon these explanations in trying to understand the debates surrounding the topic of sexuality in Zimbabwe.

2. "Sex, Hormones and Sexual Behaviour."⁴⁷

⁴⁶Mary S. McDonald Pavelka, "Sexual Nature: What Can We Learn from a Cross-Species Perspective," (1995): 27-28

⁴⁷Jean D. Wilson, "Sex, Hormones and Sexual Behaviour," in ed. Abramson Paul R. and Pinkerton Steven D. *Sexual Nature, Sexual Culture*, 121-134, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995.

In “Sex, Hormones and Sexual Behaviour”, Jean Wilson talks about the influence of hormones on sexual behaviour. Wilson says that investigating behavioural patterns in humans is more complex than it is for animals. Libido and potentia are said to be influenced by gonadal hormones. Libido refers to the instinctual sexual drive. Potentia refers to the ability to perform and complete sexual intercourse. Gonadal refers to the testes and ovaries. It is of interest for Wilson to find out whether copulation is possible in humans without gonadal steroids. Her conclusion is therefore that in the males of most species, mating capacity is maintained for a variable period after orchidectomy (sexual removal of one or both testes) but is then followed by progressive failure. In women however, ovariectomy (surgical removal of an ovary) causes immediate complete abolition of female mating behaviour.⁴⁸

It is inevitable that chromosomal, gonadal, and phenotypic sex disorders occur in humans. This can lead to abnormal sexual development such as the presence of Klinefelter syndrome in men. Klinefelter syndrome refers to men that have three sex chromosomes (XXY) instead of two. Men with this disorder are chromosomally male but have small testes, enlarged breasts and an absence of facial and body hair.⁴⁹ Many humans with abnormalities in their sexual development inevitably end up with male or female anatomical development. Interpreting behavioural consequences of specific disorders should take various factors into account. These factors include the effects of abnormal sexual development on sexual phenotypes, their effects on hormone patterns at various times of life as well as their time of manifestation during life.⁵⁰

Though explaining behavioural patterns based on hormones seems to be very important to Wilson, for me it is not a driving force. Understanding sexual behaviour is important in the study of sexuality and is therefore useful as it helps me understand the subject matter as I carry out my research. Most people experience sexuality but do not know the underlying fundamentals of the act/experience. For most to enjoy sexual activity it is not entirely necessary that one understands the hormonal explanation for what one feels during sexual intercourse. However society can learn more about hormonal influences on sexual behaviour in order to understand ways in which to deal with and handle behaviours that stem from sexual activities. Of course not all sexual behaviours can be understood, and I do

⁴⁸Jean D. Wilson, “Sex, Hormones and Sexual Behaviour,” (1995):123.

⁴⁹Jean D. Wilson, “Sex, Hormones and Sexual Behaviour,” (1995):125-126, 133.

⁵⁰Jean D. Wilson, “Sex, Hormones and Sexual Behaviour,” (1995):128.

not set out to do this, what I focus on is more the reception of various sexual behaviours in Zimbabwean society.

In my research I try to stay away from labelling certain sexual behaviours as being either normal or abnormal. These are key points touched upon in Wilson's text. These help explain how some humans tend to be different from other humans in their sexual behaviours. This is indeed a opening for society to come to terms with the 'abnormalities' they come across in their encounters with different people. Research such as this is paramount to explaining sexuality, something that is often times considered to be mundane merely because it exists in people's everyday lives without much thought and consideration being cast its way. I hope my look at society's conceptions of the various forms of sexuality in Zimbabwe can contribute a human aspect to studies on sexuality and that it can go beyond explaining differences and look at ways of understanding and dealing with various expressions of sexuality.

3. “Psychoneuroendocrinology and Sexual Pleasure: The Aspect of Sexual Orientation”⁵¹

Meyer-Bahlburg is an Associate Director of the HIV Centre for Clinical and Behavioural Studies, and Director of its Interdisciplinary Research Methods Core. He is also a Research Scientist at the New York State Psychiatric Institute as well as Professor of Clinical Psychology in the Department of Psychiatry of Columbia University.⁵² In “Psychoneuroendocrinology and Sexual Pleasure: The Aspect of Sexual Orientation, Meyer-Bahlburg points out that though there is a wide range of literature on sexual pleasure,, sexual pleasure is not listed in the indices of several leading sexological textbooks. He finds this ironic considering the fact that in the field of sexual dysfunctions, sexual pleasure plays an important role and pleasuring a partner or oneself has become a standard term. This tendency to ignore pleasure, can be explained by the notion that in psychobiological and psychoendocrine, research in sexology has been focussed on animal models where pleasure is not usually a factor under consideration. Pleasure, in its clinical sex dysfunction use, mostly implies body caressing, however clinically one is said to get the impression that there

⁵¹Heino F.L. Meyer-Bahlburg, “Psychoneuroendocrinology and Sexual Pleasure: The Aspect of Sexual Orientation,” in ed. Abramson Paul R. and Pinkerton Steven D. *Sexual Nature, Sexual Culture*, 135-153, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995.

⁵²HIV Centre for Clinical and Behavioural Studies at the New York State Psychiatric Institute and Columbia University, Heino F.L. Meyer-Bahlburg “<http://www.hivcenternyc.org/people/heinomeyerbahlburg.html> (accessed November 12, 2008).

are different aspects of sexuality from which people draw pleasure from such as the attraction of beauty, the excitement of flirtation and courtship as well as the experiencing of orgasm and the relaxation that follows.⁵³

Meyer-Bahlburg says that for a time there has been wide consensus that there was no difference in systematic sex-hormone levels between homosexuals and heterosexuals though some recent studies have come up to refute these claims. He believes that the psychoendocrine approach to sexual orientation has moved almost exclusively to the prenatal hormone theory. In the prenatal hormone theory of sexual orientation, an individual's homosexual orientation constitutes an aspect of cross-gender behaviour and this has been shown to be the case in many mammalian species. Most of the evidence linking prenatal hormone variations to human sexual orientation are said to have come from studies conducted on people with endocrine disorders.

Though the prenatal hormone theory can be used to explain sexual orientation, Meyer-Bahlburg warns against using this theory to generalise because the evidence available is insufficient. Prenatal hormones are said to “affect the developing brain at a time other than when genital differentiation takes place.” The functional signs of such hormone exposure are of great interests to those who undertake such studies. If a functional indicator of a particular prenatal hormonal lieu were to be found in homosexuals, it would be of interest then to discover how neuroendocrine intersexuality could develop without genital intersexuality. Several researchers have therefore checked for effects of prenatal stress in humans to shed more light on this phenomenon.⁵⁴

In this paper, Meyer-Bahlburg does a good job of trying to explain the psychological underlying explanations of homosexual behaviour. This is very crucial for the topic of sexuality and particularly homosexuality because it is a heated political debate of our time. An attempt to explain this phenomenon can be a stepping stone in a move towards acceptance and understanding of homosexuality as it being something rooted within the biological make up of humans. I am not an activist for homosexual rights and neither is this paper about this topic. However as the debates I look at touch upon the topic of

⁵³Heino F.L. Meyer-Bahlburg, “Psychoneuroendocrinology and Sexual Pleasure: The Aspect of Sexual Orientation,” (1995): 135-136.

⁵⁴Heino F.L. Meyer-Bahlburg, “Psychoneuroendocrinology and Sexual Pleasure: The Aspect of Sexual Orientation,” (1995): 143-144.

homosexuality, this paper by Meyer-Bahlburg proves to be quite enlightening on this phenomenon.

4. “The Genetics of Sexual Orientation: From Fruit Flies to Humans”⁵⁵

In “The Genetics of Sexual Orientation: From Fruit Flies to Humans”, Pattatucci and Hamer point out that there are two proximate motivations for human sexuality: reproduction and pleasure. The evolutionary necessity of reproduction appears to be obvious, what continues to be evasive however is the role of pleasure. In order to understand human evolution and behaviour, Pattatucci and Hamer study genetic sources of variations in sexual orientation.⁵⁶ It is of course not easy to study human sexuality. Though they study sexual orientation both in humans and fruit flies, they make it a point to specify that the sexual orientations of humans are more complex than those of fruit flies. They do not claim to try to understand sexual orientation in humans. Rather, they take an aspect of it – trying to determine whether or not there is any genetic influence on sexual orientation.⁵⁷

In their studies, they investigate through collecting and examining family pedigrees as well as studying linkage patterns. Their pedigree analysis is based on the principle that if a trait is genetically influenced, then it will tend to aggregate in families. The study of degrees and patterns in familial aggregation can give insight into the number of genes involved in the expression of a trait as well as how the genes might act.⁵⁸ Linkage analysis is based on two fundamental principles. The first principle is that if a trait is genetically influenced, related individuals who share the trait should therefore share the same gene more often than expected by chance alone. The second principle is that, genes that are close in proximity on the same chromosome are usually co-inherited. This linkage analysis can therefore be used to search for supposed sexual-orientation-linked genes by looking for common genetic markers in related homosexual individuals.⁵⁹

⁵⁵Angela M.L. Pattatucci and Dean H. Hamer, “The Genetics of Sexual Orientation: From Fruit Flies to Humans,” in ed. Abramson Paul R. and Pinkerton Steven D. *Sexual Nature, Sexual Culture*, 154-174, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995.

⁵⁶Angela M.L. Pattatucci and Dean H. Hamer, “The Genetics of Sexual Orientation: From Fruit Flies to Humans,” (1995): 154-155

⁵⁷Angela M.L. Pattatucci and Dean H. Hamer, “The Genetics of Sexual Orientation: From Fruit Flies to Humans,” (1995): 161.

⁵⁸Angela M.L. Pattatucci and Dean H. Hamer, “The Genetics of Sexual Orientation: From Fruit Flies to Humans,” (1995): 161.

⁵⁹Angela M.L. Pattatucci and Dean H. Hamer, “The Genetics of Sexual Orientation: From Fruit Flies to Humans,” (1995): 166.

Though their focus is on genetic influences on sexual orientation, they do not cast a blind eye to other factors that could influence one's sexual orientation including the physiological and environmental factors all acting together with the genes.⁶⁰ In trying to explain variations in sexual orientation, Pattatucci and Hamer make a pretty convincing argument to explain that homosexuality is a biological phenomenon rather than social because if it were social, it is impossible that several people raised by different families in different settings can all turn out to be homosexual unless there was an underlying explanation to it. Their article gives insight into the various research that has been conducted on the issue of sexual orientation as well as the historical factors that have influenced how sexual orientation is perceived, portrayed and understood today.

Though their research is very informative and very interesting, it does not shed much light beyond the biological or genetic level. For the average citizen of the world, this information might not be helpful as it is not an easy subject to master. This focus on genetics tends to ignore the social factors that are very much in play in present day society regarding sexual orientation. It is not enough to explain the sexual orientation of a person without taking a look at how this sexual orientation is received in the society within which one lives. Many scientists might understand the biological aspects of this phenomenon but a large majority of society are not privy to this information, and do not understand some forms of sexual orientation hence leading to discrimination of those considered different or 'unacceptable'. I hope that by shedding some light on Zimbabwean society's perceptions and views on different forms of sexuality, I can contribute to the study of sexuality, such that future studies can include not only the biological aspect of sexuality, but also the societal and cultural aspect so as to give a better understanding of what underlies sexuality in our everyday existence.

5. "The Social Impact of AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa"⁶¹

In "The Social Impact of AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa", talks about how HIV has managed to undermine the great achievements of post-independence African society. HIV, van de Walle says, now makes sexual freedom appear to be a poisonous gift bestowed upon

⁶⁰Angela M.L. Pattatucci and Dean H. Hamer, "The Genetics of Sexual Orientation: From Fruit Flies to Humans," (1995): 167.

⁶¹Etienne van de Walle, "The Social Impact of AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa," *The Milbank Quarterly* 68, supplement 1, part 1, (1990): 10-32

the women. Van de Walle claims that the HIV infection found in Africans differs from that found in people in the United States of America and Europe mainly among homosexuals and IV drug users. What mainly sets these infections aside, he claims, is that (1) the HIV infections among Africans are contracted through heterosexual intercourse, (2) AIDS is a disease in children to a larger extent than it is in developed countries, (3) AIDS in Africa is reputed to be a disease of the elite – a disease of the cities where wealthy men have extramarital affairs, (4) Prostitution and other forms of extramarital sex have been instrumental in the spreading of the disease, (5) the most widely identified clinical symptoms of AIDS include weight loss.⁶²

Because of such distinctions, van de Walle asserts that it is therefore difficult to employ the same control measures for developed and African countries. Though this might seem like a helpful point regarding dealing with HIV/AIDS, it is rather discriminative and can give the wrong impression. Much of the methods used to prevent or let alone treat HIV in the developed countries need not be exclusive based on the parameters he has set. Though they might not be the only means to handling the HIV/AIDS pandemic they can in themselves be a stepping stone in the move towards HIV/AIDS prevention and cure. I do not claim that his assertions are false. In another light they can be considered as a basis to find more suitable solution for the African set up. It is a good starting point to try and find a solution to HIV/AIDS that is amenable to Africa because being over-ambitious about the disease does not help the continent.

