

UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE

Church Teachings , Gender Relations and Women's Agency: A study of Women in Apostolic churches in Harare.



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Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own work. It is submitted for the Master of Science Degree in Sociology and Social Anthropology at the University of Zimbabwe. It has not been submitted for any other degree or examination in any other university.

(NYARADZO MASHONGANYIKA)

_____ Day of _____ 2017

Dedication

To my parents Mr and Mrs Mashonganyika, my oasis of wisdom and strength, from whom I found the courage to persevere, no words can explicitly express my gratitude to them.

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First and foremost, I want to thank Almighty God for his grace which was upon me; without him my efforts could have been fruitless, all glory be to God!

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Acronyms

A level : Advanced level

FGD : Focus Group Discussion

KII : Key Informant Interviews

O level : Ordinary Level

SSI : Semi-Structured Interviews

Abstract.

It has often been argued that apostolic church teachings and practices are monolithic and overly constraining to women's agency in life, particularly in the marriage process. This study adopts the sociological stance that individuals have the capacity to express their agency regardless of how oppressive the structures may be. It also argues that expression of agency by apostolic women is mediated within different church teachings and gender expectations. As such, the study has three primary goals; it identifies teachings of three apostolic churches and elucidates the nuances among them, secondly it explains the influence of the teachings on expected gender roles and ensuing marital relations. It also documents how women express their agency in the marriage process within their church's teachings and expected gender roles.

Qualitative research methodology was employed in conducting the research. Data collection methods used were key informant interviews, focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews participant observation, audio and video analysis. Study participants were purposively selected from Johane Marange, Johane Masowe and Johane Wetatu apostolic churches members in Harare. Study findings show that apostolic churches have diverging church teachings and practices that influence gender roles and expectations. The differences in the teachings enable women to express their agency in various, diverging ways.

The study demonstrates that apostolic church teachings simultaneously facilitate and constrain expression of agency by women in apostolic churches. It discovered that women express agency when they conform to or defy church teachings and gender expectations. They actively participate in the implementation of church teachings on virginity testing, arranged marriages, polygyny, monogamy and widow inheritance among others. Women under study expressed various forms of agency that include everyday resistance, complicit, victimcy and tactic agency to engage with their church teachings and make self-interested decisions. It is apparent that apostolic women not only enact church inscribed gender roles, but also create other roles that they perceive to be relevant, creating their own identities in the process. They behave as purposeful agents who make conscious decisions concerning their marriages and related issues.

Chapter 1

Introductory Chapter

1.1 Introduction

The study looks at church teachings in Johane Marange, Johane Masowe and Johane Wetatu apostolic churches, explicating the similarities and differences of marriage teachings in them. Church teachings are especially influential on member's conceptualization of gender roles and resultant marital relations. It is often argued that women are forced to comply with these teachings (Chakawa, 2010; Machingura, 2011; Vengeyi, 2013; Madziyire, 2013). This study takes the sociological view that all human beings no matter how oppressive a system they operate in are agentic and structure is not only constraining but also enabling (Giddens, 1984; Utas, 2005; Gasa, 2007). Thus, the present study documents how women express their agency in relation to their church teachings and expected gender roles. As will be shown in the chapters below, understanding agency is important for a comprehensive understanding of apostolic women's agentic actions and self-interested decision-making within their church structures.

1.2 Background

The debate on Christianity and women's agency in Africa has been going on for a long time. It has been argued that during the colonial era, women were converted to Christianity because it gave them a ground to stand on and express their agency by resisting male dominated cultural beliefs and traditions. Missionaries increased women agency by widening the space in which they could act on by teaching them that they were equal to men and could steer their lives autonomously to their desired destinations (Mwaura, 2005).

However, Chimhanda (2005) asserts that from its early days, Christianity reinforced male dominance and female subordination by reinforcing patriarchal beliefs. In the 20th century, the Roman Catholic Church made efforts to incorporate women in church activities and decision-making, yet traces of female subordination survived within the church structures, making women subordinate to males. Patriarchal ideologies at church intersected with Shona patriarchal practices to constrain female agency at church and at home. As such, Christianity played an ambivalent role as it created the stage for women to express their agency, whilst simultaneously reinforcing women subservience (Sundkler and Steed, 2005; Mwaura, 2005).

While the influence of church teachings and beliefs on gender relations and women agency have been researched in Pentecostal and missionary churches, very little has been done in explaining women's choices in apostolic churches. If anything, apostolic women have been portrayed as passive victims of church teachings and structure as will be explained in chapter two. The study challenges the view that apostolic women are passive victims of church prescriptions that is widespread in literature (Vengeyi, 2013; Chakawa, 2010; Madziyire, 2013; Chikwature and Oyedele (2016).

Studying three apostolic churches afforded the researcher an opportunity to discover the nuances that are in their teachings, as the churches were started during different socio-economic contexts. A brief background to the churches is presented to contextualise the origins of the different churches and their teachings. According to Machingura (2011), Johane Marange received a vision to start a church in 1932. He was born Muchabaya Momberume and became Johane Marange after he started the church to signify his role as the founder of the church. The church started during the colonial era in Zimbabwe and offered resistance to colonialism and its ideas. Mavunganidze (2008) notes that Johane Marange is against monogamy, allowing members to keep their traditional way of life. This resonates well with Chitando et al (2014)'s observation that African indigenous churches are movements that seek to ensure that Christianity is not experienced as an alienating religion.

Johane Masowe is the second apostolic church in the study. Chitando (2004) says that Johane Masowe was born in 1914 in Gandanzara Makoni district. He too had two names, he was born Shoniwa Masedza, later adopting Johane Masowe after he began his ministry. Dillon-Malone (1978) notes that Masowe started preaching the gospel of repentance in 1932 after God had revealed himself in a burning bush where a voice from the bush told him that Africans should stop practicing witchcraft and adultery. This took place whilst he was praying in Marimba Hill, near Norton for forty days. It was then that he was given the name Johane Masowe. He was told that he was chosen by God to serve black people as the African 'John the Baptist of the wilderness', hence the name Johane Masowe. He started to preach the gospel of repentance to black people, asking them to let go their witchcraft, adultery and use of African herbal remedies in health care. He was against white colonialists. He was arrested many times yet he continued to preach.

Engelke (2007) notes that initially Johane Masowe rejected the Bible as he believed that God would talk to him directly. When he finally accepted the Bible he decided to follow what was in the Bible and he approved of polygyny in the church. He also performed faith healing, prophetic utterances, exorcism and ecstatic worship. Mukonyora (1998) argues that the church was formed in the context where it resisted colonial domination; by refusing colonial education and colonial ideas on marriage that emphasised monogamy. These early beliefs have an influence in today's Johane Masowe church teachings on marriage and expected gender roles.

St John Apostolic Church of the Whole World JWP (Johane Wetatu Pasirose) is the third apostolic church in the study. According to the church's website, Dr Bishop Mabhiza in Mhondoro, Zimbabwe founded the church on 1 June 1985. He was told by God in his dreams to start a church that would be called St John Apostolic Church of the Whole World. He was told that the church would accommodate everyone regardless of colour, race or gender. This church believes in manifestation of the Holy Spirit. The website explain that Dr Bishop Mabhiza went to Harare in 1988 and spent ten months in a hill called Bakasta in Highfield suburb praying and fasting. There, he was told that the church that he was starting was going to produce 'champions of champions' and he should encourage his congregants to attain formal education to achieve what the Holy Spirit revealed to him.

The influence of Johane Marange and Johane Masowe church teachings on gender roles have been researched and the studies revealed that women's agency is constrained in these churches as teachings create an atmosphere that increases male dominance and female subordination. Apostolic women are presented as passive victims, who fail to express their agency within their church structures, which are conceptualized as largely constraining and external to women (Chakawa, 2010; Machingura, 2011 and Madziyire, 2013) as will be shown in chapter two. The literature presents apostolic church teachings as structures that subordinate women to allow male dominance. Giddens (1984)'s definition of structure can challenge the view that women in apostolic churches are docile; as he asserts that no matter how oppressive a structure is; individuals always find ways to manoeuvre within them and make self interested choices.

In light of the ideas by Giddens on structure and agency, which are explained in detail in chapter three, the study aims to contribute to the corpus of knowledge on apostolic churches and women's agency by discerning the nuances in apostolic church teachings and exploring the

gender roles that are created by the teachings. It documents how women express their agency in relation to gendered expectations and their church teachings. The study explain the ways that church structures, in this case church teachings constrain individuals, it also highlight the ways in which the structure facilitates expression of agency by women in decision making on marriage related issues as explained in chapter five and six, where study findings are presented and discussed respectively.

1.3 Problem statement

Literature on apostolic churches, seem to argue that women are passive victims of overly constraining church teachings, who cannot express their agency in life, particularly in the marriage process. Women are portrayed as individuals who cannot choose their marriage partners (Chakawa, 2010), who are forced to marry (Vengeyi, 2013), who cannot make decisions in the family or have a divorce and are forced to have levirate marriages (Madziyire, 2013). The study I undertook for my undergraduate dissertation revealed that prevailing assertions on the influence of apostolic church teachings on members have some knowledge gaps, which can be filled by research. It revealed that contrary to the prevailing view that apostolic churches have the same teachings that prohibit women from attaining formal education and biomedical healthcare (Bishau, 2010; Mawere 2012; Vengeyi, 2013; and Mavunganidze 2008) teachings in Johane Wetatu allow members to attain formal education and use biomedical health services. As such, the present study challenges the argument that apostolic women are docile.

The study adopts Giddens (1984)'s argument that agency is expressed in different forms and structure is not only constraining but also enabling, to sociologically challenge the idea that women are passive victims of church teachings. In his structuration theory, Giddens explain that structure and agency are intertwined and there is no structure without agency. It is the aim of this study to identify teachings in three apostolic churches, clarify their nuances, and explain how they influence gender roles and marital relations. It explores and documents women's agential expression within their church structures. There are ways in which women in apostolic churches express their agency covertly or overtly, which can only be discovered through research. The study gives a comprehensive description of the avenues that women use to express their agency in apostolic churches.

1.4 General research question

How do apostolic church teachings on marriage influence gender roles, marital relations, and women's agency?

1.5 Objectives of the study.

- To identify Johane Marange, Johane Masowe and Johane Wetatu teachings on marriage, gender relations and discern the nuances among them.
- To explain the influence of church teachings on expected gender roles and marital relations
- To explore and document women's expression of agency in the marriage process within apostolic church structures.

1.6 Research questions

1. What are the marriage teachings and practices of Johane Marange, Johane Masowe and Johane Wetatu apostolic churches?
2. What are the nuanced differences among church teachings?
3. Which marital gender roles are fostered by church teachings?
4. How do church teachings influence member's marital relations and the ideal family type?
5. How do women express their choices and resistance in the marriage process in relation to their church teachings?

1.7 Justification of the study

Literature has presented apostolic women as victims of their church teachings. They have been portrayed as individuals who fail to express their agency. It has commonly been argued that apostolic church structures are monolithic and overly constraining to women agency. Adopting Giddens structuration theory, the study challenges the preceding assertions by highlighting that sociologically, it is erroneous to claim that women are complete victims as individuals create space to express their agency even in the most oppressive of structures, structures are not only constraining but also enabling. As such, the ways that women express their agency within apostolic churches may not be apparent but are discovered through research that acknowledges that individuals have the capacity to express their agency in any social context. The research was conducted in three churches to show the nuances of different apostolic churches and the resultant

agentic behaviour that women can express in them respectively. The study intends to cover the knowledge gap that has been created in literature by the portrayal of women as largely constrained individuals who cannot manoeuvre within their church teachings to make their own decisions.

1.8 Organization of this study.

The study has six chapters; the first chapter is the introductory chapter where the introduction, background, problem statement, general research question, objectives and study justification are presented. The second chapter critically reviews relevant literature and shows the gaps that the research fills. The third chapter is the theoretical section where the researcher presents the theoretical basis of the research. Study methodology is the fourth chapter; it explains the procedure followed in data collection, analysis and presentation. The fifth chapter presents the findings of the research that identify apostolic church teachings, expected gender roles and the ways in which apostolic women express agency. The last chapter discusses the research findings and presents study conclusions.

1.9 Chapter Summary

The introductory chapter introduced the research area. The background section situates the study in the historical context from which apostolic church teachings and gender relations emanates. The statement of the problem shows the gaps in literature that the research will address. The study's objectives and questions were also presented. The research rationale was also given in the study justification and the chapter concludes by outlining the organization of the research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review.

2.1 Introduction: church teachings, agency and women in apostolic churches.

This chapter review literature on agency as a sociological concept linking it to arguments associated with women in apostolic churches. The review is divided into five subsections on the following issues the multidimensionality of agency, the influence of church teachings and social context on women's agency, influence of church teachings on expected gender roles and identities, church practices in relation to women's agency and different forms of agential behaviour that women express. Chitando (2004) explains that AICs (African Indigenous Churches) were formed by Africans and incorporate African traditions in their church teachings as they resist teachings of most missionaries that African culture is heathen and antithetical to the gospel. Johane Marange and Johane Masowe were formed in 1932 and they are Apostolic churches, which is a branch of AICs (Mapuranga 2013). Both have been widely researched on a number of aspects including the influence of their teachings on gender relations and women's agency in the marriage process. They have been erroneously portrayed as churches which impede agency of women in the marriage process as their teachings deny them a chance to choose marriage partners (Machingura 2011) and force them to marry (Vengeyi 2013) among others. This portrayal of women as helpless victims of church teachings or structures can be challenged by various theoretical explanations which highlight that women are not only victims of social structures, instead, they may express agency in various ways that can be unravelled through research.

2.2 Multi-dimensional nature of agency.

The notion of agency is central to this study. Tollefsen and Gallagher (2016) define individual agency as breaking away from a given structure and taking initiatives to change it. When a group does this it becomes shared transformative agency. Avishai (2008) concurs by explaining that resistance agency is when actors confront hegemonic forces by actively participating in decision making to achieve their goals. This implies that individuals or groups may resist the status quo and create new ideas and ways of living, which may eventually change the structure. Individuals expressing agency may participate in making decisions in issues that concerns them. Kabeer (1999) defines agency as the capacity to set objectives and taking action to achieve them. Ahearn

(2001) highlights that individuals can express convinced agency when they agree with decisions that they make or that are made by others, such individuals believe that they can take relevant action to achieve their intentions.

Utas (2005) use the term 'victimcy' to explain that women do not simply comply with the roles assigned to them, rather, they are agents who can create space for exercising agency using complicit or explicit resistance. Hansson (2014) concurs as he explains that victimcy is a form of self-representation in which agential behaviour is effectively exercised under harsh and disempowering situations. Gasa (2007) defines the concept 'subversive subservience', which is another form of victimcy where women use stereotypes of victimhood and passivity to manoeuvre through difficult situations. Miller et al (2011) explains that understanding of agency as overt resistance alone, fail to do justice to the various ways in which women express their agency in non-western collectivist cultures. This study adopts the definition of agency by Ahearn (2001) who defines agency as socio-culturally mediated capacity to act. She argues for the conceptualization of agency that goes beyond the agency- victim dichotomy. She asserts that a definition of agency that emphasise on the victimhood-agency binary may not account for the agential expression continuum that falls in between agency and victimhood; where women accept, accommodate, resist or protest. Engstrom et al (2016) explain that agency cannot be defined as a possession of the individual, but as a state that develops in collective interaction and is maintained over time.

There are various aspects of agential expression. Ahearn (2001) explains that complicit agency is when people act in conformity with hegemonic forces, when they partially consent to the decisions made. They will search for socially acceptable solutions to their problems. Adjei (2017) highlighted that negotiated agency is the way individuals can modify or balance their personal intentions to suit expectations in their social context, for a greater outcome. Utas (2005) explains that women have tactical agency, which is short-term responses by actors to situations in relation to structure. Agential expression can be subtle and hidden what Scott (2008) calls 'everyday resistance'. Everyday resistance is a theoretical concept, which explains that individuals can resist domination quietly, using techniques that may be disguised, invisible and seemingly trivial. Such techniques include feigned ignorance, disloyalty, false compliance, and foot dragging. Vinthagen and Johansson (2013) explain that everyday forms of resistance may have limited influence on the overall relationship of power; nevertheless, they provide a way for

individuals to resist hegemonic ideas and ideological suppression, where open rebellion may be perilous. Therefore, women can differ in the degree of their involvement in making decisions that concerns their lives; they can express negotiated, complicit, transformative, everyday resistance tactic or victimcy as forms of agential behaviour. There are no clear-cut boundaries on agential behaviour that women can express; thus, they can be used interchangeably in their daily lives depending on the situation to be dealt with.

2.3 Influence of church teachings and social context on women's agency.

Studies on apostolic churches contend that apostolic church doctrines are largely influenced by their founder's teachings. Banda et al (2014) highlight that in Johane Marange the church's first pronouncements '*tsananguro dzekutanga*', which were given to their founder by God, are revered by church members. These first pronouncements formulate church teachings that govern the marriage institution. Madziyire (2013) claims that in Johane Marange there is a directive that wives must recruit more wives for their husbands. Congregants believe that Mutumwa directly received church teachings from God. Therefore, they are divine and it is a taboo to question or challenge them. They erroneously argue that apostolic churches first pronouncements impede freewill of women, as they do not rebel against them. They say women do not have to make marriage decisions autonomously but usually conform to church teachings. The studies make it appear as if women in Johane Marange are victims of church teachings and have no choice but to enter into polygynous marriages. The studies did not find out if women in the church deploy these seemingly constraining teachings for their own benefits. Sahu et al (2016) explain that agency is not always overt, as women may appear to conform to set social structures, while they quietly resist. In this light, the study sought to ascertain if women use overt or covert agential behaviour when making decisions concerning their marriages.