In his paper, van de Walle tries to explain why some people follow particular paths in their sexuality. He comes up with various explanations for prostitution in the cities and claims that “With the economic crisis and the narrowing of opportunities for women in the labour market, the sale of sexual services is often the only resource left to many women in cities.”⁶³ While van de Walle sees prostitution as a thing of the cities, Bailey and Auger testify to some form of prostitution that occurs in rural settings. Women in rural areas are said to exchange gifts for liaisons. These women are normally those between marriages and those that are infertile and have no fear of bearing an illegitimate child.⁶⁴ Prostitution is not the only form of commercial sex work that he makes reference to. He also alludes to women

⁶²Etienne van de Walle, “The Social Impact of AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa,”(1990): 11-12

⁶³Etienne van de Walle, “The Social Impact of AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa,”(1990): 19

⁶⁴Robert C. Bailey and Robert V. Auger, “Sexuality, Infertility and Sexually Transmitted Disease among Farmers and Foragers in Central Africa,” in ed. Abramson Paul R. and Pinkerton Steven D. *Sexual Nature, Sexual Culture*, 195-222, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995): 197

who maintain several relationships with different men. They do this so as to maximise their marriage chances. Maintaining relationships with several men at once can also be seen as a means for women to prove their fertility should they get pregnant and this can be used as a bargaining tool that can secure stable attachment of a man.⁶⁵ Such activities no doubt leave a lot of individuals vulnerable to HIV because in trying to prove one's fertility, one ends up engaging in unprotected sex with several sexual partners exposing them all to risk of infection. Van de Walle is of the opinion that those who are very stringent with their families about not engaging in sexual activities out of wedlock, run the higher risk of having infected family members than those who are permissive about sexual relationships.⁶⁶

Van de Walle's paper tries to find solutions within African societies that can help with combating HIV/AIDS. This lays groundwork for what society can do about a plight they come face to face with on a regular basis. In looking at the debates on sexuality in Zimbabwe and trying to consider them in relation to HIV/AIDS, I hope to shed light on the topics that can potentially influence how HIV/AIDS is viewed and addressed in Zimbabwe. Perhaps this can also contribute to African discourse on HIV/AIDS which does not only focus on social factors, but also looks at the underlying concepts of sexuality, which are fundamental in the spreading of HIV.

Though van de Walle makes an important effort in trying to explain various causes of spread of HIV infections as well as possible means of curbing the spread, he seems to generalise on the reasoning behind several sexual behaviours. This cannot be enough as humans differ and different attributes can be responsible for certain behaviours. In his generalisation however he has brought to light the major explanations for many behaviours that are linked to sexuality in Africa and are therefore necessary to take a look at if one is to understand how it is in Africa. This had laid a groundwork and work such as this by van de Walle are very instrumental in writing a global history, because though he emphasises differences between HIV/AIDS in developing and developed countries, in a sense he brings the different cultures together to write a global history. I hope I can add more to van de Walle's insights on HIV in African society by adding insight on Zimbabwe, a country that has not been spared from HIV/AIDS infections and through this, and be able to contribute to the writing of global history.

⁶⁵Etienne van de Walle, "The Social Impact of AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa,"(1990): 19.

⁶⁶Etienne van de Walle, "The Social Impact of AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa,"(1990): 20.

2.0 Background to Zimbabwe

In order to orient with the country in question, a brief history of Zimbabwe is outlined

The area known as present day Zimbabwe has been occupied by Homo Sapiens for at least one hundred thousand years.⁶⁷ At present, the Ndebele and Shona live together in Zimbabwe with the Shona making up 82% of the total population while the Ndebele make up 14% of the population. Mixed and Asian people amount to 1% of the population while the white population is less than 1%.⁶⁸ Historically the Shona have tended to identify themselves as members of either dialects or clusters such as Karanga, Manyika and Zezuru, Shavasha and Korekore. Shona speakers are not only limited to Mashonaland, they can also be found in Matebeleland.⁶⁹ The Ndebele are the most numerous non-Shona speaking people in Zimbabwe. They are said to have originated among the Zulu of South Africa and live mostly in the southern part of Zimbabwe, mostly around Bulawayo. Most of the Ndebele since the nineteenth century in Zimbabwe are of local origin and not immigrants from South Africa.⁷⁰

The ethnic make up of Zimbabwe has not always been as it is today. Several changes have occurred over the years before the population of Zimbabwe became structured as it currently is. There are several ancient stone structures in Zimbabwe which show that many civilizations have existed in Zimbabwe, the first major civilization being the Mwenemutapa (Mutapa or Monomotapa or Munhumutapa).⁷¹ The Mutapa, upon arrival in what is now known as Zimbabwe, took control of lands that had belonged to other groups of people. These groups include the Karanga and Tavara which accepted Mutapa rule without much trouble.⁷² The Portuguese are believed to have arrived in the sixteenth century and instigated several wars which weakened the empire. When the Portuguese initially arrived, the Mutapa

⁶⁷Jacob W. Chikuhwa, *Zimbabwe: The Rise to Nationhood*, (Bloomington Indiana: Author House, 2006): 15

⁶⁸The World Fact Book, "Zimbabwe," <http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/zi.html> (accessed July 20, 2008)

⁶⁹Jacob W. Chikuhwa, *Zimbabwe: The Rise to Nationhood*, (2006): 305.

⁷⁰Jacob W. Chikuhwa, *Zimbabwe: The Rise to Nationhood*, (2006): 306.

⁷¹"Zimbabwe History," www.africanet.com/africanet/country/zimbabwe/history.htm (accessed July 20, 2008)

⁷²D.N. Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe 900-1850: An Outline of Shona History*, (USA: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, 1980): 118

made efforts to make contact with them in order to establish some forms of trade because they wanted to establish a relationship with whoever had control of the Indian ocean.

Having established connections with the Portuguese, the Mutapa became known to the Portuguese thereby resulting in the Portuguese becoming privy to information regarding the wealth of the Mutapa state. The long term intentions of the Portuguese were therefore to get access to the Mutapa state's wealth.⁷³ The gold-fields of Zimbabwe attracted so much Portuguese interest. In no time the Portuguese were able to strengthen their trading relations with the Mutapa empire.⁷⁴ Following a revolt by the Tonga people under the Mutapa empire, the Mutapa state was considerably weakened and an ensuing drought forced the Mutapa state to concede to the desires of the Portuguese however not completely. The leader of the Mutapa ceded mining areas which could not be mined due to the lack of technology at the time.⁷⁵ This led the Portuguese to divert their efforts to Manyikaland and Teve. Francisco Barreto, the leader of the Portuguese managed to establish friendship with the chief of Manyikaland, Mutasa Chikanga and this led to Manyika territory being an important area of local Portuguese trading activities. Barreto's successor, Homem embarked on expeditions that led to the extraction of privileges from the Mutapa empire. During the period of 1575-1666, the Portuguese were able to penetrate Mutapa territory which made the relations between the Mutapa and the Portuguese uneasy over time.⁷⁶ Following the death of the last leader of the Mutapa state, Changamire Chioko Dambamute in 1902, the Portuguese defeated the people of Mutapa and this signalled the end of Mutapa independence.⁷⁷

During the period during which the Portuguese and the Mutapa maintained trading relations, many Shona people are thought to have come together and formed the Rozvi empire which covered more than fifty percent of the land presently known as Zimbabwe. The word Rozvi is believed to stem from the verb '*keurozva*' which means to destroy. This is believed to have originally been used by the Portuguese to mean the warriors of the Changamire rulers in the eighteenth century knowns as Vurozvi, Ukalanga, Gore or Goremukuru. For the Shona people, Rozvi was multi-tribal and hence included several groups.⁷⁸ The rise of the Rozvi was originally in the north-west plateau of Zimbabwe. The

⁷³ D.N. Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe 900-1850: An Outline of Shona History*, (1980): 121-124.

⁷⁴ Jacob W. Chikuhwa, *Zimbabwe: The Rise to Nationhood*, (2006): 34

⁷⁵ D.N. Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe 900-1850: An Outline of Shona History*, (1980): 124.

⁷⁶ Jacob W. Chikuhwa, *Zimbabwe: The Rise to Nationhood*, (2006): 36-37.

⁷⁷ Jacob W. Chikuhwa, *Zimbabwe: The Rise to Nationhood*, (2006): 37-38.

⁷⁸ D.N. Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe 900-1850: An Outline of Shona History*, (1980): 227.

Rozvi were warriors in their own right. The armies of the Rozvi consisted of young unmarried men and were a political group that was influential in many parts of Zimbabwe. The Portuguese themselves initially used these Rozvi armies for the protection of their interests in Manyikaland and other parts of Zimbabwe.⁷⁹ With time, the Rozvi armies eventually managed to drive away the Portuguese and the land formally belonging to the Mutapa, which the Portuguese had claimed, was taken over by the Rozvi. Though for a long time the Rozvi were able to live peacefully, turmoil in the mid nineteenth century in Transvaal and Natal led to the collapse of the Rozvi empire.⁸⁰

The collapse of the Rozvi empire as it was, was to a large extent connected to the arrival of the Ndebele, particularly in southern Zimbabwe. The Ndebele state which had broken off from the Zulu with their ruler, Mzilikazi of South Africa, arrived in Zimbabwe to the detriment of the Rozvi. The Ndebele kingdom was a product of the Mfecane. When Mzilikazi left the Zulu, he did so with about five hundred kinsmen and in their movements north of South Africa, they managed to amass other smaller groups along the way.⁸¹ When the Ndebele arrived in Zimbabwe, there was no Changamire for the Rozvi. Ndebele occupation of mainly Shona-speaking regions of Zimbabwe was made easy by the political weakness of the Rozvi Changamire state.⁸² The Rozvi were therefore attacked and defeated by the Ndebele and the Ndebele were able to settle down to the west of the Changamire state.⁸³ The Ndebele undertook several campaigns against the Rozvi in the 1840s and 1850s and the Rozvi were attacked wherever they could be found. Many of the Rozvi who did not relocate following the settlement of the Ndebele, became Ndebele speakers themselves and began identifying themselves as Ndebele.⁸⁴

Upon settlement, the Ndebele are said to have enjoyed tranquillity though the Ndebele did not completely subdue all the Shona peoples around them. The Ndebele were able to re-establish contacts with the European missionaries, traders and hunters as had the Mutapa done before.⁸⁵ The colonisation of Zimbabwe began with the finding of gold in Witwatersrand in present day South Africa in 1886. Because not much gold was found in the South African Gold reef, there was a lot of discontentment among the colonialists. News of

⁷⁹D.N. Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe 900-1850: An Outline of Shona History*, (1980): 245.

⁸⁰“Zimbabwe History,” www.africanet.com/africanet/country/zimbabwe/history.htm (accessed July 20, 2008)

⁸¹Jacob W. Chikuhwa, *Zimbabwe: The Rise to Nationhood*, (2006): 42.

⁸²Jacob W. Chikuhwa, *Zimbabwe: The Rise to Nationhood*, (2006): 43.

⁸³D.N. Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe 900-1850: An Outline of Shona History*, (1980): 266.

⁸⁴D.N. Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe 900-1850: An Outline of Shona History*, (1980): 266-268.

⁸⁵Jacob W. Chikuhwa, *Zimbabwe: The Rise to Nationhood*, (2006): 43.

the existence of gold and a more economically promising venture in Zimbabwe led Cecil Rhodes to expand his acquired territory.⁸⁶ The Rhodesians were able to destroy the Ndebele state. Many people thus had to be resettled and this resulted in a lot of major movements in the population of Zimbabwe. However much of the area of the pre-Ndebele past were able to preserve their traditions.⁸⁷

On July 30th 1887 in Matebeleland, Cecil Rhodes sent Pieter D.C.J. Grobler to negotiate a treaty with king of the Ndebele.⁸⁸ He managed to persuade Lobengula, the king of the Ndebele at the time, to sign a treaty which made Matebeleland and its minerals part of the British sphere.⁸⁹ This treaty came to be known as the 'Grobler Treaty'. Cecil Rhodes is believed to have misinterpreted the rights that the treaty with Lobengula granted him.⁹⁰ This treaty with Lobengula therefore gave the British exclusive rights to mine in the areas of Zimbabwe that were under Lobengula's rule at the time.⁹¹ In 1890, Cecil Rhodes British South Africa Company (BSAC) occupied Mashonaland.⁹² Due to the large amounts of gold known to be present in the mining areas of Zimbabwe, there was an increasing influx of European settlers. This resulted in war breaking out with the Ndebele in 1893 with the Ndebele being defeated convincingly thereby resulting in increased European immigration. These settlers included a police force which settled in Mashonaland and founded the town of Salisbury (presently known as Harare).⁹³ The defeat of the Shona and the Ndebele between 1893 and 1897 inadvertently guaranteed the Europeans settlement. Rhodesia became the name of the settler country named after Cecil Rhodes. Rhodes had gained the right to distribute land among the European settlers. Half of the total land including all the mining and industrial regions were reserved for the European settlers. This did not make the relationship between the settlers and the local population any easier since the land was

⁸⁶Ian Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe 1890-1948: Capital Accumulation and Class Struggle*, (New York: Longman Inc., 1988) 5-6

⁸⁷D.N. Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe 900-1850: An Outline of Shona History*, (1980): 78.

⁸⁸Jacob W. Chikuhwa, *Zimbabwe: The Rise to Nationhood*, (2006): 45.

⁸⁹Ian Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe 1890-1948: Capital Accumulation and Class Struggle*, (New York: Longman Inc., 1988) 5-6

⁹⁰Jacob W. Chikuhwa, *Zimbabwe: The Rise to Nationhood*, (2006): 45.

⁹¹"Zimbabwe History", <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Zimbabwe-History.html> (accessed July 20, 2008)

⁹²Jacob W. Chikuhwa, *Zimbabwe: The Rise to Nationhood*, (2006): 45.