Agential behaviour expressed by women varies based on the prevailing socio-economic context. As such, expression of agency by women in different apostolic churches is mediated by different socio-economic factors, which include the structures governing social conduct. Bishau (2010), Mawere (2012), Vengeyi (2013) and Mavunganidze (2008) among others claim that Johane Marange and Johane Masowe apostolic churches have conservative teachings, which deny women a chance to express their agency. They argue that the conformity of members to teachings, which deny them access to formal education and biomedical health, is an indication

that they lack agency. As noted in the introductory chapter, Johane Wetatu Pasirose has different teachings concerning education and health. Therefore, it may also have different teachings from other apostolic churches concerning marriage, which may enable women to express their agency in differentiated ways to those expressed by women in the older apostolic churches. As such, the study explores the expression of agency in Johane Marange, Johane Masowe and Johane Wetatu apostolic churches to highlight these differences. Utas (2005) explained that agential behaviour is expressed in relation to others and is influenced by the prevailing social context. There is a need to explore apostolic churches that were formed during different socio-economic eras to ascertain the different types of agency that can be expressed by women in different apostolic churches. Therefore, church teachings in three apostolic churches were examined to reveal the context specific agencies that women in them express.

It has been argued in literature that church teachings on education have an influence on the way apostolic women are constrained from making marriage related decisions. Sibanda (2011) says that early marriage in some apostolic churches destroys women's capacity to choose a marriage partner. She asserts that Johane Marange church endorses that girls should have minimum schooling and get married as soon as they reach puberty. Madziyire (2013:75) claims that members of Johane Marange did not want their children to attain higher education for fear that they might find suitors outside the church. She found that most male respondents felt that educated girls tend to rebel against church doctrine by getting into waged labour and marrying out of the church. Women are portrayed as victims who are trapped in their church structures, such that they fail to make autonomous decisions.

2.4 Influence of church teachings on gender roles and identities.

There has been often been argued that apostolic church teachings define women's identities and prevent them from defining themselves. Madziyire (2013) and Sibanda (2011) state that church teachings that advocate early marriage, denounce usage of modern contraceptives, and forbid divorce emphasise women identities as wives and mothers. They claim that women in apostolic churches are rarely given a chance to define their individual identities other than being a daughter, wife, and mother. The aforementioned studies erroneously portray women as exclusive victims of normalised femininities, which are reportedly reinforced by church teachings. Oswell (2013) study on children challenge the previous idea by observing that children and adults are

not passive subjects who adopts and enact prescribed social roles. Rather, individuals influence and are influenced by social structures in defining themselves. The current study acknowledges the interplay between church teachings and women's own ideas in shaping their identities and lived experiences.

The impression that is depicted in most academic literature is that there is total subordination of wives in apostolic churches, an assertion that may be challenged. There is a contention by some scholars in the studies which follow that apostolic church teachings make husbands have more decision making power than wives. Madziyire (2013) asserts that Johane Marange church doctrines make men have absolute power to make decisions in the household. Husbands control wife's labour and finances. Chikwature and Oyedele (2016) found that women in Johane Marange are expected to submit to their husbands. Submission is interpreted as the husband making all decisions including how many wives he will marry; without consulting the wife who is also affected by decisions made. As such, women capacity to make decisions in their marriages is reduced. Nevertheless, Sahu et al (2016) study on Hindu and Muslim women challenge the view that women are entirely subordinated, they assert that 'subordination can never be total' and there is space, however limited for people to exercise agency. Understanding various ways in which women express agency within religious parameters can only be done through research.

Despite the capacity by women to use stereotypes about themselves to steer through difficult situations, women in apostolic churches have been portrayed as docile. Sibanda (2011) asserts that child marriages are prevalent in Johane Marange to enable men to control women. She claims that men want young girls as wives as they will not challenge their decisions. Patriarchy, power, and control are deemed as the reasons behind early marriages. Machingura (2011) says that apostolic women are not considered as autonomous beings; they must always have a male head as a father or a husband, who will make life decisions for them. Sahoni (1998) who asserted that the reason for child marriage is to make sure that the girl will be attached to her husband; as she never experienced an independent adult life of her own reinforces this. Gasa (2007) confronts the portrayal of women as passive by using the concept 'subversive subservience', where women use stereotypes of victimhood and passivity to steer through difficult situations. She notes that voices of women from her migrant women research revealed that women experiences could not be put in static categories of victimhood or agency. The foregoing

challenges the perception that church teachings that condone early marriage destroy women agency. As such, the research reveals how apostolic women use stereotypes of victimhood as a leeway to express their agency.

In literature, lack of leadership positions for women in some apostolic churches has been inaccurately interpreted as an impediment to autonomous decision making by women. Vengeyi (2013) is of the view that Johane Marange apostolic church prevents women from holding leadership positions, as they are deemed incapable of making decisions. She argues that the church misinterprets creation story Gen 1-2 to forbid women from holding any leadership position in the church. Madziyire (2013) found that in Johane Marange women cannot hold positions as secretaries, treasures, baptists and preachers. They are not supposed to address men in public places; as such, they are not allowed to preach. Women are thought of as subordinate at church and at home. This makes women feel incompetent to make autonomous decisions in their lives including on matters concerning their marriages.

Hodzi (2014) is of the view that the way apostolic church members address each other as '*Madzimai*' and '*Madzibaba*' has connotations attached to them which explain that men '*Madzibaba*' are perceived to be leaders and fathers, whilst women and girls '*Madzimai*' are regarded as mothers. She says that this socialise young girls and boys to accept the imbedded connotations as the titles are used when referring to members of the church regardless of their ages. The studies perceived women to be powerless in decision making as they overlooked the reality that women may not hold the aforementioned positions, but they can express their agency in other avenues. They are active in implementing church teachings; therefore, they hold strategic positions in the flow of action in their church structures. As such, they can exercise agency as they can decide whether to implement church teachings in their lives and in the lives of others. The study recognizes the capacity of women to make self interested decisions within their church teachings and gendered expectations.

2.5 Church practices in relation to women's agency.

2.5. 1 Polygyny, arranged marriages and women's agency.

Women can exercise their agency within the church practice of polygyny. Mahmood (2001) notes that agency include ways in which women resist the dominant male order by subverting the hegemonic meanings of cultural practices and deploying them for their own agendas. A more

detailed discussion of theoretical aspects of agency is the next section. The assertion that apostolic churches reinforce hegemonic masculinity by encouraging polygyny and reduce women's agency in these marriages is prevalent in literature. Machingura (2011) says that most members of Johane Marange take pride in polygyny because the church prescribes it as an ideal marriage type. Johane Marange, the church founder, had thirteen wives. Mavunganidze (2008) reinforces this as she notes that in Marange polygyny is not only a type of marriage but also a value system. Multiple wives enhance the status of the husband; as the church uphold the belief that a real man should have more than one wife.

Chakawa (2010) affirms that in Johane Marange polygynous men can easily get a senior position in the *dare* (church court) on the assumption that he has experience in resolving conflicts. Makahamadze et al (2008) found that Johane Marange church members are characterised by the social institution of polygyny, where a model family constitute of an average of four to five women. Machingura (2011) claims that polygyny must be analysed and removed from Johane Marange church as it prevent women from making autonomous decisions. This is in contrast with Elbedour et al (2012) who asserted that women in polygynous marriages have greater autonomy as other wives can take care of the husband in their absence. The contention that the practice of polygyny has cultural and hegemonic masculinity rationale in it is correct, however, it is inaccurate in that it does not show how women can challenge hegemonic meanings of cultural practices by using them to achieve their own ambitions. The present research recognizes the capacity of women to challenge hegemonic meanings of cultural practices, and shows the forms of agency that women express without necessarily removing the cultural practices.

Arranged marriages do not necessarily entail lack of agency of women in apostolic churches. The following studies that conceptualize agency as synonymous with resistance, fail to notice other forms of agential behaviours that women may express when they accept to get into arranged marriages. Vengeyi (2013) argues that women in apostolic churches lack agency because parents in Johane Marange can decide who will marry their daughter prior to consulting the daughter concerned. Machingura (2011) says that it is the church teaching that a girl cannot override her father's decision to marry her off. Girls are usually reluctant to report to the police; those who decide to rebel by running away or refusing the marriage are made to feel guilty. In such cases, girls are not supposed to be assertive in choosing whom to marry. Chakawa (2010)

concur that parents may give their daughters to accomplished preachers and evangelists as they want their daughter to be in the 'light of the lord', that is for daughters to remain devoted church members. Madziyire (2013) observes that men in Johane Marange can marry as many wives as they desire, but girls usually don't have a say on whom they will marry. It is from this that Sibanda (2011) conclude that child marriages should always be considered forced marriages, as no informed consent is given nor considered necessary.

The preceding studies conceptualised agency as explicit resistance that women can express in denying arranged marriages. This conceptualization prevented the studies to notice other forms of agency such as victimcy and tactic agency that women might exercise. Ahearn (2001) emphasises the need for social scientists to move from understanding agency as synonymous to resistance and freewill. Instead they should acknowledge that expression of agency differ from one society to the next. The present study in line with Ahearn, explores teachings of apostolic churches to ascertain the churches' position on arranged marriages and the subsequent forms of agency that women express within them.

Giddens (1984) notes that structure is constraining as well as enabling, it not only restricts actions of individuals but also provides passageway for people to achieve their intentions. Nevertheless, it is often taken for granted that women in apostolic churches are largely constrained by church teachings, without acknowledging that within the structure of endogamy, there could be agential behaviour expressed by women. Machingura (2011) argues that women agency is constrained as the church is against marriage to non-members. He asserts that it is their principle that a man will not marry his daughter to a 'pagan' (anyone who is not a member of their church). Therefore, women are predisposed to polygynous marriages, as they are expected to marry from the few men available in the church. Dillone Malone (1978) concurs with the preceding, as he states that the disproportion between men and women ratio is filled by encouragement of polygyny.

Machingura (2011) highlighted that parents can forcefully take back their daughters from husbands who decide not to join the church. Marriage to a nonbeliever is censored and radically sanctioned. Malianga and Muridzo (2015) found that marriage to a nonbeliever is acceptable if he or she chooses to convert to the church before the marriage ceremony. Parents are blamed if a child marries outside the church. Marriage to a nonbeliever is not binding and divorce can be

effected. Apostolic church's teachings, which emphasise marriage within the church, have been portrayed as constraining to the extent that women fail to make decisions on whom to marry. The studies fail to acknowledge that structure may enable women to make some decisions. One can note that in the foregoing studies, members of apostolic churches are depicted as strict adherents to their church teachings who are incapable of subverting them. The studies fail to acknowledge that these women can express convinced agency when making decisions, where they choose what to do or when they accept the decisions made by others. The present study acknowledges that structure is both constraining and enabling and uncovers how teachings on endogamy or polygyny influence women's agency and gender relations in apostolic churches.

2.5. 2 Women's agency vis-a-vis virginity testing.

Machingura (2011) explains that in Johane Marange and Johane Masowe girls are expected to remain virgins until marriage. Men want their daughters to marry whilst they are virgins as her virginity gives honour to the family and more bridewealth is paid for her. Older women regularly examine girls by physically inserting two fingers in the girl's vaginas to ascertain virginity. A girl is perceived to have lost her virginity when two fingers are inserted in her vagina without encountering the hymen or any natural resistance or barrier. Those who are found to be virgins are congratulated and encouraged to marry their age mates and become head wives. Those who are found to have lost their virginity may be given to polygynous men as second or third wives. Madziyire (2013) claims that in Johane Marange failed virginity test is humiliating and forces girls into polygynous marriages. It also means that supposedly non-virgins lose her freedom to choose a husband. The church rule is that if a girl loses her virginity, she must be married off instantly. This is controversial as the process to select virgins may be flawed and virgins can be mistaken as non-virgins.

Chakawa (2010:43) state that at a Passover held in Mafarikwa in 2008 all girls present were virgins and there was a 'gold rush' by elderly men to marry the virgins. In the end, even virgins have limited agency as they can be forced to marry through prophecy and arranged marriages. This portrays women as docile victims of church teachings, who are trapped in the church structures and cannot escape. This depiction of women is erroneous; Lubkemann (2010) explains that women can use tactic agency, which is aimed at solving problems at that particularly instant, without long-term considerations. Its dynamic nature allows actors to seize opportunities the

moment that they arise. The present study identifies various tactics that women use to subvert the church structures and practices such as virginity testing.

In literature, actions that do not result in change have erroneously been interpreted as lack of agency of apostolic churchwomen. In the present study, women's acceptance of levirate marriage proposal is not be perceived as lack of agency, as agential capacity also includes those acts that lead to constancy. Mahmood (2001) asserts that agential capacity is relayed not only in those actions that result in progressive change, but also in those which focus on continuity and stability. Machingura (2011), Madziyire (2013) and Kambarami (2006) concur that women are not given the option to remain widows after the death of their husbands; the husband's brother inherits them. This is reinforced by Kambarami's (2006) study, as he notes that widows only reside in their marital homes as inherited wives or they should go back to their parent's home. If they decide to go, they must leave their property and children. The current study explores teachings of apostolic churches on levirate marriages, and documents how women express their agency within them.

2.6 Complicit, negotiated, and convinced agency expressed by apostolic women.

Women exercise agency within social structures but this does not dispute the idea that they can become victims of social structures. Gasa (2007) notes that when arguing that women have agency, it does not override the idea that women are also be vulnerable, rather, it recognise that women are not passive subjects which are always exploited at will by men and structure. Being analytically labelled passive victims estrange women from their agency. In the following studies, women in apostolic churches were labelled victims of dictates given by the Holy Spirit; they were deemed incapable of exercising agency. Malianga and Muridzo (2015) assert that in Johane Marange and Johane Masowe church members revere the Holy Spirit and are forbidden from disputing its orders. They say that there is child abuse in Johane Marange and Johane Masowe apostolic churches, where elderly men can claim that they have been given girls by the Holy Spirit through prophecy. In such a case, the girl to be married cannot deny the proposed marriage. This practice is known as *kutambidzwa* or *kupiwa pamweya* (given by the Holy Spirit). Machingura (2011) reinforces this as he note that in Johane Marange the Holy Spirit allegedly authorizes first and subsequent polygynous marriages, whereby prophets can make a girl marry without seeking her consent. This implies that women are denied the opportunity to choose a

marriage partner, as girls have to accept the marriage partner that they are given by the Holy Spirit. The study identifies how the Holy Spirit curtails or facilitates expression of agency by women within contexts created in apostolic churches.

There is an impression that apostolic church member's independence in choosing marriage partner may be limited by prophecy. Sibanda (2011) argues that in Johane Marange prophets abuse their position as they persuade young girls to become wives of elderly men in the church. Vengeyi (2013) concurs with the preceding, as she notes that it is common in Johane Marange for prophets to persuade the girl to accept the marriage. The girl is told that it is God's will for her to be married to the man that the 'prophecy' would have chosen for her. Malianga and Muridzo (2015) found that some elders might claim that they had prophetic dreams '*kurotswa*', in which a certain girl was given to them as their wives. Kambarami (2006) study found that in Johane Masowe girls are enticed to marry based on prophetic revelations and they cannot refuse the marriage as they risk being ostracised by their families. The preceding studies interpreted the way women are persuaded to get married as absence of agency.

In contrast to the aforementioned, Ahearn (2001) asserts that people express their agency when they conform to hegemonic forces. In such situations, people give various reasons for refraining from overtly opposing expectations in their society. Scott (2008) notes that individuals can use everyday resistance to oppose structural domination by incorporating some resistance techniques into their daily activities, such that it becomes part of the norm and is hidden from structural control. The existing forms of choice making and resistance strategies exhibited by women in apostolic churches have not been revealed because the foregoing studies on apostolic churches had a limited understanding of women's agency. This study conceptualizes agency as any form of action mediated within a social context, and captures the different types of agential actions that women in apostolic churches exhibit.

There is a possibility that apostolic women can express negotiated agency within their church structures. Chakawa (2010) is of the view that women fail to exercise agency in the marriage process. She explains that if a girl refuses a prophetic marriage she may be summoned to the '*dare*' a church court comprising of church elders. She will be accused of '*kun'ora*', having stigma emanating from disrespecting church principles and elders. She may end up succumbing to the pressure and accepting the proposed marriage. In most academic literature, the implication

is that apostolic churches constrain women's autonomy in marriage as members are routinely forced to marry. Vengeyi (2013) and Chakawa (2010) portray members of apostolic churches as people who are incapable of defying church teachings. The studies defined agency in terms of actors being in control of creating objectives and achieving them, which failed to capture agential behaviour, where social actors can collectively set goals. Utas (2005) argues that agency is not something that actors possess or do not possess, rather it is something individuals maintain in relation with other social actors. The preceding makes it essential for this study to identify how women in apostolic churches express agency when they relate to each other and their church structures.

Academic literature gives the impression that apostolic churchwomen are victims of teachings, which forbid divorce, and they stay in failing marriages against their will. Hansson (2014), who asserts that agential behaviour may be expressed in dire social circumstances, has challenged the conceptualization of women as hopeless victims. In contrast, Madziyire (2013) argues that in Johane Marange women cannot make autonomous decisions, as they remain in abusive marriages because the church is totally against divorce. Dodo et al (2014) also note that in Johane Masowe divorce is not allowed; if members face any marital problems, they must desist from getting divorced by solving the problem. Madziyire (2013) highlights that in cases of divorce; the daughter's parents are discouraged from taking their daughter back. If divorce occurs, the wife is prevented from taking any property or children with her; as these are considered to belong to the husband.

The foregoing studies portray women as actors who enact roles dictated upon them by the church and are incapacitated to initiate a divorce even when they want to. Victimcy, as explained by Utas (2005) challenge such arguments, by explaining that women are not subjects who simply comply with the roles assigned to them, rather, they are agents who can create space for exercising agency using complicit or explicit resistance. The research identifies church teachings on divorce and uncovers women's agential behaviour in deciding whether to divorce.

There is consensus in literature that the practice of polygyny in apostolic churches is a strategy to have economic benefits by men exploiting women. Utas (2005) used the concept of 'victimcy' in his study to confront dominant images of women in war as exclusively victims who are constrained by structure. The portrayal of women as victims exploited by men in marriage for

economic reasons expressed in the following studies need to be analysed. Machingura (2011) argues that the philosophy behind polygyny is that the more wives that one has, the more descendants he will have and the wealthier he will become. The children act as a source of labour and a great economic asset. Machingura (2011) is of the view that the members believe that wealth that Biblical patriarchs such as Abraham and Solomon had was a result of polygyny and hard work. He argues that Johane Marange members try to have as many wives as possible and let them engage in various income generating projects while controlling the income generated from the projects such as knitting and basketry. The more wives apostolic men have the more power and success they are believed to have. Chikwature and Oyedele (2016) concur by stating that polygyny is a reproductive strategy to maximise offspring whilst minimising investment in every child. They observed that husbands deal with economic pressure by letting their wives carry the burden of funding for their children's schooling. The present study employs victimcy, which acknowledges that individuals use different forms of agential behaviour in harsh conditions for their benefit to discover the ways women express their choices within their marriages.

2.7 Chapter summary.

The literature review showed that marriage teachings of Johane Marange and Johane Masowe have been widely researched. It explains how church teachings influence members on choosing marriage partners, divorce, and polygyny. It also shows that the studies conducted make it appear as if most if not all apostolic churches have similar teachings that victimise women and limits their agency in the marriage process. The studies erroneously claim that women's agency is overly constrained, as they did not probe further to ascertain if agency exists in any subtle form in the decisions that women make concerning their marriages. The literature expressed the need to acknowledge the complexity in women's agency and to conceptualise agency in a way that recognize its dynamic nature, to enable one to have a more comprehensive picture of agential behaviour by women in apostolic churches and the subsequent gender relations.

Chapter 3

Theoretical framework.

3.1 Introduction: structuration theory, women and apostolics.

This study adopts Giddens 'structuration theory' to explain the influence of church teachings on gender relations and women's choices in apostolic churches. As noted above, it is usually taken for granted that women in the apostolic churches are passive victims of constraining church teachings, who enact gender roles inscribed by the church because the teachings prevents them from making autonomous decisions in life in general and in the marriage process in particular. Contrary to the foregoing, structuration theory explains that individuals are purposive agents who make strategic decisions to achieve their intentions. Giddens perceive individuals as active participants in society who, not only conform to societal norms, but also resist and transform them. His conceptualisation of individuals applies to the study in explaining the influence of church teachings on the expected gender roles and women agential expression within those expectations. The conceptualisation of structure as enabling and constraining made the researcher discern the ways in which apostolic church teachings constrain and enable expression of self-interested choices by women. Structuration theory asserts that individuals create structure during social interactions; this idea is adopted in the study to identify the church teachings that are reinforced and reproduced by church members as they interact. The chapter is divided into two sections the first shows the relevance of the theory to the study by highlighting the various concepts of structuration theory and the last situates the theory into the study and analyze it juxtaposed to other theoretical perspectives.

3.2 Relevance of structuration theory to the study.

The theory is relevant for the study as it has notions and concepts that help to ask questions and explain the phenomena under study. The 'duality of structure' is a central concept in Giddens structuration theory. Giddens (1984) asserts that there is an interdependent dual relationship between individual and society he terms the relationship 'duality of structure'. He states that agency and structure are not binaries but two sides of the same coin. This idea assists the researcher to explain how women in apostolic churches simultaneously reinforce and resist church teachings when making decisions. Giddens (1984:2) defines structures as 'rules and resources drawn upon by individuals in the production and reproduction of social action'. This

implies that church teachings, as structures need social actors to be applied. In the absence of church members, church teachings have no meaning, as actors are the agents who adopt and apply the teachings. In the study, the ways that women in apostolic churches adopt and use church teachings in their lives to achieve their intentions is explained.

He perceives agents as individuals who have the capacity to align their actions with the present situation. Adopting this view, the study conceptualizes apostolic women as strategic actors who make purposeful decisions in their daily lives. Ritzer (2010) explains that Giddens conceptualizes rules as techniques or generalizable procedures applied in the enactment or reproduction of social practices. Church teachings are herein perceived to be akin to Giddens's 'rules' as they are common social recipes that allow church members to make sense of the conduct of others as well as govern their own forms of actions and behaviour. Individuals possess procedural knowledge, which gives them the capacity to respond to a range of social circumstances. The study adopts Giddens's conceptualization of rules to explain women's actions and decision making in relation to their church teachings and expected gender roles.

Giddens concept of 'social systems' is essential in understanding expression of agency by individuals. Appelrouth and Edles (2008) highlight that Giddens defines social systems as patterned or reproduced relations between individuals or collectivities, which make social life orderly and predictable. Marriage is a social system in apostolic churches, with church teachings acting as the common knowledge that guides people on their decision-making. Church teachings are also rules of a broader system of marriage or family relations that are reproduced countless times and bind activities of members across time and space. The study explains how the identified rules (church teachings) influence member's marital relations.

The definition of **agency**, which acknowledges that individuals can make autonomous decisions that can bring change in society, is in line with the study's view on women in apostolic churches as actors who can express their agency in various ways. Giddens (1984: 163) contends that individuals are 'purposeful actors' who use the rules and resources in their vicinity to make a way in their lives. Giddens (1984) further asserts that individuals have conscious motivations for their actions. For him, during social interactions, individuals consciously examine their own behaviours and those of others and decide what they will do. They also have discursive consciousness, which allow them to give reasons for their actions.

Giddens notion of 'selective information filtering' is important in explaining how people holding positions of authority in apostolic churches; reinforce certain teachings, subsequently influencing the types of agential behaviour women can express. The leaders selectively enforce teachings in an effort to control the general system reproduction, by keeping things as they are or changing them. Appelrouth and Edles (2008:761) explain that Giddens acknowledges the existence of limitations on agency but maintains that resistance to the constraints is viable. He conceptualise sanctions as constraints on choice and action, which result from exercise of power by others. Adopting the idea that constraints on agency exist and agents have an option to resist them, the study reveals the tactics employed by women to undermine sanctions applied by church leaders.

3.3 Contextualizing and analyzing structuration theory.

Review of literature reveals that most studies on apostolic churches perceived apostolic church structures as hegemonic and largely constraining to women's agency. Vengeyi (2013) asserts that women are prevented from making choices on their marriage partner by church structures. Sibanda (2011) perceives gender relations in apostolic churches as hegemonic in nature, where women simply conform to the expected gender roles. Machingura (2011) is of the view that women in apostolic churches are not given a chance to make their own decisions; a male head as the father or husband make their choices for them. Giddens definition of structure challenges these views of structure as external and constraining to the individuals by asserting that individuals create structure during social interactions and they can resist structural expectations. He confronts the view that individuals act to satisfy societal needs and maintain the status quo. In the same vein, Scott (2008) explains that individuals can use everyday forms of resistance to make self-interested decisions. This gives leeway for the study to explore the ways women express their choices and resistance to church prescriptions to achieve their own agendas.

Giddens concept of duality of structure highlights that social structures are the channel for social practices as well as a product of such interactions. Appelrouth and Edles (2008) note that for Giddens social structures provide a standard that governs action. When individuals draw from them, they unintentionally recreate them. While for Bourdieu (1977), individuals recreate social meanings through symbolic violence knowingly or unknowingly. They are similar in that they accept that individuals and structure are connected, they differ when Giddens asserts that individual's subjective trends make the structure whereas Bourdieu asserts that the structure has

an objective reality that cannot be created by individual action, and individuals merely reproduce the objective reality. The study corroborates Giddens's view as it found that in apostolic churches, women are active participants in the creation and implementation of church teachings. This contradicts the view by Vengeyi (2013) that women in apostolic churches are passive participants who simply adopt church teachings and perform the expected gender roles.

Women in apostolic churches manoeuvre within social system to achieve their goals. Giddens conceptualised social systems as reproduced social interactions that stretch beyond time and space of a given interaction. They make social life orderly and predictable as they have structural properties, which regulate individual's actions. In contrast, Bourdieu (1977) asserts that the habitus is a system of dispositions, which perpetuate itself through symbolic violence. This symbolic violence reproduce social dominance as individuals accepts the stratified social order as normal. He maintains that agency of individuals within social systems is limited by acts of symbolic violence in society. The study, in contrast to Bourdieu corroborates Giddens as it found that women in apostolic churches have agency, not only do they accept social roles created in marriage by being mothers and wives, they also create other social roles within the marriage system by becoming bread winners and decision makers. This counters the idea by Madziyire (2013) and Sibanda (2011) that married women in apostolic churches are denied the chance to become income earners and decision makers.

Women in apostolic churches derive their agential capacity from their church teachings and personal preferences. Appelrouth and Edles (2008) assert that Giddens perceives rules as the basis for meaning and sanctioning social interaction. Individuals use rules to map their course of action in their daily lives. While Bourdieu (1977) argues that, the habitus structures individual's perceptions, dispositions and practices in an objective manner, as actors do not make autonomous decisions based on their free will but act based on their history, social capital and symbolic capital. As such, the habitus perpetuate itself by making social actors make decisions that are structured according to its principles. The study, corroborating Giddens (1984) found that women in apostolic churches make autonomous decisions concerning choice of a marriage partner and age of marriage whilst guided by their church teachings. Women in different apostolic churches made different decisions in line with the differences in their church teachings. This is contrary to the view by Muridzo and Malianga (2015) among others that girls in apostolic churches are denied a chance to choose a marriage partners. In contrast to Bourdieu (1977), the

research found that women resist the status quo by rebelling from church teachings to achieve their own goals. As such the study highlights that women in apostolic churches express agential behaviour to achieve their intentions.

Women in apostolic churches exercise their agency in the face of sanctions from their churches. Church teachings in apostolic churches have sanctions to discipline dissenters. Giddens (1984) maintains that sociologists over-emphasised the ability of restrictions on actors. He also notes that resistance to power or sanctions is always an option that individuals can use to achieve their goals. Collins (1993) substantiates Giddens's argument by explaining that where there are sites of domination there are also potential sites of resistance. She explains that people experience varying amounts of penalty and privileges from the multiple systems of oppression which frame their lives. The study repudiates the idea that sanctions in apostolic churches largely constrain women's agency that is expressed by Vengeyi (2013) and Chakawa (2010). It found that sanctions on disobedient members do not stop them from making independent decisions. It revealed that women strategically use sanctions for their own intentions, such as when they intentionally fail virginity testing to facilitate marriage to their preferred partners.

Apostolic women express purposive actions in relation to their church teachings. For Giddens individuals are purposive actors, who have intentions for their actions. Appelrouth and Edles (2008) explain that in structuration theory, there is practical consciousness, where individuals cannot give reasons for their action and there is discursive consciousness, where they can clearly give reasons for their actions. In both cases, Giddens maintain that individuals have intentions for their actions. He corrects functionalist's analysis that individual's action is a result of structural needs, and their significance lie in how they satisfy societal needs, of which the individual is unaware. Perez (2008) notes that Bourdieu asserts that actions of individuals acting within a culture are determined, regulated and bounded within the limits of their ethos. The habitus is the collective arbitrator that makes an individual's practices, without either clear reason or intention, to be none the less reasonable and sensible. In contrast to Bourdieu, the study substantiates Giddens assertion as it found that women in apostolic churches could give reasons for their actions when they conform to or rebel against gender roles constructed in their churches.

3.4 Conclusion

The chapter explains concepts of structuration theory that are adopted for the study. It shows that the theory acknowledges that individuals are purposive and knowledgeable actors, who can create social structures, change societal perceptions and resist societal norms. The study's findings are explained by structuration theory and contradict theoretical perspectives on agency by Bourdieu. The study in line with Giddens found that women in apostolic churches express their agency in various ways in an effort to achieve their intentions. Their actions are informed by the teachings, however, there is room for individual interpretation of the teachings, and they put certain emphasis on certain aspects of the teachings to achieve their intentions.

Chapter 4

Methodology

4.0 Introduction.

This chapter outlines the methodological process that the researcher followed from the beginning to the end of the research. The study employed qualitative research paradigm in conducting research. Qualitative research is relevant for this research as it allows the researcher to have an in depth understanding of how apostolic church teachings influence gender roles, marital relations, and women's agency. Study participants were purposively selected and qualitative research methods were used to gather data. Triangulation of study methods was done to minimise the weakness of each research method while maximising its strengths. The study timeframe, limitations, and ethics observed in the research are presented in the chapter.

4.1 Research design

Qualitative research was used because of its effectiveness in discovering intangible factors such as the influence of religious beliefs on gender roles and people lived experiences (Guest et al 2005; Yin 2011). This is congruent to Rallis and Rossman (2003) assertion that qualitative research methods offers an opportunity to conduct research that values the context and views the social world holistically, allowing the beliefs and actions of individuals to be explored in depth. It is also effective for discerning human's participation and responses to social events, making it relevant in discerning individual's agentic behaviours in the present study.

4.2 Selection of respondents.

Study respondents were selected using purposive sampling and snowballing. Purposive sampling, was used to select participants who had experienced the phenomena under study. As Silverman (2000) states that purposive sampling gives the researcher an opportunity to choose study participants who embody some characteristics that the researcher requires. Members of three apostolic churches were purposively selected to conduct interviews and FGDs. Snowballing was used to gain access to members of Johane Marange as some potential study participants did not trust researchers and were reluctant to participate in researches. Thirty-five study participants were purposively selected to take part in interviews and focus group discussions from the churches. The number of key informant and interviews conducted was determined based on theoretical saturation. Eight key informant interviews, eleven semi-

structured interviews and two focus group discussions consisting of apostolic churches in the study. Two FGDs one for married women and another for married men were conducted in Johane Wetatu.

4.3 Selected research methods.

The research was conducted using various qualitative data gathering methods, which include in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, semi-structured interviews, audio and video analysis. The researcher took verbatim notes of KII, FGDs and SSI as noted by Yin (2011) that more insights into phenomena studied are reflected more clearly participant's language.

4.3.1 Key informant interviews.

In line with insights by Patton (2002), the researcher interviewed eight key informants who were knowledgeable about the inquiry setting and articulate about their knowledge. KII were aimed at deducing the relationship between apostolic church teachings and women's expression of agency within them. Key informants insights proved useful in helping the observer (researcher) understand what was happening and why. Five KIIs were carried out with church leaders of the apostolic churches in the study, as they are strategic players in implementing church teachings in their respective churches. Three KIIs were also conducted with three married women; they provided data that explained the influence of their church teachings on marital relations and women's agency. These key informants have been in their respective churches for more than two decades; as such, they were perceived to have knowledge on the issues discussed in the study.

Key informant interviews were conducted using interview guides that listed the issues to be covered during the session. The researcher subtly probed informants to get more information and took detailed notes, which were later developed to facilitate analysis. The unstructured nature of KII made them have special meaning, as they were efficient in gathering data on the underlying motivations and attitudes for members of apostolic churches. They were excellent for documenting people's reasons for their behaviour and their understanding of issues. Key informants provided flexibility to explore new ideas and issues that had not been anticipated by the researcher but were relevant to the study's purpose. Kumar (1989) observes that bias could result from over relying on data from key informants. To prevent bias, the researcher compared data from key informants with that from semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

4.3.2 Semi- Structured interviews.

The researcher conducted eleven semi-structured interviews with members of the apostolic churches. Johane Wetatu, Johane Masowe and Johane Marange had and five, three, and four semi structured interviews conducted respectively. SSIs were aimed at gathering information that answers the research questions, ‘which gender roles are created by church teachings’ and ‘how do women express their agency within their church structures.’ Interviews held in Johane Marange and Johane Masowe were with married women as they had experienced the phenomena under examination and could explain how their church teachings influence gender roles and how they express their agency within the structures. In Johane Wetatu the interviews were held with two youth leaders, one male youth and two female youths as the youth leaders help in enforcing church teachings, while youths explained how they relate to the teachings when expressing their agency. This is congruent to Guest et al (2005) who explains that interviews are best for collecting data on individual’s perspectives and experiences when sensitive issues are being discussed. The open-ended questions asked and probing allowed participants to respond in their own words. Thus, participants gave culturally salient responses that were meaningful to them.

An interview guide was used to ask questions constructed in relation to information to be gathered from that particular interviewee whilst maintaining the basic line of inquiry with each person interviewed. The researcher used ‘role playing’ to construct questions that were sensitive and those related to deviant behaviour by church members to make participants more comfortable to respond. Gentle probing by the researcher allowed participants to elaborate and give clarifications on their views. A conversational tone was adopted by the researcher; in line Berg (2004: 75) who describes interviews as a ‘conversation with a purpose’. The interviews were effective in gathering individual’s opinions, feelings, and experiences, which complemented focus group discussions that are effective in gathering data on group norms. When combined with observation, they helped the researcher understand the meanings that everyday activities hold for members of apostolic churches. it also showed how women make self interested choices in their everyday lives. Interviews allowed the researcher to explore participant’s meanings for events and behaviours and highlighted the nuances in apostolic churches’ teachings and beliefs.

4.3.4 Focus Group Discussion.

These FGDs were conducted because of their advantages which were stated by Babour (2008:145), that ‘FGDs are useful when assessing group norms, meaning of processes and are especially a valuable tool to understand decision making processes.’

The researcher conducted two focus group discussions in Johane Wetatu, one with married men and another with married women. The focus group discussions were aimed at gathering data on the influence of church teachings on member’s marital relations and the ideal family type. FGDs were carried in Johane Wetatu Pasirose, as members of the other apostolic churches did not consent to participate in the discussions. FGDs were efficient in gathering data on the cultural norms of Johane Wetatu Pasirose and in generating extensive overviews of issues studied. The FGDs had eight participants, the size of the focus group was small enough to allow everyone to share their ideas and big enough to allow expression of various opinions. FGDs were conducted in line with Marshall and Rossman (2014) assertion that individual’s attitudes and beliefs do not form in a vacuum, people often need to listen to other people opinions to understand their own. They complemented semi-structured interviews, which reveal personal opinions rather than the overarching group norms and expectations.