⁹³"Zimbabwe History", <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Zimbabwe-History.html> (accessed July 20, 2008)

mainly distributed along racial lines and the local population had to give up their arable land for use by the white settlers.⁹⁴

With several inequalities at play in Zimbabwe, the conflict between black and white lasted in Zimbabwe for several years and led to numerous struggles for independence from colonial rule. Between late March 1896 and October 1897, a large proportion of the Zimbabwe's population revolted violently against white settlers and the BSAC administration in the war known as Chindunduma or Chimurenga. Though the Shona and the Ndebele waged separate revolts, they were essentially for the same reasons.⁹⁵ This first revolt against white settlers was eventually subdued. Zimbabweans began forming political associations that would help fight their cause against minority rule. The Rhodesian Bantu Voter's Association (RBVA), founded in 1922, is one such party although this was a party mainly comprised of Ndebeles.⁹⁶ A lot of political parties soon followed and the major parties that were eventually involved as main actors in the struggle leading to Zimbabwean independence were the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) which mostly consisted of Ndebeles, the other one mainly comprising of Shonas, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). Both these parties were banned and their leaders often sent to prison in 1963. Britain denied Southern Rhodesia – present day Zimbabwe - independence and Ian Smith called for a unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) which Britain declared to be illegal.⁹⁷

The sanctions imposed by Britain on Ian Smith's regime were not harsh enough to warrant a change, around 1966, ZAPU and ZANU members started campaigning for a guerilla war. A lot of European settlers ran away from the country at this time. Following the end of the guerilla war, talks were held and elections were then held to determine the leadership of the country by Africans. Robert Mugabe's ZANU party won the elections in 1980.⁹⁸ This transition did not go very smoothly as there were factional differences between the former guerrillas of ZANU and ZAPU. These led to the massacres of hundreds of thousands of Ndebeles by ZANU until a unilateral agreement was signed in 1988 by Joshua

⁹⁴“Zimbabwe History”, <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Zimbabwe-History.html> (accessed July 20, 2008)

⁹⁵Jacob W. Chikuhwa, *Zimbabwe: The Rise to Nationhood*, (2006): 57.

⁹⁶Jacob W. Chikuhwa, *Zimbabwe: The Rise to Nationhood*, (2006): 57.

⁹⁷“Zimbabwe History”, <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Zimbabwe-History.html> (accessed July 20, 2008)

⁹⁸“Zimbabwe History”, <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Zimbabwe-History.html> (accessed July 20, 2008)

Nkomo and Robert Mugabe. Until today, Robert Mugabe is the president of Zimbabwe though a power-sharing agreement has been reached with the opposition, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), with its leader, Morgan Tsvangirai occupying the position of Prime Minister.

For many years following independence from minority rule, the standards of living of Zimbabweans were considerably higher than those in most African countries. In the 1980s, the average life expectancy was as high as sixty-five years for a Zimbabwean as compared to about forty-seven years in many African countries.⁹⁹ In present day Zimbabwe however, the life expectancy has taken a sharp fall and now lies at forty-five years for women and forty-six years for men.¹⁰⁰ AIDS has taken its toll on Zimbabweans over the years and continues to do so with as much as 15% of the adult populations being infected with HIV.¹⁰¹

Though the history of the people of Zimbabwe shows differences in the languages, tribes, and geographical locations of Zimbabweans, there do exist similarities in their cultural lives. Evidence of these similarities is stronger in the rural communities compared to the cities which have seen large influences of European society due to colonisation. Each family clan in Zimbabwe has a totem (*mutupo* in Shona or *isibongo* in Ndebele) with which it identifies itself. These totems are mainly names of animals. Though its influence on many Zimbabweans is diminishing, the extended family is of great importance to their traditional culture and it forms the basis of most of their relations with religion. The old male in the family acts as a link between a family and its ancestors. Though not all Shona people allude to the same traditional beliefs, a large majority did in pre-colonial times before the onset of Christianity. The traditional belief is in Musikavanhu or Mwari (the Creator) and he is above the ancestral spirit hierarchy. Because of their belief that only the dead can speak to the Creator, when someone seeks a favour from the Creator, they speak through their own ancestral spirits.¹⁰² Those who are Christians in Zimbabwe, however, do not believe in spirit mediums because they believe that the dead have no influence on those alive.¹⁰³

Having given an overview of the History of the people of Zimbabwe, it is my hope that this thesis adds to the bigger picture of Zimbabwean history. It is my hope that this

⁹⁹Jacob W. Chikuhwa, *Zimbabwe: The Rise to Nationhood*, (2006): 304

¹⁰⁰Zimbabwe, "<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/zi.html>" (accessed July 20,2008)

¹⁰¹Zimbabwe, "<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/zi.html>" (accessed July 20,2008)

¹⁰²Jacob W. Chikuhwa, *Zimbabwe: The Rise to Nationhood*, (2006): 308-311.

¹⁰³Jacob W. Chikuhwa, *Zimbabwe: The Rise to Nationhood*, (2006): 319.

historical overview of the people of Zimbabwe can help orient the reader to the different ethnic groups in Zimbabwe that I will refer to in this thesis. I hope this can paint a picture that can garner the history of Zimbabwe to take shape in the field of Global History. I do not claim to be writing a new global or world history¹⁰⁴ of Zimbabwe, but rather am writing a contribution to it. Rather than simply studying the history of debates on sexuality in Zimbabwe on the local level, I try to transcend local boundaries and study this history on a global level. Previous written histories on sexuality have not included issues concerning sexuality in Zimbabwe. Now that in our time most of the parts of the globe have come to be fully known to us¹⁰⁵, I venture, to to bring the debates on sexuality in Zimbabwe to a global level as I look at it in relation to previous research on sexuality that has been undertaken in other parts of the world.

¹⁰⁴Bruce Mazlish, "Comparing Global History to World History," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 38, no. 3, (Winter 1998): 388

¹⁰⁵Bruce Mazlish, "Comparing Global History to World History," (Winter 1998): 391.

3.0 Sexuality in Zimbabwe – (overview)

Pre-colonial religions in Zimbabwe regarded sex as pleasurable.¹⁰⁶ In the traditional customs of Zimbabwe, the females are customarily expected and obliged to submit to male desire. In pre-colonial as well as during the colonial era, those who refused to do this could be kidnapped or ‘eloped’. This was considered to be legitimate and in some cases was done with the knowledge and consent of the girl’s family members.¹⁰⁷ In the event that a girl was considered to be unruly, family members are said to have condoned forced and violent sexual intercourse of the girl.¹⁰⁸

With the coming of Christianity to Zimbabwe during the colonial era, Christianity was presented as a source of civilization for the primitive and uncivilised locals. Due to their traditional beliefs that considered sexual activity to be pleasurable, Christianity therefore created an environment in which the Zimbabwean population was depicted as being promiscuous and not having strong moral and cultural values about sexual activities.¹⁰⁹ Talking about sexual activity has been a taboo in Zimbabwe for a very long time. Talking about sex was considered to be shameful. Talking about sex was often limited to “ribald humour, ritual performance or confined to same-sex or same-age discussion groups.”¹¹⁰ The shame of talking about sexual matters was not only attributed to talk on homosexuality but also extended to discussions about sexual activity between men and women. A wife was not supposed to look at her husband’s genitals and neither was a man supposed to be curious about his wife’s genitals. This, Epprecht says, gave gay men leeway to “seduce straight men who [did] not notice (or [could] possibly deny noticing) that the ‘women’ they were mounting [had] penises.”¹¹¹

Bay-Cheng places emphasis on the importance of families, particularly parents in implementing sex education. She points out that many adolescents prefer it if their parents

¹⁰⁶Rob Pattman, “The Beer Drinkers Say I Had a Nice Prostitute, but the Church Goers Talk about Things Spiritual: Learning to be Men at a Teachers’ College in Zimbabwe,” in ed. Robert Morrell, *Changing Men in Southern Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2001): 230.

¹⁰⁷Marc Epprecht, “The ‘Unsayings’ of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe: Mapping a Blindspot in an African Masculinity,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24, no. 4 (December 1998): 634.

¹⁰⁸Tina Machida, “My Coming out Story” as cited in Marc Epprecht, “The ‘Unsayings’ of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe,” (December 1998): 635.

¹⁰⁹Rob Pattman, “The Beer Drinkers Say I Had a Nice Prostitute, but the Church Goers Talk about Things Spiritual: Learning to be Men at a Teachers’ College in Zimbabwe,” (2001): 230.

¹¹⁰Marc Epprecht, “The ‘Unsayings’ of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe,” (December 1998): 636.

¹¹¹ Marc Epprecht, “The ‘Unsayings’ of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe,” (December 1998): 636.

took the time to teach them about sexuality.¹¹² Most Zimbabwean families hold strongly to the opinion that discussing issues related to sexuality in their homes is taboo. The Shona culture, which is the largest ethnic group in Zimbabwe, is very conservative and sexuality is not openly discussed. In Zimbabwe the Shona culture is quite well known for its tendencies to differentiate the roles of males and females right at infancy. The male child is reared with the notion that he will be the breadwinner of his family at the back of his mind and the female child is often times taught to be an obedient and submissive housekeeper. Maureen Kambarami attributes this to the fact that “society views women as sexual beings and not as human beings.”¹¹³ When the female child reaches puberty in the Shona culture, aunts, grandmothers and mothers make sure that all the girl child’s “teachings are directed towards pleasing one’s future husband.” In this instance we see a situation in which society plays a major role in defining a woman’s sexuality. A woman is “taught how to use it (her sexuality) for the benefit of the male race.” In the Shona culture it is therefore important “that the girl child understands her sexuality and the implications it brings upon her life.”¹¹⁴

In Zimbabwe it was often times common that a man would have several wives with whom he would bear children and they would all live together on the same plot of land. Customarily this was acceptable and was considered normal and acceptable. Having a big family was very helpful because a family would not need to seek help with planting or harvesting their fields as the family was big enough and hence had enough people to help out. In the colonial era, policies regarding marriage in Zimbabwe were placed under the auspice of the colonial state. Practices which were not in tandem with the colonial state were prohibited. Polygamy for instance, was by law punishable according to the Tax Ordinance of 1901.¹¹⁵

Although not very common in Zimbabwe today, some girls are still being forced into early marriages, particularly those in rural Zimbabwe. This does not usually happen to the males. As Bene Madunagu points out “on the surface, boys may be encouraged to delay sexual activity but are at the same time presented with conflicting messages to prove their

¹¹²Laina Y. Bay-Cheng, “The Social Construction of Sexuality: Religion, Medicine, Media, Schools and Families,” (2006): 203-228

¹¹³John Charvet, *Modern Ideologies: Feminism*. London: J.M. Dent and Sons Limited, 1982. As cited in Maureen Kambarami “Femininity, Sexuality and Culture: Patriarchy and Female Subordination in Zimbabwe,” (2006): 2

¹¹⁴Maureen Kambarami, “Femininity, Sexuality and Culture: Patriarchy and Female Subordination in Zimbabwe,” *Understanding Human Sexuality Seminar Series* (2006): 3

¹¹⁵Ian Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe 1890-1948: Capital Accumulation and Class Struggle*, (1988): 146

manhood, through heterosexual experiences.”¹¹⁶ Until recently, females were commonly thought to be sexually passive participants in the act of sex. The primary function for mating was therefore to attract males.¹¹⁷ In Zimbabwe there exist instances where society gives freedom of expressing sexuality to the males. In the event that females do engage in sexual activities outside marriage and happen to fall pregnant, they are often considered as loose or spoilt.¹¹⁸ Not much blame is placed on men because men are generally considered as ‘weak’. This tendency to attribute female sexuality to the act of reproduction has been refuted by several findings to date. Findings have shown that sexual behaviour can and does occur in a wide variety of contexts, most of which have little to do with reproduction.¹¹⁹ Therefore an assignation of the purposes for which sexual activities are to be undertaken by women does not allow for the exercising of their rights to sexual involvement and pleasure.

Over the years there has been an emergence of dangerous sexual behaviours in Zimbabwe. These include women’s and men’s predation on younger children as a means to avoid HIV, rape of virgins to cure the HIV/AIDS and sexual consumerism (the belief that we are all going to die anyway so why not engage in the most conquests possible). Women cannot dress in what they choose because those who wear mini skirts can be subjected to their clothes being stripped off in public. There is also the problem of men being afraid that women are trying to escape men’s control by taming their husbands using *mupfubwira* (herbs used to tame husbands).¹²⁰ Women in Zimbabwe are believed to be very conversant with the use of *mupfubwira* because before getting married, girls have been taught by their parents and aunts to use love portions (*mupfubwira*). These herbs are given to the girl in her porridge as well as in the water she uses to bath in order to help transform the girl so she can look more mature and responsible. When a girl then gets married, her husband comes along to the girl’s family house and herbs will be put in the pot with the food they will eat in order to ensure that the couple will stay together forever.¹²¹

The issue of sexuality has not gone without the notice of religious institutions. Zimbabwe is largely dominated by Christian churches and these are therefore the main

¹¹⁶ Bene E. Madunagu, “Sexuality in Africa Regional Perspective”, DAWN Panel on African Regional Integration and Women (2007): 3.

¹¹⁷ Kim Wallen, “The Evolution of Female Sexual Desire,” in ed. Abramson Paul R. and Pinkerton Steven D. *Sexual Nature, Sexual Culture*, 57-79, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995: 57

¹¹⁸ Human Rights Monitor, February 2001, Human Rights Forum: Harare as cited in Maureen Kambarami, “Femininity, Sexuality and Culture: Patriarchy and Female Subordination in Zimbabwe,” (2006): 3

¹¹⁹ Kim Wallen, “The Evolution of Female Sexual Desire,” (1995): 63.

¹²⁰ Marc Epprecht, “The ‘Unsayings’ of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe,” (December 1998): 648.

¹²¹ Jacob W. Chikuhwa, *Zimbabwe: The Rise to Nationhood*, (2006): 323.324.

religious voice in Zimbabwe. Christianity in present day Zimbabwe tends to work hand in hand with traditional beliefs when it comes to issues of sexuality. Traditional religion is mainly “concerned with the sanctity and purity of sex”. In its statement on AIDS in 1992, the Zimbabwean Christian Churches “called for a reassertion of traditional values against modern hedonism and promiscuity”. They therefore urged the young people of Zimbabwe to abstain from sexual activity outside the marriage institution but to rather return to their traditional African culture.¹²² Most churches try to govern the members’ sexuality by insisting on reserving sexual activity for the marriage institution as suggested by the Bible. Sexual activity out of wedlock is considered a sin. The rules of the church are applicable to both male and female members but as is often the case, the rules appear to be sterner on the women as it is easier to see evidence of involvement in sexual activity in women than it is in men. This in particular is the case in instances where females do get pregnant and cannot hide this fact and if they are pregnant out of wedlock they are often considered as sinners and in some cases are referred to as prostitutes. In often cases, this brand is only attached to the females and not to the males who are also involved and equally as responsible as the females for this sin of sexual activity out of wedlock. In the case that females do get pregnant out of wedlock, the church prohibits abortions as they believe this is the taking of another’s life (murder) and this is against Christian beliefs.

Though a lot of people in Zimbabwe tend to believe that being religious and sticking to religious advice of abstinence is a good thing, a lot of people who attach a lot of importance to religious advice are at a higher risk of partaking in unsafe sexual practices. Those belonging to the Catholic denomination for example are less likely to use contraceptives such as the pill and condoms. Since premarital sex is considered to be out of the norm and often times a sin according to the church, many teenagers often cannot purchase contraceptives for fear of ridicule and stigmatization hence leading to unsafe sexual practices that would possibly lead to unwanted pregnancies as well as sexually transmitted infections. Those belonging to religious denominations that do not allow use of contraceptives, though they may be obedient and abstain from sexual activity until marriage, are at risk of contracting infections from their partners. This is mainly because religious institutions often times offer advice on abstinence and tend to forget to offer advice on safe

¹²²Rob Pattman, “The Beer Drinkers Say I Had a Nice Prostitute, but the Church Goers Talk about Things Spiritual: Learning to be Men at a Teachers’ College in Zimbabwe,” (2001): 230.

sex practices. It is often the impression that religious institutions appear to be out of touch with reality on the ground in Zimbabwe. Even though many Zimbabweans profess to be religious, it does not necessarily mean that all are abstaining from sexual activity till marriage. In many instances, unsafe sex within marriages is resulting in several sexually transmitted infections even to those who have abstained because more often than not one partner might have abstained and not the other.

3.1 Debates on Gender and Sexuality in Zimbabwe

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman argued that society created social roles which people adopted as scripts for forms of interaction with other members of their communities. This school of thought garnered interest in sex roles as well as in how ideas of ideal male and female behaviour strongly constrained the actions of individuals of either sex.¹²³ Women in Zimbabwe have not been spared the second class citizen treatment that women all over the world have endured for centuries. Though this has changed in most of the developed world, in Zimbabwe, women's rights have not been given much attention. As Björn Lindgren points out, “the relations between men and women in Zimbabwe are ‘unequal’” and in general men dominate women in areas such as marriage and labour.¹²⁴ An example would be the 1996 installation of Miss Sinqobile Mbhena as the first female Ndebele chief in Zimbabwe. This was not well received considering that she was a woman. Many critics argued that having a woman as a chief was against Ndebele culture and tradition. It was therefore unheard of to have a woman ruling over men.¹²⁵ Here it can be noted that the Ndebele in general have different categories for men and women. The Ndebele view men and women as two distinct sexual types. This distinction is to a large extent spelled out by the genitals of a person.¹²⁶

This distinction is not only found among the Ndebele of Zimbabwe and need not only apply to the issue of chieftaincy or to leadership in general, discrimination on women based on their genetic make up has taken place in Zimbabwe on different levels. Following independence, the government of Zimbabwe cracked down on women on the streets and more or less labelled them as prostitutes unless they provided evidence to prove otherwise.¹²⁷ No similar raids were carried out on men on streets. Prostitution has historically been associated with women and society appears to have chosen to turn a blind eye to the involvement of men in similar activities. The crack down on women on the streets gave the

¹²³Stephen Garton, *Histories of Sexuality: Antiquity to Sexual Revolution*, (2004): 6

¹²⁴Björn Lindgren, “Men Rule but Blood speaks,” (2001): 188

¹²⁵Björn Lindgren, “Men Rule, but Blood Speaks: Gender, Identity, and Kinship at the Installation of a Female Chief in Matebeleland, Zimbabwe,” in, *Changing Men in Southern Africa*, ed. Robert Morrell, (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2001): 177

¹²⁶Björn Lindgren, “Men Rule but Blood speaks,” (2001): 178

¹²⁷Gay W. Siedman, “Women in Zimbabwe: Postindependence Struggles,” *Feminist Studies*, 10, no. 3 (Autumn 1984): 420

notion that unemployed women found in bars and cinemas were prostitutes and it went unchallenged even though the government of Zimbabwe had claimed that it would ensure emancipation of women from traditional hierarchies.¹²⁸

The above mentioned example of Miss Sinqobile Mabhena is not only an example of the gender discriminations within Zimbabwean society. The decision by the Mabhena family to select a woman as their leader could be seen as a challenge to the gender order, not only in Matebeleland but in Zimbabwe as a whole. Not only did this challenge the gender order. It also challenged the gender regime within traditional leadership. This installation of a female chief meant that power relations as well as marriage customs could be reversed. This of course was viewed by critics as a threat to the dominant form of male identity as it was viewed as questioning a homogenic masculinity that is very much linked to the patrilineality of Zimbabwean society.¹²⁹

The Ndebele and Shona practice heterosexual marriage. This marriage can be monogamous or polygamous. Inheritance in both these cultures is patrilineal and the totem or clan name as well as social positions and property are inherited through the male line of the family. The goods inherited by the son from his father such as cattle, are normally used together with money to pay the *lobola*. This *lobola* is received by the parents of the woman in exchange for a wife or in some cases several wives.¹³⁰ *Roora* payments were traditionally made in forms of livestock such as cattle, sheep and goats. While cash payments have become common, cattle are still used and are important for paying *roora*. This *roora* system was implemented as a system that could guarantee that wives would be fertile and faithful. In the event that a woman proved to be infertile, a man was assured of getting another wife from his wife's family who could replace the infertile wife.¹³¹

Both the Shona and the Ndebele expect men to pay *lobola* (bride wealth) for their brides before marriage. The children the wives bear belong to the family of the man who pays *lobola*.¹³² In twentieth century Zimbabwe, laws have been put in place that respect *roora* due to concern with defining parents' rights to children.¹³³ This *roora* system has existed in Zimbabwe since pre-colonial times. Though often times it is argued that *roora* was never

¹²⁸Gay W. Siedman, "Women in Zimbabwe: Postindependence Struggles," *Feminist Studies*, 10, no. 3 (Autumn 1984): 420

¹²⁹Björn Lindgren, "Men Rule but Blood speaks," (2001): 178

¹³⁰Björn Lindgren, "Men Rule but Blood speaks," (2001): 181

¹³¹Jacob W. Chikuhwa, *Zimbabwe: The Rise to Nationhood*, (2006): 323

¹³²Björn Lindgren, "Men Rule but Blood speaks," (2001): 181

¹³³Jacob W. Chikuhwa, *Zimbabwe: The Rise to Nationhood*, (2006): 323

meant as a means by which men 'bought' wives¹³⁴, this payment in a sense gives power to the men as it gives them legal control over their wives and children. A woman is therefore expected to remain in the lineage group of her husband and in the event that her husband dies, the woman has to join the household of another male member of her husband's clan. All the children and property therefore belong to the husband's family.¹³⁵

For many years, the Shona and the Ndebele condoned forced marriages of young women. Following European occupation of Zimbabwe, a lot of women found emancipation by going to hide in mission stations and mining compounds. The European settlers did encourage emancipation for the women because a lot of the practices of the Shona and Ndebele such as child-pledging (betrothing young girls to older men) were deemed to be repugnant to their European concepts of morality.¹³⁶ The European settlers also established laws that made child marriages illegal and prohibited forced marriage of women without their consent.

Forced marriages are not the only form of forced subjugation on the part of women in Zimbabwe. An example is the notion of *mukadzzi wechikwambo* (wife of the spirit). This is a form of appeasement often used to settle disputes. The guilty family would offer one of their daughters to the victim. This meant that this offered daughter was not allowed to get married but was to rather remain in the family home. She can however bear children out of wedlock with the illegitimate children retaining their mother's surname. Anyone who goes against custom by marrying *mukadzzi wechikwambo*, faces harsh consequences that can even result in death.¹³⁷

A lot of the laws that allowed for the emancipation of women during colonial times in Zimbabwe were not in line with the local customs set up by the local leaders. This did not make the relationship between the colonial state and the tribal chiefs any easier. Emancipating women thereby created a situation whereby the laws made by the traditional chiefs did not stand and this is said to have served to weaken the social economic and political institutions that had already been established by the local leadership.¹³⁸ This serves

¹³⁴Jacob W. Chikuhwa, *Zimbabwe: The Rise to Nationhood*, (2006): 323

¹³⁵Gay W. Siedman, "Women in Zimbabwe: Postindependence Struggles," *Feminist Studies*, 10, no. 3 (Autumn 1984): 422.

¹³⁶Elizabeth Schmidt, "Negotiated Spaces and Contested Terrain: Men, Women, and the Law in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890-1939" *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 16, no.4 (December 1990): 623

¹³⁷Jacob W. Chikuhwa, *Zimbabwe: The Rise to Nationhood*, (2006): 315-316.

¹³⁸Elizabeth Schmidt, "Negotiated Spaces and Contested Terrain: Men, Women, and the Law in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890-1939" *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 16, no.4 (December 1990): 623

to show that even though European settlers advocated for the emancipation of women, they did not do this without hoping to indirectly benefit from the outcomes.

In no time, the maintenance of law and order in Zimbabwe was in crisis. The European settlers thus had to collaborate with the local leaders to find a solution that works for both ends. Solutions that were sought included input of both the Shona and the Ndebele customs and through negotiations and compromise, both the European settlers and local leaders were guilty of trying to control the mobility and sexuality of African women. It therefore became much more difficult for the Zimbabwean women to take advantage of the colonial legal system that had once promised emancipation.¹³⁹ Zimbabwean women in traditional Zimbabwe for instance never retained their freedom in the event that their spouse passed away. The Shona tradition, to be precise, have a tradition known as '*kugara nhaka*' (inheritance). This meant that in a family, when one of the brothers died, his wife as well as his property were taken over by a younger or older brother of the deceased. This shows that the rights of a Zimbabwean woman to own property were at best limited. Customary law in Zimbabwe to a large extent regarded married women as having no rights to inheriting their husbands' estates. This has however changed in more recent times as the government has put measures in place to give the widows right to claim ownership of the deceased spouse's assets. The Matrimonial Causes Act (33/85) also looks out for the interests of otherwise considered property-less women by allowing for a more equitable distribution of marriage assets between divorcing couples.¹⁴⁰

Keith Thomas' essay in 1959¹⁴¹ on 'the double standard' helped make sexual attitudes a legitimate object of intellectual history. For Thomas it was morality rather than sexuality that was historical. Thomas' essay spoke about society's willingness to accept infidelity on the part of men while abhorring it if women were to be unfaithful to their husbands. This was a means by which men could make women their 'property'.¹⁴² The media in Zimbabwe portrays a lot of sexist messages in local dramas and local music. Most of these messages are intended to serve as deterrents to sexual expression and sexual activity. A lot of these messages are addressed to women and make references to women and women's bodies thereby trying to limit sexual activity among Zimbabwean females, particularly the

¹³⁹Elizabeth Schmidt, "Negotiated Spaces and Contested Terrain: Men, Women, and the Law in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890-1939" *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 16, no.4 (December 1990): 624-625

¹⁴⁰Jacob W. Chikuhwa, *Zimbabwe: The Rise to Nationhood*, (2006): 324.

¹⁴¹Stephen Garton, *Histories of Sexuality: Antiquity to Sexual Revolution*, (2004): 3

¹⁴²Stephen Garton, *Histories of Sexuality: Antiquity to Sexual Revolution*, (2004): 3

unmarried. The most common message is that of preserving one's virginity until marriage. Virginity is the main concern of the family of a girl. This is because it is the family of the girl that bears the consequences should their daughter fall pregnant. Most societies including Zimbabwe, are more concerned with the virginity of girls often ignoring that of males.¹⁴³

Since it is not easy to check for a man's virginity upon marriage, most of the messages are directed at women because some cultures still conduct virginity tests upon marriage. This in a sense is related to the traditional cultures in Zimbabwe, especially among the Shona. As Maureen Kambarami points out, "males are free to experiment sexually at will before marriage whilst females have to preserve their virginity for marriage or risk tarnishing the image of the family since the son-in-law will not pay '*mombe yechimanda*'. This is a cow offered to the in-laws as a token of appreciation for ensuring that his wife preserved her virginity prior to marriage."¹⁴⁴ Though a lot of emphasis is placed on the virginity of the girls, Zimbabwean society tends to forget that for the boys to be 'sexually free' they need girls to mate with. Expecting these boys to turn to prostitutes is unrealistic because adolescent boys normally cannot afford to pay prostitutes.¹⁴⁵

In a lot of the local drams and music there is a lot of praise bestowed upon women who are mothers. Being a wife and therefore a mother gets a lot of respect in society. For most women, reproduction therefore is a means of elevating oneself in order to avoid social stigmatization. It is a general assumption that people have sex either to have fun or to reproduce. In this situation we see the media playing a major role in restricting women's sexual activity solely to reproduction. The media in a sense insinuates that once married, women are expected to be sexually passive and submissive to their husbands, in this case implying that men are the initiators of sex and thereby set the conditions for sexual activities¹⁴⁶. Women are portrayed as the inferior sex in the expression of sexuality because a lot of the lyrics and local dramas imply that "women are expected to satisfy the sexual

¹⁴³ Alice Schlegel, "The Cultural Management of Adolescent Sexuality," in ed. Abramson Paul R. and Pinkerton Steven D. *Sexual Nature, Sexual Culture*, 177-194, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995: 179