The researcher served as a moderator who induced all members of the group to contribute to the discussion and prevented some participants from dominating the discussions. Two focus group schedules were constructed and women and men were sorted into different groups to facilitate disclosure. The segmentation ensured that the participants had enough in common to speak and share freely. This minimised what Hollander (2004: 604) calls ‘problematic silence’ when participants became reluctant to contribute to the discussion and ‘problematic speech’ (strategic shaping of comments) in group discussions caused by multiple social contexts.

4. 3. 5 Participant observation.

The researcher, using participant observation gathered data by attending six church gatherings, two church services in each church. This is in line with Denzin and Lincoln (1994: 202) who states that ‘qualitative researchers employ purposive sampling methods as they seek out groups, settings and individuals where process being studied are most likely to occur.’ The researcher observed the preaching sessions to discover the messages contained in the sermons and how they relate to church teachings and expected gender roles, to answer the question, ‘how do church

teachings influence member's marital relations and the ideal family type?' Observation allowed the researcher to discern the various perspectives held by members of apostolic churches on issues under study as they were revealed in their sermons. Observation gave the researcher the opportunity to identify consistencies and inconsistencies between what people said in interviews and what they did. It permitted the researcher to learn directly from personal experience by immersing herself in the study setting.

4.3.6 Video and audio analysis

The researcher analysed two videotapes from Johane Wetatu and an audiotape from Johane Marange. Church members recorded these videos and audiotapes during their national gatherings for record keeping and their intended audience were church members. The videotapes and audiotapes were purposively selected after watching and listening to seven of them before selecting those that had sermons by the church bishops. As the researcher perceives the bishop's sermons to have an immense influence on the way church members interpret church teachings and expected gender roles. Audio and video analysis were aimed at gathering data on the church teachings as Johane Marange and Johane Wetatu bishops teach them; to answer the research question, 'which gender roles are fostered by church teachings?' The study, in line with Marshall and Rossman (2014) view, employed audiotapes and videos as unobtrusive or non-reactive measures as the data derived from the tapes was not affected by the presence of the researcher. As such, they complemented FGDs and interviews, which could suffer from reactivity effects, as the researcher was the primary research instrument.

4.4 Data analysis methods.

4.4.1 Inductive data analysis.

Qualitative content analysis was used in data analysis; allowing study findings to emerge from data. This was done by interpretation of text data, through a systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes and patterns. The first step in data analysis was the transcription of audiotapes and videotapes into text. The researcher immersed herself in data by reading and re-reading the transcripts and field notes from audiotapes, videotapes, interviews, FGDs and observations. Secondly, the transcripts and field notes were analysed by inductive content analysis to get the main ideas emerging organically from the data. Transcripts were subjected to open coding with individual themes as the coding unit. Teachings of apostolic churches and their

influence on gender relations and women's agency were discovered as they surfaced from the data.

The third step was identifying themes from the data. Manifest and latent content was discovered by triangulating data from the various data gathering methods used in the study. Comparing of data from different methods helped in identifying relationships, corroborating and conflicting ideas. Corroborating data from the different methods formed the major themes; the fundamental ideas within the themes formed sub headings. The fourth stage was interpretation of data, when the identified themes and categories were discussed within the literature review and theoretical frameworks by offering explanations, showing relationships, making inferences and drawing conclusions.

4.5 Study time frame.

The study was conducted in seven months from July 2016 to February 2017. The proposal was written from 1 July to 31 September 2016. The researcher gathered data in the field from 1 October to 31 December. Data gathering and initial data analysis were done simultaneously. On 31 December the researcher exited the field and concentrated on data analysis and writing study findings, discussion and conclusions.

4.6 Study limitations.

The scope of the study is limited to the experiences of apostolic church members in Johane Marange, Johane Masowe and Johane Wetatu, it does not capture the experiences of members of other apostolic churches. The study is confined to the experiences of apostolic church members in Harare. As such, it may not be possible to generalise the research findings to other social contexts outside this geographical boundary. Several theoretical underpinnings such as Giddens's structuration theory that are used in explaining the phenomena under study limit the scope of interpretation of study findings. The researcher encountered problems in the initial stages of data gathering as members of one church agreed to have FGDs while others refused. This was countered by using participant observation and audio analysis to gather the same information at the same breadth. The researcher could not analyse any audio or videotape from Johane Masowe as there was none, since members are forbidden from recording church proceedings. To counter the problem, the researcher used participant observation and KII to

gather the data. The combination of methods helped as one method provided strengths that countered weaknesses in the other method, thereby compensating the limitations.

4.7 Ethical considerations.

4.7.1 Informed consent.

The researcher, in line with Hesse Biber and Leavy (2010) and Crow et al (2009) views ensured that participants gave informed consent as they were fully informed of the research aims, procedures, potential risks and benefits. They were informed of their roles and rights in the research before volunteering to participate in the study. These enabled participants to consciously and deliberately decide whether to participate. A participant information sheet and consent form was issued to the participants before research was conducted. The researcher, aware of ethical issues surrounding written consent made sure that potential study participants understood the contents of the study by using Shona language (the first language for study participants) to draft the documents. As was noted by Shahnazarian et al (2013) and Johnstone (2005) that consent forms must be in the language that study participants can easily understand, such that study participants will sign the form when they fully comprehend what they are consenting to. Participants were given time to decide whether to participate or decline.

In line with Shahnazarian et al (2013), the researcher regarded informed consent as a process where the study participants understand the research and participate voluntarily and not mere signing of consent form at the beginning of the study. It included provision of information on the aim, risks benefits and rights of participants before the study commenced and continued after the research started. The participant information sheet explained the intention of the study, the rights of participants, and asked people to participate in the study voluntarily. A participant consent form was given to study participants it explained that participants were free to leave the study anytime with no prejudice and sought their permission to be audiotaped and quoted directly. The form guaranteed that information gathered was solely used for academic purposes. It explained that the researcher would maintain full confidentiality on the information given by participants. (Gurero (2007) emphasise that researchers should take all steps necessary to ensure that participants fully understand what is being stated in the information sheet and consent form. As such, the researcher explained the contents of the documents to ensure that participants gave valid consent.

Although the above procedure was followed for focus group discussions, semi structured interviews and key informant interviews, the researcher faced a dilemma with regards to participant observation. The researcher reasoned that asking for consent from all participants at the church services would make the presence of the researcher produce biased information. To avoid the occurring of the bias, only assembly leaders knew that the researcher was conducting research, while others believed that the researcher was attending church services just to hear the sermons.

In addition, the researcher encountered women who participated in the study after seeking permission from their husbands. The researcher initially believed that she should seek consent from the women concerned, she soon realised that for some women consent was extended to their husbands. The influence of the husbands was such that some women who previously agreed to participate in the study opted out because their husbands forbid them from participating in the study.

4.7.2 Privacy and confidentiality.

Biber et al (2011) notes that study participants have to be told the degree of confidentiality that the researcher have for them. The researcher explained to research participants that total confidentiality was to be maintained. The researcher adopted the assertion by Adams et al (2008) that it is important to anonymize not only the identity of study participants but also any harmful exposure of identifiable information or places. As such, identifiable information was anonymised. Participant's real names were substituted with pseudo names to maintain anonymity of participants who did not consent to the use of their real names in the study. All the information given by participants was used for purposes of this research only. The audiotaped interviews and FGDs were solely used for purposes of this research and kept at a safe place, accessible only to the researcher.

4.7.3 Protection from harm.

The researcher protected the study participants from harm by making sure that they understood the intention of the study and participated voluntarily. Maintenance of confidentiality also protected participants from being prejudiced or exposed to risk that could result from their negative exposure. The researcher gave study participants the opportunity to ask her to skip

questions that aroused psychological distress to them. This is in line with Biber et al (2011) that the researcher must minimise chances for psychological harm to participants.

4.8 Chapter summary.

This chapter explain the methodology that was used in the research. It shows how data was gathered using qualitative research methods. It also explains that study respondents were purposively selected and gave valid consent to participate in the study. The chapter describes the procedure followed to generate themes from the data using qualitative content analysis. It also gives evidence of how data was analysed and how study conclusions were reached. The chapter present the measures that were taken by the researcher to prevent prejudicing study participants.

Chapter 5

Presentation of findings.

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the research that was conducted in Johane Marange, Johane Masowe and Johane Wetatu Pasirose apostolic churches. There are four issues, which stood out in the FGSs, KII, and SSI. These are the differences in apostolic church teachings on polygyny, wife inheritance and the expectations of the Holy Spirit. The second is that women make decisions to enact or defy gendered marital roles in full awareness of the consequences of their actions. They make self-interested decisions using various forms of agentic behaviour, which can be apparent or subtle. It also emerged that apostolic church teachings not only restrict but also facilitate women decision making. The chapter is divided into three sections; the first presents the identified church teachings and gendered expectations. In this section, teachings that govern the marriage process and expected gender roles are highlighted. The second section presents findings on how the church teachings influence gender relations in marriages. The last section shows how women express their agency within church structures. Findings are presented thematically as they emerged from the data addressing the objectives of the study, allowing comparison to be made among the different apostolic churches.

5.1 Marriage teachings in apostolic churches.

Data from different methods revealed that in Johane Marange, teachings are derived from African tradition and the Old Testament in the Bible. It emerged that church teachings encourage members to be transparent when they marry. If a young man wants to marry a young woman, he is expected to propose to the girl. If they become lovers then they must tell their parents so that they will know the boy or girl that their child is in love with. It is the church teaching that a child should marry after the age of eighteen years. Premarital sexual relations are abhorred in the church. Physical intimacy is a taboo, lovers are forbidden from kissing, hugging, touching each other erotically or engaging in any sexual activity. Girls are supposed to be married whilst they are virgins. If a woman indulges in premarital sexual relations with a man, she is considered a wife of that man and she is expected to go and live with him. The church prohibits members from eloping, as payment of bridewealth must be made before lovers live as a husband and wife.

Men are encouraged to marry in the church but they can marry a girl who is not a member of the church, on the condition that she agrees to be baptised and become a member. Women are forbidden from getting married to a man who is not a church member. It is necessary that a man pay the cow for the bride's mother *mombe yeumai*. It is the church's teaching that a man can marry as many wives as he can. A woman is expected to give birth to as many children as she can and she is forbidden from using biomedical family planning methods. Divorce is discouraged in the church. A woman can be divorced if she is caught in the act of adultery and she can divorce her husband after the church authorities have endorsed it. A widow is expected to be inherited by her husband's brother if she wants to remain in her husband's family. The foregoing gives an overview of church teachings on matrimony in Johane Marange.

There are various positions which were created by the Holy Spirit in apostolic churches and are given names by the Holy Spirit. Johane Masowe *Vaperedis* are elderly men at the church, *Madamasca* senior women in the church, *Vadare* are also elderly men at the church who are younger than *Vaperedis*. *Vasadare* are middle aged women, younger than *Madamasca*, and they have different roles in the marriage process as will be outlined below. In Johane Masowe members are encouraged to have lifelong monogamous marriages. When a boy wants to propose love to a girl he can do so by telling *Madamasca* who are in charge of sexuality education for young girls and newly married women. *Madamasca* inform the girl about the boy who is proposing to her or they can let the boy and girl converse and decide whether the girl is interested. If the girl and boy agree to become lovers, *Madamasca* will tell *Vaperedis*, whose job is to lead the whole congregation at an assembly. *Vaperedis* will inform the parents of the girl that their daughter have a relationship with the boy. After the parents of the girl and the boy have been informed, the whole congregation is told of the loving relationship between the two. This is done to ensure transparency. Lovers who are not married must abstain from sex, flirting, kissing and hugging. Lovers can seek guidance from prophets in the church so that they may be forewarned if there will be impending danger in their loving relationship.

The church is also involved during the whole marriage process. It is the church teaching that when a boy and girl in the church want to marry, bridewealth has to be paid to the girl's parents. *Vadare*, whilst they are younger than *Vaperedis* whose role include solving marital problems and deliberating all issues affecting the church. They become the mediators '*vanyai*' during bridewealth payment process. After bridewealth has been paid, a church wedding is done

muchato wekumasowe, where prophets pray for the couple to bless their marriage. Thereafter, *Vasadare*, whose role is to educate women on marital issues, will escort the bride to her husband's home.

It is considered a sin when a girl or boy marries a person who is not a member of the church. She or he is supposed to confess and be cleansed by being prayed for by prophets. Divorce is not allowed in the church. A widow may choose to be inherited by her husband's brother, remarry, or stay alone.

In Johane Wetatu Pasirose members are supposed to have lifelong monogamous marriages. The church condemns polygyny, and same sex marriages. When a boy wants to propose love to a girl he can inform the assembly advisor *Baba Mutsigiri* who will inform the women's advisor *Mai Mutsigiri*, who will then tell the girl and the two can meet and discuss the issue. The boy can also go directly to the girl and propose love to her. If she agrees, they must tell the assembly advisors (*Baba Mutsigiri* and *Amai Musigiri*). The assembly leaders give advice to the couple on the way they are supposed to behave in their relationship until they marry. The teachings also make it mandatory for a couple to be married customarily by payment of bridewealth before they could be recognised in the church as a family. It is a punishable offence for a girl in the church to elope; both the girl and boy are considered guilty of a sin. They are punished by the confiscation of church regalia (*kubviswa magemenzi*) and they would not take part in church activities but are allowed to attend church services. The couple will participate in the church after the husband pays *roora/lobola* to the parents of the wife. The church also encourages members to have weddings, although it is not mandatory.

The church forbids marriage of underage girls, child pledging and forced marriages. The teachings respect the need for one to choose his or her marriage partner. Early marriages are condemned and youths are encouraged to avoid them, as they would reduce their chances to further their education, reducing their chances of becoming professionals as required in the church. Youths can marry non-members, but they are encouraged to get marry members of the church. Divorce is not allowed unless there is a life threatening situation or when the husband or wife is caught in the act of adultery.

5.2 The influence of church teachings on gendered expectations and gender relations.

Church teachings influence gendered expectations in the church and invariably influence marital relations. There were issues of chastity, choice of marriage partner, polygamy, monogamy, divorce, wife inheritance and household decision-making among others that emerged as discussed below.

5.2.1 Chastity as a virtue for youths in apostolic churches.

Data from interviews and participant observation revealed that different teachings in apostolic churches lead to different expectations for men and women. In Johane Marange it is expected that when a girl reaches puberty, she should be ready to assume her duties as a wife and a mother. She is encouraged to be chaste and get married whilst she is a virgin. Her virginity brings honour and dignity to her family, particularly her father. Women said it is important for a girl to get married whilst a virgin as this brings dignity to the girl amongst her co-wives in a polygynous marriage. During the Passover feast in Bocha, Marange older women conduct virginity testing to ascertain if a girl is still a virgin. A girl who fails to pass the test will be asked to explain how she lost her virginity. If the man with whom she had sexual relations with is a member of the church, she will be sent to him to become his wife. There is no option of being cleansed and the man in question cannot refuse to marry her. If the man is not a member of the church, she will not be allowed to become his wife, but she will be regarded as a woman and will no longer sit in the front line during the church service. When she gets married a cow that confirms that she is a virgin *mombe yechimanda* will not be given to her parents. When a man marries a virgin and does not have the cow *mombe yechimand*, he must pay the debt in future.

It emerged that in Johane Masowe, it is expected that a girl must be a virgin when she gets married. Unlike Johane Marange, virginity testing in Johane Masowe is rarely conducted; when it is conducted, it is usually done spiritually, where a prophet can ask a girl to confess that she is sexually immoral. If she refuses then *Madamasca* may take the girl and inspect whether she is a virgin and confirm or refute the prophet's prophecy. Key informants stated that there are now changes in the church, in the past virgins would sit in the front line during church services and virginity testing was done frequently. At present, anyone can sit in the front line so there is no reason to conduct virginity testing. They also stated that the new laws, which prohibit virginity

testing, make prophets and women in the church reluctant to conduct it. Hence, there are rare cases of physical virginity testing in the church.

Whilst Johane Marange and Johane Masowe emphasise virginity as a virtue for girls only, in Johane Wetatu chastity is expected for both boys and girls. Focus group discussions and interview data revealed that it is expected for both boys and girls to marry with both being virgins. There is no virginity testing for either boys or girls. Key informants pointed out that it is difficult to conduct virginity testing for boys, as such; it would be unjust to perform virginity testing for girls whilst the same is not done for boys. They also noted that there is no reason for virginity testing; the church need not know who is a virgin and who is not. Premature sexual activity angers God and it is God who must judge deviant youths and not church leaders. The church encourages young men and women to report to the church or the police if they are sexually abused.

Data from various methods revealed a divergence on the acceptable marriageable age for women in different apostolic churches. The differences create different gendered expectations for members belonging to the different apostolic churches. In Johane Marange there is a discrepancy between the marriageable age for girls and the actual age they marry. KII and SSI data showed a divergence between what members say is the marriageable age and the actual age at which girls are married. Members explained that the church operates within the confines of the national laws and it designates eighteen as the marriageable age, as stipulated by the law. However, participant observation revealed that members encourage girls to get married early, after their fifteenth birthday. A preacher effectively used a phrase to explain that a girl should be married soon after she reaches puberty.

'Hazvibatsire kurima chibage chokura, choibva asi wononoka kuchikohwa, wozochikohwa wakusarudza chimwe chaora. Chibage kana chaibva ngachikasire kukohwewa chochengetwa mudura'

(It is of no use to grow maize until it is ready for harvest; and harvest it late when you will be selecting the good crop from rotten ones. When the maize is ready for harvest, it must be promptly harvested and preserved in the granary.)