¹⁴⁴ Maureen Kambarami, "Femininity, Sexuality and Culture: Patriarchy and Female Subordination in Zimbabwe," (2006): 3

¹⁴⁵ Aloce Schlegel, "The Cultural Management of Adolescent Sexuality," (1995): 179

¹⁴⁶ Maureen Kambarami, "Femininity, Sexuality and Culture: Patriarchy and Female Subordination in Zimbabwe," (2006): 3-4

desires of their husbands.”¹⁴⁷ And “as a result, when a husband wants sex, the wife should comply because it is part of the marriage contract.”¹⁴⁸

In the event of a rape, the government is quite vigilant in making sure the perpetrators are caught and brought to justice. But it is not often the case that those who are raped report this to the authorities. This is often due to embarrassment because once people know that someone has been raped, they have often treated the victim differently. And in many situations, the society has tended to blame the victim, insinuating that the victim ‘wanted it’ to some extent. In 99 per cent of the cases in Benson and Chadya's study African men raped African women and girls in African sections of Bulawayo. They also discovered some cases that involved white men raping black women who were in their employ as domestic maids.¹⁴⁹ The main targets for rape were those that were new in the cities seeking employment because they were not very familiar with the new surroundings and were thus privy to exploitation.¹⁵⁰ Many parents moved to the cities to seek employment, many of whom brought their children along. When they had to work, many parent had to leave their children unattended. This made young girls very vulnerable to sexual advances and exploitation. Many young girls were raped during this time. Colonial law at the time is said to have put the age of consent for women at twelve years. This did not allow for young girls to come forth claiming to have been raped and abused. The colonial legal system inadvertently endangered women's sexuality and independence.¹⁵¹

Though it might appear as though women throughout Zimbabwean history have been discriminated upon and are still not given their due respect, the image of the mother is still and has always been very important in Zimbabwean culture and should be respected.. It is therefore unforgivable to offend the mother of the house as she is the one responsible for the continuation of the line of descendants through reproduction. Offending one's mother for instance can be punishable by death. There are other forms of repentance in the event

¹⁴⁷Donald E. Messer, *Breaking the Conspiracy of Silence: Christian Churches and the Global AIDS Crisis*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004 as cited in Maureen Kambarami, “Femininity, Sexuality and Culture: Patriarchy and Female Subordination in Zimbabwe,” (2006): 4

¹⁴⁸Suzanne Leclerc-Madlala, “Silence, AIDS and Sexual Culture in Africa.” University of Natal: DIDS Bulletin (2000) as cited in Maureen Kambarami, “Femininity, Sexuality and Culture: Patriarchy and Female Subordination in Zimbabwe,” (2006): 4

¹⁴⁹Koni Benson and Joyce M. Chadya, “Ukubhinya: Gender and Sexual Violence in Bulawayo, Colonial Zimbabwe, 1946-1956,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 31, no. 3, (September 2005): 594.

¹⁵⁰Koni Benson and Joyce M. Chadya, “Ukubhinya: Gender and Sexual Violence in Bulawayo, Colonial Zimbabwe, 1946-1956,” (September 2005): 595.

¹⁵¹Koni Benson and Joyce M. Chadya, “Ukubhinya: Gender and Sexual Violence in Bulawayo, Colonial Zimbabwe, 1946-1956,” (September 2005): 596-599.

that a mother of the house has been disrespected one of which is *kutanda botso*. *Kutanda botso* means the offender has to pay a material fine as well as face humiliation in front of the whole community by spending the whole day in undignified and embarrassing clothes. The offender also has to move around the community like a madman.¹⁵²

¹⁵²Jacob W. Chikuhwa, *Zimbabwe: The Rise to Nationhood*, (2006): 314.

3.2 Debates on Homosexuality in Zimbabwe

A strong homogenic masculinity prevalent in Zimbabwe does not make it easy for life as a homosexual. In his 1987 publication¹⁵³, Robert Connel takes a closer look at the implication of a homogenic masculinity. In this he sheds light on how heterosexuality is the basis of homogenic masculinity hence emphasising the connection with the marriage institution. Homogenic masculinity “is always constructed in contrast to subordinated femininities as well as various subordinated masculinities, such as homosexuality.”¹⁵⁴ With this in mind, it is easier to see how homosexual behaviours in Zimbabwe largely remained hidden from the public until the 1980s. This is not to say that homosexual activity did not exist prior to that time as has often been implied in President Robert Mugabe’s statements which tend to suggest that Zimbabwean tradition is that of exclusive heterosexuality.¹⁵⁵ Marc Epprecht says sexually intimate relations between males in Zimbabwe have existed from time immemorial. Evidence of this, he says, can be seen on an explicit Bushman painting in Zimbabwe as well as in oral Zimbabwean traditions.¹⁵⁶ These relations between men were largely frowned upon but sexual relations among men took place. As has generally been the norm in Zimbabwe, tradition requires the maintenance of proper outward appearances and this includes “hiding or denying unpleasant realities or divergence from ideals.” In order to follow traditions, Zimbabweans created an environment that “enabled them to avert their eyes” from such occurrences that did not conform to traditional teachings and expectations.¹⁵⁷

The average man on the street in Zimbabwe, when talking about homosexuality is totally averse, even to the notion of considering that people can have such a sexual orientation. These beliefs not only stem from machismo, they rather feel as though they have been socially instilled in ordinary Zimbabweans. Having been exposed to different ways of life in my studies as well as in my travels, it has become much easier for me to take one's sexual orientation at face value and not feel the need to judge. Considering that Zimbabwe is in a position where it needs to keep its population informed on the causes and prevention of

¹⁵³Connel Robert. *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics*. Palo Alto, California: California University Press, 1987.

¹⁵⁴Björn Lindgren, “Men Rule but Blood speaks,” (2001): 184

¹⁵⁵Oliver Phillips, “Review: Myths and Realities of African Sexuality,” *African Studies Review*, 44, no. 2 (September 2001): 195.

¹⁵⁶ Marc Epprecht, “The ‘Unsayings’ of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe,” (December 1998): 631.

¹⁵⁷ Marc Epprecht, “The ‘Unsayings’ of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe,” (December 1998): 633.

HIV/AIDS, ignoring a phenomenon like homosexuality as though it is non-existent in the society is a step backwards. Instead of society engaging in awareness, allowing those who are sexually oriented towards homosexuality so that they are not left behind in the fight against the spread of HIV, they have chosen an 'easy' solution to their prejudices – simply ignoring the homosexuals.

In the early nineteenth century, people who engaged in same-sex love relationships were called inverters. Inverters literally meant 'turning upside down or inside out'.¹⁵⁸ Foucault argued that before the nineteenth century, a sodomite was considered to be someone who committed unnatural acts (mainly anal sex) and hence got arrested and punished for them. A sodomite was therefore not a particular type of person but was just a lawbreaker. A homosexual on the other hand, Foucault argued, was a distinct species of person who exhibited certain characteristics and these characteristics were equally as significant as the sexual act itself in establishing the identity of a homosexual.¹⁵⁹

Scientific studies (though deemed dubious) helped to make homosexuality common knowledge by the end of the nineteenth century. It is believed that this knowledge served Europe's larger imperial interests. According to Rudi Bleys, it was not Africans but instead it was European ethnographers who initiated the claim that homosexuality was un-African. This was largely because it was important to create the notion of a sodomy-free Africa in the campaign for the abolition of the slave trade. By portraying Africans as moral and therefore needing protection, it was useful to enhance the negativity of homosexuality in Europe by claiming that "even black savages do not do this thing so why do you, you beast (the European)."¹⁶⁰ Intolerance of homosexuality may have also been intensified over the time with the rise of Rhodesian nationalism and the need to protect Rhodesia's untarnished image of settler manliness. It is reported that in 1972, two white men hunted out and beat to death an alleged homosexual who was also white for no reason other than his apparent queerness.¹⁶¹ The militarization of white Rhodesian society in the late 1960s is thought to have made Rhodesian culture less able to accommodate openly gay men.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸Angela M.L. Pattaucu and Dean H. Hamer, "The Genetics of Sexual Orientation: From Fruit Flies to Humans," (1995): 154

¹⁵⁹Stephen Garton, *Histories of Sexuality: Antiquity to Sexual Revolution*, (2004): 12-13

¹⁶⁰Rudi Bleys, *The Geography of Perversion: Male-To-Male Sexual Behavior Outside the West and the Ethnographic Imagination, 1750-1918*, New York: New York University Press, 1996 as cited in Marc Epprecht "The 'Unsayings' of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe," (December 1998): 645.

¹⁶¹Roland Hawkins, "They Killed A Man They Didn't Even Know," *Illustrated Life Rhodesia* (week ending May 16, 1973): 6-8 as cited in Marc Epprecht (December 1998): 646.

¹⁶² Marc Epprecht, "The 'Unsayings' of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe," (December 1998): 646

This homophobia was not only limited to the Rhodesian society in colonial times but has also been carried on to the Zimbabwean society in post-colonial times. Merely making homosexuality common knowledge in the fight against spread of HIV is not enough. Killing or intimidating those that oriented towards homosexuality is also not a solution. Though there have not been open killings or beatings of homosexuals in present day Zimbabwe, the refusal to accept homosexuals are being normal people, diverts society from focussing on what is really important regarding sexual practices in Zimbabwe.

In Rob Pattman's study, when he asked young men at a Zimbabwean College in Masvingo whether some people were attracted to people of the same sex, the response he got from them was that of puzzlement as they seemed to be under the impression that same-sex relationships were not a Zimbabwean or an African phenomenon.¹⁶³ The importance of tradition in determining how homosexuality was perceived should not be undermined. As Epprecht points out in "Gay Bashing in Zimbabwe II: Outing the Gay Debate", in pre-colonial Zimbabwe, children were valuable both as political and economic assets. Heterosexuality was what children were taught and encouraged to engage in from infancy. People did not have a choice as to whether or not they could marry and sexual activity was meant for reproduction and deviations from this were attributed to immaturity and in some cases it was attributed to witchcraft. Epprecht continues by pointing out that heterosexual marriages did not necessarily imply heterosexual orientation. There were means by which homosexually oriented men could indulge themselves and yet still appear 'normal'. Gay men could in fact get married to women and pay the *lobola/roora*¹⁶⁴ (bride price or dowry). Since fertility was clearly important and because staying for long without producing children following marriage was "an object of ridicule among the Mashona,"¹⁶⁵ a gay man could "make a secret arrangement with a trusted friend to impregnate his wife." If the gay man could not do it himself, his parents could make the arrangements for him with or without his prior knowledge. This is termed *kupindira* or *kusikira rudzi* which means, 'raising seed'.¹⁶⁶ This act helped the gay man hide his sexuality as well as prove his heterosexuality to society.

¹⁶³Rob Pattman, "The Beer Drinkers Say I Had a Nice Prostitute, but the Church Goers Talk about Things Spiritual: Learning to be Men at a Teachers' College in Zimbabwe," (2001): 233.

¹⁶⁴'Lobola' is the Ndebele word and 'Roora' is the Shona word for 'Bridal price'.

¹⁶⁵Charles Bullock, *Mashona Laws and Customs*, Capetown: Juta, 1912: 12 as cited in Marc Epprecht, "The 'Unsayng' of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe," (December 1998): 634.

¹⁶⁶ Marc Epprecht, "The 'Unsayng' of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe," (December 1998): 634.

The bride price was a form of insurance that ensured that the children fathered by the wives with other men would be recognized as their (the gay men's) own.

Women who had homosexual inclinations could claim that they were possessed by a male spirit such as a *svikiro* or *tokoloshi*. A woman possessed by such a male spirit could therefore have multiple female 'wives' and would in that case not be considered as lesbian. Same-sex sexual attraction among the Shona of Zimbabwe had cover-up names based on respectable words. Gay men could be referred to as *tsvimborume* (one who does not marry or literally one who possesses a knobkerrie but had nowhere to put it) or *sabwira* (an intimate male comrade). By looking at the meanings of these words, it is evident that there is nothing improper implied but historically, these were used as a means to allow the gay and lesbian community in Zimbabwe to have homosexual relations without drawing attention from the community.¹⁶⁷

The limitation on possibilities for homosexuals to live openly as homosexuals, as noted in examples above, leads homosexuals to live double lives so as to be socially acceptable – the underground life as a homosexual, and the open life as a heterosexual who has a wife/husband and a family. This inadvertently increases the number of sexual partners just so that the homosexuals can fit in. This not only exposes the homosexuals to higher risks of infection, but their sexual partners as well, who are used as part of the charade of proving to the society that they are 'normal'.

There were no words that made homosexuality explicit in the Zimbabwean context. It is believed that terms for homosexuality in Zimbabwe emerged in the nineteenth century from other languages. *Ngotsbana* (*ngochani*) is said to have been derived from the Zulu or Shangaan languages and *mantanyero* was derived from Chewa spoken by Malawi migrants to Zimbabwe. However the bulk of words pertaining to homosexuality used in Zimbabwe are believed to have come from the West and there appears to be no word in Zimbabwe that names homosexual activity. These findings are perhaps one of the reasons why the local people could not come to terms with the notion that homosexuality and homosexual feelings were something local. The foreign terminology for homosexuality makes it appear to be a phenomenon brought along by corrupt and immoral foreigners.¹⁶⁸ This 'externalisation' of homosexuality gives Zimbabweans an opportunity to dissociate themselves with the

¹⁶⁷ Marc Epprecht, "The 'Unsayings' of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe," (December 1998): 637.

¹⁶⁸ Marc Epprecht, "The 'Unsayings' of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe," (December 1998): 637.

phenomenon as something they do not have to deal with since it is not a Zimbabwean problem.

Christian propaganda from missionaries also contributed to there being so much secrecy surrounding homosexuality among Zimbabweans. For the missionaries, talking about sexual activity of any kind was almost like advocating for sex out of wedlock and this is a sin in all Christian beliefs. Because the missionaries were busy with a lot more immoralities, homosexuality was purposefully avoided and ignored and homosexual improprieties were hence ignored by missionaries and this gave the impression that homosexuality did not exist in Zimbabwe.¹⁶⁹ The missionaries were not the only ones who chose to turn a blind eye to issues of homosexuality in Zimbabwe. Epprecht points out that in comparison to other ethnographies produced by Europeans elsewhere in Africa, Rhodesians were notably more discreet. He stresses this by pointing out that between 1890 and 1979 in terms of descriptions of homosexual behaviours there were precisely two paragraphs in the entire voluminous body of published works in and about colonial Zimbabwe.¹⁷⁰ The discretion of the Rhodesians is also evidenced in the lack of coverage of even the most sensational of homosexual scandals in the newspapers. The first published report of homosexual-related crime he could find was on page 2 of the Chronicle published January 8, 1969 and the first official police comment on homosexual related crime was one sentence in the annual report in 1972.¹⁷¹

Men charged with sodomy in the early colonial era defended themselves by saying they were only 'playing'. Therefore "physical activity involving two people and friction on the penis that resulted in orgasm was not sex at all." This also meant that "a man who [was] married and also ['played'] with boys or even female prostitutes" would rarely be considered homo- or bisexual and was also not considered to be unfaithful to his wedding vows¹⁷². The practice of *ngotsbana* is thought to have possibly promoted the reproductive capacity of the rural homestead (*kumusha*) because by being gay, men who had migrated to the towns could

¹⁶⁹ Marc Epprecht, "The 'Unsayings' of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe," (December 1998): 637.

¹⁷⁰ F.W.T. Posselt, *Facts and Fiction* (1978): 59 and Charles Bullock, *The Mashona and the Matebele* (1950): 254 as cited in Marc Epprecht, "The 'Unsayings' of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe," (December 1998): 638.

¹⁷¹ NAZ RG 3/BRI 41, BSAP Departmental Report of 1972: 25 as cited in Marc Epprecht, "The 'Unsayings' of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe," (December 1998): 638.

¹⁷² Marc Epprecht, "The 'Unsayings' of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe," (December 1998): 637.

abstain from getting involved with prostitutes and managed to save a lot of their resources enabling them to support their families they had left in the rural homestead.¹⁷³

In pre-colonial Zimbabwe it had been considered normal and non-sexual for African men to sleep together in the nude under the same covers. Over the course of colonial rule however, living spaces were reconstructed according to European ways. By the 1950s, almost all public housing had separate sleeping arrangements for men.¹⁷⁴ Homosexuality was thought to be contagious. In 1952 Charles Mzingeli of the Reformed industrial and Commercial Union led a protest against attempts by the police to clean Salisbury townships of suspected female prostitutes. Charles Mzingeli is said to have asked the municipal officers disallowing free entry of women into town, “Do you want the men to be homosexuals?”¹⁷⁵

Homosexual behaviours among black men of Zimbabwe remained secretive until the late 1980s. It was through such events as the Jacaranda Queen Contest that openly gay identities began to be expressed. Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ) was established in 1990. GALZ along with other solidarity groups have emerged and they serve to educate Zimbabweans about homosexuality.¹⁷⁶ There still exist stereotypes of gays and lesbians in Zimbabwe. There are such claims as ‘gay men spread diseases and not us (the heterosexuals), they (homosexuals) prey on children¹⁷⁷ just to name a few. In most cases homophobic violence is often ignored or simply accepted as understandable and legitimate. Bisexual and homo-erotic behaviours are attributed to other rational causes instead of admitting and investigating heterosexual sensuality in Zimbabwe.¹⁷⁸

In his 1995 speech, President Robert Mugabe referred to homosexuals as sodomites, taking reference from Sodom and Gomorrah, in the old testament of the Bible, which are said to have been destroyed by God because of homosexuals. President Mugabe claimed that these 'sodomites' were “behaving worse than dogs and pigs” and were therefore a threat to the culture and tradition of Zimbabwe.¹⁷⁹ A lot of the media’s depictions of sexuality focus on heterosexual encounters. The issue of homosexuality is largely ignored. A lot of the dramas and songs on radio and television do not acknowledge homosexuality, either as bad

¹⁷³ Marc Epprecht, “The ‘Unsayings’ of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe,” (December 1998): 635.

¹⁷⁴ Marc Epprecht “The ‘Unsayings’ of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe,” (December 1998): 646.

¹⁷⁵ Charles Mzingeli as cited in Teresa A Barnes, *We Women Worked so Hard: Gender, Urbanization, and Social Reproduction in Colonial Harare, Zimbabwe, 1930-1956*, Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1999: 418

¹⁷⁶ Marc Epprecht, “The ‘Unsayings’ of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe,” (December 1998): 632.

¹⁷⁷ Marc Epprecht “The ‘Unsayings’ of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe,” (December 1998): 648.

¹⁷⁸ Marc Epprecht, “The ‘Unsayings’ of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe,” (December 1998): 649.

¹⁷⁹ Rob Pattman, “The Beer Drinkers Say I Had a Nice Prostitute, but the Church Goers Talk about Things Spiritual: Learning to be Men at a Teachers’ College in Zimbabwe,” (2001): 233

or good. It is in the rare situation whereby the issue of homosexuality appears in the news following a homosexuality related event such as a man being accused of being homosexual. In which case, most of the comments in the news will be a government response denouncing homosexual activity and in some cases advocating for punishment of known offenders (homosexuals). Bisexuality and transgender behaviour is hardly mentioned.

Epprecht alludes to the fact that though President Mugabe launched an 'anti-homo' campaign, there have not been violence or intimidation of gays and lesbians. This he believes can be a sign that a society which has traditionally regarded homosexuality as offensive and nonsensical might be making a way towards its acceptance.¹⁸⁰ I am not as optimistic as Epprecht sounds because a lot of the opposition to homosexuals and homosexuality, stem from cultural as well as religious upbringing. These are factors that are not easy to change and this cannot happen overnight. The president of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches has even gone public and denounced homosexuality as a sin.¹⁸¹ With a large Christian following in Zimbabwe, such actions limit the chances of homosexuality being given a chance to be expressed.

The first article ever to appear in the government controlled press was titled 'Homosexuals Break through Barriers' in *The Sunday Mail Magazine* of May 29, 1983. This article urged the general public to accept homosexuals because they were probably born that way. The same newspaper is said to have encouraged homophobic sentiment in Zimbabwe by printing a feminized picture of Joshua Nkomo in drag. Joshua Nkomo was Mugabe's political rival before 1987. The cartoon was used to suggest mockery and disgrace for homosexuals as well as to encourage homophobia.¹⁸²

The government controlled press for a long time refused to publish letters or commentaries that appeared to be sympathetic to gay rights or those which did not promote the notion of homosexuality as being a white man's disease. The GALZ was also not allowed to place discreet paid announcements for paid counselling services. There is a reported incident in which the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) Television refused to air a panel discussion on violence against women after they discovered that one of the panellists was a member of GALZ.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰Marc Epprecht, "Gay Bashing in Zimbabwe II: Outing the Gay Debate," *Southern Africa Report Archive* 11, no. 4 (July 1996): 14

¹⁸¹Marc Epprecht, "Gay Bashing in Zimbabwe II: Outing the Gay Debate," (July 1996): 14

¹⁸² Marc Epprecht, "The 'Unsayings' of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe," (December 1998): 647.

¹⁸³ Marc Epprecht, "The 'Unsayings' of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe," (December 1998): 644.

Prior to 1994, not much was said about homosexuality in the mass media.¹⁸⁴ It was the GALZ's attempts to display its educational material at the Zimbabwe International Book Fair in 1995 and 1996 as well as the sodomy charges against former president Canaan Banana that brought the existence of homosexuality among Zimbabweans to the lime light.¹⁸⁵ This was however not discussed or referred to that much in the press. The Herald did not express any fury over the issue of Canaan Banana's indiscretions but rather complained and accused South African of racism and having an anti-Zimbabwe agenda. This was largely because South Africa's liberal press had written extensively on the subject matter. The Sunday Mail did not report Canaan Banana's scandal but rather fostered the notion that homosexuality was a thing of the West. Ken Mufuka, one of The Sunday Mail's columnists in his 'letter from America' wrote of how sodomites were politically powerful in Washington and want to export their perversions throughout the world.¹⁸⁶

The Zimbabwean population has membership in various fundamentalist churches which encourage anti-feminist and homophobic translations of the Bible. In 1997, there was a crusade against rapists and homosexuals which was announced by Michael Mawema. He called for the castration, public whippings and stoning to death of perverts and he justified this by Bible references to Leviticus and Corinthians.¹⁸⁷ Bishop Hatendi, a former Anglican bishop in Zimbabwe, even went further than just vilifying homosexuals, he equated homosexuality to HIV/AIDS.¹⁸⁸ For those who are only trying to come to terms with their sexual orientation, this can be seen as a means of instilling fear in those who feel a tendency towards becoming homosexuals. Very few, if any, Zimbabweans have not come in contact with an AIDS infected person. Many are aware of its effects on one's life. This makes it easier for people to visualise what it is life to suffer from AIDS. This equation thereby makes homosexuality not an option as it would invariably lead to death

A report from the World Council of Churches festival held in Harare, November 27-30, 1998 points out that the issue of human sexuality was addressed. The words 'homosexual' 'gay' or 'lesbian' were not explicitly stated but were said to have been at issue since the debate at the festival "centred on wording about human sexuality in all of its

¹⁸⁴ Marc Epprecht, "The 'Unsayings' of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe," (December 1998): 647.

¹⁸⁵ Marc Epprecht, "The 'Unsayings' of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe," (December 1998): 632.

¹⁸⁶ Marc Epprecht, "The 'Unsayings' of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe," (December 1998): 645.

¹⁸⁷ Marc Epprecht, "The 'Unsayings' of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe," (December 1998): 647.

¹⁸⁸ Marc Epprecht, "Gay Bashing in Zimbabwe II: Outing the Gay Debate," (July 1996): 30

diversity.”¹⁸⁹ It is said that debates on homosexuality did take place informally rather than formally. A member of the Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ) is said to have taken part in the debate at the festival claiming that she “[hadn’t] been in church for 10 years. [She] had been discriminated since people found out [she] was lesbian”¹⁹⁰ and wanted to be treated equally since she was also created in God’s image. The committee congregated at the festival in Harare did not reach a consensus as to how exactly to deal with the issues of human sexuality raised but reached a consensus on the wording of the acknowledged differences surrounding the issues of human sexuality. What everyone appeared to have agreed upon was the condemnation of violence based on sexual differences and everyone agreed that wisdom and guidance from the Holy Spirit was necessary in such a matter.¹⁹¹

The mix of traditional and modern discomforts of homosexual behaviours in Zimbabwe may explain why officials in the present day Zimbabwean government shielded Canaan Banana’s homosexuality for several years long after his retirement from the political scene. Canaan Banana’s sexual preferences were believed to have been well known and widely rumoured from as early as the days of the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe. This fear of naming homosexuality in Zimbabwe can be seen in the parliamentary debate on homosexuality and lesbianism held in 1995. A Member of Parliament asked for the debate to be halted because if it were to be found out that they were discussing such issues as homosexuality, the parliamentarians would not be taken as people in their proper senses.¹⁹²

President Robert Mugabe’s anti-gay remarks in 1995 seemed to coincide with his re-election campaigns. President Mugabe’s attack on homosexuals included comments such as, “If we accept homosexuality as a right, as is being argued by the association of sodomists and sexual perverts, what moral fibre shall our society ever have to deny organised drug addicts, or even those given to bestiality, the rights they might claim under the rubrics of individual freedom and human rights?”¹⁹³ Mugabe along with his supporters portrayed homosexuality as a threat to the national values of Zimbabwe as well as to the ideal

¹⁸⁹ National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, “Letter to WCC’s 8th Assembly Addresses Priorities, Divisive Issues of Human Sexuality,” 1998 NCC News Archives: 2

¹⁹⁰ National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, “Letter to WCC’s 8th Assembly Addresses Priorities, Divisive Issues of Human Sexuality,” 1998 NCC News Archives: 2

¹⁹¹ National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, “Letter to WCC’s 8th Assembly Addresses Priorities, Divisive Issues of Human Sexuality,” 1998 NCC News Archives: 3

¹⁹² Mr. Matura, Zimbabwe Parliamentary Debates, vol. 22/38 (September 6, 1995): 2520 as cited in Marc Epprecht, “The ‘Unsayings’ of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe,” (December 1998): 638.

¹⁹³ Iden Wetherell, “Gay Bashing in Zimbabwe I: Mugabe’s Unholy War,” *Southern Africa Report Archive* 11, no. 4 (July 1996): 13

partiararchical culture of Zimbabwe. This threat (homosexuality) was frequently and explicitly linked with Western imperialism. This stance on homosexuality presented Robert Mugabe as 'brave' in a nationalist sense and anti-gay vigilantes were considered to be heroic. African blacks who tolerated homosexuality were considered to be not really African but rather puppets of the Sodom-friendly West.¹⁹⁴ The government's anti-colonial attack on homosexuals could be seen as a means by President Mugabe to make homosexuality a distant phenomenon that was somewhat detached from the Zimbabwean people. This could also serve to show the government's 'moral panic' at the thought of its Zimbabweans becoming homosexuals and violating their culture.¹⁹⁵ Members of the ruling party put their career ambitions at risk in the event that they spoke favourably of homosexuality and often spoke of their tolerance through pseudonyms. Being anti-homo was therefore a ticket towards gaining favour with the government because it showed nationalism.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ Mr Mudariki, *Zimbabwe Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 22/38 (September 6, 1996): 2516 as cited in Marc Epprecht "The 'Unsayings' of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe," (December 1998): 645.