Members considers it a service to God when a girl marries and serves her husband. When she does this, it is believed that she will inherit the kingdom of heaven after her death. Members

believe that a woman is subordinate to her husband, as such; she cannot converse with God even after death. Her husband is perceived to be the mediator between her and God. Members believed that a man would mediate for his wife and plead her case so that she will enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, a woman who is not married cannot enter the kingdom of heaven because she will not have anyone to intercede for her. A key informant who shared the same views as other interviewees had this to say,

'Mukadzi ngaaremekedze murume wake nekuti ndiye Mwari wake wekutanga. Mukadzi haakwanisee kutauro naMwari, murume wake ndiye anomumiririra kuti awane umambo hwekudenga'

(The wife must respect her husband because he is her first God. A woman cannot converse with God; her husband intercedes for her so that she will inherit the kingdom of heaven.)

Data from KII, SSI and participant observation revealed that women in Johane Marange are expected to get married before attaining tertiary education. Although church members are encouraged to send their children to school, they are reluctant to send their daughters for tertiary education for fear that they would fail to fulfil their gender roles. Fathers are afraid that if their daughters attain tertiary education, exposure to secular ideas may influence them to rebel against the church by getting married to non-members. They also believe that girls would engage in sexual immorality and lose their virginity, in the process losing family honour and dignity. It emerged from audio analysis and interviews that it is the church teaching that men as the breadwinner for their families are encouraged to attain higher and tertiary level education qualifications and be gainfully employed.

There is congruity between the designated marriageable age for girls and the actual age they marry in Johane Masowe. Most women in the church said they were married after their eighteenth birthday. Church teachings encourage members to send their children to school regardless of their gender. Data from KII and SSI revealed that in the past, when Zimbabwe was colonised, members of the church were not permitted to let their children attain formal education. Members highlighted that the practice served its purpose during that time, with the coming of independence; members are encouraged to let their children attain formal education. This is because the Holy Spirit prophesied that members are going to become wealthy and own large

properties. For the prophecy to be fulfilled, members must let their children attain formal education so that they may be formally employed.

Girls from Johane Wetatu Pasirose marry later than girls in other apostolic churches. They usually marry when they are above twenty-two years old. They explained that they are not only encouraged to complete their secondary education before they marry but they are also expected to attain tertiary education and secure employment before they are considered ready for marriage. A preacher was giving advice to girls on a national gathering had this to say

‘Murume wako wekutanga i certificate yedzidzo yako, zvakanosha kuti ukwanise kuzvimiririra uine degree nebasa rako wozoorwa. Nekuti degree rako harife rakakuramba’

(Your academic certificate is your first husband, it is important that you must be independent, you must have a degree and employment before getting married, because your degree will never divorce you.)

In the same vein, all church members are encouraged to go to school, regardless of their gender or age. Married men and women are encouraged to proceed with their education. Key informants highlighted that when the church was founded, it was prophesied that children of Johane Wetatu are going to be champions of champions, *‘vana va Johane Wetatu vachava nyanzvi dzenyanzvi’*. This means that members of the church must excel in everything they do including attaining formal education. Girls are expected to become champions by attaining the highest possible educational qualification that they can and be formally employed before they get married.

5.2.2 Endogamy, polygyny, monogamy and gender roles.

Data from interviews showed that gender roles and marital relations in Johane Marange are influenced by teachings that emphasise endogamy, which is marriage within the church. Girls are strictly forbidden from getting married to non-members. Men can marry non-members and ensure that the girl will become a member of the church and follow all church’s teachings. It is the father’s duty as the head of the household to make sure that her daughters will marry members of the church. When his daughter wants to marry a non-member, he must prevent the marriage by not accepting bride wealth, even when the girl elopes, he must take her daughter back. Failure to do so is interpreted as a weakness. Key informants stressed that getting married

to a member of the church bestows honour and dignity on the girl's family, particularly her father. It was highlighted that a girl who decides to get married to a non-member would have severed herself from the church and her family. As such, the researcher found that when girls marry men in the church, their fathers are perceived as men who managed to assume their fatherly responsibilities as head of households, by maintaining order in their families and making family members abide by church's teachings.

It was noted from SII and KII that in Johane Marange, polygyny has its roots in Shona tradition and is sanctioned by the Holy Spirit. Audio analysis revealed that in Johane Marange, the Bishop of the church told his congregants that the church leadership could not forbid men from having many wives, because it is an African tradition that cannot be destroyed. He explained that the Holy Spirit gives parameters on how polygyny should be practiced. A man must pay bride wealth for all his wives and make sure that they become full members of the church. Participant observation made the researcher notice that most men in the church have more than one wife and men are encouraged to marry more wives. Having more wives is perceived as having more decision making power in the household, which will ensure that a man will inherit the kingdom of heaven. A preacher reinforced church's stance on polygyny when he said, '*Murume anotongwa nemukadzi haawane humambo hwekudenga.*' (A man who is ruled by his wife will not inherit the kingdom of heaven.) A man with one wife is perceived to be a man who is ruled and controlled by his wife and is therefore unfit to enter the kingdom of heaven.

It became apparent to the researcher that apostolic churches have differing stances on polygyny and monogamy. Data from KII and SSI showed that in Johane Marange it is the church teaching that a man can marry many wives and he must provide everything that his family need. He is the breadwinner and must make sure that all his wives and children have what they need to survive. A real man is one who marries his wives from the church, provides for them, and makes sure that they abide by church teachings. A man with more wives has more chances of being elected a leader. He is expected to have a rural homestead, where each of his wives will have her own kitchen and compound; the man must provide livestock and land for each of his wives. The wives in their turn must respect their husband and live in harmony.

Data from participant observation, SSI and KII revealed that polygyny is unacceptable in Johane Masowe and Johane Wetatu. Men in the churches have one wife, as they believe that marrying

another wife is committing adultery. They also noted that the Holy Spirit does not approve of polygyny and a man who engages in sexual activity with any woman other than his wife, risk being cursed by God. Data revealed that women in the churches are satisfied with this church teaching as they highlighted that it discourage men from marrying other wives. In Johane Masowe, a man who commits adultery or marry another wife will not be allowed to preach.

It emerged from data collected in focus groups that members of Johane Wetatu Pasirose are in a monogamous marriage, male participants did not marry second wives as they know that it was a serious offence in the church, which is punished by confiscation of church regalia (*kubviswa magemenzi*), which is shameful. If the man in question had a leadership position he would be discharged from his duties. In Johane Wetatu, a real man is one who has one wife, children that he can provide for and a house owner. Couples are encouraged to have children that they can send to school up to tertiary level. It is encouraged that every family must have their own urban residential home owned by the husband, wife, or both.

When making decisions in a polygamous marriage, the husband is expected to either discuss the issue with all of his wives or his first wife *vahosi*, who will tell her co-wives. When wives want to do anything they have to consult their husband before proceeding with their plans. Therefore, the man is the head of the household who is expected to make the final decision in the household, whilst the wives are supposed to be obedient to him. In Johane Masowe and Johane Wetatu decisions are made in the house hold after consultation between husband and wife. Data revealed that women believe they participate in decision making in the family.

In Johane Marange, a woman is expected to accept polygyny and live in harmony with co-wives. After getting married, she is supposed to respect her husband and bear children for him. Wives are expected to revere their husbands and serve them. Participant observation revealed that women are told to let their husbands rule over them. One key informant said that wives must serve their husbands because that is the only reason they were created. '*Mukadzi anotongwa, basa rake nderekuita zvinodiwa nemurume wake nekuti ndizvo chete zvaakasikirwa.*' (A wife is dominated, her duty is to do what her husband expects because that the only reason she was created.)

The study revealed that a woman is expected to have sexual relations with the man that she is married to, if she commits adultery she will be divorced and this brings shame to her family. She

should have many children. Most members used the phrase, '*Takanzi berekanai muwande sejecha regungwa.*' 'We were instructed to multiply and become as many as the sand of the sea'.

Whilst others were saying people and not animals are needed in heaven, therefore people must bear more children. Others used different phrases to stress that God instructs every living organism to bear fruit in its season and women must do the same. They are not supposed to be outdone by trees, which bears its fruits at the designated time. For them an ideal family should have many wives and children.

In Johane Masowe and Johane Wetatu women are expected to respect their husbands and serve God by creating stable families. Giving birth to children is expected from couples but the couple decide on the number of children that they can have and it is not mandatory that a couple should have children. Women are also expected to take care of the children and make sure that they follow all church rules so that they may be blessed.

5.3 The influence of church teachings on women's agency in the marriage process.

Church teachings create expected gender roles and marital relations, yet women create their own spaces to express their agency within them. They make choices which conform to or resist church teachings and its gendered expectations. Agential behaviours expressed by women within apostolic church teachings that emerged in the study are explained below.

5.3.1 Women's roles in choosing marriage partners.

Data from interviews revealed that there is a strong code of respect between members of the opposite sex in apostolic churches. Members of Johane Marange are not allowed to touch each other in any sexually oriented manner. It emerged from the data that a girl has her chance to choose a marriage partner by keeping her virginity. The moment she engages in any sexual activity with a man, she automatically becomes his wife. However, if she is touched by a man in a sexually provoking manner, but does not have sexual contact with him, the girl can confess at church and can be cleansed of the sin. If she decides to become a wife of that man, the man cannot refuse to marry her. A man can marry a girl he touched in a sexually provoking manner when she agrees. A girl who is still in her possession of her virginity can refuse to get married to a man who touched her in an erotic manner. In the end, a man cannot force a girl to become his wife when there is no sexual contact between them. The particular girl is expected to confess her

sin and be cleansed '*kusunungurwa*' of her sin by being prayed for by prophets. The members revealed that in Johane Marange, young lovers often court for a short time and get married quickly as they want to prevent sexual immorality.

Data from key informants revealed that women in Johane Marange lose or keep their virginity to enable them choose marriage partners. Some older women explained that some girls are notorious; they lose their virginity to get married to men that their parents do not approve of as their future husbands. In such cases, a girl engages in sexual activity with a man knowing that when she will be tested during Passover, she will fail, and her parents would inevitably send her to the man she slept with. The man with whom she had sexual relations with is obliged to take her as his wife. There was consensus among women that 'virginity' is a tool that they can use to become head wives if they choose to keep it. It can be used as a tool for rebellion when a girl give it to a man that parents do not approve of and it can become an instrument for achieving her goals when she give it to a man of her choice in so doing, claiming a place as a wife of that particular man. However, the data revealed that the man must be a member of the church to avoid nullification of the marriage. Most women in Johane Marange were virgins when they first had sexual intercourse with their husbands regardless of whether they elope or had bridewealth paid for them before living with their husbands. For women in Johane Marange, virginity is a priced possession that every girl should possess and present as a gift to her husband it is also a weapon that they use to achieve their intentions.

Data from various methods revealed that young girls express their agency in the marriage process by eloping with the men they want marry. Johane Marange is against eloping but a girl can decide to elope when her parents refuse to let her marry the man of her choice. It was revealed in SSI and KII that most girls elope as a way of getting married. When a girl elopes to a member of the church, the parents cannot take her back; she automatically becomes a wife of that man. Women in the study eloped for various reasons, some eloped because the man who wanted to marry them did not have money to pay bride wealth, and others did so because the parents did not approve of the boy that they wanted to marry. Some young girls elope because their parents refused to let them marry men who were already married. Elderly women explained that young girls in Johane Marange are eloping in large numbers in the church because of the material possession that men have. The church teaching is that the girl who eloped and the man to whom she elopes to, will not participate in church activities until the man has paid

tsvakiraikuno money to let the girl's parents know that he has their daughter. In Johane Marange eloping is a tool that a girl can use to marry the man of her choice.

It emerged that in Johane Masowe eloping is a practice that girls engage in to express their agency in choosing a marriage partner. Some women in the church explained that they did not follow the procedure for getting married; instead, they eloped to their husbands. Most girls are eloping because they will be getting married early when their parents do not approve of them being married, lack of money to pay bridewealth or after they have fallen pregnant. They highlighted that after they eloped, their husbands paid money to tell the parents to let them know that they had eloped *tsvakiraikuno*. Data revealed that after eloping, the girl and the boy to whom she eloped will come to church, confess their sin and their church regalia will be confiscated *kubviswa magemenzi* until the boy has paid bridewealth. Eloping is shameful for the girl and some girls decide to follow the procedure approved by the church to avoid the shame that they will feel if they elope.

In Johane Wetatu, women usually follow the marriage procedure that is prescribed in the church. However, some girls elope to boys after falling pregnant. Data show that most women from Johane Wetatu did not elope; they had bridewealth paid for them before living with their husbands because they did not want to be cursed by God. Youths in the church explained that when they marry they would have bride wealth (*roora*) payment and a white wedding because they viewed this procedure as a dignified way to get married. They believe that couples who followed the proper marriage procedure received blessings from God and have stable marriages. They do not want the shame of garment confiscation (*kubviswa magemenzi*), that would result from eloping. It emerged from the data that women and girls are articulate when they decide to elope or follow the designated marriage procedure, thereby expressing their agency.

Women in Johane Marange revealed that they continue to live in polygynous marriages because they benefited from the families. Some women said they intentionally married polygynous men because they men were wealthy and they wanted to be part of their families. Upon marriage, they joined their husband's trade such as sewing and selling wares. With time, they had enough capital to start their own small businesses to sustain themselves. Women said they do not confront their husbands when they feel they were unfairly treated, lest they would be labelled rebellious women who will not receive anything from the husband. They appear to be ignorant as

a calculated strategy to remain ‘obedient wives’ who will be provided with money, food and help from the husband. They said they would not fight family members, as the family is their safety net, which would provide them with help when they face life challenges.

5.3.2 Everyday resistance as used by women in apostolic churches.

Women in all the apostolic churches in the study believe that they can ask God to make their husbands more loving and make their marriages successful. They fast and pray for their husbands and families. Women in Johane Masowe and Johane Wetatu have Wednesday as the day they pray and fast for their families. They believe that the prayers create unity among family members and make their marriages more successful. A woman from Johane Masowe who shared the same sentiments had this to say in an interview,

‘Handikwanise kutonga murume wangu. Asi ndinoziva kuti kana ndatsanya nekunamata, Mwari anoita kuti rudo ruwedzere mumba, murume wangu anoramba akatendeka kwandiri uye mhuri yedu inoramba ichibudirira.’

‘I cannot control my husband. Yet I know that when I fast and pray, God makes our family have more love, my husband will remain faithful to me and our marriage will become more successful.’

Thus, praying and fasting for the husband and the family is normal in apostolic churches and is understood as a way to strengthen marriages. However, this researcher perceives it to be a hidden strategy used by women to limit male domination in marriages.

The study revealed that some women express their agency within polygynous families by recruiting more wives for their husbands, to ensure that the husband will continue to adore them. They believe that if they recruit more wives for their husband, they would remain in favour of the husband and receive more attention. The husband may neglect the wife who would not have brought him a new wife. In the end, the wife who did not recruit a new wife for her husband can feel abandoned and lonely and she can decide to take a sister or a niece as a co-wife, in a bid to find an ally and balance the bargaining power of the other wife or wives.

It emerged that fathers rarely give their daughters to elderly men to become their wives but women usually facilitate marriage of their younger nieces and sisters to their husbands. Some women highlighted that they cannot stop their husbands from marrying more wives but they can

negotiate on the way polygyny is practiced. A woman explained in an interview that she negotiated on her own terms when the husband was marrying a second wife.

'Ndakazviona kuti ndakanga ndisingakwanise kurambidza murume wangu kuroora mumwe mudzimai. Asi ndakaramba kuti iye nemukadzi mudiki vashandise imba yangu yekurarira, zvakazoita kuti murume wangu atsvage imwe imba kuri kugara mukadzi mudiki.'

(I knew that I could not stop my husband from marrying another wife, but I told him that he could not sleep with his second wife in my bedroom. This made my husband find another house where the younger wife is staying.)

Therefore, women are also active participants in polygyny, whereby they recruit more wives for their husbands or act to influence how polygyny is practiced. Even when they appear to be silent, sometimes, it is not a silence of conformity to church practices but a strategic silence to achieve certain goals.

Interviews made the researcher discern that women in Johane Marange endorse polygyny to achieve their objectives. Most of the women interviewed said they accept polygyny because they want to please their husbands. It became apparent that each of the women in polygynous marriages chooses to live in peace with co-wives to prevent being labelled as a jealous wife, which would make the husband loathe her. Some women said even though they did not like it when their husbands marry more wives, they did not openly oppose it, they remained silent and ignored their husband's wife hunting and marrying expeditions. They thought that open confrontation would not help them but would cause more problems; one of the married participants expressed her sentiments in a KII,

'Handifarire kuroorwa kwevamwe vakadzi nemurume wangu, asi handikwanise kumurambidza, ndinongonyarara ndoita sendisina basa nazvo kuti ndisazvitsvagire rimwe dambudziko.'

(I am not happy when my husband marries more wives, but I cannot stop him, I just remain quiet and act as if I do not care to avoid creating another problem.)

Therefore, the silence that is expressed by some women is not a silence of compliance with church norms and practices but it is a silence of defiance.

Some women in Johane Marange challenge church teachings, which state that household chores are the wife's duty. They neglected their house keeping duties by delegating the chores to their children while they focus on informal trading. They said that they rarely cook at home; as they let their children cook and perform general housekeeping while they partake in informal trading to earn more money. Their husbands were rarely at home and would not notice that the wife is delegating her duties to the children, and when noticed it would appear as if the children are helping their busy mother. They can pretend to be experiencing mood changes when pregnant and use it as an excuse for neglecting their marital duties, such as cooking, washing clothes or having sexual intercourse. One woman in an SSI expressed her opinion,

'Kana ndakazvitakura ndinogona kuita zvandinoda ndisingabike kana kuita zvinotarisirwa kumukadzi akaroorwa, murume wangu anenge achingoti inhumbu inodaro.'