¹⁹⁵ Rob Pattman, "The Beer Drinkers Say I Had a Nice Prostitute, but the Church Goers Talk about Things Spiritual: Learning to be Men at a Teachers' College in Zimbabwe," (2001): 234

¹⁹⁶ Marc Epprecht, "The 'Unsayings' of Indigenous Homosexualities in Zimbabwe," (December 1998): 644.

3.3 Debates on Prostitution in Zimbabwe

Prostitution is the commercialized sale of sexual services in which sex is a commodity. Prostitutes are often referred to as sex trade workers.¹⁹⁷ Because the term 'prostitution' is sometimes loosely used in Zimbabwe, I do not allude to the definition of a prostitute as a woman whose livelihood over a period of time tends to depend wholly on the sale of sexual services and whose relationship with customers does not extend beyond the sexual act.¹⁹⁸

Following Freud's claim on the repression of sexuality, Steven Marcus believed that the more society's sexuality was repressed, other means to deal with their instincts were found, hence the turn to underground pornography and prostitution to fulfil and satisfy their sexual desires.¹⁹⁹ Though modernization has seen sharp increases in rates of prostitution, this is not a new phenomenon in Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe the definition of prostitution is often times not defined in a clear cut manner. In the 1990s for instance, the term 'prostitution' was loosely used to describe women who were seen wearing trousers or mini-skirts as well as those who dated older men with lots of money and those who dated men with power. This term prostitute, therefore denoted women who violated their culture as well as their bodies. This loose use of the term 'prostitute' was one of the ways in which men in Zimbabwe learnt to become 'men' – by eroticising and politicising women.²⁰⁰ In such instances, one can see that men in Zimbabwe, at their whim, can portray women as prostitutes either as objects of their desire or objects of their contempt.²⁰¹ The labelling of ladies that appear to be urban as prostitutes does indeed reveal a double standard on the part of men in Zimbabwe as was also noted by Christine Obbo²⁰² in her studies on Uganda. These men want to control their women, be it wives, sisters or daughters while at the same time having sexual relationships with mistresses, concubines and prostitutes. These men contradict, as lovers what they strive to achieve as husbands and parents.²⁰³

¹⁹⁷Vern L. Bullough and Richard D. McNulty "The Sex Trade: Exotic Dancing and Prostitution," 2006: 303

¹⁹⁸Etienne van de Walle, "The Social Impact of AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa," (1990): 18

¹⁹⁹Stephen Garton, *Histories of Sexuality: Antiquity to Sexual Revolution*, (2004): 5

²⁰⁰Rob Pattman, "The Beer Drinkers Say I Had a Nice Prostitute, but the Church Goers Talk about Things Spiritual: Learning to be Men at a Teachers' College in Zimbabwe," (2001): 227.

²⁰¹Rob Pattman, "The Beer Drinkers Say I Had a Nice Prostitute, but the Church Goers Talk about Things Spiritual: Learning to be Men at a Teachers' College in Zimbabwe," (2001): 230.

²⁰²Obbo Christine. *African Women: Their struggle for Economic Independence*. London: Zed Press, 1981: 87

²⁰³Etienne van de Walle, "The Social Impact of AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa," (1990): 19

Research by Jock McCulloch has shown that prostitution existed in early twentieth century Zimbabwe.²⁰⁴ John Pape talks about a large influx of prostitutes into Zimbabwe around 1914.²⁰⁵ McCulloch attributes the existence of prostitution in Zimbabwe to the disparity between the sexes at the time.²⁰⁶ At this time, prostitution was publicly condemned and was even officially addressed by the Salisbury Council. At the time the concern was centred on prostitution by white women. These white prostitutes were considered to be racially undiscerning when it came to choosing their customers.²⁰⁷ By 1908 it is believed that there were nineteen prostitutes on the streets of Salisbury.²⁰⁸ Even at this time in Zimbabwean history prostitution was highly unwelcome in the society as shown by the white population which was not subtle in unleashing their wrath on any white women who did not pay attention to the existing racial lines when conducting their business affairs.²⁰⁹ There was also discontent as evidenced by the calls in 1908 from ratepayers for the government to suppress prostitution as well as the April 1909 letters to the High commissioner (Lord Selbourne) protesting the existence of prostitution on the streets of Salisbury.²¹⁰

Ordinance No. 13 of 1900 did not explicitly make prostitution illegal and this, McCulloch says, gave the police room to tolerate prostitution. This lack of explicit acknowledgement of the moral wrongness of prostitution warranted several protests including the November 1909 speech by von Hirschenberg.²¹¹ It was not easy to stem prostitution because as McCulloch pointed out in his book “Black Peril, White Virtue”, there were more white men than white women in Southern Rhodesia at the time. In the event that men wanted sex, without the white women prostitutes, white men would have had to resort to having sex with black women. This was a worse evil than prostitution.²¹² In the 1990s, being with prostitutes became the thing that 'real men' did. Those who were church-goers were not the 'real men' those who went to the beer-halls and got drunk were considered to be real men. While the beer drinkers could engage in sexual intercourse with women and

²⁰⁴ Then known as Southern Rhodesia

²⁰⁵ John Pape, “Black and White: The 'Perils of Sex' in Colonial Zimbabwe,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 16, no. 2 (December 1990): 703

²⁰⁶ Jock McCulloch, *Black Peril, White Virtue: Sexual Crime in Southern Rhodesia, 1902-1935*, Bloomington: Indian University Press, 2000: 89

²⁰⁷ John Pape “Black and White: The 'Perils of Sex' in Colonial Zimbabwe,” (December 1990): 703

²⁰⁸ Present day Harare

²⁰⁹ John Pape “Black and White: The 'Perils of Sex' in Colonial Zimbabwe,” (December 1990): 703

²¹⁰ Jock McCulloch, *Black Peril, White Virtue: Sexual Crime in Southern Rhodesia, 1902-1935* (2000): 90

²¹¹ “We feel that this (prostitution) is a question which affects the moral foundations upon which the strength of the British Empire has been and is being built.” Jock McCulloch, 2000: 90-91

²¹² Jock McCulloch, *Black Peril, White Virtue: Sexual Crime in Southern Rhodesia, 1902-1935* (2000): 92

claim to have had a nice prostitute, the church goers were more inclined towards falling in love rather than engaging in meaningless sexual activities.²¹³

An important aspect raised by McCulloch in his book is that of female independence. During this period of time, all over the world women were generally dependent on men. Prostitution gave way to a new freedom. These women were not subordinate to any man and were financially independent and in most cases earned a lot more than their male clients and they also earned significantly more than women in 'respectable' employment.²¹⁴ Prostitution it seems was not an easy aspect of social life to deal with. White men wanted to be able to have access to commercial sex but at the same time also wanted to be respectable. This also posed a dilemma regarding the legitimization versus the suppression of prostitution.²¹⁵ Another reason why white men at the time wanted to suppress prostitution was as a means to ostracise women who had chosen autonomy from men while at the same time white men wanted to save the white women who had 'fallen from grace.'²¹⁶

Following independence in Zimbabwe, black Zimbabwean women were demanding freedom, not only from racial and economic oppression but from gender based oppression. Men in Zimbabwe have a history of not wanting to take responsibility for their engagement with women outside the marriage institution. Men who had intercourse with women they were not betrothed to attributed this to the women. Their claims were that if the women did not violate their culture and were not loose or if they did not tempt the men, then the men would not be in positions to engage in sexual relations with these women.²¹⁷ In 1983, three years after independence, there was a campaign to end prostitution in Zimbabwe and this led to the detention of several thousands of women. Gay W- Seidman points to how the government at the time made use of a pre-independence vagrancy law that allowed women to be picked up on the street, in hotels and cinemas and even at home and held until they could provide either marriage certificates or proof of employment in those areas they were picked up from. Even though a lot of the women picked up were innocent of prostitution,

²¹³Rob Pattman, "The Beer Drinkers Say I Had a Nice Prostitute, but the Church Goers Talk about Things Spiritual: Learning to be Men at a Teachers' College in Zimbabwe," (2001): 229.

²¹⁴Jock McCulloch, *Black Peril, White Virtue: Sexual Crime in Southern Rhodesia, 1902-1935* (2000): 92.

²¹⁵Jock McCulloch, *Black Peril, White Virtue: Sexual Crime in Southern Rhodesia, 1902-1935* (2000): 92.

²¹⁶Jock McCulloch, *Black Peril, White Virtue: Sexual Crime in Southern Rhodesia, 1902-1935* (2000): 92-93.

²¹⁷Rob Pattman, "The Beer Drinkers Say I Had a Nice Prostitute, but the Church Goers Talk about Things Spiritual: Learning to be Men at a Teachers' College in Zimbabwe," (2001): 229.

they were detained nonetheless.²¹⁸ This goes to show the unacceptable nature of prostitution in Zimbabwe even though the measures employed were a nuisance to a lot of innocent women. A commentator is known to have expressed his happiness at the hope that most men would be able to give their earned money to their wives for a change considering that there was no one to entertain them in brothels and nightclubs following the “Operation Clean Up” aimed to rid the streets of prostitutes.²¹⁹ Sleeping with a prostitute and “glorifying in the transgressions of enjoying prostitutes” was not the only way for men to prove that they were 'men'. Proving one's manhood could often times involve disassociation with prostitutes. Being a man at times meant that the men had to be moralistic and had to take on roles as the spokespersons for the culture of Zimbabwe. These men therefore had the task of criticising prostitution.²²⁰

Zimbabwean law prohibits prostitution. According to the Sexual Offences Act enacted by the president and the parliament of Zimbabwe, keeping a brothel or living on earnings made from prostitution is punishable by a fine or imprisonment for up to two years or both.²²¹

²¹⁸Gay W. Siedman, “Women in Zimbabwe: Postindependence Struggles,” *Feminist Studies*, 10, no. 3 (Autumn 1984): 419

²¹⁹Gay W. Siedman, “Women in Zimbabwe: Postindependence Struggles,” *Feminist Studies*, 10, no. 3 (Autumn 1984): 420

²²⁰Rob Pattman, “The Beer Drinkers Say I Had a Nice Prostitute, but the Church Goers Talk about Things Spiritual: Learning to be Men at a Teachers' College in Zimbabwe,” (2001): 230.

²²¹Sexual Offences Act (Act 8/2001) Part IV Article 9

4.0 Discussion in relation to HIV/AIDS and Sexuality in Zimbabwe

So much information is now readily available concerning HIV/AIDS. “The role of the CD4 lymphocyte, the dangers of unprotected sex, and the viral etiology” of HIV/AIDS have been made known.²²² Sexuality in relation to HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe is therefore of great concern. In Zimbabwe, the average age at first sexual intercourse is believed to be eighteen for both men and women though there do exist instances of sexual intercourse at earlier ages. Lack of information as well as unprotected sex leaves these young people at risk, not only of unwanted pregnancies but HIV and STDs as well. This is quite worrisome considering that Zimbabwe is one of the countries in the world that have a high rate of AIDS prevalence rates. The infection rates are said to be highest before the age of twenty-five year. It is believed that among teenagers, women are especially vulnerable.²²³ Instead of only schooling girls to become good wives, society should bear the moral responsibility to educate these girls about the perils of unsafe sexual activities. Without this education, the girls cannot survive long enough to be the good wives they are normally trained to become. It is also not enough that before the girl gets married the aunts do not take on the responsibility to teach their nieces about sexual responsibility as well as safe sex methods.

In Zimbabwe, adolescent sexuality is of broad concern in light of the HIV AIDS pandemic. Society might choose to ignore adolescent sexuality as though it does not take place. This, in the HIV/AIDS era can be very detrimental to Zimbabwean society considering that it is the unmarried young whose sexuality is more problematic because they have very strong sexual impulses and if these tendencies are not properly channelled, could be a big problem.²²⁴ The government tries to encourage practising safe sex. Through various governmental organizations such as the New Start Centre are created so as to provide information for the people of Zimbabwe. There is however often a stigma on people who visit such organization because they are mainly associated with giving counselling to those

²²²Vinh-Kim Nguyen, “Uses and Pleasures: Sexual Modernity, HIV/AIDS, and Confessional Technologies in a West African Metropolis,” in *Sex in Development: Science, Sexuality and Morality in Global Perspective* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press 2005): 245.

²²³Young Mi Kim and Adrienne Kols and Ronika Nakayuru and Caroline Marangwanda and Peter Chibatamoto, “Promoting Sexual Responsibility among Young People in Zimbabwe,” *International Family Planning Perspectives* 27, no.1 (March 2001): 11.

²²⁴Alice Schlegel, “The Cultural Management of Adolescent Sexuality,” (1995): 177.

infected with HIV/AIDS so going there for regular information on sexuality is often not done and people, especially adolescents abstain from going to these organizations. In light of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, this is detrimental to the Zimbabwean society because many people thus deny themselves access to important information on sexuality and sexual activity, that could otherwise save their lives. "Without access to services but pressured for sex by the growing bodies, young people are forced to improvise, for instance, by using substitutes such as polythene materials during sex. They fear visiting health centres even when suspecting STI, and are anxious about being infected with HIV as this may show they are sexually active at prohibited ages."²²⁵

Most young people in Zimbabwe are aware of HIV/AIDS but still engage in unprotected sex. The demographic survey carried out in 1994, published that 98% of women aged 15-19 had heard of AIDS and only 19% were using condoms.²²⁶ There exist a lot of sexually transmitted diseases STDs in Zimbabwe. However most of these are not taken note of. In women, STDs are easier to locate in the event that women are tested for fertility levels. STDs such as gonorrhoea and chlamydia are some such STDs that have caused infertility in women. Though often unnoticed because very few women visit a gynaecologist for regular check ups. The large incidence of STDs in Zimbabweans can be attribute to the social and sexual arrangements common among sub-Saharan Africans. These are sexual arrangements that are in place in order to maximise women's exposure to pregnancy.²²⁷ Zimbabwe is a country that has a large proportion of its population living well below the poverty line. The issue of fertility should not be high on its agendas. Society has put in place expectations of women and these do not take into consideration the dangers of the HIV/AIDS era we are living in. If a woman does not bear children, many parents are dissatisfied and can call for their sons to divorce the infertile women, this drive to prove one's fertility only increases the risks of a sick and dying population.