'When I am pregnant I can do what I like, I can avoid cooking or other duties expected of a married wife, and my husband will believe that the pregnancy will be making me behave in that way.'

It is expected that a man in Johane Marange must make sure that all his wives attend church services and keep church commandments. It emerged that women in Johane Marange used various tactics to challenge church's prescriptions. None of them said she openly refuses to go to church, but they find ways to avoid attending church gatherings. They use subtle means such as pretending to forget to wash the church regalia, when their husbands ask why they did not go to church, they explain that they forgot to wash the church regalia and had nothing to wear. They can pretend to forget to shave their hair and then tell their husbands that they could not attend church service without shaving their hair.

Leadership roles in Johane Marange are differentiated by gender. Data from participant observation and interviews showed that the church gives leadership positions to men and women should guide others by being exemplary to their children fellow women. Men are expected to take on leadership positions as baptists (*vabhabhatidzi*), preachers (*vavhangeri*), prophets (*vaporofiti*), healers (*varapi*) and treasurers (*mubati wehomwe*). Only men are allowed to preach in the church. Whilst in Johane Masowe there are no leadership positions for treasurers, baptists or the secretary. Men and women are allowed to preach during church services. They contended

that there are no differences between men and women and the Holy Spirit can speak to the congregation through either of them.

Data revealed that of all apostolic churches in the study, Johane Wetatu has the most defined leadership structure that accommodates males and females. Every assembly has a leader called Resident Pastor (*Baba Muparidzi*), Resident Secretary (*Baba Munyori*), Protocol officer (*Baba Mutariri*), Protocol Advisor (*Baba Mutsigiri*) and assembly Treasurer. There are also women leaders at every assembly, there is the women's leader (*Mai Mutungamiri*), women's Secretary (*Mai Munyori*), women's protocol officer (*Mai Mutariri*) and women's advisor (*Mai Mutsigiri*). All women leaders and other elected women at the assembly form '*Vanaamai vetsitsi*' 'Mother's of mercy', whose job is to give advice to young girls and women pertaining life issues. Unlike other apostolic churches, in Johane Wetatu there is a national committee for women comprising of the national chairwoman, treasurer, secretary and other committee members, whose job is to lead in all projects that women will be undertaking and presenting women's concerns to the church's central committee. It is similar to Johane Masowe in that women are allowed to preach.

5.3.3 Church teachings and prophecy on girl's choice of a marriage partner.

Women in Johane Marange adhere to the teaching that prohibits them from marrying non-members more than women in Johane Masowe. Data from interviews and participant observation made the researcher discover that women in Johane Marange usually conform to the dictum- do not be unequally yoked! That prohibits them from marrying non-members. Women marry members of the church because they want to maintain cordial relationships with their families and church. Women in the church explained that if they elope to a non-member, their parents would take them back or refuse to accept bridewealth, the family would be disgraced.

Even though Johane Masowe has the teaching that forbids girls from getting married to outsiders, most girls in the church deviate from this church doctrine. Women in the church said they marry men they are in love with, regardless of whether they are members of the church. They explained that the church teachings encourage members to marry in the church but if a girl or boy marries a non-member, he or she is permitted to come back to church. A guilty girl must confess her sin and she will be forgiven '*kusunungurwa*', her church regalia will be confiscated for three weeks, thereafter, she will be given their church regalia back and will be reintegrated into the church, boys who marry non-members follow the same process. Women in the church

explained that if a girl marries a non-member her parents are permitted to accept their daughter's bridewealth and no blame is levelled on them.

In contrast to the foregoing, even though women in Johane Wetatu are allowed to marry non-members, most women married members of the church. Data from focus groups showed that most women who married whilst in Johane Wetatu, married members of the church whilst a few married non-members. They believed that marrying in the church would prevent religious conflict in their marriages. Most of the girls interviewed said they wanted to marry men in the church because they did not want to marry men who might expect them to join their churches. The girls feared that they could be exposed to polygyny and risks of their husbands having extra-marital sexual relations exposing them to STIs and HIV infection; they believed their church teachings protected them from such risks.

Data from KII and SSI revealed that prophets have limited influence on a girl's choice of a marriage partner. In Johane Marange it emerged that a prophets cannot initiate marriage arrangements. A boy or girl can consult them to seek guidance on the person that he or she wants marry. Members noted that it is rare for a prophet to tell a girl the man who will become her husband. If there is such a prophecy, the girl can go elsewhere to confirm what the first prophet say. Data revealed that some girls refuse to get married to men who might try to use prophecy to persuade them to accept their marriage proposals. Women in the church believed that prophecy act as a guide that can forewarn them of impending danger and tell them what to do to avoid getting married to men who will destroy their lives. Women were contented that prophecy helps them to make better decisions when choosing a marriage partner.

Prophecy concerning member's marriages can be given in apostolic churches. Data gathered from participant observation, video analysis and interviews with youth showed that in Johane Wetatu prophets could foretell the marriage of members in the church. They could describe the person that one would marry or tell the place where they would meet the person, specific name of the future lover was not revealed and prophets did not arrange marriages. This provided a general guideline of the person that a person could marry in the future. Youths went to consult prophets with their prospective marriage partner before getting married. The Holy Spirit could then tell the lovers the problems they might face in the future such as difficulties in having children. It would also tell them how to transcend these future problems, so that they would have

a happy marriage that would not end in divorce. It was also evident from the data from youths that prophets could reveal the hidden secrets that one partner would not tell his or her lover, such as when one had been married before or had a child. This is done to prevent the discovery of secrets later. This gave the lovers a chance to make informed decision when deciding to whether to marry.

From the interview data, it was noted that in Johane Marange girls got married early because they believe that it is important to serve God as married women. Women explained that peer pressure is a major cause of early marriage. They decided to marry early because a girl who decides to marry later in life became a subject of scrutiny and criticism by some church members. Some people could start to say that there are evil spirits that prevent her from getting married or that her family failed to teach her the importance of marriage. In the end, some girls get married early to preserve family name and honour.

In contrast to Johane Marange, most youths in Johane Wetatu believe that they will be ready for marriage when they are financially independent. Most of the female youth said they did not want to get married before they were at least twenty-five years old; they believed that at that age they would be financially independent, and emotionally mature to cope with the challenges that would come with marriage. Married women in the church highlighted that the church teachings gave them the opportunity to choose the time they married. They noted that the church put more emphasis on girls attaining formal education and becoming professionals than it does on girls getting married. This enables girls to marry at their own time.

5.3. 4 Women, work and household decision-making.

It is noticeable that men and women in apostolic churches work together to provide for their families. Data from interviews and participant observation revealed that in Johane Marange both wives and husbands provide for the family and make financial related decisions. Even though the church teachings instruct husbands to provide for their families, the study revealed that women are engaging in various activities to provide for their families. Most members of Johane Marange believe that a working wife may become promiscuous. They asserted that if a woman becomes a waged labourer she might become sexually immoral. Most women engage in vending to earn an income that they use for their children whilst a few are in waged labour. Some said their husbands could not afford to pay for education of their children; therefore, they earn money to

pay school fees for their children and provide other basic needs for themselves and their children. It was highlighted that in a polygynous family, the husband does not control the money earned by a wife, the wife decides what she will do with her income. As such, husbands are not sole breadwinners in these families. Therefore, women manoeuvre within their church teachings to become income earners and decision makers in the family.

It was noted from interview data that women decide whether to adhere to church teachings that forbids or permits the use of family planning methods. Most of the women in Johane Marange adhered to their church teachings, which forbid the use of biomedical family planning methods. They believe that when they give birth to children, they will be performing a sacred duty, which will make them inherit the kingdom of heaven. They will be fulfilling the command from God that they should multiply and be as many as the sands of the sea. They also believe that '*paska*' (Passover) is their tablet and it provide for all their health needs. To them, desisting from using medicalized family planning methods demonstrates that they have faith in God; a woman who uses family planning pills is perceived to be lacking faith.

However, some women rebel from church teachings and use bio-medical family planning methods such as jadelle and oral family planning pills among others. Data from KII and SSI revealed that when entering the gates on the church shrine, prophets could identify women who use family planning methods. When identified, they are required to confess their sin. Most identified women confess their sin, are cleansed by being prayed for by prophets and must pledge not to sin in the same manner again. Those who decide not to confess are perceived as dissenters who have detached themselves from the church. Such dissenters are supposed to leave the church as they bring shame to their families and God's wrath on the church. Some women in the church said they decide not to use family planning to avoid the shame of confessing the sin or be excommunicated from the church.

There seem to be conflict on the use of family planning between prophets and church teachings in Johane Masowe. Church teachings allow women to use family planning methods while prophets consider it a sin. Church teachings allow members of Johane Masowe to access biomedical services. Data from KII and SSI revealed that women in Johane Masowe use biomedical family planning methods. It was also revealed that sometimes prophets tell women that they are sinning when they use family planning methods as they will be preventing the birth

of children, they can also tell them to confess this sin. It emerged that despite what the prophets say, women do not regard family planning as a sin and none of them confess it. When the prophets tell women to confess that they are using family planning methods, women continue to sit adamantly and none of them say anything. In the end, women continue to use family planning methods to control the birth of children.

Johane Wetatu is the only apostolic church under the study that encourages women to use biomedical family planning methods. From the focus group discussions, it was noted that women in the church use family planning methods such as oral pills to control the birth of their children. Women explained that they are satisfied with their church teaching that allows them to control the birth of children and they readily adhere to it. Thus, apostolic churches have varying teachings concerning use of bio-medical family planning methods and influence women choices and behaviour differently.

5.3. 5 Women's decisions in divorce and widow inheritance.

Interviews and key informants data revealed that women in Johane Marange rarely initiate divorce proceedings although the church has an avenue for them to do so. The church teachings are against divorce. A wife can divorce her husband when he cannot provide for his family. She can divorce the man after following a process, which can take at least two years to complete. Firstly, she must approach the '*dare*' members and tell them that her husband is failing to provide for her. The *dare* advises her husband to take care of his wife. If there is no change after a few weeks or months, the woman can approach the *dare* for the second time. If the *dare* conclude that the wife is presenting a valid case of neglect, the issue will be taken to the higher ranks until it is brought to the attention of the uppermost church court, comprising of the church Bishop and several '*laubaum*'. *Laubaum* are men holding positions as Baptists, healers, preachers and prophets in the church. This court will then decide whether it is reasonable to have the woman separated from her husband. Members believe that at that stage the decision made is a result of the court's deliberations and what the Holy Spirit would have revealed to the Bishop. The court can let the woman leave her husband '*kusunungurwa*' and she will no longer perform her duties as a wife and she will be free to go back to her father's family.

Women in the church noted that wives rarely follow this process because it takes a long time and the outcome from the uppermost church court is uncertain. If a woman goes back to her father's

place without following the procedure, she is asked to leave the church, as she will be considered a dissident. Women then explained that disgruntled women who do not wish to stay in the church or in their polygynous marriages could commit adultery and will be divorced promptly by their husbands. Data from interviews revealed that second wives are more likely to commit adultery, leading to divorce. Women who are frustrated by the system that fail to finalise divorce quickly can decide to rebel against church teachings by committing adultery, knowing that, when this is discovered they will be divorced. Data revealed that *vahosi* or first wives usually seek counselling instead of divorce. First wives explained that when they face marital problems they seek advice from *vavhangeri*, who will give constructive advice to the family. They did not seek divorce, as that would make them failures; instead, they choose to persevere and find ways to solve their marital problems amicably. They also highlighted that the problems they are confronting in their families are not important because they shall find happiness when they inherit the kingdom of heaven after their death. It is apparent that in Johane Marange, the reactions of first and subsequent wives are different when they face marital problems.

Couples in Johane Masowe rarely opt for divorce as a way to solve their marital problems. Data from KII and SSI showed that women in the church usually consult the Holy Spirit and church leaders to help them before they divorce. They explained that when they face marital problems, they seek advice from prophets or they will go to *Vadare* to seek help. There are few divorce cases in the church because the prophets can prophecy on the cause of their problem and give constructive advice that will make couples reconcile. Women in Johane Masowe also find help during their Wednesday gathering *Chitatu*, where women receive advice from *Vasadare* and *Madamasca*.

Data from FGDs revealed that women in Johane Wetatu decide to have counselling instead of divorce. They said they would not divorce their husbands unless there were in a life-threatening situation, such as consistent violence or when they caught their husbands in the act of adultery. They said that they had counselling with their leaders, whenever they faced marital problems, they would go to Mothers of mercy (*Vanaamai vetsitsi*), and to women's leadership at their assembly. The founder of the church Dr Bishop Mabhiza also counsels couples three days in a week so that they can understand and transcend their problems. He has a Diploma in Marriage and Life Counselling, he give couples physical and spiritual counselling to make them comprehend stressful situation they may be facing such as failure to have children, and make

them understand that divorce will not solve their problem but they could accept the reality and search for a solution together. Many of the married people in the focus groups testified that counselling had stabilised their marriages.

Data from key informants and interviews showed that in Johane Marange women make conscious choices during wife inheritance. The church considers a widow who is below fifty years as young and must be inherited by her husband's brother to avoid sexual immorality. Most widows in the church chose to be inherited so that their children would remain in their father's family. They did not choose to remain single, as they believe that such a status would mean that they would have abandoned their wifely duties (bearing children, rearing them and serving their husbands), in so doing, they would be in no position to inherit the kingdom of heaven. Women chose to become inherited wives with the belief that they were making the most suitable decision in their situations.

In contrast to Johane Marange, widows in Johane Masowe can decide whether to remarry. Interview and participant observation showed that a widow is free to decide if she wants to get married. She can choose to be inherited by her husband's brother when he is not married, as the church is against a man taking a second wife under any circumstance. Widows in the church explained that they were living alone or had married other men but none of them was inherited. They felt that they were in control of their lives as far as choosing whether to remarry was concerned, the church only forbids them from marrying married men.

Widows in Johane Wetatu explained that their church teachings encourage women to be independent after the death of their husbands. Women in the church interpreted 'independence' as a situation where widows can sustain their children after the death of their husbands. Whether to remarry or be inherited by a husband's relative is a choice that widows have to make independently, the church does not prescribe anything. It is similar to Johane Masowe in that it has teachings that forbid married men to inherit their relative's widows. Participant observation and interviews made the researcher discover that most widows in the church did not remarry after the death of their husbands but raised their children alone. While a few married men from the church or non-members, but none of them was inherited by her husband's brother. Therefore, different apostolic churches have different teachings concerning widow inheritance, which influence widow's agency in choosing whether to remarry.

5.4 Chapter summary.

This chapter presented research findings from Johane Marange, Johane Masowe and Johane Wetatu Pasirose apostolic churches. This chapter is divided into three sections; the first presented the identified church teachings and gendered expectations. The second section presented findings on the influence of church teachings on gender relations in marriages. Women showed that they choose whether to enact gendered expectations created in their respective churches. The last section explained the different agentic behaviour expressed by women. They usually use subtle forms of resistance to make self-interested decisions. It shows that teachings in apostolic churches are not only constraining to women's decision-making, but also enabling. Findings were thematically presented addressing the objectives of the study.

Chapter 6

Discussion of findings.

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the research. Findings are juxtaposed to existing literature to discover continuities and discontinuities. Giddens (1984) tenets in his structuration theory are used in discussion of the study findings. This chapter interprets study findings by showing of relationships and offering explanations. It also draws the study's conclusions.

6.2 Apostolic women, tactic and other forms of agency.

The study found that women express tactical agency using virginity as their instrument. Contrary to Madziyire (2013) and Vengeyi (2013) view that women fail to exercise agency when they fail virginity testing, the study, found that women in Johane Marange could intentionally lose their virginity to facilitate marriage. It discovered that women express tactical agency when they solve their immediate problem of getting married to the lovers that parents are not willing to have as their daughter's husbands by having premarital sexual relationships with such men. Such girls would hope of failing their virginity test so that they would be sent to the man with whom they had sex.

Johane Marange women showed that they have what Giddens (1984) called 'procedural knowledge', which they capitalised when they intentionally kept or lost their virginity. They act with full awareness of their desired consequences. In contrast to Madziyire (2013) assertion that girls who fail virginity testing are forced to enter into polygynous unions, the study found that girls deliberately have sexual relations with wealthy men to claim a place as a wife of the man. This is in line with Utas (2005) assertion that women apply 'tactic agency', which allows them to seize opportunities the moment they arise. This also resonates with Gasa (2007) notion of 'subversive subservience' as apostolic girls manipulate stereotypes of victimhood to achieve their intentions. Girls who intentionally lose their virginity to a man play to be the victim who can only be compensated by marriage to that man. The study, corroborating Machingura (2011), found that some women keep their virginity because of the eminence attached to virgins and the hope of becoming head wives. Therefore, women are fully conscious of their options and choices.

Women in apostolic churches exercise tactical and convinced agency in the use of family planning methods. In contrast to Bishau (2010), Mawere (2012), Vengeyi (2013) and Mavunganidze (2008) assertion that women in apostolic do not express their agency in choosing the number of children they want to have. The study, found that women decide whether to adhere to church teachings that influence their decision-making on family planning. The study in agreement with Sibanda (2011) found that members of Johane Marange are not allowed to use bio-medical family planning methods. However, the study also found that some women in Johane Marange resist this teaching covertly by using the pill and jabelle. Such women can be discovered by prophecy and they confess the sin and are forgiven.

The foregoing is in line with Giddens (1984) perception that resistance to power is an option that actors can take. They showed that they have the final say on their sexual issues, whether there threats or not. These women express tactic agency as they manage to solve the immediate problem of preventing pregnancy, but this did not solve the problem completely, as they were afraid that the use of family planning would be discovered and revealed by prophets. Some women who were identified by prophets used tactic agency to appear repentant by confessing the sin so that they would not be expelled from the church- a loophole that they exploited. Thus, women show that they use everyday forms of resistance to defy church teachings and make self-serving decisions.

In contrast to the assertion by Machingura (2011) and Madziyire (2013) that widows are forced to enter levirate marriages, the study found that widows in apostolic churches express their agency in choosing whether to remarry after the death of their husbands. Women in Johane Marange accept levirate marriages, as they prefer to continue performing their wifely duties to a husband. Their husband's brother inherits them so that they would continue giving birth to children. They also want their children to remain in their father's families. They believe that when they serve their new husbands and continue giving birth, they would inherit the kingdom of heaven. The fact that they make decisions that have traditional connotations and that are in line with their church teachings does not imply that they lack agency. Mahmood (2001) concurs with the foregoing as she explains that agential behaviour is expressed not only in those actions that result in transformative change, but also in those which focus on maintaining the status quo and social order. These women express what Ahearn (2001) call 'complicit agency' as they choose to

act in conformity with their church teachings and gender expectations when they coincide with their preferences.

Widows in Johane Masowe chose to remarry or remain single but none of them is inherited. In Johane Wetatu, most widows choose not to remarry, as they believe that they are independent women who can take care of themselves and their children. They acted as knowledgeable agents who feel they are in control of the situation on deciding whether to marry after the death of the husband. Women in Johane Masowe and Johane Wetatu decisions on marriage are facilitated by what Giddens (1984) call 'rules and allocative resources' the 'rules', which in this case are church teachings and 'resources' which in this case are financial stability and self confidence to decide whether to remarry. Their church teachings allow them to make autonomous decisions on the issue, while the resources facilitated the actual implementation of their decisions. Thus, structure in apostolic churches enables women to express their agency concerning issues of widow inheritance.

6.3 Church teachings and prophecy on women's choice of a marriage partner.

Contrary to Malianga and Muridzo (2015) assertion that young girls are coerced to marry against their will by prophets, the study found that women are actually aided by prophets to make decisions when choosing whom to marry. While Vengeyi (2013) claim that prophets abuse children when they give young girls to elderly men as wives, the study found that in all apostolic churches under study, prophets cannot initiate marriage arrangements, but they can foretell the person a woman or a man will be married to, without telling the name of the person. Women in Johane Marange and Johane Wetatu consulted prophets seeking guidance from the Holy Spirit. This implies that women's agency in choosing a marriage partner is aided by prophecy. This is in contrast with Vengeyi who notes that women in Johane Marange are induced to marry without giving their consent. In contrast to Malianga and Muridzo (2015) assertion that girls cannot defy what the Holy Spirit would have said, the study found that girls in Johane Marange could seek confirmation of a prophecy from another prophet in order to refute or accept it. The girls can also exercise agency by refusing a prophetic marriage proposal that they do not perceive as valid. Women in the study expressed convinced agency, as they were certain that they autonomously decide to believe or act upon prophecy that was related to their choice of marriage partners. This does not dispute the idea that girls may be persuaded to marry; rather it shows other dimensions

of how prophecy is used by women in the marriage process to make decisions that were overlooked in literature.

In contrast to Chakawa's (2010) and Vengeyi (2013) view that women in apostolic churches cannot defy church rules that govern marriage, the study found that women in apostolic churches exercise their agency by eloping to men they wanted to marry. None of the churches under study allows girls to elope to their husbands. The girls who elope had various reasons for doing so; some wanted to marry men who were wealthy while others wanted to marry men that their parents did not approve of among other reasons. These women expressed what Giddens's (1984) call 'discursive consciousness' as they explicitly explain the reasons for eloping. The churches have certain sanctions that are applied on those who elope. In all the apostolic under study the sanctions for those who elope is non-participation in church activities until the boy pays bridewealth. While in Johane Masowe, they are supposed to show remorse for their sin. Although disapproval for those who elope is expressed in all apostolic churches, it did not deter women from eloping; instead, they continue to do so, to achieve their various intentions. This corroborates Giddens (1984) assertion that even though sanctions and power relations exist, resistance to them is always an option that individuals can take in spite of the sanctions.

Expression of agential behavior in attaining formal education and choosing the age of marriage for girls is mediated within church teachings. The study substantiates the assertion by Madziyire (2013) and Sibanda (2011) that most girls in Johane Marange fail to attain formal education as they are married early. Most girls in the church attain formal education to up to primary school with few of them writing their ordinary level examinations. Men in Johane Marange marry young girls, as they believe that women are supposed to serve them. Most importantly, girls believe that when they marry they will be doing a great service to God, which will save their souls, as they will inherit the kingdom of heaven. They also marry early to avoid bringing dishonor to their families, as late marriage would result in scrutiny by other church members. The idea that they marry early due to their church teachings does not translate to lack of agency. Girls decide to marry as they discern it as the most appropriate course of action considering their social situations.

Contrary to Johane Marange, in Johane Wetatu and Johane Masowe, most girls attain the highest level of academic qualifications that they can and they secure employment before getting

married. This is because their churches condemn early marriages and polygyny, which give girls an opportunity to choose whether to stay in school. Girls can choose their marriage partner and marry at their own time. Most girls in Johane Wetatu decide to pursue tertiary educational qualifications, as they believe that they will be fulfilling the prophecy of ‘championship’, which will make them successful in their lives. They decide to achieve academic excellence and financial stability before they marry. This may be understood in Giddens’s concepts of ‘discursive consciousness’ and individuals as ‘purposeful actors’, as women have clearly defined reasons for staying or leaving school in relation to their church’s teachings. Adjei (2017) view that women express negotiated agency to balance their personal intentions and social expectations can explain agential behavior of these women. They acted in the manner that is socially acceptable in their churches. Johane Marange women marry early to avoid staining their family name, while those in Johane Wetatu married later after attaining the expected educational qualifications and employment.

6.4 The church’s leadership and women’s agency.

In contrast to the assertion by Vengeyi (2013) and Chakawa (2010) that women in Johane Marange are routinely forced to marry by church elders who form the *dare* or church court. The study found that in Johane Marange members of the *dare* do not force girls to marry. Women in the church said they choose whom to marry on their own. It also found that in Johane Masowe *Madamasca* are active in the marriage process, as they give advice and escort the girl to her husband’s home. In the same manner *Vaperedis* and *Vadare* facilitate in the marriage process by giving advice to lovers and being mediators *vanyai* during the marriage process. It is important to note that neither *Madamasco* nor *Vadare* urge girls to marry men they do not want. In the same vein, church leaders in Johane Wetatu help the young lovers by giving advice. The study concludes that leaders in apostolic churches help women during the marriage process but they let girls choose their marriage partners.

Women in different apostolic churches face conflicting church teachings concerning church leadership. The study concurs with Madziyire (2013) that women in Johane Marange do not hold leadership positions and are not allowed to preach at church. However, this does not translate to lack of decision making in their lives as women find ways to express their agency to achieve their ambitions. Contrary to the assertion by Vengeyi (2013) and Madziyire (2013) that women

in apostolic churches are not given leadership positions in the church, this study, found that women in Johane Wetatu hold leadership positions in the church. The argument by the aforementioned scholars is that women in apostolic churches are subordinated and cannot make decisions in the church neither can they make autonomous decisions in their lives. The study found that women in Johane Masowe and Johane Wetatu are treated equally with men as they can preach in the church. They also hold leadership positions in the church that are parallel to those of men. These women decide on the projects and programmes that they do and they actively participate in making decisions that concern them.

In addition, the structure in Johane Wetatu and Johane Masowe facilitate women to make decisions as their leadership positions make them have authoritative resources. *Madamasca* and *Vasadare* in Johane Masowe; assembly and national women leadership in Johane Wetatu possess what Giddens (1984) calls 'authoritative resources' as they have power to teach other women what to do and how to act. When they meet during their Wednesday gatherings, they share and find solutions to their problems. In contrast to Madziyire (2013) conclusion that women in apostolic churches feel incompetent to make life decisions because they do not hold decision-making positions in church, the study demonstrates that the leadership positions that women in Johane Wetatu and Johane Masowe have, make them confident to make autonomous decisions in issues that concern them.

6.5 Polygyny, arranged marriages, levirate marriages and women's agency

In contrast to the assertion by Machingura (2011) and Madziyire (2013) that women are subordinate and passive participants in polygyny, the study found that women in Johane Marange are active participants in the creation of polygynous marriages. They endorse polygyny, believing that if they accept it, then they will inherit the kingdom of heaven. The study findings contradict Madziyire (2013) assertion that women's agency is destroyed, as they have to accept additional wives that may be given to their husbands by the Holy Spirit. The study found that in Johane Marange, the Holy Spirit does not choose additional wives for men in the church. Instead, women usually facilitate the marriage of their younger nieces and sisters to their husbands in a bid to secure privileges from the husband. The findings confirm Mahmood (2001) assertion that agency include ways in which women resist the dominant male order by subverting the hegemonic meanings of cultural practices and deploying them for their own agendas. Women in

Johane Marange change the hegemonic meaning of polygyny from a sphere where husband rule to a sphere where co-wives can form alliances to sway the husband's attention to them at the expense of those wives who don't have such alliances. In the end, it is not the will of the husband that prevail in most polygynous marriages, but the wishes of wives with the strongest alliance.

Women's agency in choosing their marriage partners is mediated by their church's teachings concerning arranged marriages. In contrast to Madziyire (2013) and Machingura (2011), the study found that arranged marriages do not necessarily entail lack of agential expression by women in apostolic churches. Women express their agency by arranging and accepting arranged marriages. In contrast to the view by the aforementioned scholars that women in Johane Marange lose their agency when they enter marriages arranged by their parents, particularly the father. The study found that fathers rarely arrange marriages for their daughters. Instead, married women arrange marriages of their nieces and sisters to their husbands. The study discovered that arranged marriages are forbidden in Johane Wetatu and Johane Masowe. Women in these churches explained that they autonomously decide on the man whom they marry, as their churches proscribe arranged marriages. This implies that there are differences on agential behaviour that women can express in different apostolic churches. This is in line with Ahearn (2001) assertion that agential expression by women differ from one society to the next and there is a need to discern the nuances among them.

The study found diverging views in apostolic churches concerning endogamy, while some churches prescribe it others do not. The study corroborates findings by Madziyire (2013) that women in Johane Marange are forbidden from marrying non-members. However, the study contradict the view that women's agency is limited by the teaching. Women in Johane Marange express their agency by following the teaching because they want to achieve their objectives. They marry in the church to preserve family's honour and to gain status as obedient women. Women do not want expulsion from the church that would result from marrying non-members. They also believe that by marrying in the church, they will be obeying God, which will make them inherit the kingdom of heaven. These women express what Giddens (1984) call 'conscious motivations to action', as they have reasons for marrying in the church.

In Johane Masowe marrying non-members is a sin, but women continue to marry non-members because the church reintegrate them once they have confessed and the marriage is validated. The

aforementioned is different from Johane Marange, which expels and disowns any woman who marries a non-member. Women in Johane Wetatu marry members of the church even though the church permits them to marry non-members. They believe that marrying in the church is advantageous for them, as they think the church teachings protect them from polygynous marriages and adulterous husbands. Women express their agency in Johane Masowe and Johane Wetatu when deciding whether to marry in the church. Their church teachings act as the structure that limit as well as facilitate their actions, which is in line with Giddens's (1984) notion of structure as both constraining and enabling. Therefore, women in apostolic churches under study show that they have conscious motivations for their actions and the church teachings not only restrain their actions, but also assist them to achieve their intentions.

6.6 Everyday resistance and apostolic women.

Contrary to Madziyire (2013) and Sibanda (2011) assertion that husbands overly control wives in apostolic churches and women enact the inscribed gender roles, the study found that women use everyday resistance to make self-interested decisions in their lives. They used hidden everyday resistance strategies, such as when women in Johane Marange defy gender roles by delegating their wifely duties to their children while they focus on income generation activities. They also manipulated their 'pregnant women' status to make choices that were oblivious to their husbands. They could neglect their wifely duties by refusing to cook or some of their marital duties and the men would think that it is because of the pregnancy. This concurs with Scott (2008) assertion that individuals can resist structure using practices that are invisible, making it easier to evade structural control. This is also in line with Utas (2005) who explains that women can use tactic agency to make way through what appear to be overly constraining situations.

The study corroborates the idea by Scott (2008) that individuals can use everyday resistance to limit hegemonic control. Some day-to-day activities by apostolic women that appear to be normal are resistance strategies. Such as when they pray and fast with the belief that the prayers would make their husbands more considerate. Their actions demonstrates that women do not confront men upfront but they sought assistance of a higher authority (God) as they believe that he would control their husbands for them. This shows that even when their actions are not transformational in relation to structure, they are nevertheless agentic. This in line with Vinthagen and Johansson (2013) who explains that everyday resistance is incorporated into the

social life and is regarded as the norm. It is disguised and the researchers can identify everyday resistance activities even when the actors consider it to be something else.

In contrast to Chikwature and Oyedele (2016) contention that women in Johane Marange totally submit to the demands of their husbands, the study found that women employed false compliance and feigned ignorance as avenues to resist male domination covertly. Johane Marange women used silence and false compliance to appear as obedient women, who were immune to pangs of jealousy. Their silence is a strategy that they use as a survival strategy, they knew that if they chose to be headstrong, they would be ridiculed and ostracised by other family members. Instead, they lived in harmony with others so that they would be liable to receive help from the family. This is in line with Scott (2008) who notes that individuals can pretend to be obedient and use their supposed silence as a tool to resist when open rebellion is too risky. The women compared the gains from rebellion to feigned obedience and they believed they would gain more from feigned obedience. This is in line with Vinthagen and Johansson (2013) observation that not all actions of obedience are actual obedience. The study agrees with Sahu et al (2016) assertion that ‘subordination can never be total’ and there is space, however limited for people to exercise agency.

Contrary to Vengeyi (2013) and Chakawa (2010) assertion that women in Johane Marange are passive victims of male dominance, the study found that women use subtle resistance strategies. Some women in Johane Marange used evasion as a resistance technique in their relationships with their husbands. They disobey church rules and the husband’s expectations by using evasion strategies. They used various individualised practices, such as when they pretend that they forgot to wash church regalia or to shave their heads among other techniques to avoid regular church attendance. This is in line with Scott (2008) that everyday resistance is about minute advantages that may have little effect on the overall relationship of power, which provides occasional opportunities for individuals to make self-serving decisions. Its influence on relations of power becomes important when considering their cumulative effect.

6.7 The Holy Spirit, polygyny and women's decision-making.

The Holy Spirit accepts polygyny in one apostolic church and forbids it in other apostolic churches. The study concurs with Machingura (2011) assertion that Holy Spirit accepts polygyny in Johane Marange, as it prepares wives and husbands to inherit the kingdom of heaven. The man must show his leadership qualities as the head of the polygynous union, while women prove that they are submissive to their husband and do not feel jealous for their co-wives. These qualities are believed to qualify them go to heaven. Interestingly, in Johane Wetatu and Johane Masowe the Holy Spirit forbids polygyny, a man must have one wife; likewise, the wife must have one husband. Members of these churches believe that a man who marries many wives will not inherit the kingdom of heaven, as he would have committed a sin before God. This shows what Giddens (1984) call 'selective information filtering' by church leaders. In Johane Marange the church teachings allow polygyny and the church leadership explain that the Holy Spirit accepts it; while in Johane Wetatu and Johane Masowe church teachings prescribe monogamy and church leadership say that the Holy Spirit forbids polygyny. Thus, leaders selectively enforce certain beliefs that are in line with their church teachings and give vigour to their arguments by making members believe that the Holy Spirit accepts what they say. This is done to maintain the status quo and get all members to conform to church teachings.

Contrary to the assertion by Madziyire (2013), Sibanda (2011), Chikwature and Oyedele (2016) that Johane Marange women lack decision making power in polygynous marriages. The study confirms that men in Johane Marange are 'heads' of the family and they lead women in a polygynous union. However, women also participate in decision-making. The head wife *vahosi* is given a lot of respect and the husbands make decisions after consulting her. The women can also make decisions by discussing the issue with *vahosi*, who will tell the husband or they discuss with the husband. Women in the study find ways to swerve the decisions made by the husband by being obedient wives or recruiting more wives for him. Therefore, women in Johane Marange express what Utas (2005) call tactic agency, where they used a mixture of agential behaviours to manoeuvre and transcend what may appear to be difficult situations.

Women in apostolic churches actively participate in income generation and managing finances. Contrary to the assertion by Madziyire (2013) and Sibanda (2011) that husbands control wives labour and finances in apostolic churches, the study found that women also take part. Men in

Johane Marange are expected to exclusively provide for their families and most of them do not want their wives to become waged labourers. However, harsh economic environment, prompt wives in the church to engage in income generating projects such as vending. In polygynous unions, the wives engage in various economic activities to supplement the money they are given by their husbands. Each wife decides what she does with her income. In the end women in Johane Marange are not overly financially subordinated, they find ways to financially sustain themselves.

Women in Johane Wetatu and Johane Masowe have financial decision-making power in their families as their church teachings permit them to become waged labourers. Women, as youths are expected to be financially stable before they marry to make them capable breadwinners. Some wives are professionals while others are in informally employed and they plan together with their husbands on what they do with their income. Therefore, women in apostolic churches are active financial decision makers in their families. This show that structure is both constraining and enabling; in Johane Marange structure constrains wives from becoming waged labourers but it enables them to be informal traders. While in Johane Masowe and Johane Wetatu, structure strengthens wife's financial decision making power as they are permitted to become professionals who earn income in the same manner as their husbands. Women in apostolic churches together with their husbands assume the breadwinner status and they help in making financial decisions in their families.

Contrary to the views by Chakawa (2010) and Madziyire (2013) that apostolic women lack the agency to divorce abusive husbands, the study, found that women express their agency in various ways when dealing with marital problems. In Johane Marange, disgruntled wives, particularly second wives create an opportunity to leave the family by committing adultery to satisfy themselves and at times, get divorce from their husbands. Some women in the church, especially first wives usually seek counselling from the church elders to be reconciled to their husband instead of divorcing. This is because the first wife believes she has an obligation to maintain stability in the polygynous union. Some women in the church seek divorce from their husband and follow the church procedure until they are divorced from their husbands. While others decide to persevere and survive in their marriages as they believe that divorce will not solve their problems. Thus, women in Johane Marange express tactical agency as they use a various techniques to transcend marital problems they face in polygynous marriages.