A lot of advice on AIDS that is presented by the media promotes the ABC (Abstain, Be Faithful and Condom use) of HIV/AIDS prevention. This situation has not necessarily led to a decrease in HIV/AIDS infections. HIV/AIDS continues to spread around

²²⁵ Berth M. Ahlberg and J. Chikovore and G Lindmark and L Nystrom, "Prohibition and Violence: the Context of Adolescent Sexuality in Zimbabwe," International Conference on AIDS (2004).

²²⁶ Young Mi Kim and Adrienne Kols and Ronika Nakayuru and Caroline Marangwanda and Peter Chibatamoto, "Promoting Sexual Responsibility among Young People in Zimbabwe," (March 2001): 11.

²²⁷ Robert C. Bailey and Robert V. Aunger, "Sexuality, Infertility and Sexually Transmitted Disease among Farmers and Foragers in Central Africa," (1995): 197

Zimbabwe. Abstinence is largely based on uncertainties because not all unmarried people will choose to abstain from sexual activity until marriage. The problem of adolescent sexuality would not be an issue if all people got married when they reach puberty²²⁸ as this would mean that pre-marital sex would be limited if not eliminated. But of course this is not the reality on the ground hence the need for several measures, other than abstinence, to encourage safe sex practices. Since many adolescents are more inclined to spend time watching television or using the internet, the media is not such a bad avenue for sex education. However it should not be the only means, if society played a role in addition to the media, spreading information on HIV/AIDS to the adolescents can be made lighter.

It is important to note that this ABC stance from the media is not applicable to everyone. As noted in this thesis, in most marriages, it is the males who determine the rules of sexual encounters and women therefore generally have no say. A woman in most instances cannot abstain and neither can she insist on condom use with her husband. As Makanga points out, the media can play a significant role in fighting HIV and AIDS. The media could encourage, suggest as well as promote the general understanding of HIV and AIDS through the language it employs. From his research findings, Makanga discovered that the majority of articles in the local newspapers in Zimbabwe (the Herald and the Daily News) took the liberty to describe HIV and AIDS, yet few of the articles managed to provide details about HIV transmission, care and prevention. The articles were found to rarely discuss issues of sex and sexuality, although the majority of HIV infections in Zimbabwe are considered to occur through heterosexual transmission. Participants in Makanga's study "stated that the news media should provide more information, in particular about sexuality. They suggested that without the information the news media did little to change their sexual behaviour, however several participants suggested that the news stories encouraged them to be increasingly compassionate to people living with HIV and AIDS. Many participants suggested that the Zimbabwean media was giving 'a human face' to the epidemic."²²⁹

In dealing with HIV/AIDS and the duty of informing the masses, particularly the young is difficult to assign. Left up to the health specialists in Zimbabwe, talk about safe sex does not offer much detail and seems as though it is based on the idea that the audience has

²²⁸ Alice Schlegel, "The Cultural Management of Adolescent Sexuality," (1995): 177

²²⁹ T Makanga, "Exploring the Impact of Zimbabwean News Media on Individual Perceptions of HIV/AIDS" International Conference on AIDS (2004).

some knowledge about sexual activities as well as the standard moral code. The pleasures associated with sexual practices are often ignored such that the young people who do not have first hand knowledge about sexual practices are not reached by the messages meant for them. Most of the messages of the New Start Centre in Zimbabwe end up being mantras that everyone on the streets knows. Instead of taking up the role of informer and going into detail, other types of messages are left to fill the hole left by the silence about sexual pleasures and people can get caught up in topics that are eventually not related to HIV/AIDS and the meaning is lost.²³⁰

The silent approval of boys' actions when they carry out indiscretions by society as well as the church is a problem for Zimbabwe at this time where the rate of HIV/AIDS occurrence is very high. It is evident that both society (through the families) and the media tend to emphasize more on what is expected of the females sexually rather than the males. This could prove to be very detrimental as the findings of Alexander, Gibney, Mbizvo and Olayinka showed that more men are engaged in sexual activity with multiple partners than females do.²³¹ In Zimbabwe, gender roles as well as social norms and legal factors are very influential and contribute to the risky sexual behaviour responsible for the spread of HIV/AIDS. From the findings of Young Mi Kim and colleagues, it is pretty easy for stereotyped sexual norms and peer pressure to encourage young men to prove their manhood and thereby enhance their social status by having sex. Due to their socialisation not to discuss sex, young women are left in positions whereby they cannot refuse sex or insist on condom use. The economic situation in Zimbabwe does not help matter either. Young women are often times willing to exchange sexual favours for economic assistance normally in the form of 'sugar daddies', (older men with a lot of money), who might be HIV positive, thereby exposing themselves to risk of infections.²³²

From the various debates that take place on sexuality, it is evident that although cultural norms expect the family of the girl to expose her to notions of sexuality, very little is done in this regards. The information on sexuality that a girl gets from her family, is that

²³⁰Shanti A. Parikh, "From Auntie to Disco: The Bifurcation of Risk and Pleasure in Sex Education in Uganda," in *Sex in Development: Science, Sexuality and Morality in Global Perspective* 125- 158, (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press 2005): 125-126.

²³¹L. Alexander and L. Gibney and M.T. Mbizvo and B.A. Olayinka, "Generational Differences in Male Sexuality that may Affect Zimbabwean Women's Risk for Sexually Transmitted Diseases and HIV/AIDS," *East African Medical Journal* 77, no. 2, (2000): 93-97

²³²Young Mi Kim and Adrienne Kols and Ronika Nakayuru and Caroline Marangwanda and Peter Chibatamoto, "Promoting Sexual Responsibility among Young People in Zimbabwe," (March 2001): 11.

which she will need in her marriage home. The family does not do much to inform the girl child on the importance of protection. In many cases it appears that the family leaves this job up to the media and in rare cases to the schools. This is not very helpful for Zimbabwe seeing as children are more likely to be influenced by members of their families than they are by strangers. When strangers do take up this role, in the form of media and institutions set up to inform the public on sexuality, not much information is disseminated to the people. Several erotic messages that contain underlying ideas about sexual morality end up being the measure of the day. As a country influenced a lot by Christianity, religious rhetoric in no time takes centre stage and not knowing about sex easily becomes equated with being sexually pure.²³³ In such occasions the message is lost and the public is left in a sphere of disinformation and are not well equipped in the struggle against HIV/AIDS.

Homosexuality, according to Robert Staples²³⁴, is the most difficult behaviour of blacks to trace historically. Though often not noted in African literature, the practice in some African tribes of sending young male children off to separate compounds might have produced some homosexual behaviour²³⁵. Even though findings show that homosexual activities did not come along as a result of colonialism but were rather existent in Zimbabwe prior to colonialism, a lot of arguments against accepting homosexuality are still centred around this notion. This is not a very helpful way of dealing with homosexuality in Zimbabwe because whether or not it is a result of colonialism is irrelevant in present day Zimbabwe. What I find to be relevant is how homosexuality is addressed and how this has an impact on those involved in homosexual activity. Alienating the gay population, though it might seem like the appropriate thing to do culturally, does not tackle the problem of finding the best ways to ensure that all those taking part in sexual activities are aware of the risks associated. Openly dealing with homosexuality could offer solutions for the benefit of the country as a whole.

The media through magazines, television and the Internet play an important role in the construction of sexuality. Popular media reports however should be taken with a pinch of salt because in some cases they tend to distort information or only choose reports that

²³³Shanti A. Parikh, "From Auntie to Disco: The Bifurcation of Risk and Pleasure in Sex Education in Uganda," (2005): 128.

²³⁴Staples Robert. *Black Masculinity: The Black Male's Role in American Society*. San Francisco: Black Scholar Press, 1982.

²³⁵Bill Stanford Pincheon, "An Ethnography of Silences: Race, (Homo)sexualities, and a Discourse of Africa." *African Studies Review* 43, no. 3, (December 2000): 49.

confirm certain viewpoints. The media also plays an important role in the normalization of sexuality through implicit and explicit socialization. Most of the media depictions on sexuality in Zimbabwe are centred on the notion of heterosexuality within the marriage being the norm. Zimbabwean society has therefore been socialized by the media to accept heterosexuality as the normal form of sexuality and any other forms of sexuality are to be considered as deviations and not to be welcomed. By ignoring homosexuality, the danger exists that issues relating to HIV/AIDS prevention among homosexual men and women are left unattended to and I believe a country like Zimbabwe that is facing large numbers of HIV/AIDS victims cannot afford to take that risk.

Treating prostitution as non-existent does much more harm than good in the long term. Even though Zimbabwean law prohibits prostitution, this does not mean that it does not exist. A lot of prostitutes can be seen on the streets in the city centres. Due to fear of persecution, a lot of prostitutes are also operating under cover. Ignoring to deal with prostitution as something that exists does not tackle the problem of ensuring that Zimbabweans take part in safe sexual encounters. The desire for high levels of reproduction taking precedence over safe sex could also very well prove to be to the detriment of Zimbabweans. Without paying much attention to the results of uncontrolled sexual activities, the nation could find itself in a position whereby a large majority of its population are HIV positive. Reproduction without much fore-thought can actually lead to results that are the reverse of initial intentions.

HIV/AIDS is existent in Zimbabwe and is not going away any time soon. Therefore all the secrecy surrounding sexuality is quite misleading for the people of Zimbabwe. As the most likely mean of contracting HIV/AIDS is through sexual intercourse and sexual activity be it heterosexual, bisexual or homosexual, the fact is there is sexual activity taking place. Therefore segregating sexuality as a no-go-area is a neglectful characteristic I believe the government as well as other influential social and religious institutions have taken. Mostly this ignoring of sexuality is because these institutions feel that by openly discussing these topics they will be seen as falling far away from the dictates of Zimbabwean culture. This culture of attributing weaknesses to observing cultural norms does not do much justice to the HIV/AIDS phenomenon in Zimbabwe and can only spell doom for Zimbabwean society.

Conclusion

From my findings it is evident that not much has changed significantly historically when it comes to talking about sexuality. Most of the debates on sexuality that took place in colonial times have not changed. It is still the same topics that are more or less debated in present day Zimbabwe. The coming of more print and electronic media has increased the platform for debating sexuality. It would be logical to assume that the debate on sexuality has thus increased but this has not been taken up quite well by Zimbabweans as cultural norms still appear to take precedence and hinder any public or open debates on this issue of sexuality.

In Zimbabwe, coitus is the only form of sex that is still being considered as 'real' sex, that is penal-vaginal intercourse. Because 'real' sex involves male and female genitalia, Bay-Cheng sees it fitting that the social construction of sexuality is thoroughly heteronormative, therefore meaning that it is only heterosexuality that is explicitly and implicitly acceptable as normal while homosexuality is marginalized.²³⁶ Borrowing from Bay-Cheng, in Zimbabwe it is still very much the case that some people view homosexuality as a sin while others are tolerant and view it as a minority no less worthy than heterosexuality.²³⁷ In colonial as well as post-colonial Zimbabwe homosexuality is still considered to be a sin and it will be some time before it can openly be accepted and dealt with.

The debates on sexuality in Zimbabwe are not mutually exclusive. In light of HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe, it is therefore imperative that the importance of sex education is emphasized. This need not only happen in the classroom in primary and secondary schools. Many social institutions and relationships are also important in this sex education because as Bay-Cheng points out, we are constantly soaking up norms on sexuality from the institutions and societies around us,²³⁸ therefore the various actors debating sexuality in Zimbabwe (churches, media government and society through families) need to be aware just how

²³⁶Laina Y. Bay-Cheng, "The Social Construction of Sexuality: Religion, Medicine, Media, Schools and Families," 2006: 208-209

²³⁷Laina Y. Bay-Cheng, "The Social Construction of Sexuality: Religion, Medicine, Media, Schools and Families," 2006: 208-209

²³⁸Laina Y. Bay-Cheng, "The Social Construction of Sexuality: Religion, Medicine, Media, Schools and Families," 2006: 217

influential they could be in dealing with sexuality and therefore in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Sex is one of the most broadly interesting spheres of human activity,²³⁹ and it is said to be one of the things that historians can at least be certain about because without heterosexual penetrations, Garton claims, humans would not be here to ruminate about the past.²⁴⁰ Even though some of the Zimbabwean society might turn out to not be open to the idea of research on sexuality because it could be considered to be detrimental to the sexual values and morals of society²⁴¹, this study is necessary if insight is to be attained as to the sexuality of Zimbabweans. Perhaps from the results of this study, Zimbabweans can garner interest in knowing more about sexuality so they can have more control of their sexuality and also understand what it entails and implies for the average Zimbabwean. This study could also serve to show that studying and revealing the historic roots of sexuality in Zimbabwe does not necessarily imply that these forms of sexuality are being encouraged. And it also does not mean that informing people about sexuality will lead to those who might not have know about these sexualities, to try them out. My study need not promote undesirable sexual behaviours and attitudes among Zimbabweans. Even though my conclusions might not be perfect, I believe that they are better than not drawing any conclusions at all about the history of sexuality in Zimbabwe. I hope that this study has contributed a piece to the future research on sexuality in Zimbabwe and that eventually, a bigger picture on sexuality in Zimbabwe will begin to materialize.

²³⁹Roy F. Baumeister and C. Nathan DeWall and Jon K. Maner, "Theories of Human Sexuality," (2006): 18

²⁴⁰Stephen Garton, *Histories of Sexuality: Antiquity to Sexual Revolution*, (2004): 1

²⁴¹Michael Wiederman, "Sex Research," (2006): 13

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