The study findings concur with the assertion by Dodo et al (2014) that members of Johane Masowe are encouraged to seek counselling and desist from divorcing. Women in the church seek counselling from *Vadare* and *Vasadare* to resolve marital problems. In the same vein, members of Johane Wetatu seek counselling from church leaders before opting for divorce. The study demonstrates that for apostolic women in Johane Wetatu and Johane Masowe, marriage is a sacred union between a wife and husband, it must be cherished and should not be destroyed. Measures must be taken to reconcile partners facing marital problems and divorce should be implemented as the last resort. As such, when women follow the teaching that forbid divorce they are expressing their agency by doing what they believe is the best for themselves and their families. If we borrow Giddens's (1984) concepts, women are exhibiting discursive consciousness as they can fully explain reasons for choosing whether to divorce.

6.8 Church teachings and creation of gendered identities.

The study, contrary to the claim by Madziyire (2013) that women in apostolic churches simply enact the gender roles that are created by their church teachings found that women in apostolic churches participate in creation of their identities. Madziyire (2013) claims that women in Johane Marange do not have any other identities other than enacting normalised femininities as daughters, wives and mothers. The study found that women in Johane Marange also create other identities as active small-scale traders in their vending endeavours. They also assume the duties of the breadwinner, as they supplement the money they receive from their husbands. In Johane Wetatu and Johane Masowe, women create their identities as independent women who can take care of their children even in the event of the death their husbands. In Johane Wetatu women create identities as learned women who are professionals in various fields of expertise. Therefore women not only have the identities of being daughters, mothers, and wives, rather, they are also breadwinners, professionals, and independent women.

Women are not forced to adopt certain identities; rather, they actively participate in their creation. Even when they take the traditional roles and identities as mothers and wives, it does not mean that they are passive, but active participants in the process. This concurs with Mahmood (2001) assertion that agential capacity is relayed not only in those actions that result in progressive change, but also in those which focus on continuity and stability. Women in apostolic churches carry their traditional identities as mothers and wives and they create other

identities mentioned above within parameters prescribed by teachings. The study concurs with Oswell (2013) assertion that individuals, in our case women, are not passive subjects who adopts and enact prescribed social roles. Rather, they influence and are influenced by social structures in defining themselves.

6.9 Study Conclusions

The study concludes that the historical context of the church and its first pronouncements *tsananguro dzekutanga* makes every apostolic church have its own church teachings that govern the marriage process. There are similarities on the teachings of apostolic churches, which include that prophets cannot initiate marriage process and men are encouraged to pay bride wealth when they marry, members are urged to resolve their marital problems, reconcile and desist from divorcing. Every apostolic church under study has its own structures composed of church teachings, and leaders who implement them to assure conformity of church members. In theory all apostolic churches designate eighteen as the years that girls are eligible for marriage; however there are differences in practice as members of Johane Marange encourage girls to marry early. While in Johane Masowe and Johane Wetatu girls are encouraged to marry later in life after attaining formal education and securing employment. The research shows that apostolic churches have different teachings that govern issues of virginity testing, polygyny, arranged marriages and widow inheritance. It reveals that there are marked differences on what is believed to be the commandments of the Holy Spirit, while leaders in one apostolic church say that the Holy Spirit sanctions polygyny, leaders in other apostolic churches say that the Holy Spirit abhors it.

The research concludes that the differences in apostolic church teachings and practices lead to different gender roles and expectations on members in the respective churches. Women in Johane Marange are expected to adopt their feminine duties as mothers and wives, while in Johane Marange and Johane Masowe they are expected to be family providers in addition to their feminine duties. In all the churches, it is considered the husband's duties to lead and provide for their families. Yet, it is apparent that both the husbands and wives work to earn income and provide for their families. Johane Marange members believe that polygyny is the ideal family type, while in Johane Masowe and Johane Wetatu monogamy perceived as the model family. It is evident that marriage is perceived to be a divine institution in all apostolic churches and once entered into, it is expected that the marriage (whether monogamous or a polygynous) should not

be dissolved. As such, church teachings act as the framework, which provides guidance to couples before and after they marry.

It was concluded that women in apostolic churches express their agency in multifarious ways. The divergences of apostolic church teachings place women in different contexts from which to express their agentic behaviour. Women express convinced agency when they adhere to church teachings, believing that they are doing the best for their lives. They also participate in creation of their identities when they choose to enact or to ignore gendered roles and expectations. The study demonstrated that women can give reasons for adopting or defying gendered expectations in their churches, they showed that they have conscious motivations to their actions. Women in Johane Wetatu exercise convinced agency when they decide to become professionals and independent, financially stable women. When women conform to gender expectations by supporting polygyny, virginity testing and arranged marriages this does not translate to lack of agency. Women in Johane Marange find ways to express their agency within what appear to be the male dominated polygynous system by forming alliances. Apostolic women create space to make self-interested choices using subtle, everyday forms of resistance.

The study concludes that women in apostolic churches have motives for their actions, as they can clearly explain reasons for choosing whether to stay in school, elope or marry within or outside the church. It is apparent from the study that women not only enact their expected gender roles as daughters, mothers and wives, but also create other roles as income earners and decision makers in their families. They can decide to adhere to church teachings by becoming professionals such as in Johane Wetatu or they can covertly resist church teachings such as in Johane Marange when they secretly use family planning pills. It is apparent that apostolic women usually conform to church teachings when they coincide with their expectations, and defy them when they do not.

One can note that apostolic church teachings provide avenues for women to express agential behaviour. Teachings in Johane Wetatu and Johane Masowe allow women to become waged labourers, giving them financial decision-making power in their families. They are also given leadership positions in the church. Apostolic women capitalises on the loopholes in their church teachings to make self-serving decisions. They not only conform to church teachings, but also actively participate in implementing them in their lives. They have procedural knowledge of the teachings and they can negotiate their way within them. In Johane Marange where their agency

seems to be constrained because women are not expected to become waged workers or income providers, they have created space to have financial autonomy by earning income as informal traders.

The structure provides leaders who help girls by giving them sexuality education. The Holy Spirit is a branch of structure in apostolic churches, it aid women to express their agency by giving advice, and prophecies, which help women make decisions. Neither *Madamasco* in Johane Masowe nor *Vadare in Johane Marange* urge girls to marry men they do not want. In the same vein, church leaders in Johane Wetatu help the young lovers by giving advice and participating in bride wealth payments. The study concludes that the Holy Spirit and leaders in apostolic churches help women during the marriage process but they let girls choose their marriage partners.

Women in Johane Marange express tactic agency when they manipulate their virginity status as a tool to achieve their goals. Women express resistance agency when they decide to divorce, despite the teaching in their churches that marriages are for life. Some women in Johane Marange used victimcy when they portrayed themselves as victims of neglect by their husbands, making them eligible for divorce.

It is apparent from the study that church teachings have enabling and constraining influence on women's decision-making. Women not only adopt church teachings and prescribed gender and marital roles, instead, they make individual interpretations of the teachings and use them to achieve their intentions. They act as purposeful agents who make deliberate decisions on marriage related issues. Women create space to express their agency within their church structures. On the surface, it may appear as if women have limited freedom to exercise their agency, further scrutiny revealed that church teachings facilitate women's agency. Where their agency is constrained by some church teachings, women have proved capable of creating a space to stand on, from which they exercise agency. Women express their agency by complying with expectations, resisting them or by subverting the meaning attached to the act and inscribing their own as revealed in this research.

6.10 Chapter summary.

This chapter discussed the research findings, highlighting concurrences and contradictions with existing literature. It shows that contrary to the assertion that apostolic women are passive

victims of church teachings, they make self-interested decisions, using various forms of agential expression strategies. It analysed study findings within Giddens structuration theory to show relationships and explain study findings. It also highlighted the conclusions that were reached by the study.

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Appendixes.

Appendix 1. Participant information sheet and Participant consent Forms Used in the Research.

University of Zimbabwe

Faculty of social studies

Participant information sheet.

Researcher: Nyaradzo Mashonganyika

Title: Church teachings, gender relations and women's agency: A study of Women in Apostolic churches in Harare.

My name is Nyaradzo Mashonganyika, a Master of Science in Sociology and Social Anthropology student at the University of Zimbabwe. I am kindly asking you to take part in this research. This form outlines the purpose of the study and provides a description of your involvement and your rights as a participant.

The study seeks to identify apostolic church teachings on marriage, explain their influence on expected gender roles and marital relations. It also documents how women make choices and resistance on marriage issues.

Objectives of this study are

- To identify Johane Marange, Johane Masowe and Johane Wetatu teachings on marriage, gender relations and discern the nuances among them.
- To explain the influence of church teachings on expected gender roles and marital relations
- To explore and document women's expression of agency in the marriage process within apostolic church structures.

You are encouraged to ask questions. Your suggestions and comments are valued in this study.

Participant consent form

The Researcher

I guarantee that the following conditions will be met.

Your real name may be used in the written research report with your consent. If no consent is granted, you and other persons names involved in the research may be given pseudo names, which may be used in the verbal and written records and reports.

If you grant permission to be audiotaped, no audiotapes will be used for any other purpose other than this study, and will not be played for any other reasons other than to do this study.

Field notes generated from the study will solely be used for academic purposes for this research study.

Your participation in this research is voluntary; you have the right to withdraw from the study at any point, for any reason and with no negative consequences.

You will receive a copy of the final report before it is handed in, so that you have the opportunity to suggest changes to the researcher if necessary.

The participant

Do you grant your permission for your real name to be used in this study? Yes No

Do you grant permission to be quoted directly? Yes No

Do you grant permission to be audiotaped? Yes No

I confirm that the purpose of the research has been explained to me. Alternatives to my participation in the study have been discussed. All my questions have been answered. I have read this consent form. My signature below indicates my willingness to participate in this study.

I agree to the terms

Participant _____ Date _____

I agree to the terms

Researcher _____ Date _____

Appendix 2.

Shona Participant information sheet and Participant consent forms used in the research. University of Zimbabwe

Faculty of social studies

Gwaro rinotsanangura ongororo.

Muongorori: Nyaradzo Mashonganyika.

Chinangwa: Tsvagurudzo ye mitemo svondo, kudyidzana kwevakadzi nevarume uye sarudzo dzinoitwa nevakadzi. Ongororo muvakadzi vesvondo dzepostori muHarare.

Ndinonzi Nyaradzo Mashonganyika, ndiri mudzidzi we Master of Science in Sociology and Social Anthropology pa University of Zimbabwe. Ndinokumbirawo kuti mupe pfungwa dzenyu mutsvagiridzo ino. Gwaro rino rinoburitsa zvinangwa zveongororo uye kodzero dzenyu kana mapinda mutsvagiridzo ino.

Tsvagiridzo ino ine chinangwa chekuda kuziva mitemo yesvondo dzepostori. Inoda kuongorora kudyidzana kwevakadzi nevarume nezvinotarirwa kwavari muwanano. Inoda kuburitsa nzira dzinoseenzeswa nevakadzi kuita sarudzo munyaya dzekuroorana.

Zvinagwa zvetsvagiridzo ino.

- Kuburitsa mitemo ye Johane Marange, Johane Masowe ne Johane Wetatu pakuroorana, uye kujekesa misayano yemitemo musvondo idzi.
- Kuongorora zvinotarirwa kuvakadzi nevarume vakaroorana pakugarisana kwavo.
- Kuongorora nzira dzinoseenzeswa nevakadzi kuita sarudzo munyaya dzewanano.

Munokurudzirwa kubvunza mibvunzo yamunenge muinayo, pfungwa dzenyu dzinokosheswa zvakanyanya muongororo ino.

Gwaro rewirirano.

Muongorori

Ndinovimbisa kuti zviga zvinotevera zvichateedzerwa.

Zita renyu chairo rinogona kuseenzeswa pazvinyorwa zvetsvagiridzo ino kana imi mapa bvumo. Imi nevamwe vanenge vasina kupa bvumo yekuti mazita aseenzeswe vanoseenzeserwa mazita ekunyepa muzvinyorwa zveongororo ino.

Kna mukapa bvumo yekuti izwi renyu ritepwe pamunenge muchipa pfungwa dzenyu, tepi iyi inozongoseenzeswa panenge pachitwa nezveongororo ino chete;

Makasununguka kupa pfungwa dzenyu mutsvagiridzo ino kana kurega. Makasununguka kusarudza kurega kuenderera mberi nekupa pfungwa dzenyu muongororo ino, zvisinei nekuti manga mambobvuma kupa pfungwa dzenyu muongororo iyi.

Kana zvichikodzera munogona kupiwa chinyorwa chetsvagiridzo ino, kuti muverenge nekugadziriswa pakakanganiswa.

Mupi wepfungwa mutsvagiridzo.

Munopa bvumo yekuti zita renyu chairo riseenzeswe mutsvagiridzo here? Hongu [] Kwete []

Munopa bvumo yekuti mazwi enyu aseenzeswe sematauriro amakaaita here? Hongu [] Kwete []

Munopa bvumo yekuti izwi renyu ritepwe here? Hongu [] Kwete []

Ndinobvuma kuti chinangwa cheongororo ino chatsanangurwa kwandiri. Zvandinogona kuita maererano nekupa pfungwa dzangu mutsvagiridzo ndazvizivisa. Mibvunzo yang yose yapindurwa. Ndaverenga ndikanzwisisa zvirimugwaro rewirirano. Signature yangu iri pazasi inoratidza sarudzo yangu yekuti ndipe pfungwa dzangu mutsvagiridzo ino.

Ndinobvumirana nezviga izvi

Participant _____ Date _____

Ndinobvumirana nezviga izvi

Researcher _____ Date _____

Appendix 3. Key Informant Interview guides

Key Informant Interview guide for church leaders.

1. When is a boy or a girl considered ready for marriage?
2. What do you teach members about marrying a member or a non-member of the church?
3. What is the ideal procedure of marriage in the church that you teach people to follow?
4. What is done when one breach the rules of the marriage procedure?
5. What does the church say about the practice of virginity testing? What do you think about it?
6. Which roles do prophets play on women decision on who to marry?
7. What do you teach youths and couples about marriage?
8. Explain what the church considers as the ideal family.
9. Do the church teachings allow divorce of married couple if it does, under which circumstances?
10. What does the church say about early marriage, child pledging and forced marriage?
11. What are the marital roles of a wife in marriage?
12. What are the marital roles of a husband in the family?
13. What do women do when they face marital problems?
14. What does the church say about widow inheritance?

Key Informant Interview guide for married women.

1. When is a boy or a girl considered ready for marriage?
2. What do you think about marrying a member or a non-member of the church?
3. Explain how women actions relate to church expectations when they marry?
4. What is done when one breach the rules of the marriage procedure?
5. What are your views on virginity testing?
6. Which roles do prophets play on women decision on who to marry?
7. Explain what the church considers as the ideal family.
8. Under which circumstances do women opt for divorce?
9. What does the church say about early marriage?
10. What are the marital roles of a wife in marriage?
11. Suppose a woman does not want to perform her marital duties, how can she do it?
12. What are the marital roles of a husband in the family?
13. What do women do when you face marital problems?
14. What do you think about widow inheritance?

Appendix 4: Semi- Structured Interview guides.

Semi- Structured Interview guide for married women.

1. What are the reasons that made you marry the man who is now your husband?
2. Explain the procedure you followed when you were married and why?
3. What is done when one breach the rules of the marriage procedure?
4. What does the church say about the practice of virginity testing? What do you think about it?
5. Which roles did prophets play on the decision on whom to marry?
6. What where you taught about marriage before you marry?
7. Explain what the church considers as the ideal family.
8. In which ways does your family earn its income?
9. How do you make decisions in your family?
10. What do you think about divorce?
11. What are your marital roles as a wife in marriage?
12. What are the marital roles of a husband in the family?
13. What do you do when they face marital problems?
14. Suppose a woman wants to neglect her marital duties, how can she do it?
15. What do you think about widow inheritance?

Semi- Structured Interview guide for Youth leaders.

1. What do you teach youths about marriage?
2. When are youths considered ready for marriage, and why?
3. What is done when a youth breach the rules of the marriage procedure?
4. What does the church say about the practice of virginity testing? What do you think about it?
5. Which roles do prophets play on youth's decision on whom to marry?
6. What do you teach youths about marriage?

Semi- Structured Interview guide for youths.

1. When do you think you will be ready for marriage, and why?
2. What do you think about marrying a member or a non-member of the church?
3. What is the procedure of marriage you want to follow when you marry and why?
4. What is the role of prophets on your decision on who to marry?
5. What are you taught about marriage by church leaders?

Appendix 5 Focus Group Discussion guides.

Focus Group Discussion guide for married women.

1. What are the reasons that made you marry the man who is now your husband?
2. Explain the procedure women follow when they get married and why?
3. How do you earn income in your family?
4. How are decisions made in the family?
5. What does the church say about the practice of virginity testing? Which roles do prophets play on the women marriage partners?
6. What where you taught about marriage before you marry?
7. Explain what you consider as the ideal family.
8. What do you think about divorce?
9. What are your marital roles as a wife in marriage?
10. What are the marital roles a husband in the family?
11. What do you do when they face marital problems?
12. Explain how women can neglect their gender roles?
13. What do you think about widow inheritance?

Focus Group Discussion guide for married men.

1. What is done when one breach the rules of the marriage procedure?
2. What where you taught about marriage before you marry?
3. Explain what you consider as the ideal family.
4. What do you think about divorce?
5. What are the roles of a wife in marriage?
6. What are the marital roles as a husband in the family?
7. What do you do when you face marital problems?
8. What do you think about widow inheritance?